

## 22. Attempts at Dialogue

During the period of the British Mandate, there were attempts at establishing contacts and dialogues with the Arabs, with the goal of bringing them to accept the fact of Jewish settlement in Eretz Yisrael and to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

Examining the way in which textbooks present these contacts is important for the following reasons: bringing them to the student's knowledge breaks down the stereotype according to which the Arabs are united in their total and sweeping opposition to the Zionist enterprise and to compromises with Israel under any condition; presenting the unfolding of the contacts brings the student to the conclusion that the Jewish side is not to blame for the failure to achieve compromises and the "blame" rests with the Arab side.

It is worth emphasizing that the Arabs' opposition to compromises is explained by rational motives – opposition to the purchase of land and to Jewish immigration out of concern over losing the Arab majority – and not for irrational reasons, such as blind hatred.

### *The Weizmann–Feisal Agreement*

The first clear attempt at dialogue was in the meetings between Chaim Weizmann, as representative of the Zionist movement, and the Emir Feisal, the head of the Hashemite delegation as "the representative of the Hejaz kingdom and in its name," meetings that led to an agreement in January 1919. The agreement is discussed in varying degrees of detail, from presenting the complete text of the agreement to a few sentences that focus mainly on the foundations that contain recognition of the Jews' aspirations. In two history books used in the state-run school system, the entire agreement is presented in full (299, **The World and the Jews in Recent Generations**, Part A: 1870-1920, a high school textbook, p.282; 13, **From Exile to Independence – The History of the Jewish People in Recent Generations**, A, 1990, pp.205-207).

Another history book states the following: "Weizmann agreed to close cooperation in developing the Arab state and Eretz Yisrael. Feisal agreed to Jewish immigration to Eretz Yisrael." (217, **Imperialism and the First World War**, 5742, p.100)

A history book used in the ultra-orthodox network contains the following:

#### "Arab Regard for the National Home

"When the 'Delegates' Conference' arrived in Eretz Yisrael in 5678 (1918), Dr. Weizmann made a first attempt to obtain the Arabs' consent for the establishment of the National Home. He met with the Emir Feisal, and the two men signed an agreement in which Feisal promised to support the National Home, if the Western powers would also give the Arabs what they promised them." (20, **The History of Recent Generations**, vol. b, 1997, p.128)

Another history book used in the general educational stream points to the fact that the Palestinian national movement was not monolithic and united in its opposition to Zionism, but rather there were additional trends:

"After the First World War, two trends were clearly evident in the Palestinian national movement (of the Arabs in Eretz Yisrael):

The first trend – an attempt at dialogue between leaders of the Arab national movement and the Zionist movement.

The second trend – fostering the dream of "Greater Syria" headed by an independent Arab king (Syria was then under British occupation).

“The first trend was expressed in the famous meeting between Weizmann and Feisal at Akaba in 1918, and the signing of an agreement between them in January 1919. Feisal was interested in cooperation with Zionism, not because he was sympathetic to Zionism but rather because he believed that Zionism contained 'tremendous power' and influence which could serve the Arab interest. In other words, it could lead to the applying of international pressure for realizing the Arabs' independence in the Middle East, in exchange for Arab recognition of a Jewish state, immigration and settlement." (75, **Zionism – The Jewish People in Recent Generations**, A: 1882-1939, p.120)

The same book contains a letter by Feisal to U.S. Justice Felix Frankfurter, one of the leaders of American Jewry, in which sympathy for Zionism is clearly evident:

"We recognize that Arabs and Jews are cousins, and they have suffered persecutions on the part of the powers, who were stronger than they, and are capable, thanks to this happy historic meeting, to jointly take the first step for realizing their national ideals. We Arabs, especially the educated among us, look with deepest sympathy on the Zionist movement ... We will wish the Jews a most hearty welcome home ... We are working together for a reformed and revived Near East, and our two movements complete one another. The Jewish movement is national and not imperialist. Our movement is national and not imperialist, and there is room in Syria for us both. Indeed, I think that neither can be a real success without the other."

(75, **Zionism – The Jewish People in Recent Generations**, A: 1882-1939, p.129).

In most of the books, the fact that Feisal showed readiness to recognize the Jews' demands for a separate national existence is highlighted.

"In all its paragraphs, this agreement places the 'Arab state' and the 'Jewish state' opposite each other – in other words, it recognizes the fact that Eretz Yisrael is not a part of the 'Arab state' and is not itself an Arab state. That is to say, Feisal conceded Eretz Yisrael to the Jews ... From the standpoint of Zionism, this was recognition of Eretz Yisrael's autonomy and of the Balfour Declaration, and was an excellent basis for the gradual and peaceful development of an autonomous Jewish society in Eretz Yisrael." (13, **From Exile to Independence**, A, 1990, p.204).

Another explanation attributes the initiative for the meetings to the British: "Despite their reservations about the Balfour Declaration, British military government officials knew that their entrenchment in the Middle East did not depend only on Arab support, but rather on Zionist support as well, and they tried to create Zionist-Arab understanding even before the war ended. Their goal was to achieve joint Zionist-

Arab consent to accept British aegis, consent that was likely to help Britain in its struggle with France in dividing up areas of influence in the Middle East." (227, **Zionism Tested in Action, 1914-1939**, 5744 (1984), p.64).

### *A Role Playing Exercise*

In a history book used in the general education stream that focuses on the subject of the "stockade and tower" settlements, and meant for elementary school students, the subject of the contacts between Jews and Arabs is presented in a general way, without referring to a specific event. This book differs from the rest by the fact that it presents both sides' positions in a fair and symmetrical fashion (though in very simplistic terms), and does not lay the blame for their failure only on the Arab side. This section is worth presenting in its entirety.

