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Holding the EU up to its own standards

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As the head of the Nahum Bedein Center for Near East Policy Research, I have covered the Palestinian Authority school system since the very first day that the PA began to issue its own textbooks on August 1, 2000.

Having met with and received authorization of Yassir Arafat to receive and review all textbooks issued by the Palestinian Authority and used by UNRWA schools in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and Gaza, the center engaged Dr. Arnon Groiss to review more than 1,000 school books issued by the PA.

Dr. Groiss, fluent in Arabic, holds a Phd in Islamic Studies from Princeton University, and a masters degree in public administration at Harvard, and served as the deputy director of Arab language services at the Israel Broadcasting Authority.

In that context, I asked the EU spokesman if the EU would take proactive steps to remove incitement from PA and UNRWA schools.

This is the EU response: "The 2022 assistance package in support of Palestine was adopted on 16 December 2022. Education was not included in the incentive-based tranche of the PEGASE mechanism. The EU remains firmly committed to promoting inclusive and quality education for the Palestinian people, including to ensuring full adherence with the United Nations values and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) standards and norms in the field of education and in all education material.

The assessment carried out by Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research provides an objective basis for the EU's engagement with the Palestinian Authority on education reforms.

The Commission takes this study seriously and acts on its findings as appropriate, with a view to bring about the full adherence to Unesco standards in all Palestinian educational materials. Based on the study, the EU has stepped up its engagement with the Palestinian Authority to ensure that further curriculum reform addresses problematic issues identified in the shortest possible timeframe.

The Palestinian Authority must ensure the highest standards in fostering a culture of peace and coexistence paving the way for a future where the conflict can be solved through negotiations leading to a two-state solution. The EU has no tolerance for incitement to hatred and violence, as means to achieve political goals, the glorification of 'armed resistance' and antisemitism in all its forms. Any material that goes against these principles risks undermining peace and coexistence and has no place in textbooks or classrooms.

These principles are non-negotiable for the Commission. In this regard, the Commission will therefore continue to engage in this field and address any remaining issues and reserves the right to take appropriate measures as necessary".

My response is to thank the EU for its clear and unambivalent reply regarding their commitment to uproot all antisemitic and anti-peace material from the Palestinian Authority educational material as part and parcel of its finance policy of PA and UNRWA schools.

The paragraph in the EU letter saying: "The EU has no tolerance for incitement to hatred and violence as means to achieve political goals, the glorification of 'armed resistance' and antisemitism in all its forms" is really encouraging. I especially appreciate the EU commitment, that "the commission will therefore continue to engage in this field and address any remaining issues, and reserves the right to take appropriate measures as necessary".

Just to give you a solid basis for discussion, Here are some concrete examples of undesired material that the EU might address in its dealings with the PA:

1. The total absence of the State of Israel – a fully recognized sovereign state world-wide – from all maps. Instead, the whole country is presented as "Palestine" politically.<sup>i</sup> Israel's pre-1967 territory presented as "Palestinian territories occupied in 1948",<sup>ii</sup> which insinuates the goal of total annihilation of Israel, rather than peaceful co-existence with it.
2. De-legitimization of the presence of Israel's 7 million Jewish citizens, as their cities – including Tel Aviv – do not appear on the map,<sup>iii</sup> which insinuates the desire to make them "disappear" eventually and contradicts the ideal of peace and co-existence.
3. Denial of Jewish history in the country, including the existence of archaeological relics that prove that.<sup>iv</sup>
4. Denial of the Jews' historical and religious ties to their ancient-modern capital Jerusalem,<sup>v</sup> including the "neglect" to mention the very name "Jerusalem"

(*Urushalim* in Arabic) in a brief review of the city's names throughout history.<sup>vi</sup>

