

Israel and Jews in the Palestinian Authority (PA) Schoolbooks: De-legitimization, Demonization, and Advocacy of Violent Struggle, Jihad, Martyrdom and the "Right of Return", instead of Peace

By

Dr. Arnon Groiss

(June 2016)

Introduction

Between the years 2000-2006 the PA introduced a new curriculum to be taught in all schools in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as in schools in East Jerusalem. Over 250 books for grades 1-12 in various subjects were published within a project partly financed by European countries. The books are continuously reprinted with some changes, but the fundamentals regarding Israel and the Jews have not been altered: de-legitimization of the very presence in the country of both Israel and the Jews, demonization of Israel and the Jews, non-advocacy of a peaceful solution to the conflict and, instead, emphasis on a violent struggle for the liberation of Palestine without limiting it to the areas of the West Bank and Gaza. Jihad, martyrdom and the perceived "Right of Return" are part and parcel of that violent struggle.

Following are examples taken from the newest versions available that were mostly published in 2014 and 2015.

De-legitimization

1. Jews have no right in Palestine, only "greedy ambitions" as Zionists:

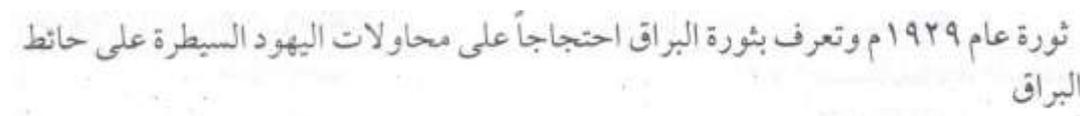
"The Zionist colonialist greedy ambitions [*atmaa*] in Palestine started in 1882"



(*National Education*, Grade 7 (2013) p. 20)

2. Jewish holy places in the country, such as the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron and Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem, are all presented as Muslim holy places usurped by the Jews:

"The 1929 [Arab] revolt [in Palestine against the British authorities]... is known as 'Al-Buraq Revolt' in protest against the Jews' efforts to take hold of the Al-Buraq Wall [the Wailing Wall]."



(*National Education*, Grade 7 (2013), p. 21)

"The effort to Judaize some of the Muslim religious places such as the Ibrahimi Mosque [the Cave of the Patriarchs] and the Mosque of Bilal bin Rabbah [Rachel's Tomb] (Bethlehem)."

محاولة تهويد بعض الأماكن الدينية الإسلامية مثل المسجد الإبراهيمي
ومسجد بلال بن رباح (قرب بيت لحم).

(National Education, Grade 7 (2013) p. 55)

3. Israel's establishment in 1948 by virtue of the 1947 UN Partition Resolution is considered "occupation":

"The Israeli Occupation

The disaster of 1948 fell upon Palestinian society at the hands of the Zionist organizations as most of the Palestinians were forced to emigrate from their land and the State of Israel was established on part of Palestine..."

الاحتلال الإسرائيلي :
حلَّتْ بالمجتمع الفلسطيني نكبة عام ١٩٤٨ م على يد المُنظَّمات
الصُّهيونية ، حيث هُجِّرَ معظم الفلسطينيين من أرضهم ، وأنشئت دولة
اسرائيل في قسم من فلسطين ، وضمَّت الضفة الغربية إلى الأردن