#### “Meetings With Arab Leaders

“In the period of the disturbances, several meetings were held between Jewish and Arab leaders. At these meetings, the Jews wanted to reach an understanding with the Arabs, so that both peoples living in Eretz Yisrael could live here together and in peace.

The Arab leaders argued that Eretz Yisrael is an Arab country and must remain such. They did not agree to having many Jews living in the country, since they were concerned that if there was a Jewish majority here, governance would pass to the Jews. Therefore, they demanded from the Jewish public that it cease buying land and halt Jewish immigration. Only under those terms would they be willing to accept us. The leaders of the Jewish Yishuv knew that if they accepted these conditions, the Jewish people would not be able to build itself a home in Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, they did not agree to halt Jewish immigration and the purchase of land. Our leaders believed that it was possible to find a way for both peoples to live in peace and cooperation with each other, without stopping the building of the Jewish National Home, and without harming the Arab community living here.

Neither the Jews nor the Arabs were willing to give up their desires and to accept the other's demands. However, at the end of each meeting it was agreed that there was room to hold additional meetings. These meetings were secret and only became known many years after they were held."

Later, the students are asked to participate in a role-playing exercise in which they will represent the Arab side. This, of course, encourages them to relate to the Arab side with openness and understanding, though not to identify with it.

“17 Kislev 5698 (17.11.1937)

“To: Members of the Pioneering Youth Movements in Haifa  
From: The Initiating Committee  
Agenda: Role Playing

“There have recently been a great many rumors about secret meetings between Jewish leaders and Arab leaders. The matter is somewhat vague and unclear.

Whether or not the rumors are correct, it is important that you, too, devote some thought to the matter. Let's do so in the form of role-playing: several members will present the Jewish position and several will present the Arab position.

Each member is free to choose the position he wishes to represent.

We suggest focusing the role playing around these two points:

1. The meetings between the Jewish and Arab representatives – what are they likely to bring to each of the sides?
2. Each of the sides has matters that are important for discussion – what are they?

Sincerely

The Initiating Committee"

(342, **Stockade and Tower**, pp.118-119).

## ***The Failure***

All of the books in all of the educational streams place the blame for the failure of the contacts with Feisal on the Arab side. The following analysis reflects how the subject is presented in most of the books:

"At first, it seemed that the agreement that they had reached created an opening for a new path in Zionist-Arab relations, but in fact it contained nothing real. Feisal did not succeed in taking control of Syria, nor did he manage to dominate the Arab mood, which was directed against realization of the Balfour Declaration.

There were sharp opponents to Feisal's moderate policy from the outset. In February 1919, in other words about a month after the signing of the Feisal-Weizmann treaty, the first national meeting of representatives of Muslim-Christian associations convened in Jaffa, and they decided on total opposition to Zionism and to the Balfour Declaration. In June 1919, the Arab-Syrian conference met in Damascus, which was attended by Arab businessmen from Eretz Yisrael as well. This was considered to be the first of the gatherings of Eretz Yisrael Arabs. This conference, too, passed resolutions calling for the establishment of an independent Syrian state within 'the national borders of Syria' – Syria, Eretz Yisrael, Transjordan and Lebanon – and total opposition to Zionism. These resolutions served as the beginning of a long series of resolutions against the Jewish National Home and Jewish immigration, and for the establishment of an independent Palestinian-Arab state. Ultimately, the policy of moderate Arab statesmen in 1918-1919 was silenced and halted, and the radical line of Feisal's opponents, the line of non-readiness to any agreement and any compromise, gathered strength until it took over entirely."

(13, **From Exile to Independence**, part a, 1990, p.204).

Other books in the general stream present the text of resolutions by the General Syrian Congress, which convened in Damascus in February 1919 with the participation of representatives from Eretz Yisrael.

"We hereby reject the Zionists' demands for the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in part of southern Syria known as Palestine, and we hereby oppose Jewish immigration to any part of the country. We do not admit that they have right of ownership and we hereby view their demands as a serious danger to our national, political and economic life.

We desire that there be no breakup of Syria and no separation of Palestine or of the coastal areas in western Lebanon in the homeland. We hereby demand that the unity of the country be maintained under any condition."

(227, **Zionism Tested in Action, 1914-1939**, 5744, 1984, p.65).

Another book, used in state-run and state religious schools, presents the text of another document in full:

"A Voice is Calling to the Arab People in Southern Syria (Palestine)

"The Jews are trying to separate Palestine from Syria and the rest of the Arab countries, in order to become the rulers of this country.

Palestine is a natural part of Syria, there is nothing separating them; the residents of Syria are Arabs like us, their leaders are like our leaders and their interests are connected with ours. Uniting Palestine with Syria and the rest of the Arab states is the only way to happiness for the Arab nation and the Arab countries...

"There are only 60,000 Jews in our country and they have not even the slightest right to our land and have no connection with it. We, the Arabs, number more than a million people here, and therefore the land belongs to us.

Therefore, protect your country, your honor, your spirit and your property. Demand that Palestine and Syria be one, free, Arab state; and that foreigners have no influence in this country.

The Callers for Justice!"

(299, **The Jewish World in Recent Generations**, part a: 1870-1920, textbook for high school students, 1998, p.283).

Only one book, a history book used in the general education stream, contains a version according to which the Zionist stance also contributed to there being no chance for the agreement to be fulfilled:

"Although Feisal and Weizmann did reach an agreement, from the early 1920s it already became clear that there was no way to bring about its implementation. True, the Zionists declared their desire for cooperation with the Arabs, but in practice they acted to increase immigration and settlement in order to create a Jewish majority in all parts of the country. Although Feisal aspired to establish the 'Kingdom of Greater Syria,' that would include Syria, Eretz Yisrael and Transjordan, and to be the leader of the entire Arab nation, in practice he did not rule in Palestine (Eretz Yisrael) and in Syria. Control over the Palestinian population was in the hands of local families who did not see themselves as being connected to Feisal and his aspirations. Moreover, the Arabs viewed the Zionists as a foreign entity in the region, among other things because of the way of life of traditional Arab society."