5. Non-recognition of the Jews' holy places in the country, chief among them being the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, which is presented as an exclusively Muslim holy place.<sup>vii</sup>
6. Falsification of an historical item by erasing the Hebrew inscription from it.<sup>viii</sup>
7. Demonization of Jews by describing them as "the Devil's aides" in the context of Al-Aqsa Mosque,<sup>ix</sup> or "enemies of God's prophets",<sup>x</sup> which is tantamount to incitement to murder within a traditional society from which most of the Palestinian school students come.
8. Instilling in the children's minds the obligation to free Palestine in its entirety, not just the areas of the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>xi</sup> Palestinian cities within Israel's pre-1967 territory should be returned to Palestinian rule: Jaffa in this example.<sup>xii</sup>
9. "Armed resistance" is the way of the full liberation of Palestine. The female-commander of the most ferocious terrorist attack on an Israeli civilian bus in 1978, which ended in the murder of over thirty Israeli civilians – men, women and children – is made a role-model for Palestinian children.<sup>xiii</sup>

These specific examples are taken from schoolbooks that were published by the Palestinian Authority in 2020 and are in use today, also in the UNRWA schools.

Some of these examples were not noticed by the Georg Eckert Institute researchers.

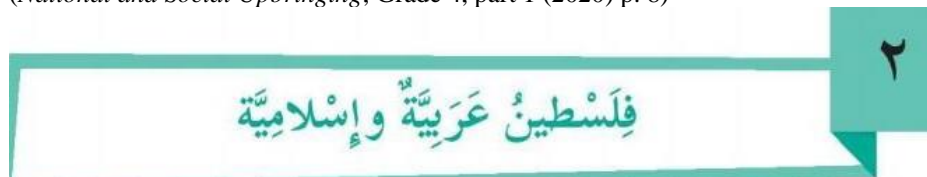
Others were duly addressed by them and appeared in their report, while still others were explained away in one way or another. We, on our part, tend to view these examples as indications of a comprehensive indoctrination trying to negate the "other" to the point of extinction.

Either way, our question remains: Will the EU indeed implement its own policies and demand the removal of the following incitement from the PA/UNRWA educational system that it finances:.

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<sup>i</sup> “[Lesson] 2: Palestine is Arab and Muslim”

The lesson presents a map titled “Map of the Arab Homeland” in which the whole country is painted red, with the name “Palestine” appearing next to it and the Palestinian flag is drawn above. (*National and Social Upbringing*, Grade 4, part 1 (2020) p. 8)





ii The term “the territories occupied in 1948” replaces in the schoolbooks the expression “Israeli [pre-1967] territory”:

“The following chart clarifies the numbers of Palestinians in the year 2015 according to the Palestinian Statistics Center:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Number of Inhabitants</u>
The West Bank and the Gaza Strip	4,750,000
<b>Inside the territories occupied in 1948</b>	1,470,000
In the Arab states	5,460,000
In the foreign states	685,000

I will organize the regions where the Palestinians are found in a descending order according to the numbers of inhabitants:

[4 empty squares]”

(Mathematics, Grade 4, Part 1 (2020) p. 22. **Emphasis added**)

٥ الجدول الآتي يوضح أعداد الفلسطينيين في العام ٢٠١٥، حسب مركز الإحصاء الفلسطيني:

المنطقة	عدد السكان
الضفة الغربية وقطاع غزة	٤٧٥٠٠٠٠
داخل الأراضي المحتلة عام ١٩٤٨م	١٤٧٠٠٠٠
في الدول العربية	٥٤٦٠٠٠٠
في الدول الأجنبية	٦٨٥٠٠٠

أرتب مناطق تواجد الفلسطينيين تنازلياً حسب أعداد السكان:

iii Having been considered foreign settlers, the Jews in the country are not counted among its inhabitants and the cities they built, including Tel Aviv, are absent from the maps featured in textbooks issued by the PA and used in all schools. The map shown here, titled “Map of Palestine”, does not show these cities at all, except for Eilat that appears under the Arabic name of the desolate place where it was later built – “Umm al-Rashrash”. Other cities shown are Acre, Haifa, Safad, Tiberias, Nazareth, Jaffa, Gaza, Nablus, Jenin, Ramallah, Tulkarm, Lydda, Ramleh, Jericho, Al-Quds (Jerusalem), Beisan (Beit Shean), Bethlehem, Hebron, Beer Sheba, Khan Yunis, Rafah. Tel Aviv, Netanya, Rehovot, Nahariya, Holon, Bat Yam, Rishon Letziyon, and many other large Jewish cities are absent. (Social Studies, Grade 6, Part 1 (2020) p. 6)



