

# **Special Report: Endangering Jewry — Philadelphia Leaders, Agencies Promote Pro-Palestinian Cause Despite Its Anti-Jewish Nature**



This report produced by the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the Zionist Organization of America, March, 2022. ZOA is America's oldest educational and advocacy group promoting and defending the Jewish state of Israel and ensuring that Israel be strong, secure and vibrant. We also bolster the mutually beneficial United States-Israel relationship, and we expose and combat Jew-hatred.

Greater Philadelphia ZOA is one of ZOA's chapters throughout the nation.

To reach Greater Philadelphia ZOA, email [office@zoaphilly.org](mailto:office@zoaphilly.org) .

To reach National ZOA, email [info@zoa.org](mailto:info@zoa.org) .

Note: Graphic above is an artist's rendering representing the city of Philadelphia's official support for an anti-Jewish movement.

# **Report: Endangering Jewry – Philadelphia Leaders, Agencies Promote Pro-Palestinian Cause Despite Its Anti-Jewish Nature**

The City of Philadelphia is engaged in a campaign to promote the Palestinian-Arab cause – a cause and a movement that negates and denies Jewish history, heritage and rights, and which often incites Jew-hatred based on false allegations as well as distortions of historic and contemporary events. In some cases, proponents of this movement want to destroy the Jewish state and the world's largest Jewish community. Some Philadelphia officials and employees have expressed this directly or indirectly. Thus, the mayor, members of Philadelphia City Council, other elected and appointed officials as well as city agencies are deliberately undermining the well-being of the Jewish Community and giving an official government imprimatur to those who want to harm Jews and destroy Israel. Philadelphia and its suburbs are home to a significant number of Jewish people and Jewish institutions. Hundreds of thousands of individuals and well over 100 institutions could be adversely impacted and endangered by out-of-control incitement of Jew-hatred.

**It is important to state that Judaism, Zionism and Israel are synonymous and intertwined. While some Jewish people are not supportive of Israel or of Zionism, both the Land of Israel and Zionism are integral components of Judaism and Jewish heritage. Zionism is simply the right of Jewish people to enjoy self-determination in the Jewish People's historic and legal homeland — with peace and security.**

As the anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel campaign occurs, attacks against Jewish people and Jewish institutions are at levels unseen in generations. This is mostly due to media misreporting about the Muslim and Arab war against the Jewish people, accompanied by propaganda efforts that completely invert the perception of actual Arab aggressor and actual Jewish victim. There has also been an unprecedented and pervasive assault on the truth, with false accusations of “apartheid”/racism and oppression leveled against Jewry. Jewish schools and synagogues in America today must have security guards and expensive, sophisticated protection systems. Some Jews are fearful of wearing clothing or symbols that identify them as being Jewish.

Rhetoric and actions by the City of Philadelphia give an official government imprimatur to the lies and a tacit license to threaten or harm Jews.

- In 2021, Mayor James Kenney, for the first time, issued an official proclamation in support of “International Day of Solidarity With the Palestinian People,” a notoriously anti-Jewish event contrived by the United Nations. The U.N. created this event in 1977 to denigrate the re-establishment of Israel on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the U.N. vote which paved the way for Jews to have self-determination in their historic and legal homeland. The U.N. holds this “solidarity” event annually. The mayor and three members of City Council along with two state representatives spoke at an official city event on November 29 to mark the occasion.
- The city's Free Library of Philadelphia has had a year-long, aggressive and accelerating series of activities and events to promote the Palestinian-Arab cause -- particularly among children. These have included featuring anti-Israel/anti-Jewish books and books by anti-Israel/anti-Jewish authors in “storytime” book-reading events for young children – which have included comments by Library staff that erase Israel from the map and equate Zionism with racism. The Library has tied their promotion of “Palestine” and “Palestinians” to the popular Black Lives Matter organization as part of a tactic known as “intersectionality.” The Library is a system of 55 branches, an active web site and a large presence on social media. It is an agency that is part of the mayor's office, overseen by a deputy mayor who was made aware of what the Library was perpetrating.
- The School District of Philadelphia allows a student organization with a decidedly anti-Israel/anti-Jewish record to have chapters in two high schools and it also works closely with a cultural organization that has erased Israel from its maps of the Middle East and takes anti-Israel/anti-Zionist positions. The Black Lives Matter organization is a regular influence within the school system.
- A city-sponsored soccer tournament designates “Palestine” as a country on a city website although it is not a country.
- A city agency that helps newly released prison inmates had on its website a Marxist organization's article which viciously attacked the Jewish state in an anti-Zionist screed laced with false allegations about Jews.
- A city-owned Israeli flag that is flown publicly was attacked and the attack was recorded on video. One of the perpetrators was apprehended but was released without being charged.