(6, **The Twentieth Century – On the Verge of Tomorrow**, History for ninth grade, 1999, p.46).

## ***The King Abdullah-Golda Meir Meeting***

Another attempt at dialogue occurred shortly before the establishment of the state, at a meeting between Golda Meir and King Abdullah. A history book used in the ultra-Orthodox stream describes the event in the following way:

"About a week before the establishment of the state, Golda Meir met with King Abdullah of Transjordan. A similar meeting had already occurred in November. Then, the king came to the electric power station at Aram Naharayim. This time, the king refused to come to Jewish territory and therefore Golda Meir made the journey ... to Amman disguised as an Arab woman. The king received them in friendship, but he was depressed, troubled and sad.

He suggested that Eretz Yisrael remain undivided and that it be annexed to Transjordan. In the new state, autonomy would be assured for Jews in the areas where they lived. In parliament, Jews would hold 50% of the seats and would perhaps be included in the new state's government as well. When they rejected his proposal, he said: 'If that is the case, then there is no avoiding war.' He added: 'I am very sorry, it's a shame about the blood and the destruction. If you feel a need to meet with me in the midst of the battles, do not hesitate to come see me. I will always be glad to have such a meeting.'"

Immediately after the description of this meeting, which contains a certain positive tone vis-a-vis the Arab side, by the nature of the story about its readiness to hold a dialogue with the Jews, in the sentence after the king's remarks, the author writes: "Transjordan was only one of the five states that decided to invade Eretz Yisrael by coordinating their actions, in order to throw the Jews into the sea." In other words, there is a repetition of the stereotype that all the Arabs are interested in throwing the Jews into the sea, despite the fact that previously it was related that at least Transjordan was willing to accept autonomy for the Jews. The author ascribes different positions to the same Transjordan in two sentences.  
(20, **The History of Recent Generations**, vol. b, 1997, p.239).

## 23. Peace is a Dream

Several literature readers present poems and stories that express a yearning for peace. However, it is a peace that is perceived to be a wishful thinking, a dream, utopia. In all of the poems and stories the aspiration for peace stems, among other things, from a desire not to experience war any more. Peace is also taught as one of the basic values of Judaism.

### *Not Battle, Not Fire*

*Peace* / Tamar Adar

Peace – is a blessing,  
Peace – is a prayer,  
Peace – is a word that you will hear  
all the time, every day – every hour.  
Peace – is what is said when meeting  
both children and adults:  
Peace unto you and how are you,  
we were so happy to see you!  
Peace – is what is said when parting  
from friends,  
And if you want, you also add:  
See you soon!  
But peace, real peace  
is a wish, a dream.  
Peace is something we all seek  
Always peace, not battle, not fire.  
Therefore let us all wish:  
May there be peace over Israel!  
(204, **Way of Words**, B, 1993, p.107)

"In advance of Independence Day, the children warmly wished the country many blessings: May peace only come! May dad just return from army reserve duty! May our land be beautiful... Ruthie drew mountains, the mountains of the Heights, full of colorful flowers. 'When there is peace, they will not ride in the mountains in tanks and they will be full of flowers.' Yossi drew a long, winding road with a long convoy of cars traveling on it. 'When there is peace, the fathers will not go away to do reserve duty and they will be able to go on trips with their children every Saturday.'" (216, **Alfoni**, second grade reader, 1979, p.134)

A poem in a reader for second grade in the state religious stream:

*Blue and white* / Yisrael Rashel

like a song, like a dream.  
Blue and white  
A hope for peace."  
(176, **Open the Gate**, 1990, p.182; 186, **Strings**, for fourth grade, 1993, p.113)

*Box of Crayons* / Tali Shorek

I had a box of crayons –  
bright, pleasant and nice.  
I had a box of crayons  
both cold and hot.

I did not have the red of the wounded's blood.  
I did not have the black of orphans' mourning.  
I did not have the white of the dead's faces.  
I did not have the yellow of burning sands.

I had the orange of the joy of life.  
I had the green of blooming and blossoming.  
I had the light blue of clear skies.  
I had the pink of a dream and rest.  
I sat and I drew Peace.  
(186, **Strings**, 1993, p.107)

*I Had a Dream of Peace* / Eli Netzer

A green field, a wood and a house,  
A white dove and an olive branch,  
And the sun shining in the middle of the day –  
I dreamt a dream of peace.

A young soldier and a shepherd with a flock,  
And no enemy lying in wait for them,  
And a bird singing on an oak tree –  
I dreamt a dream of peace.

A fellah sowing seeds in a furrow,  
A young woman and young man walking on a path,  
Summer and a vine, a fig and a pomegranate –  
I dreamt a dream of peace.

A beautiful melody playing in my ear,  
I dreamt a dream and I am dreaming still.  
Perhaps in another year, perhaps in another day,  
The dream will come true?  
(26, **New Israel Readers**, for third grade, 1986, pp. 214-215)

*May There Be No More Wars* / Liora Varon

At night, after Mother turned out the light,  
I asked that be no more war.  
That Father will not go to the army,  
And Mother will not be sad.

At night, after Mother turned out the light,  
I told God,  
That Aisha and I are friends,  
And I very much like the cakes,  
That her mother bakes.  
(141, **Way of Words**, Book A, 1992, p.134)

*A poem / Dalia Weinstein*

I would like, and only to you do I say this,  
To be a girl in another land.  
In a country where there is no news,  
about people killed and about wars;  
In a country which has no army and soldiers,  
and where people are not afraid and don't worry;  
In a land where peace is constant,  
And you can go on a trip everywhere;  
... And I am not conceding the state,  
I just want this country to be another land.  
(194, **Way of Words**, Book D, 1996, p.159)

*Dove With An Olive Branch / Talma Eliagon-Rose*

I have a picture at home  
Of a dove with an olive branch.  
Above it – the sun  
At its feet – the ravages of war  
The dove of peace  
Drawn by an artist's hand  
A perfect picture,  
Dreams in a frame.

