



FLORIAN MARKL

# Teaching to Hate

AN ANALYSIS OF PALESTINIAN  
SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

**mena-watch**  
Der unabhängige Nahost-Thinktank



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*Cover image: Palestinian schoolchildren hold their national flag and posters of the Palestinian president during a demonstration in the West Bank city of Tulkarem. (September 19, 2011)*

Credit: IMAGO/ZUMA Wire

## 1. INTRODUCTION

There was an argument about money in the European Commission. As scantily sensational as this message may sound, the reason for the controversy was unusual. This is because the dispute was not about funds for French farmers or for the construction of nuclear power plants, but about funds for something that sounds quite harmless at first: school textbooks were the topic of concern. More specifically: Palestinian school textbooks.

In the 2021 E.U. Budget, an allotment of EUR 214 m was pledged for the provision of support for the Palestinian Authority (PA); however, up until that point, not a single cent had been spent. This was because the EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, Olivér Várhegyi, was blocking payment using his veto power, pointing out the highly problematic character of Palestinian school textbooks. The Austrian daily newspaper, *Die Presse*, reported on the reasoning he provided: “Numerous books in the subjects Religion, natural sciences, History, and Social Studies do not correspond to the UNESCO standards of peace, tolerance, coexistence and freedom from violence.”<sup>1</sup>

### PROBLEMATIC BOOKS

Detailed research by Israeli organizations such as the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education (IMPACT-se) and the Center for Near East Policy Research shows how Palestinian school textbooks, not least thanks to European aid, propagate extremist narratives that include incitement against Jews, hatred of Israel, and advocacy of bloody violence against Israelis, thereby negating any prospects for a peace solution.<sup>2</sup>

After many years in which the EU, as the main international donor to the Palestinian Authority, has turned a blind eye to the systematic indoctrination of Palestinian children with such problematic content, there has been movement in the recent past: In 2019, the E.U. had a study initiated to identify “possible incitement to hatred and violence and any possible lack of compliance with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Or-

ganization) standards of peace and tolerance in education” in Palestinian school textbooks.<sup>3</sup>

### QUESTIONABLE FINDINGS

The Braunschweig Leibniz Institute for Educational Media Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) was commissioned; however, the study was ill-fated from the very beginning. In an interim report from August 2020, the researchers were full of praise for the textbooks examined, but this verdict, as the German daily newspaper *Der Tagesspiegel* reported, was due to a “serious mishap”: The authors had “simply examined the wrong textbook. All the examples that ‘promote peace or show tolerance towards Israelis’ did not come from Palestinian Authority textbooks, but from volumes used to teach Arab students in East Jerusalem. These books, however, are paid for and provided by the State of Israel.”

Outrageous examples of incitement in actual Palestinian school textbooks, on the other hand, were ignored:

“Not even the fact that a book for ninth-graders celebrates the burning of Jews by Molotov cocktails as a ‘barbecue party’ has been mentioned.”<sup>4</sup>

The final report ultimately presented by the Georg Eckert Institute, which is said to have been completed in February 2021, initially remained under lock and key and was only published in June 2021 after some tug-of-war.<sup>5</sup> The *Tagesspiegel* wrote about it:

“The good news: The researchers involved have given the all-clear signal. The books examined corresponded to UNESCO guidelines. The bad news: After reading the study, it is difficult to see how the researchers could reach this conclusion. (...) There are many dubious interpretations, omissions and other irregularities.”

Marcus Sheff, who as head of IMPACT-se is very familiar with Palestinian textbooks, therefore attested to the GEI

<sup>1</sup> Grimm, Oliver: Streit um EU-Geld für Palästinenser, *Die Presse*, April 13, 2022, <https://www.diepresse.com/6124891/streit-um-eu-geld-fuer-palastinenser>.

<sup>2</sup> The reports from IMPACT-se can be found here: <https://www.impact-se.org/reports-2/palestinian-territories/palestinian-authority/>; those from the Center for Near East Policy Research here: <https://www.cfnep.com/205640/congress-discussion>.

<sup>3</sup> European Parliament: Answer given by Vice-President Mogherini on behalf of the European Commission, Parliamentary question - E-000906/2019(ASW), April 24, 2019, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2019-000906-ASW\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2019-000906-ASW_EN.html).

<sup>4</sup> Abdi, Muhamad/Leber, Sebastian: Wie Deutschland Antisemitismus mitfinanziert, *Der Tagesspiegel*, October 10, 2020, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/themen/reportage/schulbuecher-rufen-zu-terroranschlaegen-auf-wie-deutschland-antisemitismus-mitfinanziert/26262170.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Leibniz Institute for Educational Media/Georg Eckert Institute: Report on Palestinian Textbooks, <https://www.gei.de/en/research/projects/report-on-palestinian-textbooks-paltex>.



study “serious shortcomings.” The researchers “had ignored incitement and anti-Semitism in some of the books studied,” while in other cases they were apparently trying to find “excuses for hateful material.”<sup>6</sup>

## HEARING IN THE EU PARLIAMENT

The GEI report, which resulted in such questionable findings, did nothing to dispel the EU’s newly awakened concerns. At the end of March 2022, the European Parliament’s Budget Control Committee passed a resolution condemning the “hateful material” in Palestinian school textbooks.<sup>7</sup> The PA Minister of Education responsible for textbooks refused to attend a hearing in the EU Parliament on April 20, 2022,<sup>8</sup> at which Marcus Sheff of IMPACT-se presented new evidence of incitement in Palestinian teaching materials.<sup>9</sup>

On May 4, the European Parliament condemned the Palestinian Authority for misusing funds for the production of hateful and violent school textbooks and demanded that the disbursement of further EU funds be conditional on educating children in peace and tolerance.<sup>10</sup>

## THE PALESTINIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

The textbooks used today in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority (PA). This Palestinian competence is a consequence of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process that began in the 1990s.

Between the end of the Israeli War of Independence in 1949 and the Six-Day War in 1967, the school system in the two areas had been in the hands of two Arab states: Jordan had occupied and illegally annexed the territory, which has only been called the West Bank since then, including the part of Jerusalem it controlled; Egypt had conquered the Gaza Strip and placed it under Egyptian military administration. Jordanian and Egyptian textbooks were used in school lessons during this period. After the

1967 Six-Day War, in which Israel gained control of these areas, the previous textbooks were first reused, but they were checked by the Israeli military administration and were modified (in particular, anti-Semitic and belligerent passages were removed).

It was only after the beginning of the Oslo peace process, from 1994 onwards, that content of Palestinian origin found its way into textbooks. Since 2000, the PA has developed and published its own books, since the school year 2006/2007 only these have been in use. A gradual process of revising the PA textbooks for all school levels ultimately began in 2016. Hopes that problematic content would be removed were dashed – as we shall see, on the contrary, a radicalization of content took place.

The Palestinian school system comprises ten compulsory school years for six to 15-year-olds, with grades 1–4 as the preparatory phase and grades 6–10 as the qualification phase. This can be followed by two years of secondary school, and students can choose between a technical and a vocational track.

The majority of Palestinian students are taught in PA schools, but schools are also offered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and private agencies. UNRWA schools use the teaching materials of the countries in which the respective schools are located. In the West Bank and Gaza Strip, PA textbooks are therefore used in UNRWA schools as well.

## WHAT IT’S ALL ABOUT

What exactly is the problematic content that Palestinian students are confronted with in their school textbooks? Studies of Palestinian teaching materials usually refer to standards for education for peace and tolerance in school education, as set out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) over the years, or similar criteria catalogs. For the Israeli Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School

<sup>6</sup> Abdi, Muhamad/Leber, Sebastian: Hass, der den UNESCO-Richtlinien entspricht, Der Tagesspiegel, June 18, 2021, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/themen/reportage/skandalstudie-zu-palaestinensischen-schulbuechern-hass-der-den-unesco-richtlinien-entspricht/27301940.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Cf., Palestinian Authority Slammed by EU Budget Committee for New Textbooks With Increased Hate Speech and Violence, eureporter, April 1, 2022, <https://www.eureporter.co/politics/european-parliament-2/2022/04/01/palestinian-authority-slammed-by-eu-budget-committee-for-new-textbooks-with-increased-hate-speech-and-violence/>.

<sup>8</sup> Palestinian Minister backs out of EU Parliament hearing on textbook incitement, The Jerusalem Post, April 29, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/international/article-705449>.

<sup>9</sup> European Parliament: Committee on Budgetary Control, April 20, 2022, [https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/event\\_20220420-1645-COMMITTEE-CONT?start=20220420150802&end=20220420150909](https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/event_20220420-1645-COMMITTEE-CONT?start=20220420150802&end=20220420150909).

<sup>10</sup> Cf., Lempkovicz, Yossi: European Parliament condemns the Palestinian Authority for funding more violent and hateful textbooks, European Jewish Press, May 4, 2022, <https://ejpress.org/european-parliament-condemns-the-palestinian-authority-for-funding-more-violent-and-hateful-textbooks/>.

Education (IMPACT-se), school textbooks should, among other things,

- promote tolerance, understanding and respect toward the “Other,”
- be free of wording, imagery and ideologies likely to create prejudices, misconceptions, stereotypes, misunderstandings, mistrust, racial hatred, religious bigotry and national hatred, as well as any other form of hatred or contempt for other groups or peoples,
- not promote acts and expressions of violence, incitement to violence, hostility, harm and hatred,
- develop capabilities for non-violent conflict resolution and promote peace,
- convey up-to-date, accurate, complete, balanced and unprejudiced information, and use equal standards to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples,
- propagate equal rights for all genders and sexual identities, without depicting limiting and/or exclusionary gender roles, and
- contribute to teaching sound and sustainable economic conduct and encourage regional and local cooperation.<sup>11</sup>

In its analysis, Mena-Watch examined a total of 128 school textbooks published by the Palestinian Authority between 2018 and 2020. The subjects include history, social studies, Arabic language, Islamic education, mathematics and chemistry.

In our analysis, we focus on eight core topics and areas that can be characterized as extremely problematic:

- the portrayal of Jewish history, which partly conveys religious and otherwise anti-Jewish content and in which any connection of the Jews to the disputed land is denied,
- the practical non-existence of Israel, which is not to be found on maps and whose name is mentioned only in a few exceptional cases, while at the same time it is comprehensively demonized,
- the peace process and education for coexistence with Israel are almost non-existent; instead, the necessity to fight against the “Zionist occupier” is constantly preached,
- violence against Israel is advocated, and terrorists are praised as martyrs and role models,
- exclusive claim to Jerusalem allegedly built by Arabs is made,
- the topic of Palestinian prisoners held by Israelis is continuously focused upon, with whom solidarity is demanded without reference to the acts they have committed,
- the question of Palestinian refugees is portrayed in a highly one-sided manner, whose full right of return is being propagated,
- extremist and violent narratives are even conveyed in subjects such as math or physics, which should have nothing to do with politics.