Meanwhile during 2021 there were no official activities by any city departments, agencies nor officials to promote Israel, Zionism or the cause of Jewish self-determination or indigenouness in the Land of Israel. Nor were there any that portrayed the Israeli People in a positive light.

This report will demonstrate the size and scope of this campaign, including images and screen shots of activities; events; and rhetoric from city officials, city employees and anti-Israel/anti-Zionist/anti-Jewish activists and organizations. Most of this occurred during 2021.

This report is divided into five sections:

- Activities by elected and appointed Philadelphia officials
- Activities by the city's Free Library of Philadelphia
- Activities within the School District of Philadelphia
- Activities by other city agencies and departments
- A recap and recommended actions to alleviate and counter Jew-hatred in the city.

### Some facts:

- *The Jewish People are indigenous to the Land of Israel, and the Land of Israel is integral to the Jewish People and Jewish faith. In fact, there are certain mitzvot (religious obligations for observant Jews) that can only be performed in the Land of Israel (Eretz Israel) and Jews all over the world turn toward Israel (and specifically Israel's capital, Jerusalem, which has the two most sacred sites in Judaism: the Temple Mount and the Western Wall) to pray. According to censuses at the time, Jews have been the majority population in Jerusalem since 1850. Though most Jews were exiled following the Roman conquest, there has continually been a Jewish remnant that has lived in the Land.*
- *The Palestinian-Arab cause, or the so-called Palestinian "liberation" movement/"Palestinianism" advances the false narrative that there was an Arab nation of Palestine and that its territory was "stolen" by Jewish "colonizers" to create Israel. Its activists call for territory that under international law belongs to the Jewish People to be taken from Israel/the Jewish People; for there to be a new, additional Arab state to be implanted within Israel to be headed either by the corrupt terrorist/genocidal group Hamas or the corrupt terrorist/genocidal Palestine Liberation Organization; for potentially millions of descendants of Arabs who may have lived in what is today Israel to be allowed to move into Israel; and for "Palestine" to be "free from the river to the sea" – thus destroying the world's only Jewish-majority country.*
- *There never in world history has been a country called "Palestine." The derivation of the name is Roman: Palestina, not Arabic. There is no equivalent to the letter "P" in Arabic. "Palestine" was the name of a region within the Ottoman Empire. Prior to the Ottomans it was controlled by a myriad of Arab and/or Muslim tribes and sects. When the world broke up the Ottoman Empire via the Treaty of Sevres following its defeat in World War I, the victors in the war – who controlled the territory – committed in the San Remo Resolution to return the territory to the Jewish People for the re-establishment of a Jewish homeland. Later, the League of Nations, the world's governing body, voted that the territory should be given to the Jewish People to settle the Land as "a national home for the Jewish people." This became known as the Palestine Mandate. The League awarded control of the territory or mandate to Great Britain in 1922.*
- *Later in 1922, the British excised 78% of that territory and gave it to the tribe known as the Hashemites. Today that territory is the nation of Jordan. Thus: There was a vast territory called "Palestine" where Arabs and Jews lived, of which 78% of the territory was taken away from the Jewish People to create an Arab nation in Palestine. And yet there are no accusations of a Jordanian "occupation" of "Palestine" by Palestinian-Arabs nor by activists and advocates who champion the "Palestinian" cause. In 1947, the United Nations (which had "grandfathered" the League of Nations' Mandate for Palestine) General Assembly voted (in Resolution 181) to divide the remaining 22% of the mandate west of the Jordan River into "an Arab state" and "a Jewish state." The resolution is non-binding.*
- *When Muslims and or Arabs controlled that territory, they never created a nation there. Local Arabs denied that they were a distinct, separate people, instead largely identifying as "Syrians." It was the Jews who lived in the territory who were referred to as the "Palestinians," and in fact Jews set up many institutions and organizations with "Palestine" as part of the name.*
- *The Jewish Agency, which represented the Jewish People, accepted the plan although that meant that the Jewish People*

would only be able to retain about 11% of the Land that the League of Nations had set aside for the restoration of the Jewish state. Meanwhile, the Arab League rejected the proposal. Less than six months later, the Jewish community declared its independence, and the very next day the armies of six Arab nations as well as many of the local Arabs attacked the nascent state, attempting to obliterate it.

