

Chapter III: The Portrayal of Jews and Judaism

6. Overview

No positive remark referring to the Jews is to be found in Syrian textbooks. On the contrary, they do not constitute a nation, they are detached from their ancestors and have no connection whatsoever to Palestine. Their religion contains racist elements.

Beyond that, the Jews have proven themselves to be eternal enemies of the Arabs since ancient times and deadly enemies of the early Muslims.

Their behavior among the nations has brought upon them the latter's hatred, and justifiably so. The Holocaust, though its magnitude is exaggerated by the Jews, may be justified as well. The Jews are racist, enemies of the prophets, the Muslims and, in fact, of all mankind and even of God himself.

The final conclusion is obvious - they need to be eliminated.

7. Not a Single Positive Remark about the Jews

In all the sixty-eight textbooks that were examined for the purpose of this survey not a single positive remark about the Jews could be found as can be seen from the material presented below.

The only non-hostile references in the Syrian textbooks are the following ones.

"Zionism tries to give the Arab struggle for the recovery of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people characteristics of religious and racist hostility on the part of the Arabs against the Jews. What is your opinion regarding the truth of that? Are the Arabs against the Jews as a religion? Do they [the Jews] constitute a people? Is Zionism a racist and aggressive movement? Explain that." (Homework, National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, p. 95)

"Zionism is a phenomenon objectively anti-Semitic. The struggle against it is, actually, a struggle for a better future for the Jews, wherever they are." (Reader, Grade 12, p. 131)

8. A "False" people, an "Imaginary" Nation

"It is clear that the Zionist claim regarding the existence of a Jewish people with an independent nationalism [qawmiyyah] is a false claim unsupported by scientific facts or by actual data. For the Jews are sons of the societies they live in and they belong to them nationally, linguistically, culturally and historically. The religious factor alone cannot make them an independent nationality." (National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 90)

"Judaism is a religion embracing followers from the various peoples of the world. Among them [one can find] the Falasha of Ethiopia, the Tamils of India, the Arabs of Yemen, the Khazars of the Turks and the Slavs and Germans of Europe... Every Jew is a citizen of the country where he lives." (National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, p. 94)

"The Zionist movement strove to exploit the Jewish religion as a factor for gathering the dispersed Jews of the world who belong to various nationalities and numerous peoples." (National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 89)

"The Zionists believe in the existence of "a world Jewish nation" whose human element is constituted by the Jews of the world who live in various countries and under diverse regimes. They constitute one nation in spite of [the fact that] they do not enjoy the basic characteristics that create a nation like territory, culture, language, mental composition, common history and economic unity." (Reader, Grade 12, pp. 129-130)

9. The Jews are detached from their Ancestors and from Palestine

The Syrian textbooks make an effort to detach the Jews of today from their ancestors and, consequently, from their ancient homeland. Even Islamic Education textbooks which refer to the Patriarchs and other Jewish figures considered holy in Islam, do not associate them with the Jews. One example is the chapter about Abraham in the Islamic Education textbook for Grade 3, pp. 59-60. In higher grades, this theme is further developed, with the conclusion that the modern Jews do not have any connection with Palestine.

"Their claim, that they are the descendants of the Hebrews who emigrated to Palestine more than two thousand years ago, is false scientifically and is refuted by anthropologists, as there is no pure-blooded people [in the world], because [all] the peoples have already been mixed with one another... It is [also] false historically, because groups from various peoples embraced Judaism without having been from Palestine or from a Hebrew descent, like the people of the Khazar Kingdom... and they constitute today 90% of world Jewry." (National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 94)

"Zionism is based on an old religious notion which claims that there is a connection between the Jews and Palestine, though it is known that the Jews of today do not have any connection with Palestine." (National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, p. 92)

10. Judaism and Jews are Racist

The Jews are described as racist. One textbook recommends that the students read a book entitled "Jewish Racism" by Dr. Jirji Kan'an. (National-Socialist Education, Grade 9, p. 151)

The concept of the "Chosen People" is twisted in order to claim that the Jews are racist.