On the following pages we will go into the individual points in more detail and illustrate them with concrete examples from the textbooks. In doing so, we rely on our own analysis as well as on other existing studies.

And we will also keep looking at how the EU-commissioned GEI study proceeded in order to come to the absurd conclusion, despite the countless examples that prove the opposite, that Palestinian textbooks meet UNESCO’s standards for peace and tolerance in education.

<sup>11</sup> Cf., IMPACT-se: Textbook Analysis Methodology, <https://www.impact-se.org/methodology-2/>.

## 2. PORTRAYAL OF JEWS AND JEWISH HISTORY

In a conflict situation, such as that between Palestinians and Israelis, it is of decisive importance how the other person is seen, what knowledge about him/her is available and what motives are attributed to his/her actions. After all, the question of which conflict solutions are considered possible and/or desirable depends not least on this. The school has an important role to play here: It can, as UNESCO demands, promote understanding and tolerance with the content it conveys, teach non-violent approaches and thus pave the way for a possible peace. However, it can also do the exact opposite – and as the analysis of the representation of the Jews, their history and their relation to the disputed territory shows, the Palestinian textbooks have chosen this second way, which does not serve to solve the conflict, but rather fuels it through the comprehensive demonization of the “Other”.

### PORTRAYAL OF THE JEWS

Palestinian textbooks contain some general calls for tolerance, which are highlighted by GEI’s EU-commissioned study in order to prove the compatibility of teaching materials with UNESCO standards. For example, a textbook for *National and Social Education* from 2020 for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade (Part 1, p. 9) in the section on “Arab and Islamic Palestine” emphasizes that the official religion of the country is Islam, but that “all monotheistic religions and their sanctuaries are respected.”

Upon closer inspection, however, two points are striking about this supposedly tolerant passage: Firstly, tolerance, following Islamic tradition, is limited exclusively to monotheistic religions, but not to all doctrines, whether monotheistic or not. And secondly, the passage is strongly counteracted by the rest of the school textbooks, in which any connection of the Jews to Palestine is simply denied. Therefore, according to the Palestinian understanding, there are no Jewish sanctuaries that need to be treated with “respect.” Generally speaking, tolerant passages refer exclusively to Christianity, whose attachment to the land and Jerusalem is emphasized several times.

In order to conclude, as the GEI study did, that Palestinian textbooks meet UNESCO standards, the multitude of passages in which Jews are presented in an extremely negative way, both from a historical and contemporary perspective, needs to be ignored or relativized. Although the books sometimes distinguish between Judaism as a religion and Zionism as a political movement (cf., *Geography and History of Palestine in the Modern Age*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade,

Part 1, p. 80), the terms Judaism/Jewish and Zionism/Zionist are used as synonyms in an overwhelming number of cases.

One section, for example, uses stories from the early days of Islam to encourage Palestinian women and girls to kill in the name of Islam, to seek martyrdom and to raise their own children in the spirit of jihad. The role model is Safiyya bint Abd al-Muttalib, a companion of the Prophet, who is said to have killed a Jew during the so-called Battle of the Trench. The students are given the task of reflecting on the role of women in the struggle against the “Zionist occupation.” (Cf., *Islamic Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, Part 2, p. 79) This way, the textbook skips directly from early Islamic history and the killing of a Jew to the current struggle against Israel.

During the course of a recent revision of several books, terminological changes have been made, which make clear how synonymously the terms have been used. While there was previously talk of “the Jews” desecrating Islamic tombs in Palestine, the “Zionist Occupation” has recently been blamed for the destruction of the graves. (ibid., p. 71) In other places, instead of “Zionist-Jewish occupation,” there is now only talk of “Zionist occupation,” but there is nothing to suggest that these adaptations would go beyond purely cosmetic changes and signal a change of mind.

### ENEMIES OF ISLAM

All the more so since the basic narrative about the Jews has not changed: They are presented as negative from the time of the Prophet to the present day. Drawing on early Islamic history and partly on quotations from Islamic sources, Jews are characterized as liars and deceivers who tried to dissuade the Prophet from the right path but were punished by Allah for their “sins” and “transgressions.” (*Islamic Education*, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 21)

From the fact, another book tells us, that the Jews did not abide by agreements with the Prophet and instead committed “treason, deceit and hostility,” it follows “that it became necessary for the Muslims to fight them.” (*Islamic Education*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 2017, Part 1, p. 50)

Since Muslims do not believe in the divine character of Jesus, the Christian accusation of Jewish deicide is missing from Islam; instead, however, there is the belief that the



Jews tried to murder Muhammad, whereupon the Prophet expelled them from Medina. According to the description of this attempted atrocity, the “hypocritical” Jews are described as “enemies of Islam in all times and places” who would never stop fighting against Islam and Muslims with all possible means. Students are encouraged to discuss the numerous attempted assassinations of the Prophet by “infidels” and “hypocrites.” (*Islamic Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, Part 2, p. 65 f.)

The school textbook for another grade is about the Jews’ attempt to spread “corruption,” pointing out that Allah sent down His servants on earth to prevent this. And every time the Jews tried to spread new “corruption,” the text continues, it would again lead to their “annihilation.” According to the textbook, the Quran clearly states the necessity of fighting against the “Children of Israel.” Schoolchildren are encouraged to discuss the qualities of those who fight the “corruption” emanating from the Jews. (*Islamic Education*, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, Part 1, p. 16)

## NO JEWISH CONNECTION TO PALESTINE

While in Palestinian textbooks religiously argued hostility to Jews dominates the portrayal of Jews at the time of the Prophet Mohamed, the current editions of the books consistently deny that Jews were ever associated with the territory referred to as the “Land of Palestine.” In today’s Israel, which is rarely mentioned by name and treated as practically non-existent, and in Palestine, Jewish history is said to never have occurred – all claims to the contrary were shameless and lie-ridden fiction by “Zionists,” the “Zionist Occupation” or “Zionist Gangs.”

Therefore, all testimonies of Jewish history are supposed to be lies or falsifications. For example, the Western Wall/Wailing Wall, the last remnant of the Jewish temples on the Temple Mount, is strictly referred to as the “al-Buraq-Wall,” named after the mount of the Prophet on whose back, according to the Islamic story, he is said to have started his miraculous nocturnal journey into the night sky from Haram al-Sharif. “Al-Buraq Wall,” as can be taken from one textbook, “is part of the western wall of Al-Aqsa Mosque,”



Figure 1: The Western Wall/Wailing Wall: “Palestinian land and an exclusive right of the Muslims.” (*Islamic Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 63.)



which then leads to the following conclusion: “The al-Aqsa Mosque, including the wall, are Palestinian land and an exclusive right of the Muslims.” (*Islamic Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, Part 1, p. 63.)

Everything else, including a Jewish claim to the wall, was deemed a lie. The “The Zionist occupation changed the name ›Al-Buraq Wall‹ into ›the Wailing Wall,›” furthermore, they “replaced some of the City Wall’s stones with stones that have Zionist decorations and forms,” and “built new Jewish synagogues in the Old City that never existed.” (*Social studies*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, Part 1, p. 60 f.)

This is, as the example of the Hurva Synagogue shows, an outright lie: Located in the Jewish quarter of the Old City, this house of worship was one of the most important synagogues in the country until the Israeli War of Independence in 1948. After the entire old city came under Jordanian control, Jordanian soldiers blew up the entire building complex. After Israel’s conquest of the Old City in the 1967 Six-Day War, plans were made to rebuild the synagogue. After long delays and many years of discussions, the reconstruction was finally decided in 2005, and the synagogue was re-inaugurated in March 2010.<sup>12</sup>

The Palestinian school textbook which speaks of synagogues that “never existed,” uses the fact that Jordanians in the territories that fell under their control in 1948 literally carried out ethnic cleansing of all Jews and razed or otherwise desecrated their historical testimonies to declare all Jewish history a “lie” and “fake.”

Instead of being familiarized with the actual history, schoolchildren are told to remember: “Jerusalem is an Arab city built by our Arab forefathers thousands of years ago.” The fact that this primarily denies the Jewish heritage of the city is also made clear by the next sentence: “Jerusalem is a holy city for Muslims and Christians.” (*National and Social Education*, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 2020, Part 1, p. 29) Thus, churches and mosques are listed as part of Jerusalem’s tourist attractions, but not Jewish sites. (Cf., *Geography*, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 2019, p. 121. On the topic of Jerusalem, see Chapter 6.)

However, not only Jerusalem is said not to have any Jewish history, but the same is claimed about all other parts of the country as well. The Negev desert, for example, where the prophet Abraham is said to have once lived, which was part of the ancient Jewish kingdoms and has belonged to Israel since its founding, was in fact deemed “an integral part of the land of Palestine.” (*Mathematics*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, Part 2, p. 9)

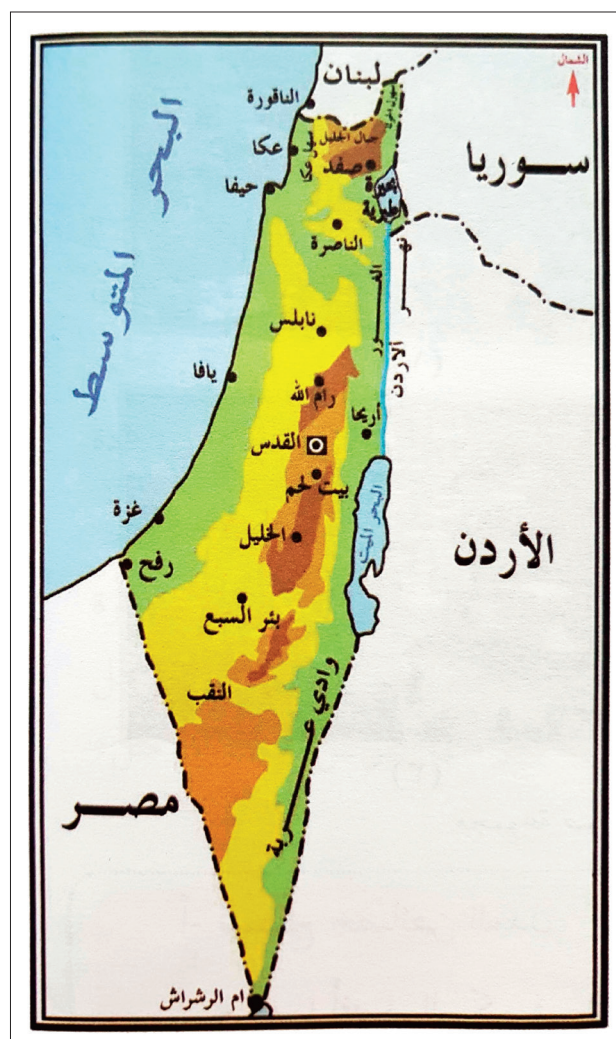


Figure 2: Jewish cities such as Tel Aviv or Eilat do not exist on this map of Palestine (*Islamic Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, p. 98)

A map in a textbook called “Palestine” completely conceals the existence of Israel and cities founded by Jews such as Tel Aviv. Instead of the name of the Israeli tourist stronghold Eilat on the Red Sea in the far south of Israel, there is the name Um-Rashrash – the name of a police station consisting of only a few mud huts from the time before the founding of Israel. (*Social studies*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, Part 2, p. 36)

<sup>12</sup> Cf., Balint, Benjamin: In the Holy Land, a Rebuilding for the Generations, *The Wall Street Journal*, March 10, 2010, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748704869304575109473645885194>.

