

**JIHAD, JEWS,
AND ANTISEMITISM
IN SYRIAN SCHOOL TEXTS**



A B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATION

Based on
“Jews, Zionism and Israel in Syrian School Textbooks”
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Cover details taken from:

Geography of Greater Syria [Sham], Grade 5, p.39

The text in the photo says, “The Palestinians of 1948
[i.e. those who stayed in Israel] we remain on your
[the Israelis’] chest.”

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1

INTRODUCTION

The ideas expressed in this survey are not drawn from political statements or from news media reports, rather they are culled from the pages of school texts in Syria. These samples of what Syria teaches its children underscore the hostility toward Israel, democratic values, and peaceful society that Syria seeks to instill in its coming generation. The following analysis of Syria's school textbooks demonstrates that hateful attitudes continue to find expression in Syria's national school curricula, despite public gestures by Syria in support of a diplomatically negotiated end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

B'nai Brith International offers this report on the treatment of Israel, Jews, jihad, and terrorism in Syrian school textbooks in conjunction with research conducted by the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP). The Syrian school materials collected by CMIP include numerous blatantly antisemitic and incendiary pro-terror passages that would be repulsive in textbooks of any free society.

Mitigating the animosity towards Zionism and the penchant for terror in Syrian political strategy is an arduous task. But the burden of learning to respect one's neighbors and to value tolerance is even more improbable if the pupil is indoctrinated by lessons of hate. Democracies should not help perpetuate the dangerous myths and hateful attitudes of Syria's schoolbooks. These texts speak for themselves. Let all who welcome an open Syria read these excerpts and ask, "Will the children in Syria's classrooms learn to embrace tolerance?"

The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace, (CMIP) is a non-governmental organization established in New York in 1998. Its purpose is to encourage the development of peaceful relations between peoples and nations by establishing a climate of tolerance and mutual respect founded on the rejection of violence as a means to resolving conflicts. CMIP has produced a series of research reports focusing on how the Mideast conflict is reflected in the region's school curricula and textbooks.



The main text in the center of this map, which covers the State of Israel reads, "Palestine"; the text at the bottom of the map reads, "Map of Palestine."

Civics, grade 6, page 132

2 | OVERVIEW — THE ESSENCE OF THE CONFLICT

Peace has become Syria's declared strategic choice since the Madrid Conference of 1991. This survey examines the extent to which the idea of peace with Israel has become part of Syria's official curriculum. CMIP reviewed 68 textbooks for grades 1-12 in various subjects. All the textbooks were part of the Syrian curriculum during the year 2000. The chief findings are as follows:

1) Rejecting Israel's Very Existence, Not Merely its Borders

The Arab-Israeli conflict is a major theme in the Syrian curriculum, and it is discussed in most textbooks. The essence of the conflict is Israel's right to existence, not its borders. The conflict is portrayed as a fateful struggle for existence between the whole Arab nation and a Zionist-Jewish entity in Palestine.

"The Muslims in the countries of the world are struggling to evict the Jews from Palestine in defense of al-Aqsa Mosque."

(Islamic Education, Grade 6, p. 57)

"The Arab-Zionist struggle is a fateful national struggle, a struggle for existence, and not a struggle over borders."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 133)

2) Virulent Anti-Semitism

Not a single word in favor of the Jews is to be found in the Syrian textbooks. The Jews are denied the characteristics and heritage of a nation. They are detached from their ancestors and from the land of Palestine, and their religion is racist. Furthermore, the hatred of the nations of the world towards them is justified. The Holocaust was justified, though Jews exaggerate its magnitude. The textbooks call for elimination of the Jews.

"The Prophet knew about the treacherous intention harbored in the Jews' souls."

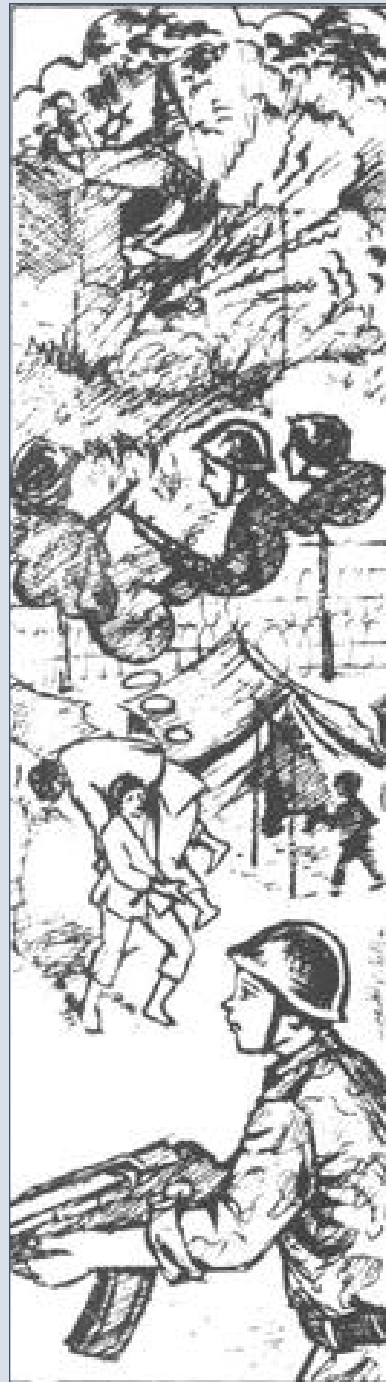
(Islamic education, Grade 6, p. 127)

"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)

3) Purging Jerusalem

Jerusalem is, and has always been, an exclusively Arab city, according to the



Reader, grade 5, page 109

Syrian textbooks. The Jewish legacy of the city is denied. Jewish holy places in the city are not enumerated alongside those of Muslims and Christians. The Jewish presence in Jerusalem is that of a foreign occupier whom Arabs and Muslims must evict. That eviction is likened to purification, since the Jews defile the place by their mere presence.