Dove with an olive branch –  
Come out of the picture,  
Restore the faith  
That peace will follow in your wake.  
(194, **Way of Words**, Book D, 1996, p.162)

A fourth grade reader for state-run schools tells of a friendship between the members of a kibbutz and an Arab from the village of Dar al-Kassem, Abu Salah. At each meeting between them, Abu Salah would say, "War is no good." When the United Nations passed the partition resolution, the kibbutz members were prohibited from visiting the village and Abu Salah also stopped visiting the kibbutz. They said that he was at a funeral of a kibbutz member who had been shot to death by Arabs. When the village was captured, they found it empty and an old woman told them that the "gangs" (the nickname for the Arab gangs) told the residents to leave the village, fearing revenge by the Jews. "Only the flowering almond trees waved their white

arms on both sides, like white flags of peace. And Abu Salah's words echoed in our ears: War is no good." (194, **Way of Words**, Book D, 1996, pp.75-77)

### ***Fighting Without Hate***

There is special meaning to the words of Raya Harnik, the mother of the Golani Reconnaissance Unit commander, Goni, who fell in the battle for Beaufort Castle in Lebanon in June 1982, which are presented in a reader for the state-run schools:

"Why was Goni killed, my beautiful boy?  
Because he loved his country,  
And he loved his friends,  
And he thought that he was responsible for those under his command.

He was not killed because he hated Arabs,  
And he was not killed because he wanted to be a hero.  
He was killed because of the love for this beautiful country in which he hiked as a boy  
and a young man,  
And for the army, which he thought the best of all.  
And for the reconnaissance unit and its soldiers, in whom he believed.

It is a sad ending to a true story.  
It is a sad ending for Goni and for me,  
But not for you, children.  
Goni wanted you to live in peace and tranquillity,  
That you should grow up in joy, just as he did,  
That you should go to kindergarten and school  
And hike in the country and love it.

And that there should be peace for you and for all Israel.

And if there is peace and there will be no more wars,  
Then Goni's story will be like a legend.  
Something people remember – like a dream, like a poem.  
(194, **Way of Words**, book d, 1996, p.146)

### ***A Prayer for Peace***

A language book for 3-4 grades in the state-run stream includes the prayer for peace by Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav:

*Prayer for Peace* / Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav

"May it be Your will O Lord our God and God of our Fathers, to banish wars and bloodshed from the world, and to establish great and wonderful peace in the world  
And nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.  
All the inhabitants of the earth will know the real truth, that we did not come into this

world to argue and quarrel, Heaven forbid, and not for hatred and jealousy and taunting and bloodshed, Heaven forbid. We came into the world only to know You, Blessed One, forever."

the students are asked to perform one of the following three activities:  
Tasks for selection (work in groups):

Compose a prayer for peace; Prepare a folder of peace songs;  
Draw a picture of peace.  
(42, **I Understand** – Reading Comprehension, 1995, p.9).

### ***“This Picture Speaks”***

The same book contains a picture of the late Yitzhak Rabin, the late King Hussein of Jordan and U.S President Clinton at the signing ceremony of the peace agreement with Jordan. "This picture 'speaks.' What is it saying? Write in your notebooks anything you want regarding this picture. Emphasize the words related to this picture: bloodshed, peace, help, war, cooperation, pleasantness, reconciliation, joy, conflict, anger, revenge, argument, love, admiration, hatred, disturbance, pain."  
(42, **I Understand**, 1995, p.8).



A fourth grade reader used in the state-run schools emphasizes a selection from the Declaration of Independence in which the State of Israel calls for peace: "We extend our hand in peace and good neighborly relations to all the neighboring states and their peoples, and call on them to engage in cooperation and mutual assistance with the independent Hebrew people in its land." The same book also quotes the statements by Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Rabin when they received the Nobel Prize for Peace.  
(48, **Windows**, fourth grade reader, 1996, pp.9, 12)

A reader used in the state religious stream tells about Yitzhak Rabin and his actions on the subject of peace with Jordan and with the Palestinians, and his murder because of his striving for peace.

"Yitzhak Rabin was twice elected Prime Minister of Israel. After experiencing six wars during his lifetime, he decided to lead the State of Israel toward peace with the Palestinians. Yitzhak Rabin signed an agreement with the Palestinians, the objective of which is to achieve peace between them and us. He shook hands with Yasser

Arafat in front of the entire world. A year later, he signed a peace agreement with the country of Jordan. Not everyone in Israel agreed with the path to peace chosen by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. On Saturday night, 12 Heshvan 5755 (5.11.1995), Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin participated in a peace rally in Tel Aviv and gave a speech from the stage. The atmosphere at the rally was festive, the crowd expressed its love for Yitzhak Rabin. The murderer, who opposed Rabin's political path, waited next to the Prime Minister's car. When Yitzhak Rabin parted from the crowd, the murderer shot and killed him.

After the selection, there is a picture with Rabin and King Hussein at the signing ceremony of the peace treaty between Israel and Jordan. (312, **The Language of Lines**, 1999, p.154)

A reader used in the state-run stream for sixth grade brings a selection from Yitzhak Rabin's speech at the Nobel Prize for Peace award ceremony. Next to his picture is written: "During his last term in office, he began the peace process with the Arab world. He signed the peace treaty with Jordan and the phases of reconciliation with the Palestinians. He was murdered in November 1995 by a Jewish assassin who wanted to prevent the continuation of the peace process. (309, **The Way of Words 4**, 1996, p.170).