## ERASURE OF HISTORY

The complete denial of the country's Jewish history in current Palestinian textbooks is all the more remarkable because it is a new development. As IMPACT-se points out, in earlier versions of these books there were at least hints of this now completely hidden and concealed history.<sup>13</sup>

At one time, the Jewish scriptures and some fundamentals of the Jewish faith were reported largely objectively and accurately. The story of Abraham and his burial in Hebron, the Jewish conquest in the land of Canaan as well as the prophets David and Saul were to be found. A map showed "Palestine in the Reign of Prophet David" with the "Children of Israel" in the accompanying text.

Mention was made of the ancient Jewish kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the heritage of Jewish Jerusalem, including the fact that Jerusalem was the Jewish capital for some time. An overview timeline listed the Jewish kingdoms and the occupations of the country by the Assyrians and the Babylonians and the expulsion of the Jews into exile and their return to the land. A map of Jerusalem showed, among other things, the Jewish quarter in the Old City.

Several Jewish uprisings against Roman rule were mentioned in the years from 70 CE to the so-called Bar Kokhba uprising of 132–136 CE, as a result of which the Romans forbade the Jews to live in Jerusalem. The founding of Israel in 1948 was also mentioned, the State of Israel was marked by name on several maps.

All these references to Jewish history have been removed in revisions of Palestinian textbooks since 2016. Since then, Palestinian schoolchildren have only been given a completely false and demonizing image of Jews, who are said to historically never have had anything to do with Palestine and for whose presence in the country there is allegedly not the slightest legitimate reason.

## WHAT ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST?

Part of this comprehensive historical distortion is a big black hole: There is literally no word about the Holocaust in Palestinian school textbooks.<sup>14</sup> Outlines of the history of the First and Second World Wars are taught (albeit from a perspective that only serves to portray the Arabs and espe-

cially the Palestinians as victims of the sinister machinations of the Western powers and the supposedly powerful influence of the "Zionists" on Western media and politics). The fact that National Socialism was based on a racist world view is also not concealed.

However, there is deafening silence concerning who were the designated main victims of Nazi persecution and who were systematically murdered by the millions. Without mentioning the systematic murder of European Jews, the schoolchildren instead only learn in general terms why the Europeans allegedly wanted to "get rid of" the Jews: because they were so reserved, did not want to integrate and wanted to stay among themselves. (*Geography and History of Palestine in the Modern Age*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, Part 1, p. 80)

By completely turning their backs towards the Holocaust, Palestinian students are deprived of an essential part of Jewish history and the prehistory of the founding of the State of Israel. That such a selective and distorting education cannot contribute to the understanding of the "Other" does not need to be elaborated.

## ONLY EVIL INTENTIONS

Since, from the point of view of Palestinian textbooks, Jews have no connection to Palestine, and there is absolutely no reason for their presence in the country (let alone the creation of a Jewish state), Jews cannot, of course, pursue any legitimate interests there. When they are mentioned, there are often terms such as "invaders," "foreigners," or "aggressors," reaching a climax in a book, in which they are called "savage Zionist gangs," "that came from a foreign world full of hostility and hatred to Arabs and Palestinians and invaded it without permission (...)." (*Arabic Language*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, 2017, Part 1, p. 23)

With all their "fake" claims about alleged Jewish history, the text continues, the actions of the "Zionists" pursue only malicious purposes: to wipe out the Arab and Palestinian character of the land, to make life impossible for the Palestinians, to poison their water, to destroy their land, to expel them, to imprison them and to kill them. A particularly important target is said to be Jerusalem, "the capital of Palestine," where the "Zionist Jews" tried to bring down the al-Aqsa Mosque with excavations "with the aim of deporting

<sup>13</sup> Cf., in the following, IMPACT-se: The Rejection of Peace: References to Peace Agreements, Israel, and Jews, Now Removed from PA Curriculum grades 1–12, Pre-2016, September 2019, [https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/Rejection-of-Peace\\_Changes-from-Pre-2016-PA-Curricula.pdf](https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/Rejection-of-Peace_Changes-from-Pre-2016-PA-Curricula.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Cf., Alayan, Samira: The Holocaust in Palestinian Textbooks. Differences and Similarities in Israel and Palestine, in: *Comparative Education Review*, vol. 60, no. 1, February 2016, p. 80–104.

its Arab and Muslim residents and making it a Jewish city.” (*Islamic Education*, 2020, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, p. 98) The fact that Jerusalem was a Jewish city long before Arabs lived there and before Islam even came into being is not mentioned.

The negative characterizations of the Jews at the time of the Prophet continue seamlessly in the portrayal of the “Zionists,” who are not said to have rational or legitimate intentions, but who, motivated by hatred, are said to be solely out to harm the Palestinians and ultimately kill them.

### RECOGNIZED STANDARDS, AS IF!

In summary, it can be stated: The image of Jews and their history that is conveyed to Palestinian students has little

to do with reality but is highly distorting and demonizing. With regard to Jews, there can be no question of objective and accurate information that pupils are to be taught according to the international standards often used for school textbooks.

The same applies to the demand that schools should educate the children entrusted to them in tolerance, mutual understanding, and peace. In Palestinian textbooks, Jews are portrayed in such a demonizing way that they can’t really be imagined as counterparts for peace or even co-existence.

One consequence of this distorted perspective on Jews and their history is that Israel is not recognized as a legitimate state. Even worse: Largely, Palestinian textbooks pretend that the State of Israel simply does not exist.

## 3. THE EXISTENCE OF ISRAEL IS DENIED; THE JEWISH STATE IS DEMONIZED

Peaceful coexistence and mutual recognition – including Israel’s right to exist – are the pillars of the so-called Oslo peace process, which established Palestinian self-government with the Palestinian Authority (PA) for the first time in history in part of the territories claimed by the Palestinians. In order to create peace one day, the existence of the “Other” must not only be formally recognized, but also anchored in society. School education can play an important role in this.

If one wants to judge whether the PA is aiming for the goal of “peaceful coexistence and mutual recognition,” one must address the question: What do Palestinian textbooks say about Israel?

### ISRAEL DOESN’T EVEN EXIST

The answer to this question is both short and sobering: Israel does not exist in Palestinian textbooks, and the name of the country is hardly mentioned. In the books before us, the term Israel does not appear at all. In other books analyzed by IMPACT-se, “Israel” is written in quotation marks in a few cases. Not a single one of the many dozens of maps shows the state, not a single map shows Jewish places.

Instead, there is talk of “Zionist occupying powers” or the “Zionist occupation.” In maps, the country is either not labeled with the country name, or it is written “Palestine.” As in the well-known slogan “From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free,” which is also often chanted in Europe at anti-Israel demonstrations, “Palestine” stretches from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea; Israel has no place in it – just like in the official logo of the Palestine



Figure 3: “My Homeland Palestine” (*National and Social Education*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 2.)





Figure 4: “Map of Palestine” (*Social Studies*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 54 f.)

Liberation Organization (PLO), to be seen on the website of the Palestinian State’s Representation in Austria.<sup>15</sup>

To pick just one example of many: On a “map of Palestine” the borders of the alleged “present-day Palestine” are shown. In the task, the children should determine these “current” boundaries.

Activity (5): Observe, read and make a conclusion:  
“A- We will define the borders of Palestine from all four directions.

B- We will name the Arab state neighboring Palestine, which isn’t from the Levant [Bilad Al-Sham].

We have learned:

Palestine: is the geographical area that extends from the Mediterranean Sea in the west, to the Jordan River in the East, and from Lebanon and Syria in the north to the Gulf of Aqaba and Egypt in the south, an area of approximately 27,000 km<sup>2</sup> (...).”

## INCREASING RADICALIZATION

One might think that Israel’s portrayal would have improved over the years as a result of criticism of problematic textbook content. However, it is just the opposite. As already shown by the presentation of Jews and Jewish history, new editions of textbooks promote the radicalization

of students even more than previous editions did. If Israel was previously to be found on at least some maps, the state is literally wiped out in the newer editions; if reference is made to it, it is comprehensively delegitimized and demonized. IMPACT-se states in its study of the Palestinian curriculum of 2020/2021:

“Jewish existence in contemporary Israel is characterized as an act of racist aggression against the Palestinian and Arab character of the region. Jews are referred to as colonialist occupiers.”<sup>16</sup>

The indications of the desire for a Palestinian national homeland in today’s Israel are increasing, violent resistance to the “Zionist occupation” is legitimized. The fact that the new curriculum emphasizes the return of Palestinian refugees beyond the 1949 demarcation lines and the establishment of Palestinian sovereignty in Israel makes students understand that the “liberation struggle” does not end in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

## THE PALESTINIAN SELF-IMAGE AND THE GEORG ECKERT INSTITUTE

Based on the analysis of the textbooks, it cannot be denied that Palestinian students are indoctrinated with the nationalist ideology of a “Greater Palestine” in which Israel is as if wiped out. But what simply cannot be denied can still be reinterpreted.

This is the method of choice of the Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) of the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media, which in its EU-funded report on Palestinian textbooks does not deny that the PA curriculum is “irredentist” and “negates the existence of the State of Israel.” The report states correctly that no map “depicts Israel as a state. Keys and labels identify ‘Palestine’, but never ‘Israel’; Israeli cities do not appear unless they have a long-standing Arab population (and these are then shown as Palestinian cities).”