“Jerusalem is Arab and our forefathers lived there for thousands of years ... But the Zionist aggressors have occupied the city of Jerusalem and killed and expelled many of its people ... Jerusalem is Arab ... and it will remain Arab forever.”

(Reader, Grade 3, pt. 2, p. 25)

4) Liberation and Liquidation

The liberation of Palestine is portrayed as a major goal of Syria. The Syrian textbooks do not conceal the fact that full liberation of Palestine is synonymous with the liquidation of Israel. No possibility is given to dual existence of Palestine and Israel.

5) Muslims Must Wage Jihad; Syrians Should Seek Martyrdom

The struggle against Israel is a “holy war” – jihad – which is the duty of every Muslim. Martyrdom is an exalted value in the Syrian textbooks. Embracing and supporting terrorist activities is a common theme.

“Let us make seeking martyrdom the highest



“[Dalal al-Maghribi] died as a martyr on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road in the occupied land, after she had hoisted, with her Fidai comrades, the flag of Palestine over a Zionist truck for four hours during day-time.” (see note, page 23.)

At the heart of the occupied land
 She hoisted the flag of liberation
 She was a sword, she was a flame
 She was a birth of a destiny

Dalal is a girl from my homeland
 From Haifa, whom a usurper has
 driven away
 She said to the invader: “you will
 hear from me
 I am the voice of an angry
 earthquake.”

Reader, grade 6, page 97

This map names the countries in this region. Rather than recognizing the State of Israel, that specific territory falls under "Palestine."

**Geography,
Grade 5, page 34**



value in society. Seeking martyrdom is an essential need in every national struggle against the invaders and the imperialists. It is the essential basis, which is inevitable and has no alternative, for the protection of the homeland and the liberation of the land... Let us glorify martyrdom and let it become important in the souls of all of us. Let it be our way whenever the homeland calls."

(President Hafez Assad, Reader, Grade 6, pt. 1, p. 138 and see also Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 7, p. 68)

"Al-Aqsa Mosque and the land of Palestine that surrounds it are a holy country that the Muslims should wage a Jihad, in order to recover it from the hands of the Jews."

(Islamic Education, Grade 4, p. 84)

"I shall sacrifice my soul in order to water my homeland with my blood."

(Grammar, Eloquence and Prosody, Grade 11, p. 16)

6) Peace Equals Surrender

Making peace with Israel means surrender and is rejected as a treacherous act. On the other hand, participating in the peace process is presented as a continuation of the old struggle against Zionism and Israel. In no place does the phrase "peace with Israel" appear and Syria is not referred to as committed to recognizing Israel's right to exist.

"Revolutionary Syria... has rejected the course of surrender and treacherous negotiation."

(Islamic Education, Grade 8, p. 43)

3

ISRAEL AND ZIONISM MUST BE DESTROYED

Syrian school materials teach an unequivocal commitment to destroying Israel. The textbooks do not impart to students the possibility of living peacefully with Jewish neighbors. The battle is for exclusive existence: only one party in the Arab-Israeli conflict can survive.

Zionism, the national movement of the Jewish people desiring to reestablish its national home in its ancestral homeland, is portrayed as a “racist-imperialist-colonialist-aggressive political movement” that exploits the Jewish religion in order to control vast areas of the Arab homeland in partnership with imperialism.

To further blacken this image, the essence of Zionism is described in the Syrian textbooks as similar to that of Nazism, or worse. Zionism is presented as the most hostile movement threatening Arab nationalism and the Arab homeland in its entirety.

Unbearable Existence: Israel's Very Existence is Intolerable

"Gangs of oppressive Zionism have occupied parts of our land and they threaten our existence."

(Islamic Education, Grade 9, p. 166)

"...the Zionist invasion still threatens their [the Arabs'] existence... [Question:] What is the Arabs' duty in order to confront the dangers that threaten their existence?"

(Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 7, pp. 160, 161)

"In fact, the Arab countries did not face during their long history a danger greater than the one they are exposed to today. We are struggling first and foremost in order to ward off a treacherous aggression against us and in order to safeguard our existence."

(Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 9, p. 96)

Avenging Palestine is a Matter of Honor for All Syrians and All Arabs

With current schoolbooks, Syrian children learn from the earliest ages on that fighting Israel and taking revenge for humiliating past defeats is a matter of honor incumbent on all Syrians and Muslims.

"We, Muslims, should... sacrifice our souls and property... until we recover our holy places and return to our nation its glory and dignity."

(Islamic Education, Grade 4, p. 106)

"The setback of the fifth of June 1967 left in the souls of the Arab citizens a painful impression mixed with a real desire for revenge, rehabilitation and for washing the disgrace with blood."

(Civics, Grade 5, p. 100)

Obsessive Treatment of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Of the 68 books examined in this survey, 52 contained material directly related to the



Our Country
Our country our country
For her is our Jihad
For her is our martyrdom
Our country, our country
The scented Mt.Carmel
And the green coast
The cypress and the pine
And the blooming orange tree
And what forefathers built
Our country, our country
From Rafah to Safed
A map of my country
I have drawn upon my liver
And left it to my child
Our glories are rejoicing
Our country, our country

Reader, grade 5, page 109

conflict in varying degrees of intensiveness. Lectures, discussions, short stories, poems, slogans, quotes from President Hafez Assad's speeches, language exercises, homework of various sorts, photographs, drawings, diagrams and maps all reinforce the centrality of combating Israel. In some of the books the Arab-Israeli conflict stretches over whole chapters dedicated to various aspects of the dispute. Four additional books contained negative remarks about Jews in ancient and medieval times, though without reference to the present conflict.

Hating Zionism in all grades

The textbooks espouse hatred for Zionism starting in grade one (students age 6) through grade twelve (students age 17). Zionism is presented to the students in the lower grades accompanied by negative epithets, such as "the Zionist aggressors" (Reader, Grade 2, pt. 1, p. 107), "the Zionist enemy" (Conversation, Reader, Expression and Recital, Grade 2, pt. 2, p. 20), "the filth of Zionism" (Islamic Education, Grade 6, p. 109) "the Zionist cancer" ("Palestine is Arab", Selected Stories, Grade 6, p. 52). It is further portrayed as the main identity of the enemy. "Zionist soldiers," or simply "the Zionists," are the ones who kill Bassem's father in the story "The Small Lemon Tree" (Short Stories, Grade 5, pp. 8, 12 respectively).