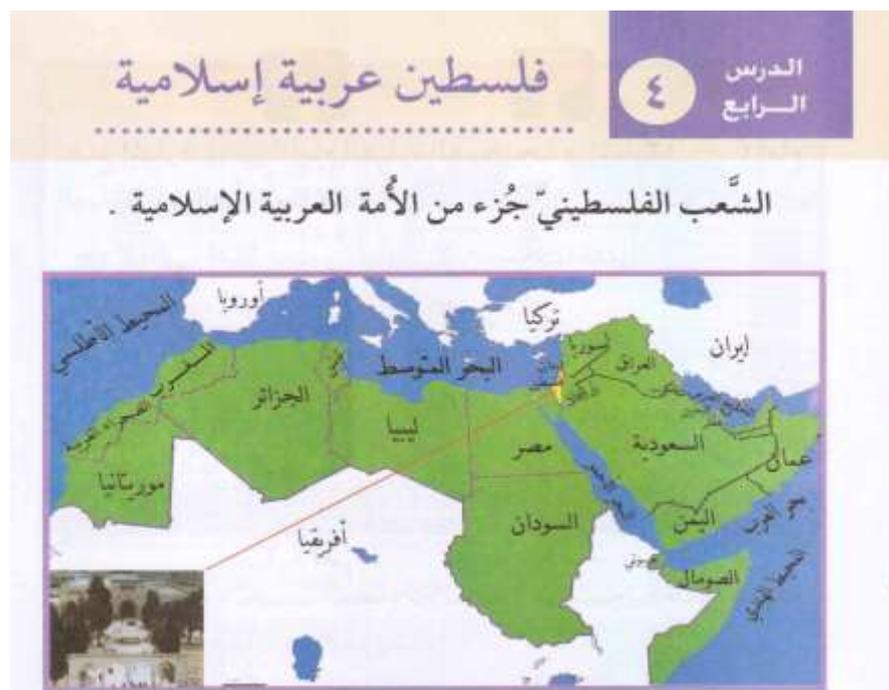
(National Education, Grade 5 (2014) p. 30)

4. The country in its entirety is "Arab and Muslim", as shown on the map:

"Lesson Four: Palestine is Arab and Muslim"

"The Palestinian people is part of the Arab-Muslim nation"

[The inscription next to the country says:] *"Palestine"*



(National Education, Grade 2, Part 1 (2015) p. 16)

Another example in which Israel is made part of a Palestinian entity is taken from a mathematics book:

"13. The independence of the State of Palestine was proclaimed in the year 1988 [in Algiers]. How many years have passed since the proclamation of independence?"

The answer:"

١٣ أعلن استقلال دولة فلسطين عام ١٩٨٨ م . كم سنة مضت منذ إعلان
الاستقلال؟



الحل:

(Mathematics, Grade 3, Part 1 (2012) p. 80)

5. Palestine replaces Israel in the region in text as well:

"I learn

The land of the Levant [Bilad al-Sham in Arabic] was so named because it is located to the north of the honorable Ka'bah. The land of the Levant presently comprises the following states: Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria."

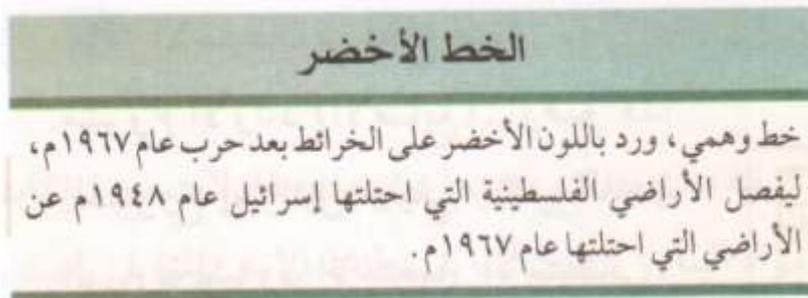


(History of the Ancient Civilizations, Grade 5 (2014) p. 27)

6. Israel's pre-1967 territory is an occupied territory much the same as the West Bank and Gaza:

"The Green Line

[It is an] imaginary line that appeared in green on the maps after the 1948 war in order to separate the Palestinian lands occupied by Israel in 1948 from the lands it occupied in 1967."



(*Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine*, Grade 11, Part 2 (2014) p. 51)

Note: This is the only page in the entire PA curriculum where the name "Israel" appears on two maps, but this very text that is placed between them annuls their significance.

7. Regions and places in pre-1967 Israel are described as Palestinian:

Language exercise: "Haifa and Gaza are two Palestinian [port cities]."

حَيْفَا وَغَزَّةٌ فِلَسْطِينِيَّانِ .

