

Following are AP report on the **Palestinian textbooks debate** and IMPACT-SE's comments [highlighted in yellow]:

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Palestinian textbooks debate reaches US campaign

(AP) RAMALLAH, West Bank — Do Palestinian school textbooks "teach terrorism," as Newt Gingrich claimed in a recent debate among U.S. Republican presidential hopefuls? Gingrich's example that Palestinians "have text books that say, 'If there are 13 Jews and nine Jews are killed, how many Jews are left?'" is not in any of the texts, researchers say.

[IMPACT-SE: Yet, Gingrich did not invent the story; he just mixed up the details: such books were found in Gaza after the Six Day War. In other words, the grandparents and parents of nowadays Palestinians were brought up on this hate. That education led to wars and replicated itself in contemporary hate education]

As for Gingrich's broader claim, the textbooks don't directly encourage anti-Israeli violence, but they also don't really teach peace, studies say.

[IMPACT-SE: The question is what "encourage anti-Israeli violence" means: veneration of martyrdom and teaching students that if one dies in a clash one becomes a national hero, and also remains alive in heaven as if in a computer game and this against the background of a heavy dose of hate and inculcation of **jihad** and **ribat** (guerilla/terror) – is an encouragement for violence.]

A review of some texts by The AP, as well as several studies by Israeli, Palestinian and international researchers, found no direct calls for violence against Israel. However, the books lack material about the historic Jewish presence in the region and scarcely mention Israel and then mostly in a negative way. Peace with Israel rarely comes up. Texts for religious schools are harder-core, openly glorifying martyrdom.

[IMPACT-SE: "Glorifying martyrdom" is also widespread in the books issued by the **Ministry of Education of the State of Palestine**, not only in those issued by the **Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Directorate of Shar'i Education and Rehabilitation of the State of Palestine**]

Researchers disagree sharply in their interpretation of the material. Two NGOs, one Israeli and one international, support the view of Israeli officials that the texts promote hatred of Israel. For example, Israel is not included in a list of the countries of the Levant, and Hebrew writing was removed in a depiction of a stamp from British Mandate rule of the Holy Land.

A joint Israeli-Palestinian study takes a softer view, saying that there is no direct attempt to delegitimize Israel, but that "the way and contexts in which Israel is presented may give rise to the impression of an implicit denial of its legitimacy."

The books must be seen in the context of ongoing conflict, said Nathan Brown, a George Washington University political scientist who has written about the issue. While highly nationalistic, government texts don't glorify violence, explicitly deny Israel's right to exist or portray Jews as villains, he said.

[IMPACT-SE: All textbooks from the two Palestinian ministries are government texts published by **The State of Palestine**.

The **PA Ministry of Education** textbooks do portray Jews as villains:

Your enemies killed your children, split open your women's bellies, held your revered elderly men by the beard, and led them to the death pits. Reading and Texts, Grade 8, Part 2, [2003] (reprinted 2007), page 16// Invading Snakes: "By your life! How come that snakes invade us and we [still] observe a protection covenant [*dhimma*] which respects commitments?" Arabic Language—Linguistic Sciences, Grade 12, (2010), page 61.

The **Ministry of Education** textbooks do glorify violence. One example:

Hearing [weapons] clash is pleasant to my ear/ And **the flow of blood gladdens my soul** [...] He fell asleep in order to dream the dream of eternity [i.e., Paradise]/ And enjoy in it the loveliest visions [...] By your life! This is the death of men/ And who asks for a noble death – here it is

Questions:

1. What is meant by the phrase "a noble death" in the poet's verse "And who asks for a noble death – here it is" is:

A. Death as a result of a disease

B. A sudden death

C. **Martyrdom in defense of the homeland.**

2. **The poet sees his death close, yet he hurries towards it. Why?**

3. The poet has described the martyr's body in the seventh and eighth verses. Let us clarify that.

4. What will the poet throw at the face of the enemy?

Our Beautiful Language, Grade 7, Part 1, (2010), p. 75-76

[IMPACT-SE: It is true that textbooks published by the Palestinian **Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Directorate of Shar'i Education and Rehabilitation** are nastier rife with blatant anti-Semitism and hate for Christianity including Hamas material such as the following Hadith which is found also in the Hamas charter, suggesting that the spiritual leaders of the Palestinians are all educated in a genocidal spirit:

"The Hour of Resurrection will not come until the Muslims fight the Jews. The Muslims will kill them, and when a Jew would hide behind a rock or a tree the rock or the tree would say: 'O Muslim, O worshipper of God! There is a Jew behind me; come and kill him', except the salt bush, which is the Jews' tree."