"They [the Jews] are pushed by their racism to claim that they are the cream of creation and the favorites of God." (Islamic Education, Grade 11, p. 33)

"They [the Jews] say of themselves that they are racist. Merely by saying that you are a chosen people of [all other] peoples. This is racism." (President Hafez Assad, National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 94)

11. Occupiers of Arab Lands since Ancient Times

In contrast with the denial of Jewish national existence, Syrian history textbooks do refer to the Jews as a people in Palestine, though not as a "rightful" one. The basis of this assertion rests upon the modern Arab claim that all the nations of the ancient Middle East and North Africa, save one, were Arab. Thus, the ancient Assyrians, Chaldeans, Emorites, Canaanites, Arameans, Egyptians and Berbers were all Arabs who had emigrated from the Arabian Peninsula to Mesopotamia, the Levant, Egypt and North Africa (Ancient History of the Arabs, Grade 5, p. 17 and a map on p. 18).

According to this view, the Muslim Arab conquerors of these areas in the seventh century AD "liberated" Arab lands from foreign domination (History: The Era of the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs, Grade 6, p. 105).

The subsequent migration of Muslim Arab tribes to these areas and their mixing with their "Arab brethren" already there completed the creation of the modern Arab nation (National-Socialist Education, Grade 7, p. 31). According to this logic, Palestine has always been Arab (National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, p. 94).

Moreover, this line of argument also presents the Jews as traditional enemies of the Arabs from time immemorial.

"A mixed people, dazzled by the richness of the Canaanite cities and their civilization, crossed the river Jordan, which gave it the name "Hebrews". It began to engage the Canaanite city-states and to seize them one by one, inflicting ruin and destruction, using all sorts of treachery and deception in order to drive a wedge between the Canaanite city-states. It took advantage of the absence of a unified Canaanite state that would be able to stand against the avid invaders and drive them back, as the Zionists do today in Palestine while taking advantage of the disagreement and weakness that inflict the Arabs. The war between the Canaanites and their adversaries

continued for about one hundred and fifty years and during that period the Hebrews managed to establish a state in Palestine. Soon after that it was split, because of the disputes among its leaders, until the Chaldeans came and put an end to it." (Ancient History of the Arabs, Grade 5, p. 43).

"Compare the attitude of the Hebrews then and the attitude of the Zionists presently." (Homework, Ancient History of the Arabs, Grade 5, p. 67)

"Damascus, Hama and Suba were Aramean kingdoms that fought the Hebrews many years and managed to put an end to their avidity." (Ancient History of the Arabs, Grade 5, p. 45)

"Among its [Assyria's] most famous kings is... Sargon II who expelled the Jews from Palestine." (History of Arab Civilization, Grade 10, p. 12)

"It [the Chaldean Empire] reached its utmost extension in the reign of their king Nebuchadnezzar who wanted to return to the region its Arab face, so he clashed with the Jews who had occupied part of Canaanite Palestine and who began to conspire against him and revolted. That made him put an end to them and destroy the cities they had occupied and lead them as captives to his capital, Babylon." (Ancient History of the Arabs, Grade 5, p. 27)

"Among their most famous kings is Nebuchadnezzar, and among his great deeds is the elimination of the Kingdom of Judea and sending the Jews as captives to Babylon." (History of Arab Civilization, Grade 10, p. 12)

"The Nabatean king had to protect the borders of his state and defend them. That led him to wars with the Jews." (Ancient History of the Arabs, Grade 5, p. 79)

12. Enemies of the Arabs and Muslims in the Middle Ages

The Prophet Muhammad's mission involved some antagonism with the Jews of his time, which is expressed in the Quran and in his relations with several Jewish tribes. The Syrian textbooks emphasize this antagonism and add other themes that depict the Jews unfavorably and as enemies of Islam and the Muslims.

"There dwelt in the city of Yathrib [Medina] two Arab tribes, Aws and Khazraj... And alongside these two tribes were three small Jewish tribes who stirred up hostility between the Aws and the Khazraj which generated wars to which many fell victim." (Ancient History of the Arabs, Grade 5, p. 147).