(*Our Beautiful Language*, Grade 5, Part 2 (2014) p. 90)

Note: Haifa is the main port city of pre-1967 Israel.

"Activity: Let us color the Negev desert on the map of Palestine."



(*National Education*, Grade 2, Part 2 (2015) p. 25)

Note: The Negev is an integral part of pre-1967 Israel.

8. Israel's 6-million Jews are not counted among the inhabitants of the country, while Israel's Arab citizens are (and note the use of the word "Interior" to avoid the phrase "Israeli territory". Other such interlocutions used are "the Lands of 48" and "the Green Line"):

"Activity 3

Let us examine the figures – the inhabitants of Palestine on 1.2.1999

		Percentage
1) The [West] Bank	1,972,000}	
2) [The] Gaza [Strip]	1,113,000}	36%
3) The Palestinians of the "Interior" [i.e., pre-67 Israel]	1,094,000	13%
4) The Palestinians of the Diaspora	4,419,000	51%
Total	8,598,000	100%"

نشاط ٣

نتفحص المعطيات الرقمية - سكان فلسطين في ١/٢/١٩٩٩ م

النسبة المئوية	
	١) الضفة ١,٩٧٢,٠٠٠
%٣٦	٢) غزة ١,١١٣,٠٠٠
%١٣	٣) فلسطينيو الداخل ١,٠٩٤,٠٠٠
%٥١	٤) فلسطينيو الشتات ٤,٤١٩,٠٠٠
%١٠٠	المجموع ٨,٥٩٨,٠٠٠

(National Education, Grade 6 (2014) p. 10)

9. The Jews' language is not recognized as a legitimate language in the country. A Hebrew inscription is erased from a British Mandate stamp reproduced in a PA schoolbook, thus falsifying an official historical document (please note the stamp's empty bottom-left corner):



(National Education, Grade 2, Part 1 (2015) p. 7)

And see the original stamp:



Demonization and De-Humanization of Jews and Israel

Even under conflict conditions, such as the case is between Israelis and Palestinians, certain human codes might prevail that would make the national narrative a bit milder. One such code, for example, is treating individuals of the adversary population as ordinary human beings. In fact, Israeli schoolbooks do that regarding Palestinian individuals, and even talk about friendship relations between individuals and families of both nations and of cases in which Arab individuals saved Jewish ones. This kind of description is non-existent in PA schoolbooks. Moreover, Jewish and Israeli individuals very hardly appear there. Most references to Jews and Israelis treat them as a group only, with the accompanying connotations of alienation and alarm.

Another such human code is providing the students with objective information about the adversary's history, culture, religion, population, political structure, economy, etc. that would balance to a certain degree its demonizing description. Such material is almost entirely missing from the PA schoolbooks, contrary to what one might find in their Israeli counterparts. Following are examples of demonization and de-humanization of Jews and Israel taken from the PA schoolbooks:

1. Attribution of genocidal intentions towards the Palestinians:

"The first group of Jewish settlers came to Palestine from Russia in 1882 and the second group was in 1905. The arrival of the Jewish throngs to Palestine continued until 1948 and their goal was taking over the Palestinian lands and then replacing the original inhabitants after their expulsion or extermination."

وصلت أولى دفعات المستوطنين اليهود من بلاد روسيا إلى فلسطين عام ١٨٨٢م والدفعة الثانية كانت عام ١٩٠٥م واستمر وصول الكتل البشرية اليهودية إلى فلسطين حتى عام ١٩٤٨م ، وكان هدفها الاستيلاء على الأراضي الفلسطينية ومن ثم تحل محل السكان الأصليين ، بعد طردهم أو إبادتهم ،

(National Education, Grade 7 (2013) p. 20)

2. Israeli soldiers intentionally kill Palestinian children:

A language exercise: "The Palestinian child stood facing the enemy's bullets like a brave soldier."

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

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

3. Israel aims at the destruction of Palestinian society:

"Killing of cities has become an ordinary thing during the occupation's time as it does whatever it can to dismantle every civilization-related infrastructure in our society."