For the GEI, however, this is not a cause for criticism, but it distinguishes between “historical and geographical maps” on the one hand and “symbolic and iconographic representations” on the other hand – and the latter elements are something quite positive, or at least nothing in which the GEI has anything to complain about: In view of the Palestinians’ painful experiences, the analysis continues, “the map of historical Palestine as recognized during the British

<sup>15</sup> Cf., Representation of the State of Palestine in Austria, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), <https://www.palestinemission.at/palaes-tinensische-befreiungsorganisi>.

<sup>16</sup> IMPACT-se: The 2020–21 Palestinian School Curriculum, grades 1–12. Selected Examples, May 2021, [https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/PA-Reports\\_Updated-Selected-Examples\\_May-2021.pdf](https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/PA-Reports_Updated-Selected-Examples_May-2021.pdf), p. 3.

mandate” has become one of the “main symbols of Palestinian nationhood.” This is why the map, on which Israel does not exist, “has become a symbol of unity that transcends time and space;” therefore, it “has become an important unifying symbol of Palestinian national identity.”<sup>17</sup>

In view of these remarks, one can refer to IMPACT-se and ask what the “symbol of the Palestinian nation” and the “Palestinian national identity” was like before 2016, before Israel disappeared from the maps of PA textbooks in the course of revisions.<sup>18</sup> The map, supposedly so enormously important from a symbolical perspective that it can’t tolerate any other beside it, can apparently have become such an important symbol only six years ago. Of course, since this would contradict the GEI’s argument about the importance of the Israel-free map, this interpretation simply conceals the changes that have been made in the PA textbooks that have led to the symbolic annihilation of Israel.

Now, in a certain sense, the CFI is even – involuntarily – right: The idea of the (by no means merely symbolic) elimination of Israel was historically indeed the foundation and the essential core of Palestinian identity as it has emerged

since the late 1950s, and as the changes in the textbooks show, the PA no longer pretends to have ever moved away from it. But what on earth should be worth welcoming about Palestinian schoolchildren being drummed into this ideology based on the annihilation of the counterpart with all its violent implications? Children and young people are taught to orient themselves to a fiction that has nothing to do with reality, either historically or currently, and in which there is no room for the existence of Israel or the lives of millions of Jewish Israelis, nor for any territorial compromises between the parties to the conflict.

How such a school education contributes to “peaceful co-existence and mutual recognition” and why it should comply with international educational standards remains the secret of the Georg Eckert Institute. Anyone who does not want to participate in its whitewashing of Palestinian textbooks and does not want to sugar-coat reality cannot avoid the sobering verdict: Almost three decades after the Oslo process began, the PA is teaching the children and youth entrusted to it that Israel does not exist and that any historical, cultural and physical relationship of the Jews to the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean is a lie.

## 4. NO PEACE, NO COEXISTENCE

As noted several times, the Palestinian textbooks have been extensively revised since 2016, but unfortunately not for the better. Previously existing passages, in which less distorted and one-sided content was conveyed and mutual tolerance was promoted, have been removed from the books in the course of revisions of the teaching materials. This also had a massive impact on some of the key issues that should be addressed in school education and knowledge transfer according to international quality criteria: education for peace and the teaching of non-violent ways of conflict resolution.

This affected not least the way in which the Palestinian-Israeli peace process is now being portrayed in school textbooks. In this context, IMPACT-se speaks of “a quantum leap backward toward radicalizing the textbooks.”<sup>19</sup>

With regard to handling the peace process, there is nothing to sugar-coat when it comes to Palestinian textbooks: There is no education for peace, there is simply no longer any mention of nonviolence and the pursuit of mutual to-

lerance. Instead, the necessity of the tireless fight against the “Zionist occupiers,” the glorification of violence and the praise of jihad and martyrdom in the service of the “liberation of Palestine” is taught, which allegedly always has been and will again be Arab in the future.

## ELIMINATION OF THE PEACE PROCESS

The current Palestinian textbooks prefer not to mention the peace process. Instead of describing it as a bilateral and cooperative endeavor, it is seen as something the Palestinians have forced on Israel. For example, Israel’s recognition of the PLO and its “return” to the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1994 is portrayed not as the result of agreements between the parties to the conflict, but as something that the Palestinians forced the “Zionist occupation” to do due to the violence in the course of the so-called “first intifada.” (*Geography and Modern History of Palestine*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2019, p. 29)

<sup>17</sup> Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research: Report on Palestinian Textbooks, 2021, <https://owncloud.gei.de/index.php/s/FwkMw8NZgCAJgPW>, p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> Cf., IMPACT-se: IMPACT-se Review of Georg Eckert Institute (GEI)

Report on Palestinian Authority (PA) Textbooks, August 2021, [https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/IMPACT-se-Review\\_GEI-Report-on-PA-Curriculum.pdf](https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/IMPACT-se-Review_GEI-Report-on-PA-Curriculum.pdf), p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> IMPACT-se: Rejection of Peace, p. 1.

The peace process itself is explained only once. The relevant chapter of the book *Modern and Contemporary History of Palestine* (10<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2019, p. 76 ff.) includes excerpts from the letter that PLO leader Yasser Arafat wrote to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on September 9, 1993, four days before the signing of the “Declaration of Principles” (the so-called Oslo I Agreement). In it, Arafat recognized “the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security” and committed himself to the peace process and a peaceful solution to the conflict.<sup>20</sup>

Even the Georg Eckert Institute, in its analysis of textbooks, cannot help but note that these quotations contradict numerous passages (in this and several other books) that deny Israel any legitimacy. Moreover, earlier editions of this one textbook quoted from the letter that the PLO sees the signing of the Declaration of Principles “a historic event opening a new era of coexistence in peace and stability, an era without violence.”<sup>21</sup> In the revision of the book used today, this commitment to coexistence and nonviolence has disappeared, as has Arafat’s assurance that the PLO will do everything possible to prevent violent actions by its members.

It is also new that the name of the State of Israel is always placed in quotation marks in today’s textbooks, underlining that the legitimacy of the state is being called into question.

## AFTER OSLO?

At least the first Oslo Accords (in this one book) are still mentioned. All other agreements and agreements made between Israel and the PLO in the years after 1993, however, are not mentioned at all. There is nothing to be found about the so-called Gaza-Jericho Agreement of 1994, to which the Palestinian Authority owes its existence, the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (also known as the Oslo II Agreement or the Taba Agreement), which divided the West Bank into three zones with different jurisdictions and since which more than 90 percent of Palestinians have lived under Palestinian control, the 1997 Hebron Protocol, which established shared responsibilities in the West Bank’s largest city, or the 1998 Wye Agreement, which included another partial Israeli withdrawal and the transfer of additional territory to the PA administration.

In the past, students were indeed taught about these key data of the peace process. In a textbook (*National Educa-*

*tion*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2012, p. 52) for example, they were asked to name three of the agreements, to explain the key points of the Declaration of Principles, to describe the contents of the Taba Agreement and to indicate in which areas the provisions of the Declaration of Principles were first implemented. Based on what students are taught today, they could not possibly answer these questions.

International efforts in the peace process are also consistently concealed by today’s Palestinian textbooks, in contrast to earlier editions. They include neither the peace negotiations at Camp David under the auspices of US President Bill Clinton (2000), nor the “Roadmap to Peace” of the so-called Middle East Quartet (2003) or the Annapolis Conference under US President George W. Bush (2007).

The peace treaty between Israel and Jordan, which was concluded in 1994 as a result of the peace process, is also hushed up. On the other hand, the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979 is mentioned – to criticize Egypt for the peace agreement.

## PEACE? – IN GENERAL, YES, BUT NOT WITH ISRAEL

The fact that the peace process is almost non-existent in Palestinian textbooks today, and that its discussion in previous editions has been deleted, is the consequence of the simple fact that peace, or even coexistence with Israel, is simply not (anymore?) a desired goal of the Palestinian leadership. Peace is presented as an ideal, but only in a very general sense and not in relation to Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Just as there are commitments to universal human rights and religious tolerance, but these values are never associated with Israel in the appropriate places: Israelis have no human rights, and there is no tolerance towards them.

The possibility that the conflict with Israel could be ended peacefully by the realization of a two-state solution does not exist in the current school textbooks. Instead of relying on negotiations and cooperation, the necessity of fighting against the comprehensively demonized “Zionist occupier” until the complete “liberation” of Palestine is taught. Alternatives to this do not occur.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Yasser Arafat to Prime Minister Rabin, September 9, 1993, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-205528/>.

<sup>21</sup> Cited according to IMPACE-se: Rejection of Peace, p 3.



## GLORIFYING VIOLENCE AND MARTYRDOM

The advocacy of struggle involves the glorification of terror and violence. Terrorists who have murdered numerous innocent Israeli civilians are presented as glorious role models (see Chapter 5 below). Jihad for the “liberation of Palestine” is characterized as the “individual duty” of every Muslim (*Islamic Education*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 72). “Martyrs” who died in the fight against Israel are extensively praised, and death in battle is portrayed as preferable to a pleasant life. An Arabic textbook reads:

“We are proud of them, we sing with their wonders, and study their march, and give their names to our children; we put their names on our streets and squares and the cultural places. (...) each of us wishes to be like them. (...) They taught people that drinking the cup of bitterness with glory is much sweeter than a pleasant long life accompanied by humiliation. Indeed, they created an illustrious history to the nation. They are the heroes.” (*Arabic Language*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 15)

In short: Martyrs killed in battle are not really dead. Whoever falls in defense of his religion and his country leads a

life at the side of Allah, because God regards martyrdom as a particularly outstanding achievement. (*Islamic Education*, 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 16) The armed struggle against Israel is said to be the “natural” and “legitimate” right of the Palestinians in the struggle against the “occupation.” (*Social Studies*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 43)

As can easily be seen from the remarks, it would be downright trivializing to merely attest to the current Palestinian textbooks that they do not meet UNESCO standards with regard to education in peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms and mutual tolerance – on the contrary, they are in fundamental contradiction to them.

What was once found about the peace process with Israel has almost completely disappeared in textbook revisions since 2016. Peace with Israel is not a desirable goal, a life side by side with the Jewish state is virtually impossible. Instead, the struggle (including armed struggle), jihad for the “liberation of Palestine” and martyrdom are praised.

Instead of an education in peace and tolerance, Palestinian students experience the exact opposite: an education in hatred and violence against Israel.