## 24. The Peace Agreements and Israel's Borders

“The end of the Gulf War created good conditions for opening peace talks between Israel and its neighbors. The Syrians and the Palestinians, who abandoned hope of defeating Israel on the battlefield, turned to the negotiating table. The Palestinian intifada in the territories added to the pressure on Israel to consider the path of negotiation and peace. The process, which is still underway, was undoubtedly made possible as a result of the shifting of international relations and the collapse of the Soviet Union and the communist bloc. Under the Americans’ guidance and with the formal consent of the Russians, the Madrid Conference opened and after it, attempts to attain comprehensive peace in the Middle East continued. In 1993, Israel recognized the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as the representative of the Palestinian people.”

Next to this text is a photograph of Rabin, Clinton and Arafat.

(36, **The Twentieth Century – The Century that Overturned World Orders**, 1994, p.255)

A 1994 geography textbook for high schools in the state-run stream states:

“On September 13, 1993, an agreement was signed between the State of Israel and the PLO, the organization that represents Palestinians, and this agreement began a process in which autonomy would be given to Palestinian residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza. It is a complex process, requiring a lot of patience on both sides, in an effort to achieve a future of peace.”

(163, **The Central Mountain and Jerusalem**, 1994, p. 12)

A reader used in religious schools cites the principles of the Oslo I and Oslo II agreements – an important step, given the fact that other readers overlook the agreements and do not provide the information on them – while expressing reservations about them and doubts as to whether they will be implemented.

### “From the Press

“The incident burst forth suddenly and stunned Israel’s residents. It turned out that in Oslo, the chilly Norwegian capital, two teams, one headed by Abu Mazen, Arafat’s deputy, and another Israeli one, had been meeting. The teams signed an agreement of mutual recognition and a political agreement. The Oslo agreement did not determine any specific details. It was a general agreement that included only the principles of mutual recognition. The PLO was recognized as the legitimate leadership of the Palestinians. It was also determined that the PLO undertook to cancel the section of the Palestinian National Charter calling for the destruction of the State of Israel, something which in effect has still not been carried out to date (Kislev 5760, November 1999). The Oslo agreement was signed in 1993 and in it, Israel and the Palestinians recognized each other. Only in May 1994 was the Gaza-Jericho agreement signed. Under the terms of that agreement, the Palestinians were given complete autonomy in the Gaza Strip. In 1995, Israel and the Palestinian Authority began discussing the specific details, that were derived from the Oslo accords. The talks took place in Taba and were called the Oslo II agreements. To date (Kislev 5760, November 1999), Israel has handed over territories to the Palestinian Authority. There is still no discussion of a permanent status agreement. Prime Minister Barak of Israel

traveled to Oslo, but there is still a stalemate in the negotiations. Attacks by Palestinian terrorists have not yet stopped. At the end of the process, informed sources say, a Palestinian state will be established. To us it is clear that ‘the minds of ministers and advisers are in the hands of God.’ And we believe that ‘the Guardian of Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.’”

(370, **Europe Without Borders**, pp.63-64)

### ***“A Very Cold Peace”***

A textbook used in the ultra-orthodox education stream emphasizes negative actions by the Arabs, who are making the peace “a very cold peace.”

“After the 1973 Yom Kippur War, with the encouragement of the United States, peace talks began between Israel and Egypt. Egypt was the first country to sign a peace treaty with Israel. Following the signing of the peace treaty, Israel withdrew from the Sinai peninsula. The Jewish settlements there were forcibly evacuated. The peace with Egypt is a very cold peace! Thank God, there are no wars as there were in the past, there is no bloodshed, an Israeli embassy operates in Egypt and there is an Egyptian embassy in Tel Aviv, but occasionally there are killings perpetrated by lone soldiers. Israeli vacationers were murdered at Ras Burka, Israeli tourists were killed on a bus traveling to Cairo and Israeli ambassadors were assassinated. In reaction to the Lebanon war, the Egyptian ambassador to Israel left the country for four years. Egypt is also demanding that Israel give in to the Palestinians’ demands. In short, a very, very cold peace!”

(364, **The Middle East**, 1998, pp.50-51)

A third grade Hebrew textbook features a photograph of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, U.S. President, Jimmy Carter, and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat with a caption underneath listing their names and positions followed by “they signed a peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. It happened in 1979, that is \_\_\_\_\_ years ago.”

(42, **I Understand – Reading Comprehension**, 1995, p.184)

### ***The Results of the Wars Regarding Borders***

A geography textbook used in the state-run education stream factually describes the results of the Six Day War and the Yom Kippur War regarding borders:

“This war did not lead to a change in the southern border, but there were minor adjustments in the Golan Heights and the new border on the Golan was referred to as the 1994 Disengagement of Forces Line (the Purple Line).

Under the terms of the peace agreement with Egypt (March 1979), the State of Israel returned the Sinai peninsula to Egypt and the international border, running between the two countries from Rafiah in the north to Taba in the south (the Red Line) was approved.

In December 1981, the Golan Heights were annexed to the State of Israel. Israeli law applies to the annexed territories and their residents. The area of the State of Israel

within the borders described is 21,946 square kilometers. The areas of Judea, Samaria and Gaza have the status of held territories and they were not annexed to the State of Israel.

... 5. Explain the difference between the terms Eretz Yisrael and the State of Israel.