أصبح قتل المُدنِ أمراً عادياً زمن الاحتلال، الذي يعمل كل ما في
وُسْعِهِ على تفكيك كل بنية حضارية في مجتمعنا.

(Reading and Texts, Grade 8, Part 1 (2015) p. 61)

4. Israel is responsible for family violence within the Palestinian society:

"4 - Some of the family violence problems stem from the occupation's practices and its destructive impact on our society. I will explain."

٤- بعض قضايا العنف الأسري تنبع من ممارسات الاحتلال وأثاره المدمرة على مجتمعنا،
أوضح.

(Civics, Grade 8 (2013) p. 55)

5. A poem demonizing and de-humanizing the Israeli/Jewish person:

"How would you respond if an alien person attacked your family -
Having been dazzled by his weapon he bared a **wolf's fang**

...

How would you respond if he claimed that the date palm grove
And the orange orchard and your Arab olive trees
And yourself, and your wife Salma, and your decent sons
Are war spoils and seized possessions..."

بماذا تُجيبُ
إذا ما تعدى على أهل بيتك
شخصٌ غريبٌ
وقد غرّه أنه ذو سلاحٍ
فكشّر عن نابٍ ذيبٍ

...

بماذا تجيبُ إذا ما ادَّعى
أَنَّ كَرَمَ النخيلِ ،
وبيارةَ البرتقالِ ،
وزيتونَكَ العربيَّ ،
وأنتَ .
وزوجَكَ (سلمى)
وأبناءكَ الطيبينَ ،
مكاسبُ حربٍ ،
ومُلْكُ يمينٍ .

(Reading and Texts, Grade 9, Part 2 (2014) pp. 51-53)

Note: Emphasis added

6. Jews/Israelis are described as invading snakes:

"By your life! How come that snakes invade us..."

لَعَمْرُكَ كَيْفَ تَغْزُونَا أَفَاعٍ
وَتَرْقُبُ ذِمَّةَ تَرَعَى عُهُودَا

(Arabic Language: Linguistic Studies, Grade 12 [Humanities & Sciences] (2015) p. 63)

7. Killing of Jews is presented as a precondition to the End of Days:

"The fight against the Jews and the victory over them: The Messenger [Muhammad] already announced [the good news of] the end of the Jews' oppression upon this Holy Land and the removal of their corruption and of their occupation thereof. [It is told] by Abu Hurayrah [one of Muhammad's Companions] that the Prophet said: The End of Days will not take place until the Muslims fight the Jews, and the Muslims will kill them to a point that a Jew will hide behind a rock or a tree, and then the rock or the tree will say: 'O Muslim, O God's servant, there is a Jew behind me, so come and kill him', except the salt bush, for it is one of the Jews' trees"

مقاتلة اليهود والانتصار عليهم: فقد بشر الرسول ﷺ بنهاية ظلم اليهود على هذه الأرض المقدسة، وإزالة فسادهم واحتلالهم لها؛ عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه **أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ: «لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى يَقَاتِلَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ الْيَهُودَ، فَيَقْتُلُهُمُ الْمُسْلِمُونَ، حَتَّى يَخْتَبِئَ الْيَهُودِيُّ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحَجَرِ أَوْ الشَّجَرِ، فَيَقُولُ الْحَجَرُ أَوْ الشَّجَرُ: يَا مُسْلِمُ، يَا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ، هَذَا يَهُودِيٌّ خَلْفِي فَتَعَالَ فَاقْتُلْهُ إِلَّا الْغُرَقَدَ، فَإِنَّهُ مِنْ شَجَرِ الْيَهُودِ»** ^(٢).

(Faith, Grade 11 [Shar'i stream] (2013) p. 94)

Violent Struggle, Jihad, Martyrdom and the Right of Return rather than Peace

A delegitimized and demonized adversary is not a real partner for peace.