"Why did the Jews and the pagans want to eradicate the Muslims' state in enlightened Medina? ...What is our duty towards the enemies who lie in wait for our nation?" (Homework, Islamic Education, Grade 5, p. 141)

"The Prophet knew about the treacherous intention harbored in the Jews' souls." (Islamic education, Grade 6, p. 127)

"Why did the Jews incite the [pagan] tribes to invade Medina? ... Compare the position of the Jews towards the Prophet then with the present position of the Zionists towards the Arab nation." (Homework, History: The Era of the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs, Grade 6, p. 51)

"The Prophet felt that time had come for punishing the Jews for their position that was full of deception and conspiracy." (History: The Era of the Prophet and the Orthodox Caliphs, Grade 6, p. 55)

"As for the treacherous and disloyal Jews, they remained in Medina as criminals and sinners, waiting for the Muslims' verdict in their case." (Islamic Education, Grade 10, p. 113)

"The men [of the Jewish tribe of Qurayzah] were between 600-700 [in number]. A trench was dug for them in the market and they were beheaded there in front of the Prophet, may God bless him and grant him salvation, and his companions. [This way] God released the Muslims from the cunning of all the Jews of Medina." (Islamic Education, Grade 8, p. 157)

"The Muslim should be cautious with the Jews." (Islamic Education, Grade 9, p. 49).

13. Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust are Justified

The Jews are presented as the sole cause for anti-Semitism.

"...the state of isolation in which the Jews were living in the societies where they were found as a result of their looking down on others in those societies..." (National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, pp. 89-90)

"Name the reasons for the grudge of the nations against the Jews in the societies where they live." (Homework, National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 92)

"During World War II Nazism persecuted millions of human beings in Europe and elsewhere and part of this persecution affected the Jews for the following reasons:

- Because of the non-mingling with the nations and the societies where they lived.
- Because of their control and monopoly over currency exchange, banks and commercial financing.
- [Because of] their treason toward their homeland, Germany, as they had put themselves in the service of the Allies." (National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 104)

"He [Hitler] became aware of the conditions of the Jews in Germany and of their role in weakening it and in its defeat in the [First World] War... The most important of these [Nazi] principles and ideas [were]: ... The

abolition of the Jews' rights because they are strangers to the German Aryan society, in addition to their impact on Germany's defeat in the First [World] War." (History of Modern Times, Grade 11, pt. 2, pp. 68-69)

14. The Jews are Evil and deserve to be Eliminated

The Jews are presented as enemies of the Muslims, of all mankind, of the prophets and of God himself. They are portrayed as harboring an evil nature and criminal intentions that are rooted in their personality. They should therefore be eliminated.

"The Jews spare no effort in deceiving us, being hostile towards us, denying our noble Prophet, inciting against us and distorting the Divine Books... The Jews collaborate with pagans and atheists against the Muslims because they see that Islam unveils their cunning ways and evil nature." (Islamic Education, Grade 11, p. 33)

"The congruence of ethnic and religious racism reveals a reactionary notion condemned by humanity because it ranks the Jews higher than the other peoples and involves hostility and disdain towards the nations." (National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 95)

"The Children of Israel did not hold the prophets in esteem. They killed some of them and heaped charges against others, as they did to Moses, may peace be upon him, when they accused him of having killed Aharon. They [also] accused him of adultery and accused him of having a defect in his body... Therefore they deserved the punishment of God." (Islamic Education, Grade 10, pp. 171-172)

"The Jews held a grudge against him [Jesus] because they had found in his call a depreciation of their behavior and weakening of their influence, so they conspired against him." (History of Arab Civilization, Grade 10, p. 233)

"In the vicinity of the al-Aqsa Mosque in the land of Palestine the Jews, the enemies of God, attempted to crucify Christ [but] God rescued him from their plot." (Islamic Education, Grade 6, p. 56)

"[One] of the reasons for the hostility on the part of the Jews towards the Arabs is that God sent Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets from [among] the Arabs, while they believed that prophethood was exclusively theirs." (Islamic Education, Grade 11, p. 33)

"The Jews, enemies of God, want to remain in Palestine in order to take hold of al-Aqsa Mosque." (Islamic Education, Grade 6, p. 57)

Hence the verdict.

"You have already learned of the attitude of the Jews who plotted to kill, loot and exterminate the Muslims [in the time of the Prophet]... That is the

characteristic of traitors and deceivers in any time and place. They make use of tolerance and gentleness as a hotbed and a loophole for their crimes and sins.

"If this [affair] points to anything, it points to the hostile [and] evil tendency that is rooted in the Jewish personality. That, in its turn, confirms that co-existence with them, or having them as neighbors, is an enormous danger that threatens Islamic and Arab existence with destruction and extinction.

"Therefore, the logic of genuine justice decrees against them one verdict the carrying out of which is unavoidable. Their criminal intention should be turned against them by way of their elimination [isti'sal]." (Islamic Education, Grade 10, pp. 115-116)