Noble Hadith and Its Studies, Grade 11 (1996) p. 200]

"I think the textbook critics have cause and effect mixed up when there is a viable political process it may be possible to introduce a process to revise the books in a reciprocal way," Brown said.

[IMPACT-SE: What Brown argues here is that **indeed there is a major problem with the PA curriculum**, but, he suggests, let us **postpone the remedy** to a time when a "viable political process" takes place. This argument has a number of problems. First, there has been a long viable political process since 1993 and the results are that for 18 years the venomous material of the Ministry of Islamic Education were left intact and the progress on the other material was limited, with some improvement around 2006, but then reversal. Also, Brown assumes that as long as there is no peace process it is good to abuse one's children, teach them hate and prepare for the next war. Well, how then will there be ever a peace process? Thirdly, why "reciprocal

way"? There are international standards that bind all. The PA joined UNESCO with much fanfare, so they must abide by the standards. If others also have problems in their curricula, they should fix it as well. It has nothing to do with reciprocal or political process that is a matter for politicians not educators. Should the Iranians teach hate against America because there is no political process? Should the American teach hate against Iran? Why should we postpone the remedy when we can fix the problem now? Demonization and anti-Semitism in the curricula are widespread across the Middle East including in countries concluded peace agreements with Israel. Therefore, we should better make sure to effect change now in order to prevent a genocide tomorrow. The Palestinians should join us and **IMPACT Peace Education Today!**]

The argument looms large in a debate driven by the Israeli government, which frequently accuses the Palestinians of incitement in their schools.

"How can you take someone seriously as a partner in peace, if instead of teaching their children reconciliation they teach hate," said Israeli government spokesman Mark Regev. "It's the heart of the matter."

The Palestinians say their books legitimately focus on their national narrative, including hardships of life under occupation. "We might have a problem with Zionism, but this is not incitement, this is a difference in views," said Ghassan Khatib, spokesman of the Palestinian Authority, which controls part of the West Bank.

[IMPACT-SE: The PA joined UNESCO **as an independent state**. With all the talk about occupation, the situation in the Palestinian Territories is that of a political process in *limbo* that is grounded in internationally binding agreements. Although the situation of Palestinians and Israelis is far from ideal and a political solution is badly needed, The Palestinians are not under direct military occupation in the sense that their occupiers make all the decisions. Their President travels across the world and the PA has direct relations with almost all the countries of the world, embassies, international aid and so on. In education matters, the PA is fully independent: it makes all the decisions and all the books are published by the "**The State of Palestine, The Ministry of Education**" or "**The State of Palestine, Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Directorate of Shar'i Education and Rehabilitation**." Therefore, the Palestinians can and should act now. The PA leaders have all the power they need. They should join our call and **IMPACT Peace Education Today!**]

Palestinian officials say Israel has created an artificial issue in hopes of diverting attention from its failure to meet key peace obligations, such as halting its settlement of occupied lands.

The question has suddenly become an issue in the U.S. presidential campaign. In a [recent Republican debate](#) Rep. Michele Bachmann attacked Palestinian incitement, asking "How do you find peace when you teach your kids to hate Jews?" She said she asked the Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad about the school textbooks that includes incitement. "He said we don't do it anymore", Bachmann said. "I asked him to send me the new textbooks. I checked my email, he still didn't send it."