Zionism as a Racist Movement Based on Lies and False Allegations

The Syrian textbooks present Zionist ideology as a reactionary canard based on religious fantasies of a connection between Jews and Palestine and a false allegation that the Jews are one people.

"Zionism is a racist-imperialist-colonialist-aggressive-expansionist political movement connected with imperialism, which

makes use of the Jewish religion in order to realize its own goals regarding the establishment of a national home for the Jews in Palestine and the neighboring lands."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 89)

"Zionism is based on an old religious notion which claims that there is a connection between the Jews and Palestine."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, p. 92)

"Zionist thought is based on many lies and allegations of which the most important ones [are the following]:

1. The Jews are one people of a common descent from which Jewish nationalism is formed and enjoys historical and cultural unity as well as unity of destiny.
2. Palestine and the adjacent Arab lands are the Jews' national home.
3. The Jews who live in various areas in the world should emigrate from their homelands and gather in Palestine."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, p. 93)

"Zionist ideology is based in its general outlines on reactionary-fanatic foundations, hostile to national liberation and to all the world's powers of peace and progress. It expresses the interests of the Israeli leadership and of the Jewish bourgeoisie that is connected with international monopolies. As it sprang from imperialism and because it is connected with the latter's most aggressive and reactionary forces, it contributes to international political tension and intoxication."

(Reader, Grade 12, p. 126)

Zionism Resembles and Even Surpasses Nazism

"What is the difference between the essence of Nazism and the essence of Zionism? The Nazis were claiming racial superiority, while the Zionists claim that they are God's chosen people to whom all

peoples of the world should submit... The Nazis justified the occupation of the lands of other [people] and their enslavement by their need for living space, while the Zionists occupy the lands of others under the pretext of guaranteeing security space for the state that they established unjustly and aggressively on the lands of others. The Nazis oppressed and expelled other peoples and the Zionists are doing the same thing today with the Arabs and tomorrow with the other Muslim peoples and others."

(President Hafez Assad, National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 93)

"The vigorous and long struggle of our brethren [in the Palestinian Intifada] has exposed the racist nature of Zionism in front of world public opinion... It has exposed [this] new Nazism... which has brought to perfection Hitler's lessons, amassed malice and become superior in crime until it has become a model of racist evil."

(Reader, Grade 11, p. 49)

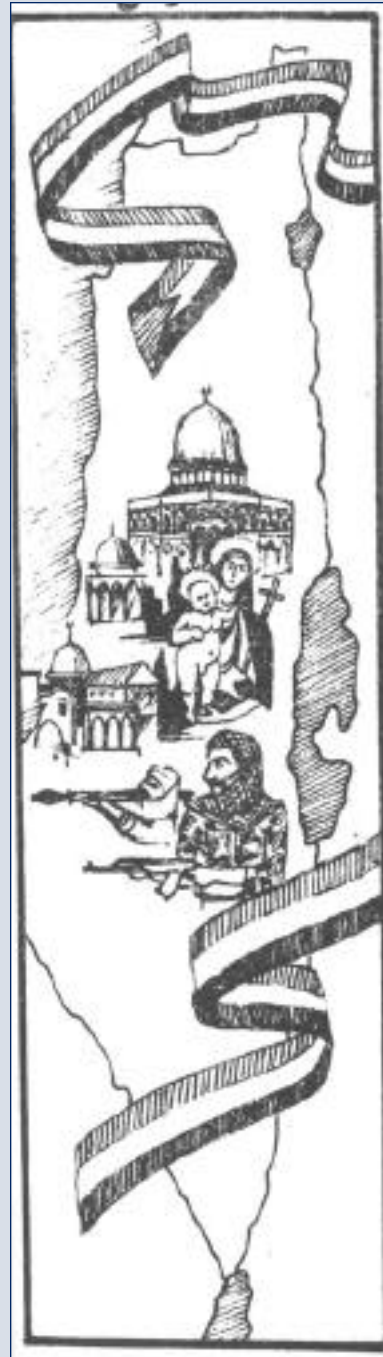
Resolving the Conflict Would Necessitate Liquidating Israel

"Zionism is considered the most dangerous movement hostile to Arab nationalism, as it aims for the liquidation of the Arab presence and the settlement of the Jews of the world in Arab Palestine, with the help of imperialism."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 45)

"The struggle between the Arab nation and the Zionist movement is a relentless, bitter and long one. It is so because this racist-Nazi movement intends to barbarically colonize an area in the Arab homeland stretching from the Euphrates to the Nile at the expense of the Arab nation and its national existence on its land and in its homeland... until the Zionist imperialist-colonialist presence on Arab land is liquidated."

(A party document, National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, pp. 96-97)



Reader, grade 6, pt.2, page 94

4

THE PORTRAYAL OF JEWS AND JUDAISM

No positive remark referring to the Jews is to be found in Syrian textbooks. On the contrary, Jews do not constitute a nation, they are detached from their ancestors and have no connection whatsoever to Palestine, according to the textbooks. Judaism purportedly contains racist elements. The evidence is clear: Syrian textbooks are unswervingly anti-semitic. The hate advocated in these texts is virulent and dangerous.

Syrian schoolbooks portray Jews as the Arabs' sworn enemies since antiquity. The Jews' behavior among the nations has brought upon them the world's hatred, and justifiably so. The Holocaust, though Jews purportedly exaggerate its magnitude, was similarly justified.

The final conclusion is obvious – the Jews need to be eliminated.

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.

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.”

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, p. 90)

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.

“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)

Instilling Historical Animosity towards Jews

“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).