Accordingly, no peaceful solution to the conflict is advocated in any of the PA schoolbooks, in sharp contrast to their Israeli counterparts. Instead, a violent struggle for liberation against occupation, which is never limited to the territories of the West Bank and Gaza alone, is promoted:

1. Violent struggle, rather than peace, is the means for the liberation of Palestine:

Assignment: "5. I will reconcile the following poetic lines with the feelings they express: 'A morning of glory and red liberty, watered by the martyrs' blood...' [Right column] - 'The hope for the liberation of Palestine.' [Left column]"

٥ أوِّقُ بَيْنَ الْأَسْطَرِ الشَّعْرِيَّةِ وَالْعَوَاطِفِ الَّتِي تَعَبَّرُ عَنْهَا فِيمَا يَأْتِي:

اللَّهُفَةُ عَلَى تَحْرِيرِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَى.	صَبَاحُ مَنَاضِلِكِ الصَّيْدِ فِي الْأَكْبَالِ فِي الْأَغْلَالِ.
التَّفَاوُلُ بِتَحْرِيرِ فِلَسْطِينَ.	صَبَاحُ الْمَسْكِ وَالْعَبِيرِ صَبَاحُ التَّيْنِ وَالزَّيْتُونِ وَاللِّيمُونِ وَالزَّرْعَرِ.
الْحِرْصُ عَلَى التَّنَسُّكِ بِأَرْضِ فِلَسْطِينَ وَالثَّبَاتِ فِيهَا.	تَنَادَيْتَنِي مَادُّهُ: غِيَابُكَ طَالَ وَتَهْتَفُ بِي: تَعَالَ تَعَالَ.
الإِعْجَابُ بِجَمَالِ الطَّبِيعَةِ فِي فِلَسْطِينَ.	صَبَاحُ الْعَاشِقِينَ تَرَاكُ، لَنْ يُلْقُوا بِغَيْرِ حِمَاكَ مَا ارْتَحَلُوا... عَصَا التَّرْحَالِ.
كِرَاهِيَةُ الْمُحْتَلِّ لِمَا يَعْانِيهِ الْمَنَاضِلُونَ فِي سَجُونِهِ.	صَبَاحُ الْمَجْدِ وَالْحُرِّيَةِ الْحَمْرَاءِ يَرُوبِيهَا دَمُ الشَّهْدَاءِ صَبَاحُكَ أَنْتَ يَا وَطَنِي بِسَمْسِكَ تَقْهَرُ الظُّلْمَاءَ.

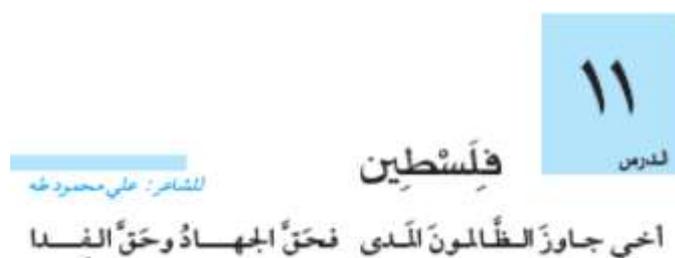
(Reading and Texts, Grade 9, Part 1 (2015) p. 12)

Note: Connecting line added (this connection is the only logical possibility)

This struggle is made more compelling by the use of the traditional Islamic concepts of *Jihad* and martyrdom [*Shahadah*] within its framework. Examples:

2. Jihad in Palestine (the first verse of a poem):

"Lesson 11: Palestine By the poet Ali Mahmud Taha
O brother, the oppressors have exceeded all bounds and Jihad and sacrifice are necessary..."



(Reading and Texts, Grade 8, Part 1 (2015) p. 44)

3. The "Martyr" poem (excerpts - including a verse directly inciting to martyrdom):

"The Martyr [Excerpts]

...
Hearing [weapons'] clash is pleasant to my ear
And the flow of blood gladdens my soul
As well as a body thrown upon the ground
Skirmished over by the desert predators

...
By your life! This is the death of men
And whoever asks for a noble death - this is it!"