Three researchers, Brown, Itamar Marcus from Palestinian Media Watch and Eldad Pardo from IMPACT-SE, said the example Gingrich cited in the Dec. 10 Republican debate does not exist in the texts. Gingrich's office did not respond to two emailed requests for further comment.

Greater clarity could arise from a State Department-funded review of both Israeli and Palestinian textbooks to be released in the spring. Since 2009, Israeli and Palestinian researchers, fluent in Hebrew and Arabic, have been examining 370 Israeli and 102 Palestinian books from grades 1-12. Some of the Palestinians review Israeli books, and some of the Israelis review Palestinian books.

Conclusions are left to the study's sponsor, the Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land, made up of clerics representing Judaism, Islam and Christianity, said Yale professor Bruce Wexler, overseeing the research.

[IMPACT-SE's reports are larger and based on international standards and ample quoting, which have been always proved to be fully accurate. Yale is a leading university. Yet, it is a bit strange academically that the sponsor – in this case clerics – should draw the

conclusions. If, say, a pharmaceutical company, ask from a university to test a new drug, should that company draw the conclusions or should it be left to the scientists? Anyway, here one has a new excuse for procrastination and waiting for a few more years. The facts as there to see in many reports. Why not just act now and **IMPACT Peace Education Today!?**

Some argue that Israeli textbooks also promote a national narrative, noting that the so-called Green Line, the pre-1967 war frontier between Israeli and the West Bank, has been erased from the Israeli school atlas. The Green Line is also absent from most Palestinian textbooks, but was restored in a Palestinian atlas published several years ago, said geography professor Izhak Schnell of Tel Aviv University.

Texts taught in secular Israeli schools continue to promote the Jews' right of return, but more space than in the past is now allocated to the Palestinians and their pain, said Ruth Firer, of Hebrew University.

Since it took control of parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1994, the Palestinian Authority has been working to replace the Egyptian and Jordanian books used in its schools for decades previous. Under intensive scrutiny from Israel and the international community, the Palestinians developed their own curriculum and purged their new textbooks of some controversial references, but kept the focus on the Palestinian narrative.

[IMPACT-SE: Our research is based on UNESCO's international standards. No one asks the Palestinians, or any other nation for that matter, to give up their national story, or "narrative." Students should learn all the relevant facts including about the "other," and also build their national identity. IMPACT-SE's reports actually praised the PA textbooks for nation building. Teaching one's own nationalism, however, should not entail demonizing the "Other" and hiding facts such as the Holocaust, or the fate of Jewish communities across the Arab World including in Palestine itself, which were destroyed during the 20th Century].

Palestinian Media Watch and IMPACT-SE harshly criticized the Palestinian textbooks.

"There is a lot of jihad, martyrdom, a complete ignoring of anything Israeli," said Pardo, a Hebrew University of Jerusalem professor and member of IMPACT-SE. "There is no education for peace, there is education for conflict."

Many of the most problematic passages IMPACT-SE cited came from the texts for Islamic religious schools. Only about 750 of the 1.16 million students enrolled in Palestinian schools in the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem attend such schools.

Shelley Elkayam of IMPACT-SE said the religious school students are influential since they go on to be religious teachers and preachers.

The textbooks include statements glorifying martyrdom. One 8th-grade text says Muslim fighters must "get rid of the usurping Jews from the usurped lands in Palestine and in the Levant."

The Palestinian Education Ministry only began supervising the Islamic schools a year ago and is gradually replacing the old texts with new ones "based on moderation," said Mohammed Jihad, head of the religious school system.

A new 12th grade book, for example, provides a nonviolent definition of jihad as a way of spreading justice.