Of the areas that came under Israeli control during the Six Day War, the eastern part of Jerusalem was annexed to Israel in 1967 and the Golan Heights was annexed to Israel in 1981. Israeli law was applied to the annexed areas. These areas were annexed with their Arab residents and they were given the option of becoming Israeli citizens ... The term 'Judea and Samaria' was used to refer to a political-administrative area of the territories, captured by the State of Israel during the Six Day War. The Kingdom of Jordan defined these areas as the 'West Bank,' i.e., areas located on the west bank of the Jordan River that were under its control. These areas include the geographical units of the western half of the lower Jordan Valley. After the Six Day War, these territories were under Israeli military rule and today they are under Israeli civil administration. In 1990, there were 916,000 people living in Judea and Samaria." (71, **Man and Environment – Chapters in the History of Eretz Yisrael**, 1999, pp. 13, 14, 74)

### ***The Green Line is not a Natural Line***

A geography textbook for high schools and teachers' seminaries lists the area of countries adjacent to Israel, as well as the area of Israel and the territories it holds.

"Israel – 21,946 square kilometers; the Gaza Strip – 363 square kilometers; Judea and Samaria – 5,878 square kilometers."

The same book notes that "the Green Line is not a natural geographic line and there has never been an undefined border like it in Israel's history." (220, **Geography of Israel**, 1995, pp.24, 313)

"The border between Syria and us is disputed. From the establishment of the State of Israel until the Six Day War (1967), the Golan and the Hermon were part of Syria's territory. During those years, the quiet along the border was frequently violated – the many Israeli communities located in the low valleys to the west of the Golan suffered terribly from numerous shelling incidents and terrorists' attempts to infiltrate across the border. Following the Six Day War, the Golan and the Hermon moved to the control of the State of Israel and the border line moved eastward.

Some of Israel's borders with its neighbors are still disputed, and only the border between Israel and Egypt has been agreed on in an agreement that was signed in 1980. These facts affect day-to-day life along Israel's border." Further on two passages are presented – one describing the difficulty of life in communities along disputed borders (with Lebanon, Syria and Jordan) and the other describing life at the Taba border crossing – and the student is asked to note the differences in the atmosphere and in the feelings of the people living in those places.

(164, **The Southern and Northern Coastal Plain**, 1992, pp.50, 65)

## 25. The Negotiations Between Israel and the Palestinians

Various books present the Israeli and Palestinian positions in different ways. Some books differentiate between the range of opinions among the Palestinian public and some also criticize the official position of the Israeli government. This topic has special meaning, as the negotiations are currently taking place and the Israeli public is divided over the question whether Israel should give back territory in the West Bank.

A geography textbook used in the state-run schools describes the dispute over the border with Jordan. Israel's maximalist position, which seeks to annex all of the area of Judea and Samaria to Israel, is presented as the position of some Israelis. The Palestinian maximalist position, that demands all of the western part of Eretz Yisrael, is presented as the position "of the Palestinians who represent a majority of the population of Jordan."

"Jordan feels Israel's proximity, for better or for worse, more than any other country in the Middle East. The border between these two countries is very long and both have claims regarding the West Bank and Jerusalem. Among Israelis, there are some who believe in the Promised Land, in the Greater Land of Israel, the one where 'the Jordan River passes through its center,' and they consider Jordan to be part of Israel. In contrast to them, the Palestinians (who represent a majority of Jordan's population) see the western part of Eretz Yisrael as part of their homeland and strive to return to it." (16, **Changes in the Geography of the Middle East**, 1992, p.216).

In contrast to the above, a geography book that includes historical analysis presents the Palestinian position in a totally different way, i.e., as a position that is willing to compromise and reach agreement on dividing Eretz Yisrael between two states. "In recent years, discussions have been underway between Israel and Arab residents of Judea and Samaria, and agreement was even reached on administrative autonomy for the residents of these areas. They themselves are seeking to establish in these territories an Arab state **alongside** the State of Israel."

(71, **Man and Environment – Geography of Eretz Yisrael**, 1999, p.74)

A 1994 geography book depicts the *intifada* (the uprising of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip in the years 1988-1993) as an expression of the Palestinians' desire for national independence:

"The Palestinians' desire for national independence gave birth to a prolonged struggle that was expressed in the 'intifada'. This struggle entailed terrorist actions on the one hand and reactions by the State of Israel on the other; there were numerous casualties on both sides."

(163, **The Mediterranean Coastal Plain and Jerusalem**, 1994, p.37)

A geography book that contains economic and historical analyses differentiates between the varying positions within the Palestinian public – a compromise position and a maximalist position:

“Most of the Arab population of Judea and Samaria supports the PLO, whose goal is to establish a Palestinian state there. The rest support Hamas, a violent religious extremist organization that seeks to establish a Muslim state in the entire area of Eretz Yisrael.”

(220, **Geography of Eretz Yisrael – Physical, Economic, Communal, Regional**, 1996, p.318)

One book criticizes the Israeli position that did not recognize the Palestinians as a people. It is the only one that uses the phrase “rule of occupation” in reference to Israel’s control of the territories:

“The government viewed most of the territories as a bargaining chip for peace negotiations, but the Arabs refused to enter into such negotiations because of the bitter defeat they had experienced. The principle of ‘territories for peace’ would eventually serve as a basis for an arrangement between Israel and part of the Arab world only in the 1990s ... Along with territories that were captured, Israel received more than two million Arab residents from the west bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip. They lived under the rule of occupation, and the State of Israel refused to view them as a national entity or a people. The Palestinian Arabs established political organizations such as the ‘Palestine Liberation Organization’ (PLO) and other organizations to fight and oppose the occupation and the State of Israel. These organizations carried out terrorist actions against Israel and against Israeli targets inside Israel and abroad.”

(6, **The Twentieth Century – On the Verge of Tomorrow**, 1999, p.162)

A geography book used in the ultra-orthodox stream considers the question of borders according to what is written in Jewish sources:

“Did you know that the Dead Sea is mentioned many times in the Torah as the eastern border of Eretz Yisrael, such as: ‘And the border shall go down to the Jordan and its limits shall be at the Dead Sea’? (Numbers, 34:12). Did you know that there is a debate whether Eilat is included in the borders of the land or is, from a halachic perspective, considered outside the land?”