The Holocaust was Justified

“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)

“[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’ electoral 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)

The Jews are Evil and Deserve to be Eliminated

“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 aggressive [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)

Jerusalem

According to Syrian textbooks Jerusalem was established by Arab people 4,500 years ago and has been inhabited by Arabs ever since. The Jews are never mentioned as inhabitants of the city, neither in the past nor in the present. The Syrian textbooks

do not refer to Jerusalem as a city holy to the Jews, nor are their holy places there mentioned alongside those of Muslims and Christians.

The presence of the Jews in Jerusalem is portrayed as that of foreign occupiers. They are also accused of violating the holy places of both Muslims and Christians. Hence, it is the duty of every Muslim to evict them all from the city. Such an action assumes the character of purification, since the Jews defile the place with their mere presence.

“Jerusalem is Arab and our forefathers lived there for thousands of years...But the Zionist aggressors have occupied the city of Jerusalem and killed and expelled many of its people ... Jerusalem is Arab ... and it will remain Arab forever.”

(Reader, Grade 3, pt. 2, p. 25)

“Jerusalem today is an injured city. Her blood flows and the echo of her call for help fills the horizon. For she is under Zionist occupation and her people have to suffer ill treatment.

(Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 8, p. 196)

“Above her summits, in spite of [all] trials
Above her hills, over [all] times

The Arab people will liberate her, and
eliminate the usurper’s existence

And return her smile to her, so she shall
become a lighthouse for every proud [man]

For Jerusalem is ours, in spite of [all] trials

Jerusalem is ours, over [all] times.”

*(Conversation, Reader, Expression and Recital,
Grade 2, pt. 2, p. 29)*

A Holy city—but not to Jews

“It [Jerusalem] has an important religious position among Christians and Muslims.”

(History of Arab Civilization, Grade 10, p. 171)

“It is the pure city that God has blessed...
Christ lived there... and Muhammad went

The Arab Eagle

Spread your wings
over Mt. Carmel
And lydda, Rauila and
Majdal (Ashkelon)
Jaffa is calling for your
help, so turn to her
And tell her groves:
"Rejoice!"

This country of wine
has wiped her tears off
And smiled at her
approaching eagle

Reader pt.1,
Grade 4, page 28



thither and thence he ascended ... Al-Aqsa Mosque is there, as well as the Dome of the Rock... and the Holy Sepulcher.

(Reader, Grade 3, pt. 2, pp. 24-25)

Muslims Should Liberate the Holy Places from the Jews

"The defense of al-Aqsa Mosque is a duty of every Muslim, male and female, because God has purified it and has blessed its surroundings, and it is imper-

missible that the enemies of God defile it."

(Islamic Education, Grade 6, p. 57)

"There will be no peace of mind so long as al-Aqsa Mosque and the Holy Sepulcher are in the hands of the oppressors."

(Grammar, Grade 10, p. 61)

"The capital of Arab Palestine shall not return to her original owners except by [sacrifice of] soul and blood, and that is a trust tied to our necks."

(Reader and Literary texts, grade 8, p. 196)

5

EXALTED JIHAD AND MARTYRDOM

Syrian students learn that holy war, *jihad*, is an exalted value in their society. Perhaps most disturbingly, Syria uses its curricula to encourage its children toward martyrdom—militant acts to defeat the enemy. The world knows the price open societies pay for such hateful indoctrination.

Nevertheless, martyrdom is a lofty ideal in the Syrian textbooks. It is given much emphasis both as an important tool in the battle against Israel and as an independent value in itself. It has such a positive connotation in Syrian parlance that a martyr's death is considered an event equivalent to a wedding party, at which one should be joyous rather than mournful.

"The Way of Martyrdom: This is the way of truth. This is the way of justice. This is the way of glory. This is the way of martyrdom."

(Civics, Grade 6, p. 119)

"Martyrdom has become the highest decoration which every person wishes to obtain. It is a social wedding party celebrated instead of sorrow and consolation among the people."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 9, p. 76)

"The Martyrdom wedding parties have increased during this period of our struggle against Zionism and Imperialism."

(Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 8, p. 9)

"What position will you take: offer your condolences upon seeking martyrdom, or congratulate? Why?"

(Homework, Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 9, p. 44)

Glorifying Martyrdom as the Road to Liberation

"Our steadfast nation has believed that martyrdom is the road to victory and liberation."

(Islamic Education, Grade 9, p. 67)

"A large number of our youths in present times are bent on dying so that their nation would live. You see them rushing towards death, trying to reach it ahead of one another. They are proud to have martyrdom as the seal of their lives for the sake of the liberation of their country and homeland that the Zionists have occupied."

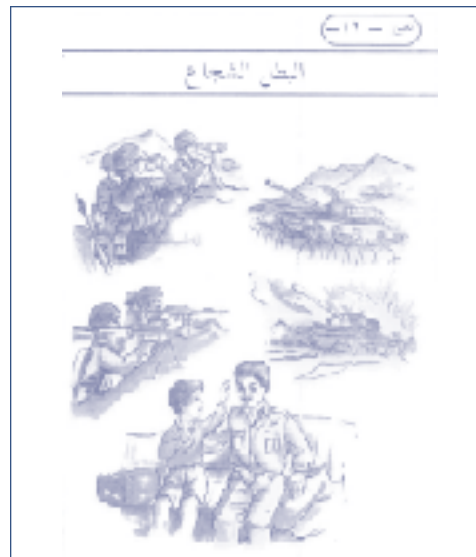
("Direction and Urge for Holy War and Martyrdom", Islamic Education, Grade 5, p. 108)

"The martyr outlines for us the correct road to the recovery of the land and the seizure of the usurped rights. What is this road?"

(Homework, Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 9, p. 95)

"Our country, our country
Our Jihad is for her
Our seeking of martyrdom is for her
Our country, our country
[Question:] Why do we wage a Holy War and ask for Martyrdom?"

(Reader, Grade 4, pt. 2, pp. 87- 88)



"The Brave Hero"
Reader, Grade 1, pt.1, page 146

Militarism in Syrian Textbooks

Militarism is a core principle in the Syrian textbooks. A six-year-old child in the first grade student is presented with a series of pictures showing Syrian soldiers destroying enemy tanks under the title "The Brave Hero"

"The Arabs have never boasted of gathered gold but of a vanquished enemy."