[IMPACT-SE: The following quotation comes from this new 12th grade book, which was issued by the State of Palestine, Ministry of Education in 2010. It teaches that Jihad is about fighting and wars:

"Ribat" for the sake of Allah is one of the actions that **are related to Jihad for the sake of Allah**. "Ribat" means living **in areas where there is a struggle between Muslims and their enemies**, [...] The people of the Levant in general, and Palestine in particular, are at **state of "Ribat" until the Day of Resurrection**

If you examine the history of Palestine, you shall find **that momentous battles took place on Palestine's soil. Its inhabitants are in constant struggle against their enemies**

Islamic Education, Grade 12, (2010), pp. 86-87

Another passage from that book explains that **Jihad**, as opposed to peace, is applied in order to enforce a comprehensive Islamic regime. **Jihad** is resorted to only "after the failure of all peaceful means." In other words, **Jihad** will never be implemented, if Israel decides to become a Muslim country. This if of course a kind of moderation, in the sense of try to bring your rival to surrender by reason first, but it does not provide, as argued in the AP report, "a nonviolent definition of **jihad**." **Jihad** in the Palestinian textbooks means war.

The basic rule in the Muslims' relations with others is peace. **Jihad was not made into law in Islam but for the purpose of safeguarding and protection of the call for Islam and its regime** and for the removal of obstacles separating between the individual and that call and **the realization of the comprehensive virtuous Islamic regime**, which is based on truth and justice and on the prevention of oppression and tyranny. This is done by argument and proof, not by sword and spear. And it is not achieved by coercion either [...] Jihad in Islam is therefore a means, not a goal, and it is not resorted to except after the failure of all peaceful means.

[...] Islam has encircled the rules of Jihad with a fence of mercy, humanism and morals, for it has enacted rules that soften its negative impact [...]

Islamic Education, Grade 11, Part 1, 2010, pp. 116-117

More examples among many, all from books issued by the Ministry of Education, The State of Palestine:

Some of the poor among the Muslims who did not possess any riding animal came to the Prophet requesting to provide them with something that can carry them, so they can join the Army, however the Prophet couldn't find them any. They returned with their hearts aching with grief, and tears filling their eyes for which they won't be able to engage in a Jihad alongside the Prophet.

Islamic Education, Grade 10, (2010), p. 53

My brother, makers of injustice crossed the border, so jihad and sacrifice are right. **Our Beautiful Language, Grade 7, Part 1, (2010), p. 40**

Whenever an Islamic land is occupied, Jihad commands. **Our Beautiful Language, Grade 7, Part 1, (2010), p. 99**

Martyrs [that – the student must complete the sentence using the instructions. I.G.] Were killed while were protecting the homeland, living with Allah. **Our Beautiful Language, Grade 4, Part 1, (2010), p. 94]**

In government schools, attended by 768,000 students, a number of passages glorifying jihad were removed, IMPACT-SE acknowledged. Still, it said, the books are problematic. For example, a 12th grade Islam studies book discusses the concept of "ribat," or steadfastness against attackers, saying Palestinians "are in steadfastness until the day of resurrection." Elkayam said this suggests the struggle over Palestine is eternal.

[IMPACT-SE: Ribat means on-going war of raids/ guerrilla/terror, not "steadfastness." This how Christian kingdoms of the past were destroyed. This means that the Palestinians are not educated for a peace with Israel, but rather for an on-going war until its destruction.]

"Although there is no direct instruction for immediate violence against Israelis, hate, rejection and a vision of one Greater Islamic-Arab Palestine are fostered," said the study, which was released in May and reviewed 70 government textbooks and 25 religious school texts. "An imaginary geography in which Israel does not exist is being taught." The joint Israeli-Palestinian study of 2006, commissioned by IPCRI, a dovish nonprofit

group, highlighted some positive elements of the new textbooks, saying they do not "incite hatred toward Jews or Judaism" and that only two cases of anti-Jewish stereotypes were found.

But no objective information is found about Israel's society and people, it said.

Khatib, the Palestinian Authority spokesman, defended the omission of Israel from Palestinian textbooks. "When Israel is going to include us in their textbooks, we will include them in our textbooks," he said. "It is supposed to be a mutual thing.

[IMPACT-SE: First, one finds much education about Palestinians, Arab and Islam in the Israeli curriculum and also much peace education, often adopting the Palestinian side in describing historical events, as we informed the reporter. Second, the following is not an argument: **"I will keep my children ignorant just to spite you, because you also keep your children ignorant."** This PA argument can not be accepted.]