(Our Beautiful Language, Grade 7, Part 1 (2014) p. 75)

Another poetical verse used as a language exercise portrays martyrdom as a wedding party:

"O my homeland, I would not cry in this wedding party
For our Arab character refuses that we cry over the martyrs"

يا وطني ما كنتُ لأبكي في هذا العرس
فعرّوبتنا تأتي أن نبكي الشهداء

(*Linguistic Studies*, Grade 8, Part 2 (2014) p. 60 and see the same verse again in:
Arabic Language: Linguistic Studies, Grade 12 [Humanities & Sciences] (2015) p. 8)

4. The violent character of the presumed return of millions of the perceived refugees into present-day Israel:

"We Are Returning

*Returning, returning, we are returning
Borders shall not exist, nor citadels and fortresses
Cry out, O those who have left:
We are returning
Returning to the homes, to the valleys, to the mountains
Under the flag of glory, Jihad and struggle
With blood, sacrifice, fraternity and loyalty
We are returning
Returning, O hills; returning, O heights
Returning to childhood; returning to youth
To Jihad in the hills, [to] harvest in the land*

إننا لعائدون

عائدون عائدون إننا لعائدون
فالحُدودُ لن تكونَ والقلاعُ والخُصُونُ
فاصْرُخُوا بِالنَّاحِيَةِ
إننا لعائدون
عائدون للديارِ للشُّهولِ للجبالِ
تحتَ أعلامِ الشُّجَارِ والجِهَادِ والتَّنْضالِ
بالدِّماءِ والبُغْداءِ والإخاءِ والوَقْفاءِ
إننا لعائدون
عائدون يا أربابَ عائدون يا شبابَ
عائدون للشُّبابِ عائدون للشُّبابِ
للجِهَادِ فِي البِحارِ والحِصَادِ فِي البِلادِ
إننا لعائدون

(*Our Beautiful Language*, Grade 5, Part 1 (2015) p. 50)

Conclusion

The foregoing examples speak for themselves. They clearly show that the PA does not educate Palestinian children for peace. Rather, the opposite is true.



Dr. Arnon Groiss – Professional background

Dr. Arnon Groiss is an Arabic-language journalist who has just retired from the Voice of Israel Arabic Radio after 42-year work there beginning in 1973. He is also an expert on Middle Eastern affairs having earned his Ph.D. degree from Princeton University's Department of Near Eastern Studies, as well as an MPA degree from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. Dr. Groiss taught for several years at the Hebrew University in the 1990s and 2000s. Between the years 2000-2010 Dr. Groiss served as chief researcher and, later, as Director of Research at the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-SE, formerly known as the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace – CMIP), a non-political NGO committed to studying the attitude to the "other" and to peace in the Israeli and in other Middle Eastern curricula. During his work there Dr. Groiss studied hundreds of textbooks of various school subjects and authored over ten reports on Palestinian, Egyptian, Syrian, Saudi Arabian, Iranian and Tunisian schoolbooks. The reports are available on the Institute's Web site <http://www.impact-se.org>. A summary of his ten-year research of this subject is to be found in "De-legitimization of Israel in Palestinian Authority Schoolbooks", published in *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 18 (2012), Issue 3, pp. 455-484, where he compares the PA schoolbooks with other Arab and Middle Eastern ones, including their Israeli counterparts. Dr. Groiss has presented his findings since 2000 to both policy makers and people of the press on numerous occasions in various places, including the US Congress, the European Parliament, the UK House of Commons, the Israeli Knesset, the Canadian Parliament, the French Assemblée nationale and elsewhere. On the basis of his experience in this field, Dr. Groiss was appointed as a member of the Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) of the Palestinian-Israeli Schoolbook Research Project commissioned by the Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land (CRIHL). The project was funded by the US State Department and ended in February 2013. Dr. Groiss' evaluation paper of this research project is to be found at <http://israelbehindthenews.com/library/pdfs/EVALUATION-1.pdf>.