(Grammar and Dictation, Grade 6, p. 67)

"The people and the nation seek glory under the shade of the swords."

(Grammar, Grade 10, p. 87)

The War against Israel is a Holy War (Jihad)

There is no dispute in the Syrian textbooks that the struggle against Israel is a jihad.

"Jihad has been, and will remain, the only way to defend the homeland and to recover what the enemies have usurped thereof."

(Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 8, p. 4)

"Al-Aqsa Mosque and the land of Palestine that surrounds it are a holy country that the Muslims should wage a Jihad, in order to

recover it from the hands of the Jews."

(Islamic Education, Grade 4, p. 84)

"The purification of Palestine of the Jews in the defense of al-Aqsa Mosque is a Jihad for the cause of God."

(Islamic Education, Grade 6, p. 57)

"We [should] declare a Jihad as the only way to liberate the land and regain [our] dignity."

(Islamic Education, Grade 8, p. 88)

"Let us believe in Jihad as a way to liberation, glory and dignity."

(Islamic Education, Grade 9, p. 169)

Everyone Should Participate in the Jihad

"Jihad today is an individual duty of every Muslim."

(Islamic Education, Grade 8, p. 88)

"Refraining from the Jihad... is high treason for which the perpetrator deserves punishment in this world and the hereafter."

(Islamic Education, Grade 5, p. 108)

"There is neither excuse nor forgiveness for the one who refrains from Jihad for the cause of God, for the purification of Palestine of the Jews."

(Islamic Education, Grade 6 p. 57)

"The Muslims in all countries of the world are preparing for the Jihad against the Jews and for their expulsion from Palestine. We are preparing for the Jihad against the Jews and for their expulsion from beloved Palestine."

(Islamic Education, Grade 6, p. 58)

President Hafez Assad and the Teaching of Martyrdom

President Hafez Assad was known for his keen martyrdom, which is openly discussed in the textbooks. Quotations from his statements on this subject are transmitted and students are urged to study them.

"The leader of the Arab nation, President Hafez Assad, has believed in martyrdom, has given it the highest degree and con-

sidered it a holy duty, so much so, that he has wished it for himself."

(Civics, Grade 6, p. 111)

"The Comrade Leader has given martyrdom and martyrs [that kind of] attention that no other leader in the world has. He has spoken of it on numerous national and all-Arab occasions, in party congresses and [in congresses] of popular organizations."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, p. 151)

"I always say: Our slogan should be 'martyrdom or victory', and I say martyrdom first, because martyrdom is our road to victory. [Question:] What is the slogan which the President asks for its implementation?"

(President Hafez Assad + Homework, Reader, Grade 5, pt. 1, pp.107-108)

"Let us make seeking martyrdom [Istish'had] the highest value in society. Seeking martyrdom is an essential need in every national struggle against the invaders and the imperialists. It is the essential basis, which is inevitable and has no alternative, for the protection of the homeland and the liberation of the land... Let us glorify martyrdom and let it become important in the souls of all of us. Let it be our way whenever the homeland calls."

*President Hafez Assad, Reader, Grade 6, pt. 1, p. 138
see also Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 7, p. 68)*

"We have believed in martyrdom as a road to [achieving our] right, victory and life. Martyrdom has become a general love of the masses and a general heroism of the masses. It will definitely remain [as] our love which no [other] love would compete with. Let martyrdom live in our souls as a constant feeling, everlasting conviction, an axiom not to be debated and a belief not to be doubted."

(President Hafez Assad, National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, p. 155)

"Martyrdom is an integral part of our mental and physical entity."

(President Hafez Assad, Civics, Grade 6, p. 115)

Other Means of Inculcating Martyrdom

But the indoctrination effort regarding jihad is not restricted to Hafez Assad's sayings. The textbooks employ a variety of other means to inculcate the ideal of martyrdom in the minds of the students, such as poetry and language exercises. There are also class assignments to this effect. In twelfth grade, after which the students join the Syrian army, the indoctrination reaches its climax with a personal pledge by the students to seek martyrdom.

Through poetry

"The body that yearns for martyrdom..."
(*Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 9, p. 91*)

"I shall carry my soul in my palm and toss it in the abyss of destruction."
(*"The Martyr's Poem", Grammar, Eloquence and Prosody, Grade 12, p. 102 and again on p. 145*)

"In what verse did he [the poet] refer to our country as a source of martyrs?"
(*Homework, Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 9, p. 51*)

Through language exercises

"The martyr watered the homeland's soil with his blood."
(*Reader, Grade 5, pt. 2, p. 107*)

"It is inevitable for the Arab to have either martyrdom or victory."
(*Principles of Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 5, p. 19*)

"I have not seen a greater [person] than the martyr. He wrote the glorious history of his nation with his [own] blood. What a wonderful writer and writing!"
(*Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 7, p. 35*)

"The heroic soldiers seek martyrdom on the fields of honor."
(*Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 8, p. 10*)

"Think of death as a sweet [thing] on the road to martyrdom and [thus] you will build the glory of our Arab nation."
(*Grammar, Grade 9, p. 55*)

"How difficult it is [for him] not to end his

Jihad with martyrdom; how cruel it is [for him] to be deprived of martyrdom."

(*Grammar, Grade 9, p. 167*)

"O my country... you will be granted the blood of the martyrs."

(*Grammar, Grade 10, p. 52*)

"We shall not hesitate to sacrifice our blood in order to be elevated to the ranks of the martyrs."

(*Grammar, Grade 10, p. 62*)

"I shall sacrifice my soul in order to water my homeland with my blood."

(*Grammar, Eloquence and Prosody, Grade 11, p. 16*)

"Courage, O revolutionary [fighter]; rush towards martyrdom."

(*Grammar, Eloquence and Prosody, Grade 11, p. 184*)

Assignments on Martyrdom

"Write, on one page, the story of a martyr from among the martyrs of the homeland and then expound upon the greatness of martyrdom and its impact on our life."