رقم (١): خريطة فلسطين

iv Denial of the country's Jewish history:

"...[The occupier] has built for himself an artificial entity that derives its identity and the legitimacy of its existence from fairy tales, legends and phantasies and tried in various methods and ways to create living material evidence for these legends, or archaeological [and] architectural proofs that would attest to their correctness and authenticity, but in vain."

(*Arabic Language – the Academic Path, Grade 10, Part 2 (2020) p. 68*)

أَرْضُهُ، وَشَرَّدَ أَبْنَاءَهُ، وَنَهَبَ تَرَوَاتِهِ، وَشَوَّهَ هُوِيَّتَهُ، وَبَنَى لِنَفْسِهِ كِيَانًا مُصْطَفَعًا يَسْتَمِدُّ هُوِيَّتَهُ، وَشَرَعِيَّةَ  
وُجُودِهِ مِنْ حِكَايَاتٍ، وَأَسَاطِيرَ، وَأَخْيَلَةٍ، حَاوَلَ بِأَسَالِيبَ وَطُرُقٍ شَتَّى إِيْجَادَ شَوَاهِدٍ مَادِّيَّةٍ حَيَّةٍ عَلَى  
هَذِهِ الْأَسَاطِيرِ، أَوْ أَدْلَةٍ أَثَرِيَّةٍ مِعْمَارِيَّةٍ، تُثَبِّتُ صِحَّتَهَا وَمَصْدَقِيَّتَهَا، وَلَكِنْ دُونَ جَدْوَى.

v The Jews' historical and religious ties to Jerusalem are completely ignored:

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

(*National and Social Upbringing, Grade 3, Part 1 (2020) p. 29*)

الْقُدْسُ مَدِينَةٌ عَرَبِيَّةٌ بَنَاهَا أَجْدَادُنَا الْعَرَبُ مِنْذُ آلَافِ السِّنِينَ.  
الْقُدْسُ مَدِينَةٌ مُقَدَّسَةٌ عِنْدَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمَسِيحِيِّينَ.

vi A short description of Jerusalem's history with a huge 1,000 year-gap between the Jebusites and the Romans, namely, the Jewish historical period. The name "Jerusalem" itself, so common worldwide, is also ignored:

"The city of Al-Quds was known by the name Jebus, after the Arab Jebusites who built it 5,000 years ago. When the Romans occupied it, they called it by the name Aelia. Later, it came to be known as Al-Quds and Bayt al-Maqdis, after the Muslims conquered it at the hands of [Caliph] Umar Bin al-Khattab in the year 637..."

(*Geography and Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine, Grade 10, Part 1 (2020) p. 43*)



عُرِفَتْ مدينة القدس باسم مدينة (بيوس)؛ نسبة إلى العرب البيوسيين الذين بنّوها قبل ٥٠٠٠ سنة، وعندما احتلها الرومان أطلقوا عليها اسم (إيلياء)، ثم أصبحت تُعرَف بالقدس، وبيت المقدس بعد أن فتحها المسلمون على يد الخليفة عمر بن الخطاب عام ٦٣٧ م / ١٥هـ، ودخلها بنفسه، وتسلمها من الرومان وأعطى الأمان للمسيحيين فيها، من خلال العهدة العمرية.

vii Denial of the existence of Jewish holy places in the country, including the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem (note that the photograph is cut in a way that “hides” the Jews who pray there):