## 5. PRAISE OF VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM

As the positive references to jihad, fighting and martyrdom suggest, the Palestinian Authority is concerned with indoctrinating students with an ideology in which violence is central to the Palestinian cause. Therefore, the Palestinian textbooks not only contain a general endorsement of the struggle against Israel, but also present even the most gruesome bloody deeds against Jews/Israelis as glorious components of a proud national history.

### HEROISM AND SELF-SACRIFICE

An Islam textbook sums up the orientation towards violence that runs through many of the textbooks. Under the title “The heroism of the people of Palestine,” students are told that since the beginning of the “Jewish-Zionist occupation,” the people of Palestine have been confronted with situations in which they have demonstrated “heroism and sacrifice”: “Men, women, children, are facing the Zionist occupiers by force and sacrifice.” The “heroic leaders of the people of Palestine have carried out many acts of bravery and courage throughout history, such as the mar-

tyr Abd al-Qader al-Husseini and Izz a-Din al-Qassam.” (*Islamic Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2019, p. 39 f.)

Izz a-Din al-Qassam was the Islamist leader of an Arab underground militia in the British Mandate of Palestine that carried out several deadly assassination attempts on Jews in the early 1930s. Al-Qassam was finally shot by British soldiers in 1935. He is the namesake of the Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of the Islamist terrorist group Hamas.

The second of the “heroic leaders” mentioned, Abd al-Qader al-Husseini, a nephew of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, ardent anti-Semite and Nazi collaborator Amin el-Husseini, was one of the military leaders of the Arab uprising against the British Mandate and the Jews in Palestine in the 1930s. After his expulsion from the country, he participated in the Nazi-sponsored coup attempt in Iraq in 1941 before returning to Palestine and becoming a key commander of the so-called “Army of the Holy War.” He was killed on 8 April 1945 in the battle for the village of Kastel, just outside Jerusalem.

But not only these two illustrious militia leaders had demonstrated their “heroism,” but also the many “children

of Palestine” who had “opposed the Zionist enemies with force and courage” during the first and second intifada. “A large number of them became martyrs during the protection of the land of Palestine.” (ibid.)

Heroes in the sense of this textbook were therefore also all those who tried since the autumn of 2000 in the Palestinian war of terror to kill as many “Zionist enemies” as possible with bloody suicide attacks, in discos, restaurants, buses, shopping malls, hotels and markets.

## NATURAL AND LEGITIMATE, LIKE THE MASSACRE OF HEBRON

From the point of view of a social studies book, all these acts do not pose a problem, because: “The right of peoples to self-determination and their right to resist occupation and foreign rule, *including resorting to the use of an armed force*, are natural and legitimate (...).” (*Social Studies*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 35, emphasis added by the author).

The “armed resistance,” the students learn, began with “Zionist immigration to Palestine” and continued with the various “uprisings” during the British Mandate period, including “the 1929 al-Buraq uprising, the 1935 Sheikh Izz ad-Din al-Qassam uprising, and the general strike” from 1936 to 1939.

It has already been explained above who al-Qassam was, and the Arab uprising from 1936 onwards has already been mentioned. What is interesting, however, is the reference to “the 1929 al-Buraq uprising.” Al-Buraq is the Arabic name for the Western Wall, which, according to another textbook, is “Palestinian land and an exclusive right of the Muslims” (*Islamic Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 63). The uprising mentioned refers to the riots of 1929, the heaviest wave of violence to date, in which Arab attackers throughout the country completely destroyed six kibbutzim and murdered 133 Jews in about a week.

The worst hit did not include “Zionist immigrants,” but two of the oldest Jewish communities in the country. A bloody pogrom began in Hebron on August 23, culminating in a veritable massacre the following day, in which Arabs armed with daggers and swords massacred their Jewish neighbors. When the killing ended, 67 Jews were dead, including a dozen women and three children under the age of five.

The British High Commissioner to Palestine at the time, anything but pro-Jewish John Chancellor, wrote after a visit to Hebron: “I do not think history records many worse horrors in the past few hundred years.”<sup>22</sup> The surviving Jews, most of whom had found shelter with Arabs, were evacuated from the city.

Three of the murderers of Hebron, who had distinguished themselves in their deeds by special cruelty, were sentenced to death by the mandatory authorities and hanged.<sup>23</sup> They who “sacrificed for their own homeland” are paid homage in an Arabic textbook and thanked for their “glorified deeds.” The “greatest reward” is said to be able to become a martyr. (*Arabic Language*, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 36)

Scenes similar to those in Hebron took place a few days later in Safed. In an attack lasting only twenty minutes, Arabs murdered eighteen Jews and wounded some eighty others. Only after two days of Arab looting and pillaging, in which more Jews were murdered, did British law enforcement succeed in ending the violence in the city.

These atrocities are hidden behind the comparatively harmless-sounding term “al-Buraq-uprising.” For the Palestinian social studies book, the bestial slaughter of completely innocent men, women and children is nothing more than the completely “natural and legitimate” exercise of the Palestinian “right to armed resistance.”

And that was only the beginning, because the “resistance operations kept on going after the issuing of the Partition Plan and the Zionist Occupation of Palestine in 1948.” Since its founding in 1965, the PLO has “adopted armed resistance.” (*Social Studies*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 38) Mind you: The “Zionist occupation” is associated with the year 1948, that is, with the founding of Israel, and not with the “occupation” of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, which took place only nineteen years later in the Six-Day War.

## FROM MUNICH VIA ROME ...

Among the numerous terrorist attacks perpetrated by the PLO’s branches around the world since the late 1960s, Palestinian textbooks highlight some of the bloodiest ones to present them as part of the heroic history of the struggle against the “Zionists.”

<sup>22</sup> Citation of Zipperstein, Steven E.: *Law and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. The Trials of Palestine*, London/New York 2020, p. 122.

<sup>23</sup> Cf., Markl, Florian: Die Vorbilder des palästinensischen Premiers, *Mena-Watch*, January 16, 2022, <https://www.mena-watch.com/vorbilder-des-palaestinensischen-premiers/>.

The “Palestinian Resistance,” as a history book teaches, has used many methods to fight the “Zionist Occupation.” This included “guerrilla warfare” as well as the attempt “to strike at Zionist interests abroad, such as the Munich operation in 1972.” (*History*, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2019, p. 52)

This refers to the hostage-taking in the Olympic Village on September 5, 1972, in which eleven members of the Israeli Olympic team were murdered and a German police officer was killed. As became public knowledge only decades later, the hostages were brutally abused by the Palestinian attackers; the shot wrestler Yossef Romano, for example, who had stood in the way of the terrorists, was castrated in front of the other hostages.<sup>24</sup>

Another example of the kind of “operations against Zionist targets” highlighted in the textbooks is a bloodbath perpetrated by Palestinian terrorists at Rome airport on December 17, 1973.<sup>25</sup> (*Geography and modern and contemporary history of Palestine*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2019, p. 61) Five Palestinian terrorists first opened fire from submachine guns in the terminal building, killing two people. Then they stormed across the tarmac onto a Pan Am plane waiting to take off, which they set on fire with phosphorus and other hand grenades. Of the 177 people on board, thirty were killed.

The attackers then abducted several Italian and German flight attendants into a Lufthansa plane, murdering two other people. Via Athens and Damascus, the flight reached Kuwait, where the action ended. By then, the “operation against Zionist targets,” as the textbook calls the bloodshed, had cost the lives of 34 completely innocent people, all of whom had nothing to do with Israel and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. None of the Palestinian textbooks contains a single word of criticism of the numerous, unjustifiable attacks on civilian bystanders around the world.

#### .... TO THE ISRAELI COAST

The glorification of bloody terror and the veneration of the murderers involved culminate in the praise of Dalal al-Mughrabi, who led the most serious terrorist attack in Israel to date on March 11, 1978. In the so-called coastal road massacre, 37 Israeli civilians were killed, including ten children; 76 people were injured.

The Mughrabi-led terrorists had taken a boat from Lebanon to Israel. Arriving at the beach, they killed an American tourist. Then they hijacked a taxi, whose occupants they murdered, threw hand grenades at the cars on the coastal road and ambushed two buses until they could finally be stopped at a roadblock. Nine members of the terror squad, including Mughrabi, died in the exchange of fire.

In Arabic class, Palestinian students read about a large portrait photo of her:

“Our Palestinian history is brimming with names of martyrs who have given their lives to the homeland, including the martyr Dalal al-Mughrabi. Her struggle portrays challenge and heroism, making her memory immortal in our hearts and minds.” (*Arabic Language*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 51)



Figure 5: Glorification of the terrorist murderer, Dalal al-Mughrabi (*Arabic language*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 51)

<sup>24</sup> Cf., Borden, Sam: Long-Hidden Details Reveal Cruelty of 1972 Munich Attackers, *The New York Times*, December 1, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/02/sports/long-hidden-details-reveal-cruelty-of-1972-munich-attackers.html>.

<sup>25</sup> Cf., Shenker, Israel: Arab Hijackers Land in Kuwait; Hostages Freed, *The New York Times*, December 19, 1973, <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/12/19/archives/arab-hijackers-land-in-kuwait-hostages-freed-in-return-5-guerrillas.html>.



Two pages further, the members of the terror squad are referred to as “heroes.” In a social studies textbook, Mughrabi is presented as a prominent example of those women who “carried the banner of resistance and liberation in the face of colonialism.” (*Social Studies*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 40) In a section titled “Hooray for the Heroes,” Mughrabi is named alongside al-Qassam, Yasser Arafat and others as one of the martyrs whom everyone should emulate:

“These sacrifices and the heroic acts they offered were not for personal gain. They did not leave behind wealth, nor real estate, as all they did was for their faith, their peoples and their homelands. Therefore, they deserved to be called heroes, immortalized by history (...). Hooray for them and down with the cowards!” (*Arabic Language*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2019, p. 14 f.)

At least as far as Arafat is concerned, by the way, the homage is completely wrong: He left this world as a billionaire.

## THE GEORG ECKERT INSTITUTE AND TERROR

Hooray to martyrdom and the murderers of dozens of innocent civilians, down with the cowards – the poisonous ideology with which Palestinian textbooks indoctrinate students can hardly be expressed more clearly. Again, one wonders how the Georg Eckert Institute could come to the conclusion that “the textbooks adhere to UNESCO standards and adopt criteria that are prominent in international education discourse, including a strong focus on human rights.”<sup>26</sup>

To reach this conclusion, the Institute used a breathtaking trick with regard to the apparent Palestinian glorification of terror: While the authors could not entirely ignore the fact that Palestinian violence is portrayed as part of a heroic struggle, they simply claim that this applies only to “certain periods of Palestinian history”:

“Terrorist operations are presented as a necessary means during a *historical phase* in the Palestinian struggle.” [emphasis F. M.]<sup>27</sup>

It is implied that this historical phase is over, and that the glorification of terror is a thing of the past.