(*Homework, Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 7, p. 16*)

"Write an essay about martyrdom and martyrs with quotations from the Fighting Leader Comrade Hafez Assad's sayings and examples from your [own] environment of martyrs who fell on the battlefield in defense of the homeland."

(*National-Socialist Education, Grade 9, p. 80*)

Personal pledge by twelfth graders to seek martyrdom

"We pledge to the Leader of our March to offer our blood and soul for the cause of our nation's grandeur and the defeat of the unjust colonialist. Let our wish become a slogan for seeking martyrdom for the realization of the goals of our Arab nation. Let us love martyrdom passionately as it means immortality. Let us bless the martyrs and let their way be our everlasting wish. I hope that my life will end in martyrdom only."

(*National-Socialist Education, Grade 12, p. 63*)

6 | IN SUPPORT OF TERROR

Embracing and supporting Palestinian terrorism against Israel is a common theme in the textbooks. The term “terror [irhab]” is never used to denote Arab activities. This term is reserved exclusively for Israeli activity. It is Israel that, according to these textbooks, plants bombs in crowded areas.

For Palestinian terrorism, the Syrian textbooks use the terms “revolution,” “Palestinian Resistance,” “Armed Struggle,” or “the Fidayi Action.” Fidayi is best translated into English as “a fighter ready to sacrifice his life for a cause.” All these terms refer to attacks against Israeli citizens and Jews around the world and are depicted as operations against military targets.

Palestinian terrorism is also considered one of the best ways of achieving victory, recovery of both land and dignity and bringing about the destruction of Israel.

The Portrayal of Palestinian Terrorism as Military Activity

"What we read today in the papers and the magazines and what we hear through the various communication media about these extraordinary heroic [actions] carried out by those heroic martyrs, like penetrating enemy camps and blowing up their vehicles and installations – these are unusual heroic actions written down with pride in the pages of our Arab nation's modern history."

(Islamic Education, Grade 6, p. 20)

"Dalal al-Mughrabi died as a martyr on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv road in the occupied land, after she had hoisted, with her Fidai comrades, the flag of Palestine over a Zionist truck for four hours during day-time."*

(Reader, Grade 6, pt. 2, p. 97)

"Fatmah Barnawi is a young woman of Jerusalem who took part in raising the flag of the armed revolution in the occupied

land of Palestine and followed the road of the difficult struggle in the framework of the Palestinian Resistance."**

*(Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 8, p. 161)**

Cultivating Support for Terrorism

"An amazing luster and a thunder-like sound turned the house of Bassem's father [together] with those [who were] inside it into a mass of fire. Bassem refused to have the foreigners dwell in his house. [Question:] Do you agree with what Bassem did? Do you have a desire to do what Bassem did? Why?"

(“The Small Lemon Tree”, Short Stories, Grade 5, pp. 17-18)

"Write a news-item for the school radio about a group of Fidais who set up an ambush for the enemy, using the following verbs (do not write more than four lines): resist, ambush, move, hide, surprise, fire, demolish, capture."

(Homework, Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 7, p. 34)



Illustrations from the short story
"The Small Lemon Tree."

* In March 1978 a group of several Palestinian terrorists, led by a woman, came from Lebanon on a boat and took over a civilian bus on the coastal road between Haifa and Tel Aviv. Thirty-eight Israeli civilians, men, women and children, were killed in the attack.

** Fatmah Barnawi was arrested in Jerusalem in 1967 following her attempt to plant a bomb in the "Zion" cinema while it was full of civilian spectators.

7 | REJECTION OF PEACE WITH ISRAEL AND DISAVOWAL OF THE PEACE PROCESS

Peace with Israel is regarded as treason, surrender, and submission. Syrian students learn from their textbooks that their own country has been a champion of the battle against peace with Israel.

The peace process is perceived as a continuation of the old struggle against Zionism by other means, taking into account the present international circumstances. Sometimes it is called “the battle of peace” [ma’rakat al-salam].

Peace is portrayed as conditional and one-sided. On one hand, its price is to be paid by Israel alone: full withdrawal and full recognition of the Arab rights, which remain unspecified. On the other hand, Syria is not called upon to give up any of its principles in return for peace: nothing is said about recognizing the State of Israel and its right to exist.

"We should believe that any hand extended for peace with the aggressors is a criminal hand that must be cut off, because that is an open treason against Islam and the Muslims. On this basis we judge the position of the conspiring agent, who violated his nation's will and his religion's instructions, [Egypt's late President] Anwar Sadat, as well as what he did, beginning in the disgraceful and treacherous visit to Israel and ending in his despicable and shameful negotiations."

(Islamic Education, Grade 8, p. 88)

Syria is a Champion of the Battle against Peace with Israel...

"The Syrian Arab country has rejected all the yielding surrender attempts which aim at the loss of the Arab nation's rights and especially the right of the Palestinian Arab people to liberation and return... We should be alert and watchful of the enemy's deception and cunning and reject any call for peace with it."

(Islamic Education, Grade 8, p. 88)

"Revolutionary Syria... has rejected the course of surrender and treacherous negotiation."

(Islamic Education, Grade 8, p. 43)

"The Arab-Socialist Ba'ath Party... has called for the... rejection of peace, negotiations and recognition of the Zionist entity."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 12, p. 66)

...Yet Israel is Responsible for Resisting Peace

While Syria boasts of its activities against peace with Israel, it accuses Israel of sabotaging peace.

"Israel tries to mislead world public opinion by its acceptance of the negotiation with the Arabs and by its desire for peace, but a peace in its own special sense which means the Arabs' surrender, without [Israel's] implementation of the resolutions of international legality. The Fighting Leader Comrade Hafez Assad described Israel's game regarding the peace process

saying: In spite of its claim that it wants peace, Israel is doing the opposite in word and in deed."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, p. 107)

The "Battle for Peace" is the Continuation of the Struggle against Israel

Full withdrawal and full recognition of the "Arab rights" is the price demanded for peace, without any commitment regarding the recognition of Israel and its right to exist.