(358, **The Negev – The High Ground**, 1997, pp.44, 45)

Another book used in the ultra-orthodox stream states:

“The Euphrates River was designated by the Creator as one of the borders of the country, in accordance with the promise in the Torah, the eastern border of Eretz Yisrael.”

(361, **Geography, 5**, 1989, p. 60)

## 26. The Peace Agreements and Water

Water, and the problems that have caused bitterness between Israel and its neighbors on this subject, is a central issue in the Arab-Israeli conflict. There is no intention here to enter into detail regarding the substance of the problems and the proposals for arrangements. Rather, this chapter seeks to examine to what extent the books' authors place the blame for non-resolution of the problems on the Arabs' rejection, or whether they present both sides' positions without determining which of them prevented arrangements from being achieved between Israel, Jordan and Syria. In most of the books, the dispute on this subject is presented in a factual way without blaming the Arabs for non-solution of the problem.

### *A Plan That Failed*

A geography textbook that also includes historical analysis presents the positions of both sides in a substantive and objective manner:

"The difficulties are connected with the long-standing conflict between the State of Israel and its neighbors. Since the establishment of the State, there have been struggles between Israel and its neighbors over the question of water sources, as well as attempts to reach arrangements. One example of this is the Johnston Plan. In 1953, the president of the United States appointed Eric Johnston as Special Ambassador for Water Affairs in the Middle East. In 1955, after consulting with experts, he submitted a regional plan for resolving the problem of water between Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Most of his proposals were not implemented, because there was no agreement on them between the countries." (69, **The Southern and Northern Mediterranean Coastal Plain, and Northern Israel**, 1992, p.38).

A geography book used in the Ultra-Orthodox stream begins by first presenting the problem in a general manner:

"The problem of water is one that also faces Israel's neighbors, and without water the wilderness will not bloom, agriculture will not develop, life will not come forth. This explains the willingness of Israel and its neighbors to fight each other for water."

Further in the book, the author places the responsibility for the conflicts over the water issue on the Arabs:

"The act of drilling was accompanied by struggles between Israel and the Arab countries. The Arabs planned to divert the sources of the Jordan River, in order to paralyze the entire water system in Israel. In their plan, the Arabs sought to divert the upper portion of the Hasbani River, which emanates in Lebanon, to the Litani channel, through a tunnel and additional canal – in order to divert the Baniyas springs. The Arabs began their diversion plan, the Israelis began digging the outlines of the National Water Carrier, and the works were accompanied by many border incidents. The Six-Day War in 5727 (June 1967) and Israel's capture of the Golan Heights finally prevented the plan from being put into action." (363, **On the Platforms of the Country – Northern Israel**, 1995, pp.29, 33).

## *A Potential for Dialogue*

A geography book used in the state-run and state religious streams points out the potential for dialogue between the countries of the region if there is cooperation between them on the water issue:

"This subject touches Israel both directly and indirectly. The deepening of the conflict over utilizing the waters of the Yarmuk River affects Israel directly. A conflict over the waters of the Nile or the Tigris also relates to Israel and its security, even if not directly. Along with the risks there is also a great deal of potential for regional cooperation and dialogue. If such a situation is created, Israel's experience in water use, irrigation and water recycling could help it forge a link with its neighbors." (16, **Changes in Middle East Geography**, 1992, p.314).

In a book used in the general stream, the potential for peace and cooperation between the peoples of the region is again emphasized:

### "If There Were Peace

"A peace agreement between us and our neighbors would enable the countries of the region to reach broad cooperation in many spheres – and as a result we would be able to utilize the water sources and their landscapes efficiently.

Israel could, for example, implement a program in cooperation with Jordan for exploiting the winter flood waters of the Yarmuk: in winter, water from the Yarmuk would flow through a special canal to Lake Kinneret – and be stored in it, and in summer some of the water would flow back to Jordan. Such a plan would enable both countries to gain additional amounts of water.

- It would be possible to set up a power station for generating electricity on a tributary of one of the rivers that 'crosses borders'. Such a station could exploit the power contained in the flow of water in order to generate electricity and supply it to the countries located near it.
- And it would also be possible to build tourism and vacation sites near the water, where residents of the region's countries and tourists from distant lands could visit."

### "Exercise 25 – Dream of Peace

"Write a poem or composition, or make a drawing, that expresses the connection between water and peace in our region."

(69, **The Southern and Northern Mediterranean Coastal Plain, and Northern Israel**, 1992, p.107).

## 27. Continued Hostility in the Era of Peace

Previous chapters discussed the Arabs' positions throughout the Arab-Israeli conflict from its inception, on the subject of lands, Jewish immigration to Israel, etc. The common thread in these chapters was that the reasons for the Arabs' opposition to Zionism stemmed from rational reasons – objection to losing the status of majority, loss of their claim to have exclusive ownership of the whole territory, etc. However, there are books that present the Arabs' hatred as stemming from the very difference between Jews and Arabs, an inherent hatred that is independent of political, military or economic circumstances.

### *The Citizens Are Hostile*

There are those who present hatred for Israel as a given that cannot be changed, and without explaining the reasons behind it. According to this explanation, the hostility is popular. The following appears in a geography book in the Ultra-Orthodox stream: "Much to our regret, the Arab states are hostile to Israel, and they pressure friendly countries to act against Israel ... A peace treaty was signed with Egypt, and even with Jordan, but the citizens of those 'friendly' countries are hostile to Israel". (364, **The Near East**, pp.30, 39).

Another book in the Ultra-Orthodox stream includes a passage in the same vein: "Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt are Arab, Muslim states (Lebanon is partially Christian), and hostile relations exist between them and Israel. Although there has been a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt for more than 20 years, and though a peace treaty was also signed between Israel and Jordan, one can feel that these are countries in which enemies live". (313, **The High Ground – Northern Israel**, 1995, p.4).