In its criticism of the GEI study, IMPACT-se quite rightly argues that this central claim is completely unfounded:

“In fact, there is nothing in the PA textbooks that suggests repudiation of violence against civilians or that it would not be used again; at no point does the PA curriculum condemn, or even criticize past use of violence against Israeli civilians, nor does it explicitly frame it as a historical phase which ran its course. Moreover, the [GEI] report does not clarify what this crucial argument – which features heavily in both the conclusions and the executive summary to the report – is based on.”<sup>28</sup>

The GEI study becomes downright grotesque when discussing Dalal al-Mughrabi’s portrayal. The authors noticed that the revised version of the Arabic textbook no longer uses the same photo as in previous editions:

“The text remains the same but the photograph of Dalal al-Mughrabi in military uniform has been replaced by a picture of her in civilian clothing, thus toning down the militancy in her portrayal.”<sup>29</sup>

The fact that the unchanged glorification of a murderess is now illustrated with a different photo does not change the praise at all (especially since the GEI itself knows that she can still be seen elsewhere in uniform. Cf., *History*, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 50). Even after the “militancy in her portrayal” has been withdrawn, Mughrabi is presented to the students – and especially the girls – as a heroine and role model to be imitated.

In its attempt to largely whitewash the PA textbooks, the GEI clings to every detail, no matter how small, in order to obscure the clear overall picture: Palestinian students are raised to hate Israel. Terrorists who have translated this hatred into murderous violence and terror against Jews, Israelis or even completely innocent bystanders in recent decades are showered with praise. And anyone who can imagine other ways of dealing with conflicts or does not support violence is ridiculed as a coward and put down.

<sup>26</sup> Georg-Eckert-Institute: Report on Palestinian Textbooks, p. 3.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>28</sup> IMPACT-se: Review of Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) Report on Palestinian Authority (PA) Textbooks, p. 11.

<sup>29</sup> Georg-Eckert-Institute: Report on Palestinian Textbooks, p. 148.

## 6. JERUSALEM, PRISONERS, AND REFUGEES

In addition to the areas already discussed, the ideology in Palestinian textbooks, which focuses on the ongoing struggle against Israel, concentrates primarily on three themes that run through the textbooks of various subjects in almost countless variations: The Arab-Islamic claim to Jerusalem, the constant reference to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, and the emphasis on the unrestricted right of return of all Palestinian refugees.

### SATAN'S AIDES IN ARABIC JERUSALEM

The basic approach of textbooks to Jerusalem is set out in a textbook on *National and Social Education*, which states succinctly:

“Jerusalem is an Arab city built by our Arab forefathers thousands of years ago. (...) Jerusalem is a holy city for Muslims and Christians.” (3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 29)

Unlike previous editions, which also talked about Jewish history in the country and even mentioned that Jerusalem was once the Jewish capital, the textbooks used today flatly deny any Jewish reference. Evidence for the Jewish history of Palestine and Jerusalem is all “falsified” (see Chapter 2 above).

Since the beginning of the “Zionist occupation,” the narrative goes, Palestinian archaeological finds have been “stolen” (*Social Studies*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 20) as the “Zionists” attempted “to steal the Palestinian physical and moral heritage” (*Social Studies*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 19). The aim was “to erase its Arab and Islamic identity.” (ibid., p. 22)

Jerusalem is particularly affected by these sinister intentions, the text continues. As stated above, the Haram al-Sharif (the Temple Mount) is presented as “Palestinian land and an exclusive right of the Muslims.” (*Islamic Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 63) There had never been a Jewish temple there, which was again only a falsification of history: “The Zionist occupation changed the name ›Al-Buraq Wall‹ into ›the Wailing Wall‹: furthermore, it “removed some of the Jerusalem City Wall and instead put other ones with Zionist decorations and forms” and “built new Jewish synagogues in the Old City that never existed.” (*Social Studies*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 60 f.)

The extent of the falsification of history expressed in these claims is particularly evident in the example of the Temple Mount. Because here, the textbooks try to deny facts that used to be taken for granted even in Muslim and Arab nationalist circles. In 1924, for example, the Supreme Council of Muslims in Jerusalem published a pamphlet called *A Brief Guide to Al-Haram al-Sharif*. In it, a historical overview of the historic hill read:

“The site is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest (perhaps from pre-historic) times. Its identity with the site of Solomon’s Temple is beyond dispute. This, too, is the spot, according to the universal belief, on which ›David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings.”<sup>30</sup>

When these lines were published, the Supreme Muslim Council was headed by none other than the notorious Mufti of Jerusalem and later Nazi collaborator, Amin el-Husseini. Even for this die-hard anti-Semite, there was no question that the Haram al-Sharif was the former Jewish Temple Mount – a historical fact of course, which however is completely denied by current Palestinian textbooks.

Since Jerusalem was occupied by the “Zionist Jews,” according to a book for *Islamic Education*, they have had “the aim of deporting its Arab and Muslim residents and making it a Jewish city.” The occupiers would carry out excavations under the Haram al-Sharif, causing “landslides and cracks in its squares” and placing the al-Aqsa mosque in “great danger” of being destroyed. (5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 98)

The mosque is “a sacred Islamic-Palestinian place and must be protected as much as the other religious sites in Palestine” – with the exception of the Jewish ones, one has to think, because these are all deemed fakes. (ibid., p. 65) In general, it is presented as the task of the Palestinians to stop the “Judaization” of Jerusalem (*Arabic language*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 14) to “protect and supervise” the city until it would one day “be freed.” (*National and Social Education*, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 31) No matter how long the “occupation” lasts, and the “danger” continues, one day Jerusalem, which “fell into the hands of the barbarians,” will be reconquered. (*Arabic language*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 27)

<sup>30</sup> Cited according to Markl, Florian: Wo Geschichtsfälschung zum Kulturgut wird, Mena-Watch, October 14, 2016, <https://www.mena-watch.com/wo-geschichtsfalschung-zum-kulturgut-erklaert-wird/>

The intended reconquest of Jerusalem is by no means meant metaphorically, but literally: Only the struggle would lead to the “liberation” of the city. The day will come when “one of our children, one of the best of our sons, will raise the Palestinian flag over the walls of Jerusalem, over its Mosques and Churches.” (*Islamic Education*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 65) What is necessary for this, even nine-year-olds are taught by means of a poem:

“I vow I shall sacrifice my blood, to saturate the land of the generous and will eliminate the usurper from my country, and will annihilate the remnants of the foreigners. Oh the land of Al-Aqsa and the Haram, oh cradle of chivalry and generosity. Patient, be patient as victory is ours, dawn is emerging from the oppression.” (*Our Beautiful Language*, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Part 2, 2019, p. 66)

The “sacred” Jerusalem, as somewhat older students learn, will “spit out the scum of foreigners and pretenders” (*Arabic Language*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 18); ultimately, the aim is to “liberate [the al-Aqsa-Mosque] from the fist of unbelief, from Satan’s aides” (*Arabic Language*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 67)

## THE WAY TO THE CITY’S JAIL

The struggle against Israel propagated in the textbooks goes hand in hand not only with the praise of violence and martyrdom, but also with the glorification of the “prisoners” who the students should look up to and emulate.



Figure 6: Jerusalem will “spit out the scum of foreigners and pretenders.” (*Arabic Language*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 18)

The passages about the detainees are often accompanied by atrocity stories about their supposedly inhumane treatment by the “Zionist occupiers,” allegations of torture, and the mention of the “martyrdom” that some would achieve in Israeli jails instead of on the battlefield.

Nowhere is there any mention of the acts committed by those serving long prison sentences in Israel, because the picture drawn is quite simple: The criminal “occupation” captures not only those who “resist,” but innocent Palestinians arbitrarily and en masse, favoring women and children. Once in the hands of the “Zionists,” an evil fate awaits them.

“The prisoners are subjected during their detention to a treatment that lacks the minimal basic needs of human life.” This allegedly also includes “interrogation and torture methods forbidden legally and internationally.” As a result of the inhumane treatment, prisoners “have died of torture and became martyrs, and many prisoners have been inflicted by chronic diseases and perpetual disability.” (*Social Studies*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 28) Hunger is also apparently used in a targeted manner (cf., *Sciences and Life*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 35), and the prisoners would suffer from “general weakness and malnutrition” (ibid., 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 65)

The prison authorities would deny medical treatment to sick detainees and would not take them to hospitals. Therefore, there is “no doubt that prison administrations are exercising the policy of a slow death towards these sick people.” (*Arabic Language*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 123)

The particular burden that families supposedly suffer as a result of the inhumane treatment of prisoners makes solidarity with them an urgent imperative. Even nine-year-olds are therefore taught the motto: “It is our task to support the prisoners and their parents, to visit the prisoners, to talk about them in schools and to show solidarity on the national holiday” (*National and Social Education*, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 59)

Already in the first grade, as six-year-olds, the children are asked to list the “names of the prisons of the occupation” (*National Handbook of Education and Life*, 1<sup>st</sup> grade, Part 1, 2019, p. 63), to describe the “road to the city’s prison” and to discuss the “imprisoned children in the prisons of the occupiers” (ibid., Part 2, 2019, p. 8). In sixth grade, the “agony of Palestinians in prisons” is cited to explain the meaning of violence (*Social Sciences*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 28); students are invited to discuss “the suffering of Palestinians in the prisons of the occupation” (ibid., p. 68)





Figure 7: “Water and salt keep the Palestinian prisoners alive while conducting the empty-guts battle [hunger strike].” (*Science and Life*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 30)

The subject of prisoners also plays a role in subjects where one would not expect it. In the third grade, the schoolchildren receive the following assignment in math class: “In 2014, the number of prisoners in the occupation prisons totaled 6,500 prisoners, while in 2015 the number of prisoners was 6,800 prisoners. In what year was the number of prisoners larger?” (*Mathematics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 13)

Another calculation example reads: “Every year on April 17, the Day of the Prisoners takes place. The number of prisoners since the 2016 intifada is 90,000, including 11,000 children and 14,000 women. Calculate the number of children and women.” (*ibid.*, p. 59)

And in a chapter on chemistry, students are asked to ponder the following sentence: “Water and salt keep the Palestinian prisoners alive while conducting the empty-guts battle [hunger strike].” (*Science and Life*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 30)

The importance of the subject of prisoners in school textbooks reflects the importance that the Palestinian Authority attaches to prisoners. The PA continues to pay hundreds

of millions annually to Palestinian terrorists in Israeli custody or to the relatives of killed terrorists – in 2017, these payments accounted for seven percent of the PA’s budget, in 2019 it was more than EUR 290 million.<sup>31</sup>

The logic behind this is as simple as it is murderous: The bloodier an attack, the more money there is for it.<sup>32</sup> The PA literally pays rewards for deadly terror while indoctrinating schoolchildren to celebrate the murderers as heroes.