"All the developments and events in the region have emphasized that it is impossible to reach a real, just and comprehensive peace in the region without Syria. That is what the Fighting Leader, Comrade Hafez Assad, has often called for, namely, that Syria is heading towards peace provided that it is just and comprehensive, which would return the land and the rights to their owners, remove injustice and put an end to occupation and aggression. This is the peace of the brave which will open the horizons of progress and prosperity for the region."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 9, p. 66)

"[Homework:] Extract from the following statement by the Fighting Leader Comrade Hafez Assad, the importance of achieving the peace which we are pursuing.[The statement:] We want peace indeed. We see and understand that everyone has an interest in that peace. But we also oppose anyone who tries to turn peace into a monopolized interest of his. We oppose him. No one will ever be able to make peace with Syria without Syria's consent, since it holds on to its interests and rights, and first and foremost — its occupied land... We have a right that we cannot relinquish. Giving up any part of the homeland means giving up the [whole] homeland... [It means] submission at the expense of [our] rights, destiny and future."

(National-Socialist Education, Grade 9, pp. 68-69)

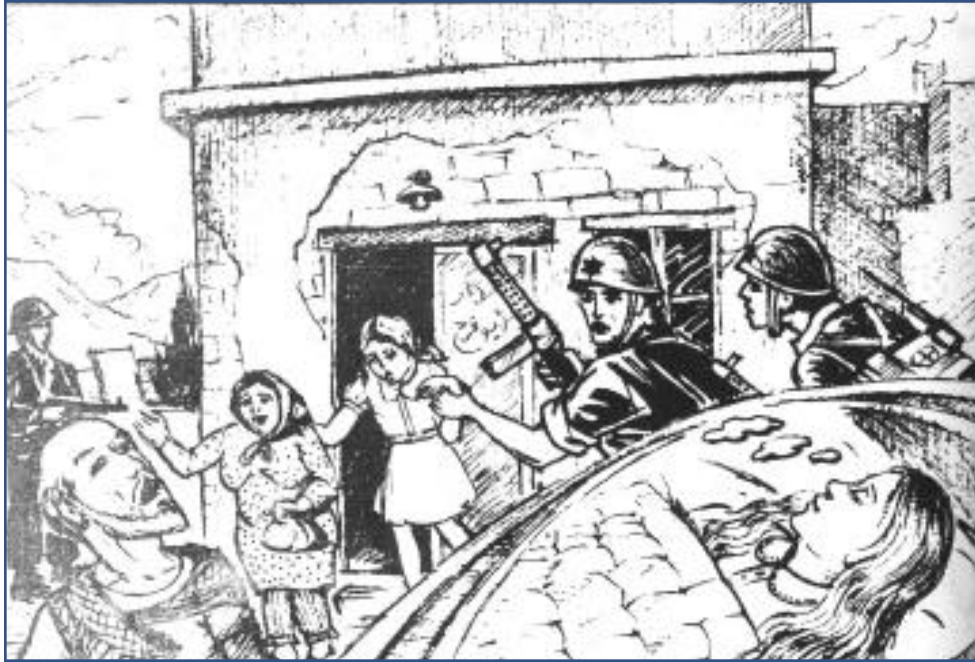
APPENDIX: THE SYRIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

Syria has a very large and rapidly expanding population of school age children due to an annual growth rate of 3.2%. The estimated population of Syria in 1999 was 17,200,000 inhabitants, of which more than 7,000,000 were of school age (5-17 years old).

All Syrian schools, including those in the private sector and those administered by UNRWA, are under the close supervision of the Ministry of Education, which is directly in charge of their curricula and textbooks.

Article 37 of the Syrian 1973 Constitution defines education as a right guaranteed by the State, "free of charge at all its levels and compulsory at the primary level". The same Article also emphasizes that the State "shall endeavor to make the other levels compulsory".

The Syrian education system consists of four levels: pre-primary education, primary education, lower secondary (also called preparatory or intermediate), and upper secondary education.



Reader, Grade 1, pt.1, page 146

Pre-primary (Ages 3-5)

The 3-year pre-primary level is not compulsory and operates on a fee-paying basis. Some kindergartens are attached to public primary schools, others to the General Union of Syrian Arab Women and to the Teachers Union, but most of them are run by private institutions, which embrace more than 60% of children. In government institutions tuition is symbolic and the pupils are mainly the children of employees.

In 1989-1990, 84,800 children between the ages of 3 and 5, representing about 5% of the age group, were enrolled in 793 kindergartens with 2,711 teachers. In 1999-2000, 108,319 children were enrolled in pre-primary education, 7.75% of the age group.

Primary Education (Ages 6-12)

Primary education is compulsory and free of charge. It runs for six years, from

Grade 1 to Grade 6 and begins at the age of 6. The primary school day lasts 5 hours, and the school year continues for 200 days. The curriculum includes Arabic, mathematics, religious instruction, elements of science and health education, social and national education, art, music and physical education.

Most primary schools are run by the government. Less than 3% of them are private, and 2% are run by UNRWA. Both the private sector and UNRWA follow the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education.

Enrollment is approximately 95%. However, in remote areas it is frequently far below the national average. A notable effort to ensure and maintain full enrollment at the primary level was clearly visible through a substantial increase in the number of teachers, from 101,325 in 1990 to 122,249 in 1999.



The Arab liberation revolution led by the Ba'th party and its secretary general, the leader Hafez al-Asad, driving out the American forces from Lebanon.

Lower Secondary Education (Ages 12-14)

The lower secondary level, also called intermediate or preparatory level, continues for 3 years, from Grade 7 to Grade 9. It is free but not compulsory. The curriculum includes all the subjects taught at primary level with the addition of English, French and "female education".

There are approximately 2,000 intermediate schools, most of which are run by the government. Of these, less than 4% were private and 2% belonged to UNRWA. Again, both the private sector and UNRWA use the curriculum set by the Ministry of Education.