“Al-Buraq Wall

Illumination: The Al-Buraq Wall is thus named after Al-Buraq [the divine beast] that carried the Messenger [Muhammad] in the Nocturnal Journey [from the Mecca Mosque to Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem according to Muslim belief]. Al-Buraq Wall is part of the western wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque. Al-Aqsa Mosque, including the wall, is a Palestinian land and the Muslims’ exclusive right.”  
(Islamic Education, Grade 5, Part 1 (2020) p. 63)



حائط البراق

إضاءة: سُمِّي حائطُ البراق بهذا الاسم؛ نسبةً إلى البراق الذي حملَ الرَّسول ﷺ في رحلة الإسراء والمعراج، وحائط البراق جزء من السور الغربي للمسجد الأقصى، والمسجد الأقصى بما فيه السور أرض فلسطينية وحق خالص للمسلمين.

viii Hebrew – the language of the Jews in the country – is erased, literally, from a British Mandate coin reproduced in a mathematics textbook:

(Mathematics, Grade 6, Part 2 (2020) p. 65, and see the original coin on the right)



نشاط (١):

أمرُّ قلبي على الدائرة فيما يأتي:



أناقش: كيف يُمكنني قياس محيط قطعة النقد، باستخدام البسطة فقط؟  
وباستخدام خيط وبسطة؟



<sup>ix</sup> Jews are demonized as infidels and as the Devil's aides:

“Where are the horsemen [who will ride] to Al-Aqsa [Mosque] to liberate it  
From the grip of infidelity, from the Devil's aides?”

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Part 1 (2020) p. 67)

أَيْنَ الْفُؤَارِسِ لِلْأَقْصَى تُحَرَّرُهُ مِنْ قَبْضَةِ الْكُفْرِ مِنْ أَعْوَانِ شَيْطَانٍ؟

<sup>x</sup> Jews are portrayed as enemies of all God's prophets and, by extension, enemies of God Himself. The following is the first out of several lessons to be learned from the chapter about Jesus Christ (who is considered one of God's prophets in Islam):

“1. Revealing the Children of Israel's nature and their hostility to the prophets.”

(*Islamic Education*, Grade 9, Part 2 (2020) p. 21)

١- كَشَفُ طَبِيعَةِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَعَدَاوَتِهِمْ لِلْأَنْبِيَاءِ.

<sup>xi</sup> There is no room for Israel in free Palestine:

"FREE PALESTINE"

(*Sciences and Life*, Grade 3, Part 1 (2020) p. 65)



<sup>xii</sup> Jaffa is considered a Palestinian occupied city that should be liberated, as said in a language exercise:

“2. It would be appropriate for Jaffa to return to our bosom.”

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 8, Part 2 (2019) p. 102)

٢- حَرَى يَافَا أَنْ تَعُودَ لِأَحْضَانِنَا.

<sup>xiii</sup> Terror is part and parcel of the liberation struggle. Following is the first page of a 4-page lesson that exalts the female commander of the terrorist attack on a civilian bus on Israel's Coastal Highway in 1978 in which more than thirty Israelis – men, women and children were murdered:

“Dalal al-Mughrabi

([by] the writing team)

In front of the text:

Our Palestinian history is replete with many names of martyrs who have given their soul in sacrifice for the homeland. Among them [is] the martyr Dalal al-Mughrabi who has illustrated with her struggle a picture of challenging and bravery that have made her memory eternal in our hearts and minds. The text in front of us speaks of one aspect of her struggle path.”

(*Arabic Language*, Grade 5, Part 2 (2020) p. 51)

## دلال المغربي

(فريق التأليف)

### بين يدي النص

يخفل تاريخنا الفلسطيني بكثير من أسماء الشهداء الذين قدموا أرواحهم فداءً للوطن، منهم الشهيدة دلال المغربي التي سطرَت بِضالِها صورةً من صورِ التحدي والبطولة؛ ما جعل ذكرها خالداً في قلوبنا وعقولنا. والنص الذي بين أيدينا يتحدَّث عن طرفٍ من مسيرة بضالِها.