### A DOLL IN JAFFA

The third recurring theme in textbooks is that of Palestinian refugees and their alleged “right of return.” In several places it is discussed how the Palestinians became refugees in 1948, the year of the “Nakba”/“catastrophe”; the presented story, however, has little to do with the real historical events and the actual emergence of the Palestinian refugee problem.<sup>33</sup>

Again, everything is quite simple: The establishment of the (unnamed) State of Israel was a large-scale international conspiracy against the Arabs, in which the British colluded with the “Zionists.” The “invaders” murdered, looted, raped, expelled and destroyed property in order to wipe out the Palestinians. The “occupiers” had hoped that “the old will die and the young will forget” (*Arabic Language*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 26), but this would not happen because the Palestinians would never resign themselves to “injustice” – “one day” they would return, and the “occupation” would disappear. (*ibid.*, p. 28)

In a textbook for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, for example, this sounds like a grandchild asking his grandfather why people left their homeland, and the grandpa answers: “Earlier, we lived in security, but the Zionist occupiers surrounded us, killed a lot of us and expelled us from our country in 1948.” (*National and Social Education*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 32) The summary clarifies:

“The Palestinians were forced to leave their cities and their country in 1948. (...) The Palestinians who fled are called refugees. To this day, they keep the keys and papers of their possessions (...). They have the right to return.” (*ibid.*, p. 34)

<sup>31</sup> Cf., Seven percent of the Palestinian budget goes into terror pensions, Mena-Watch, January 13, 2018, <https://www.mena-watch.com/sieben-prozent-des-palaestinenischen-haushalts-gehen-in-terrorrenten/>, as well as Abbas’s Palestinian Authority paid more than 290 million euros to terrorists in 2019, Mena-Watch, March 28, 2021, <https://www.mena-watch.com/sieben-prozent-des-palaestinenischen-haushalts-gehen-in-terrorrenten/>.

<sup>32</sup> Cf., Wo Judenmörder ein Ministergehalt erhalten (Where Jewish Murders Receive a Ministerial Salary), Mena-Watch, November 14, 2020, <https://www.mena-watch.com/wo-judenmoerder-ein-ministergehalt-erhalten/>.

<sup>33</sup> Cf., Morris, Benny concerning this: *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, Cambridge 2004.



Figure 8: “Demand the right of return!” (*Islamic Education*, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 88)

Numerous descriptions portray the drama of the “Expulsion.” In a Lebanese refugee camp, a grandmother tells how she once played with her friends in Jaffa and made rag dolls when the “Zionist gangs” invaded and the family had to flee:

“My father brought us here, and it never occurred to me that our exile would last this long. I am still waiting for the day on which I will return to finish making the doll under the orange tree. God willing, we shall return, even if after a long time.” In the following dictation exercise, the children are invited to write:

“While we were making the doll, we heard many explosions made by the Zionist gangs during their attack on the city, and we heard shouting [coming] from all places. Our family members came looking for us, and my father dragged me quickly. I started crying: ‘Daddy, Daddy, my doll, my doll!’” (*Arabic Language*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 62 f.)

The students are encouraged to demand the “right to return” (cf., *Islamic Education*, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 88), which is presented as guaranteed (cf., *Arabic Language*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 76).<sup>34</sup> Nowhere in the textbooks is it even hinted that there could be other solutions to the Palestinian refugee problem – the “right of return” is consistently presented as the only possible path, going so far as to imply that it is the only conceivable one.

If one considers that, in the case of the Palestinians, refugee status, unlike all other refugees worldwide, is inherited from generation to generation and therefore more than five and a half million Palestinians are now considered “refugees,” it is not difficult to see what the required complete “return” amounts to: the reversal of the founding of Israel, i.e., the elimination of the Jewish state.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> cf., Markl, Florian/Feuerherdt, Alex: Das Rückkehrrecht aus völkerrechtlicher Perspektive. Geschichte, Gegenwart und Bedeutung einer gefährlichen Illusion, in: Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft: Rückkehrrecht? Geschichte und Gegenwart einer palästinensischen Forderung, Berlin 2021, <https://www.deutsch-israelische-gesellschaft.de/download/rueckkehrrecht-eine-palaesinensische-forderung/?wpdmdl=2302&refresh=615548c6724b31632979142>, S. 8–19.

<sup>35</sup> Cf., Schwartz, Adi/Wilf, Einat: The War of Return. How Western Indulgence of the Palestinian Dream has Obstructed the Path to Peace, New York 2020.

## 7. MATHEMATICS AND NATURAL SCIENCES

How extensive hatred and violence is indoctrinated into Palestinian textbooks is shown not least by the fact that it is by no means limited to subjects such as geography, history, social studies or Islamic religious education, in which the conflict with Israel obviously plays a role and must be discussed in one way or another. As we have seen from several examples, some of the most problematic examples are found in Arabic textbooks.

Most frightening, however, is the fact that hate education extends to subjects such as math and science, where politics shouldn't play a role. Students are constantly confronted with scenes full of violence and the fight against Israel in these textbooks as well.

### SAMPLE CALCULATIONS

When it comes to teaching students how to calculate, there are many harmless examples. To learn to add, a fictitious purchase on the market may serve, one could calculate household costs and much more. The examples found in Palestinian textbooks are of a very different nature: The children do not have to deal with fruit or money, but with death and violence.

In the mathematics book for the fourth grade, for example, there is a photo of several coffins wrapped in Palestinian flags being carried by a crowd of people:

"The number of martyrs of the First Intifada (the Intifada of Rocks) is 1,392 martyrs, and the number of martyrs of the Al-Aqsa Intifada is 4,673. The number of martyrs in the two intifadas is \_\_\_\_\_ martyrs." (*Mathematics*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 27)

Figure 9: Calculate the number of "martyrs" of the two intifadas. (*Mathematics*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 27)

The martyrs also play a role in statistics class in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, where students are to enter probabilities into a table:

"The Jerusalem district is exposed to ongoing violence by the Israeli occupation against the holy sites of Islam, and its Palestinian population, resulting in the loss of property and life. The number of martyrs in district of Jerusalem during the period of 1994–2015, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics is 156 martyrs. The number of martyrs according to the years is divided as follows: (...)" (*Mathematics*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 86)

The students learn arithmetic not only through "martyrs," Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons are also popular examples. In third grade, one task is as follows:

"In 2014, the number of prisoners in the occupation prisons totaled 6,500 prisoners, while in 2015 the number of prisoners was 6,800 prisoners. In what year was the number of prisoners larger?" (*Mathematics*, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 13)

In the same book, there is also the following calculation:

"Every year on April 17, the Day of the Prisoners takes place. The number of prisoners since the 2016 intifada is 90,000, including 11,000 children and 14,000 women. Calculate the number of children and women." (ibid., p. 59)

Dividing is also practiced using examples characterized by politics, violence and death. Many dates in the history of the Palestinian people are named as important, including 1948 (the year of flight); 1988 (the year of the Palestinian declaration of independence); the "speech of Abu Ammar," i.e., Yasser Arafat, at the United Nations in 1974 and the massacres in the Lebanese refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila in 1982. Ask students to divide the years by six. (*Mathematics*, 4<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 20)

In the fifth grade, next to a picture of Jerusalem, it says that the length of the "wall" in the "Palestinian capital" is 4.2 kilometers. The students should convert the kilometers into meters. (*Mathematics*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 76)

In the eleventh grade, Palestinian prisoners again serve as a calculation example:

"If in 2009 there were 640 more beds in Mejdo prison than in Nafha prison and the total number of inmates was

2,240, how many inmates were there per prison that year?” (*Mathematics, Literature and Sharia path*, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 11)

## EQUATION WITH CORPSES

In the eleventh grade, children learn the solution to equations with one variable using the following example:

“The Abrahamic Mosque [in Hebron] is one of the most important and religious landmarks in Palestine. It’s associated calling one of with one of the massacres of the Zionist occupation, whose victims were 180 worshipers among them martyrs and wounded.

Calculate the number of martyrs and wounded in the massacre if it is known that the number of wounded is five times the number of martyrs. Assume that that the number of martyrs of the massacre is X martyrs.

The number of victims of the massacre in terms X = \_\_\_\_\_.

The number of martyrs of the massacre and its wounded in terms of X will be 6X Why?

Number of martyrs in massacre = \_\_\_\_\_.

Number of wounded in the massacre = \_\_\_\_\_.” (*Mathematics, Literature and Sharia Path*, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 4)

In the same mathematics textbook, shooting Israeli “settlers” are used to deal with probabilities:

“One of the settlers fired at the cars passing by on one of the roads. If the probability of hitting the car with the first shot is 0.7 and the settler fired at ten cars, what do you expect the number of vehicles hit to be?” (ibid., p. 55)

## THE PHYSICS OF SLINGSHOTS

According to a German physics online portal, Newton’s second law states: “If a resulting force acts on a body (...), the body is accelerated in the direction of the force.” Some examples from everyday experience illustrate the principle:

- “If you kick a ball hard, i.e., with great force, the ball is accelerated more than if you touch the ball only lightly.
- You can accelerate a handball with your arm strength more than a heavy shot-put ball.



Figure 10: *Sciences and Life*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 57

- To slow down (catch) a basketball, you have to apply more force than to slow down (catch) a volleyball.”<sup>36</sup>

In the Palestinian Authority’s science textbook for the seventh grade, a very different example of Newton’s second law can be found. One drawing shows a masked Palestinian aiming a slingshot at onrushing soldiers. Underneath, students are asked to answer the following questions:

- “What is the relationship between the elongation of the slingshot’s rubber and the tensile strength affecting it?
- What are the forces that influence the stone after its release from the slingshot?” (*Sciences and Life*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 57)

The task, which can be found in a tenth-grade textbook, becomes somewhat more demanding:

“A young girl is using a slingshot (a rock connected to a string) towards a specific target. Let’s suppose the length of the string is X, the rock’s release speed is Y and the centripetal acceleration is Z. If the young girl doubles the slingshot’s speed, but the radius stays constant, the acceleration Z will be:

- A. Z
- B. 0.5Z
- C. 2Z
- D. 4Z.”