In 1990 the enrollment rate for Grade 7 was close to 80%. Enrollment at interme-

diate level totaled 631,000 pupils. There is no data available for any of the following years. One can, however, infer from data showing a substantial decrease in the total enrollment for both the lower and the upper secondary levels (from 48% for the year 1990 to 42 % for the year 1996), that there was probably also a substantial decrease in enrollment in the lower secondary level.

Upper Secondary Education (Ages 15-17)

The upper secondary level also continues for 3 years, from Grade 10 to Grade 12. It is free of charge. Entry is selective and based on the Intermediate Diploma examination at the end of Grade 9.

There are two types of upper secondary schooling: "general" and "technical/ vocational". Pupils who are 15 years old are free to choose either general or technical schools, but those beyond this age must enter the technical schools.

Technical and vocational secondary schools include industrial (51%), commercial (22%) agricultural (7%) as well as "female" specialization of home economics and nursing (20%) in 1989-1990. Two-thirds of the courses were oriented towards scientific and practical training. Upon completion, the students take the "Technical Baccalaureate"; opportunities

in further education for holders of the technical baccalaureate are limited.

In the general secondary schools, the first year is an introductory one. The last two years are divided into literary and scientific streams. About three quarters of the pupils opt for the scientific stream. Upon completion, the students sit for the Secondary Diploma (Baccalaureate), which is the sole qualification to grant automatic entrance to universities and other institutions of higher education.

Approximately 90% of general secondary schools are funded by the government and 10% are private.



The leader Hafez al-Asad said the following about his defending the brothers in Lebanon:

"Syria is committed to its promise to liberate Lebanon and to guarantee its sovereignty on all of its territory"

The Arab revolutionaries destroying the headquarters of the American forces in Beirut.

SOURCES

All the books examined in this survey were published by the General Foundation for Printed Material and Textbooks under the supervision of the Ministry of Education of the Syrian Arab Republic. The titles of both agencies appear on each book. Fifty-eight of the sixty-eight books were printed at the Ba'ath Printing House. Following is the full list of the textbooks examined in this survey, organized according to subjects and grades. The publishing year and number of pages for each book are also provided.

Reader

Reader, Grade 1, pt. 1, 99/00, 160
Reader, Grade 1, pt. 2, 98/99, 143
Reader, Grade 2, pt. 1, 96/97, 112
Reader, Grade 2, pt. 2, 96/97, 128
Reader, Grade 3, pt. 1, 99/00, 184
Reader, Grade 3, pt. 2, 96/97, 143
Reader, Grade 4, pt. 1, 99/00, 144
Reader, Grade 4, pt. 2, 98/99, 160
Reader, Grade 5, pt. 1, 98/99, 128
Reader, Grade 5, pt. 2, 96/97, 128
Reader, Grade 6, pt. 1, 98/99, 159
Reader, Grade 6, pt. 2, 97/98, 127
Reader, Grade 10, 95/96, 76
Reader, Grade 11, 96/97, 99
Reader, Grade 12 (scientific & Humanistic), 96/97, 152

Reader and Literature

Conversation, Reader, Expression and Recital, Grade 2, pt. 1, 98/99, 94
Conversation, Reader, Expression and Recital, Grade 2, pt. 2, 98/99, 94
Short Stories, Grade 5, 98/99, 80
Selected Stories, Grade 6, 98/99, 143
Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 7, 99/00, 232
Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 8, 99/00, 207
Reader and Literary Texts, Grade 9, 99/00, 232
Literature and Texts, Grade 10, 99/00, 295
Literature and Texts, Grade 11 (Scientific), 96/97, 272
Literature and Texts, Grade 11 (Humanistic), 93/94, 324
Modern Arab Literature, Grade 12 (Humanistic), 99/00, 278

Grammar

Principles of Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 5, 99/00, 112
Grammar and Dictation, Grade 6, 98/99, 128
Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 7, 95/96, 224
Grammar, Dictation and Script, Grade 8, 96/97, 183
Grammar, Grade 9, 97/98, 184
Grammar, Grade 10, 95/96, 103
Grammar, Eloquence and Prosody, Grade 11 (Humanistic), 93/94, 216
Grammar, Eloquence and Prosody, Grade 12 (Humanistic), 96/97, 175

Geography

Geography of Greater Syria [Sham], Grade 5, 99/00, 191
Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 6, 97/98, 208
Principles of General Geography and the World, Grade 7, 97/98, 199
Geography of the Syrian Arab Country, Grade 8, 99/00, 176
Geography of the Arab Homeland, Grade 9, 96/97, 216
Natural Geography, Grade 10, 97/98, 248

Geography of the World, Grade 11 (Humanistic), 99/00, 334

History

Ancient History of the Arabs, Grade 5, 98/99, 160
History: The Era of the Prophet and the Orthodox Chaliphs, Grade 6, 98/99, 182
History of the Arabs in the Umayyad Era, Grade 7, 97/98, 175
History of the Arabs in the Abbasid Era, Grade 8, 99/00, 206
Modern History of the Arabs, Grade 9, 99/00, 192
History of Arab Civilization, Grade 10, 96/97, 278
History of Modern Times, Grade 11 (Humanistic), pt. 2, 96/97, 184

Social Education (Civics)

Social Education (Civics), Grade 4, 99/00, 152
Social Education (Civics), Grade 5, 97/98, 120
Social Education (Civics), Grade 6, 98/99, 144

National-Socialist Education

National-Socialist Education, Grade 7, 99/00, 120
National-Socialist Education, Grade 8, 99/00, 160
National-Socialist Education, Grade 9, 99/00, 155
National-Socialist Education, Grade 10, 98/99, 160
National-Socialist Education, Grade 11, 99/00, 191
National-Socialist Education, Grade 12, 89/90, 131

Islamic Education

Islamic Education, Grade 3, 99/00, 128
Islamic Education, Grade 4, 98/99, 119
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Christian Education

Christian Education, Grade 4, 97/98, 110
Christian Education, Grade 6, 99/00, 127
Christian Religious Education, Grade 7, 85/86, 164



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