A reader for Ultra-Orthodox schools contains the following:

There is a story about a father, an IDF (Israel Defense Forces) reservist, who goes to war. "'War?' I wondered, 'What happened?' 'The Arabs want to fight us and take over our country,' Yitzhak explained. Dad left to guard our state. The Arabs want to take our state away from us, but Dad and the soldiers will protect us and drive them away!"

(142, **Open the Gate**, third grade reader, 1991, p.136).

### *To Destroy the Jewish State*

"After cease-fire agreements were signed with Arab countries, for a while the hope existed that these agreements, which by their nature were temporary, would be replaced by permanent peace accords and that good neighborly relations would develop between the countries of the region. However, it was the young state's lot to fight an ongoing struggle over its very existence, when around it were hostile states that constantly declared that their goal was to destroy the 'Jewish State.'"

Thus was shown God's personal supervision not only in war, but throughout all the years of the state's existence, which form a single, wonderful chain of an overt miracle ... During the 20 years of its existence, the State of Israel has gone through three large wars. The most difficult war was during the time of the founding of the State. It was a time of difficult, terrible birth pangs, and in the battles of the 1948 war 6,000 Jews fell: one of every 100 Jews who then lived in the country. At the end of the war, the Arab countries signed cease-fire agreements, but they were unwilling to enter into peace negotiations. They even refused to recognize the State of Israel's right to exist, and they constantly declared their desire to conquer the country and expel the Jews from it.

... In the month of Iyar 5727 (June 1967), the situation came to a head: the Egyptians, Jordanians, Iraqis and Syrians formed a military alliance and prepared for a war of destruction against Israel. In the three weeks that preceded the Six Day War, when all of our enemies rose up against us, and joined together around us to say: 'Let us go and wipe them out as a nation and the name of Israel will be remembered no more,' we cried out to the God of our fathers and asked He who saved us in every generation to save us. We cried out – and were answered”.

(20, **The History of Recent Generations**, Volume B: From the First World War to the Six Day War, 1997, pp.284, 303, 304).

### ***Continuation of the Nazis***

In the same book, Egypt is presented as a direct continuation of Nazi Germany:

"The Egyptian border was quiet during this period. However, during all the years between the Sinai Campaign (the war with Egypt in the Sinai Desert in 1956) and the Six-Day War (in 1967), the Egyptian dictator, Nasser, did not sit by idly. He worked hard to build a large army and equipped it with modern and sophisticated weapons – and waited for the right time to come. He was helped by Nazi scientists and technicians, who did not manage to get along in the new Germany and imagined in their accursed souls that here they could complete the work begun by the Nazi beast: to fight a war of destruction against the Jewish people! The Nazi remnants arrived in Egypt by the thousands, and worked mainly in the missile industry. At the time, it appeared that Israel's situation was like that of Czechoslovakia before the Second World War, except for the fact that the Nazis only wanted to conquer that piece of territory, while the Egyptians wanted to destroy all the Jewish residents of the country ... The power of hatred for Israel is great, it breaks down barriers and unites enemies. And the two rulers, Hussein and Nasser met ... and an agreement was signed between them ... a terrible Holocaust was expected for our people from Egypt. The Egyptian dictator, Nasser, constantly declared his desire to destroy the Jewish Yishuv in Israel, and fanned the flames of hatred among the residents of his country by speeches and publications that were reminiscent of the Nazis' incitement against the Jews before the Second World War. As was said, Nasser was aided by the Germans and the Russians. They supplied him with the most modern weaponry and in huge quantities."

(20, **The History of Recent Generations**, Volume B, 1997, pp.305, 307, 311).

This view regarding the Arab world's irrational hatred toward Israel is not limited only to books in the Ultra-Orthodox stream. After describing Israel-Egypt relations, the wars and peace, a geography book used in state-run schools states the following:

"At the same time, Egypt is part of the Arab and Muslim world, a world hostile to Israel, most of which refuses to accept it. Therefore, the concern exists among us that Egypt could perhaps suddenly turn its back on us and return to the era of confrontations and wars. In order to be prepared for any situation, we must know the geographic, economic and political processes taking place in Egypt, and clarify for ourselves what significance these changes hold for the future of relations between Israel and Egypt."

(16, **Changes in the Geography of the Middle East**, 1992, p.124).

### ***A Foreign Implant***

In the same book, the Arabs' hatred of Israel is explained by the fact that Israel is a "foreign implant," since there are national, cultural and religious differences between Jews and Arabs. "The Arab world constantly emphasizes that Israel is present in the Middle East as a foreign implant, from both a linguistic and cultural standpoint, and from a national standpoint. Their argument is that around the State of Israel resides the Arab people, whose language and culture is Arabic, while in Israel there is a Jewish nation whose language is Hebrew and whose culture is Western."

(16, **Changes in the Geography of the Middle East**, 1992, p.19).

A textbook used in the Ultra-Orthodox sector gives a religious reason for the Arabs' hatred:

#### "An Ongoing Conflict

"Halacha – it is known that Esau hates Jacob

"The Arab countries feast their eyes on Israel's territory, arguing that Jewish Israel is a foreign implant in the very heart of Arab states. The Palestinian Charter states that a holy war – a jihad – must be undertaken to liberate Israel-Palestine from the Jews. Not only the countries bordering on Israel act against it, but the rest of the Arab countries as well." (364, **The Near East**, p.39).

#### "Hatred as a Tool

"A history book used in the state-run stream gives a functional explanation for the hatred: "The rulers of Arab countries used hatred of Israel as a way to bring their people together and unite them against a common enemy."

(6, **The Twentieth Century - On the Verge of Tomorrow**, history for ninth grade, 1999, p.158).