(*General Sciences, vocational sector*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 55)

An example is also chosen to explain acoustics, which deals with alleged Israeli atrocities. One photo shows Muslims praying on the Haram ash-Sharif, underneath is a

<sup>36</sup> LEIFIPhysik, Joachim Herz Stiftung, Kraft und Bewegungsänderung, 2. Newtonsches Gesetz (Aktionsprinzip), [https://www.leifiphysik.de/mechanik/kraft-und-bewegungsaenderung/grundwissen/2-newton-sches-gesetz-aktionsprinzip#:~:text=Newtonsches%20Gesetz%20\(Aktionsprinzip\),-Das%20Wichtigste%20auf&text=Wirkt%20auf%20einen%20K%C3%B6rper%20eine, die%20Richtung%20der%20Kraft%20beschleunigt.](https://www.leifiphysik.de/mechanik/kraft-und-bewegungsaenderung/grundwissen/2-newton-sches-gesetz-aktionsprinzip#:~:text=Newtonsches%20Gesetz%20(Aktionsprinzip),-Das%20Wichtigste%20auf&text=Wirkt%20auf%20einen%20K%C3%B6rper%20eine, die%20Richtung%20der%20Kraft%20beschleunigt.)



symbolic representation of sound waves on their way from a loudspeaker to a human ear. Ask students to discuss the following scenario:

“The forces of the Zionist Occupation prohibit the amplification of the call for prayer (adhan) in the minarets of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.” (*Sciences and Life*, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 35)

Israel is also blamed for anomalies in Palestinian fetuses (*Living Sciences*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 80) as well as for (purposefully caused) environmental pollution (*General Science*, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 42) and destruction (*Social Sciences*, 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 19), water shortage (*Chemistry*, 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 65; *Mathematics*, 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 71; *Mathematics*, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 2, 2020, p. 4; *Mathematics*, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 63), power shortage (*Mathematics*, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2020, p. 29) and, in general, for the damage to Palestinian resources (*Social Sciences*, 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Part 1, 2020, p. 47 ff.).

## EXPLAINING AWAY WHAT IS OBVIOUS

For the Georg Eckert Institute (GEI), these anti-Israel and violent examples posed no particular problem. Again, in its study of Palestinian textbooks, the GEI uses some tricks to neutralize the meaning of the hate messages masquerading in the guise of science education. First, it claims that the textbooks do not *propagate* hatred and violence, but merely *reflect* it:

“Palestinian textbooks are produced and located within an environment saturated with conflict, occupation and ongoing violence, all of which are reflected in the textbooks.”<sup>37</sup>

As the numerous examples in previous chapters have shown, this is a ridiculous claim: Those who call on students to sacrifice their lives in jihad against Israel, declare bloody massacres to be part of a “glorious history” and praise terrorists as role models for children to emulate, do not “reflect” something, but *spread* hatred and calls for violence.

The GEI does not condemn violent content, but secondly declares it to be one of the strengths of textbooks: Especially in mathematics and natural science subjects, “Real

Life Connections” (RLC), i.e., examples from everyday life experience, are decisive for the learning success of the pupils, as they make the relevance of what they have learned clear. RLC includes “content that refers to aspects of everyday life in order to link the sciences and mathematics to the familiar surroundings of students.”<sup>38</sup>

Now, on the one hand, one could object that one would not have to resort to slingshots to illustrate physical laws, but that there are also many other, peaceful everyday references. However, this objection does not count for the GEI: Because students are allegedly confronted with violence on a daily basis, the inclusion of violent content would be an educational necessity. And, there is more: “Avoidance of conflict distances the curriculum from real life, running the risk of making it appear meaningless.”<sup>39</sup>

Let’s leave aside the objection that the GEI here paints a dramatizing distorted picture of the reality of life of Palestinian youth, which usually does not consist of a daily confrontation with (one must assume: Israeli) violence, and let us concentrate on the argument put forward: As the GEI argues, there is hardly any content that can be classified as intolerable, because even the worst incitement against Jews and Israelis corresponds in a certain sense to the life experience of young Palestinians – which, after all, they hear in politics, the media and considerable parts of society. However, is that a reason to reproduce this incitement in textbooks? Shouldn’t they consciously take countermeasures and present alternative perspectives? The GEI completely turns a blind eye to the extent to which the indoctrination of children in schools helps perpetuate the conflict and educate children to the hatred and violence that are supposedly only reflected in school textbooks. (One does not want to imagine what would come out of a GEI analysis of historical Nazi textbooks: Would the Institute welcome indoctrination with National Socialist ideology as a successful integration of “Real Life Connections” in the same way?)

IMPACT-se puts it in a nutshell:

“The purpose of such content is to instill in Palestinian students a conflict-oriented view of the universe, where even the laws of math, physics, chemistry and biology cannot transcend – and in fact serve to prove – the ubiquity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the evil of the Israeli ‘Enemy,’ and the justness of the Palestinian national cause.”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Georg-Eckert-Institute: Report on Palestinian Textbooks, p. 172.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>40</sup> IMPACT-se: Review of Georg Eckert Institute (GEI) Report on Palestinian Authority (PA) Textbooks, p. 8.

## 8. CONCLUSION: BEING TAUGHT TO HATE

Previous chapters have demonstrated with numerous examples that Palestinian students are indoctrinated with textbooks published by the Palestinian Authority (PA) in ways that have little to do with education in peace, coexistence, nonviolent conflict resolution, and tolerance.

While there is not a consistent lack of general commitment to values that international educational standards suggest should be taught in textbooks, this is done with a significant limitation that makes all the difference: All these noble declarations do not apply to Jews and Israel – when it comes to them, demonization, disinformation and glorification of or encouragement to violence prevail.

### A SPOT-ON SUMMARY

The following passages provide a concise summary of the ideology taught in Palestinian textbooks:

“Israel must cease to exist not so much due to the Palestinians having an interest in her disappearance, but because this disappearance is derived from the definition of Palestinianism as the attribute of both a people and a country. Palestine is the homeland of the Palestinians and must not be separated from the Arab world; and the Palestinians are an integral part of the Arab nation. The whole of Palestine must be restored to them and put under their sovereignty, because only in Palestine in its entirety could they realize their self-determination, redeem their personality from alienation and regain their dignity and freedom.

This conception is complemented by the theory, that is also formulated as a definition, that the Jews are not a nation and thus on principle do not deserve to have a state of their own, nor can they as a non-nation maintain it. Precisely because Israel contradicts such axioms both in regard to the territory she has occupied and the essence of the Israeli Jews, it is concluded that its establishment could only have been accomplished in an historical act of aggression and plunder by a despicable movement such as Zionism.

Zionism is condemned both because it is racist and linked with imperialism and because its evil deeds flow from its very essence. The abolition of Israel’s existence is legal and also beneficial to humanity, the Arabs and the Palestinians.”

There are

“intrinsic, moral, utilitarian, volitional, legal and historical arguments, which all converge into a total negation, as a matter of principle, of the existence of the State of Israel in any form or size.”

The plethora of such arguments leads to the conclusion “that there is no atrocity that cannot be justified in order to bring about the liquidation of Israel.” Not only is there no respect for the opponent, but there is also no trace of recognition “that he may have a grievance, a claim and justice.” An air is assumed as if “there is absolute justice in the Palestinian stand in contrast to the absolute injustice of Israel; an unqualified Manichaean division of good and evil is present; justice is only on the Palestinian side; only they are worthy of self-determination. (...) The historical link of the Jews with the Land of Israel is deceit; the spiritual link as expressed in the centrality of the land of Israel in Judaism is a fraud.”

This summary describes exactly the points that we have demonstrated on the basis of the textbooks: the denial of any connection of the Jews to Palestine, the negation and delegitimization of the State of Israel, the rejection of peace and coexistence, and the praise of violence and bloody terror.

However, the quoted sentences by Yehoshafat Harkabi do not come from the present, but from the year 1979, and they did not refer to current Palestinian textbooks, but were the result of an analysis of the *Palestinian Covenant*, i.e., the basic program of the Palestine Liberation Organization PLO of 1964/1968.<sup>41</sup>

### STARTLING FINDINGS

Given all these results, our textbook analysis reaches this conclusion: The ideology with which Palestinian students are indoctrinated today corresponds (with minor terminological changes) exactly to the ideology set out by the PLO in its policy statement.

But at the time when it was written down almost sixty years ago, the PLO was not seen as a recognized and legitimate international actor. It was simply the umbrella organization of a number of terrorist organizations, all of

<sup>41</sup> Harkabi, Yehoshafat: *The Palestinian Covenant and its Meaning*, Valenine, Mitchel 1979, p. 11 ff.

which were committed to the armed struggle to destroy the Jewish state and were just beginning to make a name for themselves on the international stage with bloody terrorist attacks.

A sober analysis of what Palestinian children are taught reveals that all the claims that the PLO has fundamentally changed since the 1960s, that they have recognized Israel, renounced violence, adapted their belligerent charter, and embarked on the path to peace, reconciliation and coexistence with Israel are just simply not true. Literally none of this is reflected in today's PA textbooks.

The difference is, of course: The PA is funded with hundreds of millions of euros annually by the European Union (the EU and its member states have been by far the largest donors to the PLO and PA for about thirty years).

In mid-June, the EU Commission released 214 million euros, which, as mentioned at the beginning, had previously been blocked by the Hungarian EU Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi with reference to the scandalous contents of the textbooks, but are now being transferred without further conditions.<sup>42</sup> In addition, tens of millions are paid to UNRWA, the United Nations refugee agency solely responsible for Palestinians.

Together, these funds finance a Palestinian school system in which the entrusted children are systematically educated to hate Israel and to use violence against the "Zionist-Jewish occupation." While European politicians profess peace and securing Israel's existence in Sunday speeches, they simultaneously distribute money year after year, with which the – supposedly moderate – leadership of the Palestinians is working on the exact opposite.

<sup>42</sup> Cf., Grimm, Oliver: EU-Kommission gibt Hilfgelder für Palästinenser frei, *Die Presse*, June 14, 2022, <https://www.diepresse.com/6152488/eu-kommission-gibt-hilfsgelder-fuer-palaestiner-frei>.

## IMPRESSUM

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