- Today, 65% to 70% of Jordanians are said to be of “Palestinian” descent. Palestinian-Arabs in Jordan face official discrimination there – and yet there are never accusations of “apartheid” against Jordan. They also face official discrimination in Lebanon and in other Arab countries – yet again, there is no outcry nor activism against those countries or their governments. From 1950 to 1967, when Jordan ruled the “West Bank,” the Jordanians did not establish a Palestinian state nor was there demand for one.

These are irrefutable facts.

- Generally speaking and with rare exception, to show “solidarity” with the “Palestinian” people is to promote a narrative that denies the Jewish connection to the Land, Jewish history, Jewish heritage and Jewish self-determination. It is to agree with the false claim that the Land – including Jerusalem --belongs to the Arabs and the claim that there are a distinct Arab people known as “Palestinians” who are somehow different and distinguishable from Jordanians and also from Syrians and Egyptians. The Palestinian movement, “Palestinianism,” has as its goal the replacement of (or destruction of) the Jewish state of Israel with a state of Palestine. To promote this people and this movement – whether willfully or unwittingly – is to inflict harm on the Jewish People. Thus, one cannot simultaneously support the Palestinian-Arab movement and claim that they are not anti-Jewish.

## Activities by elected and appointed Philadelphia officials

On November 29, 2021, Philadelphia Mayor James Kenney presented a proclamation on behalf of the City of Philadelphia in recognition of “International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.” It was an official ceremony on the plaza outside of the Municipal Services Building, across from City Hall. Kenney, three members of City Council, one state senator representing Philadelphia and at least one state representative representing Philadelphia spoke at the event. The date was no coincidence. Some speakers took advantage of the opportunity to make anti-Israel/anti-Jewish political statements, including “Free Palestine,” and references to “occupation.” Therefore this was not merely an effort to recognize one of the many ethnic groups in Philadelphia, as the mayor had claimed.

*Note: The United Nations created this observance in 1977 to denigrate and delegitimize the Jewish state and people, and to cover-up Arab intransigence. It coincided with the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN General Assembly resolution 181 explained above. Most Arabs and Muslims view the re-establishment of a Jewish state of Israel as a “catastrophe” – **nakba** in Arabic - and do not recognize Israel nor Jewish self-determination. Many deny any Jewish connection to that land whatsoever.*



This year was the first time the City of Philadelphia officially participated in this U.N. observance. Thus, Philadelphia endorses the spirit of the U.N. action and gives credence to the goals of the anti-Israel/anti-Jewish activists.

Mayor Kenney spoke at the event. The proclamation text is, in part:

“In 1977, the General Assembly of the United Nations called for the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (Solidarity Day), with its resolution 32/40 B made on December 2 of that year. Since then, the United Nations has stood in solidarity with the Palestinian people every year to recognize them as a people through culture, heritage and their existence. THEREFORE...

I, James F. Kenney, Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, do hereby proclaim the day of Monday, November 29, 2021 to be the

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY  
WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

in Philadelphia, and urge residents to foster dialogue, share resources, and learn more about ways to support our local Palestinian community, as well as helping Philadelphia be a welcoming City of choice





in which to live, work, and prosper.”

As communal leader Jerome Stern noted in a letter published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, had Mayor Kenney merely wanted to honor or encourage support for the “Palestinian community,” he could have chosen any day – but instead he selected a day designed to attack the Jewish People.

*Note: Mayor Kenney did not include any Palestinian Jews in the event nor did he have them in mind. It was the Jewish people who lived in the land in pre-state Israel for generations who were commonly known as “the Palestinians.” Many Jewish institutions in Palestine and externally who helped the Jews there had “Palestine” or “Palestinian” as part of their names. Through its actions, Kenney and the city erased this history as well – even though there are Palestinian-Jews living in our region today.*

Other speakers at the event included: Philadelphia City Council Members Kendra Books, Maria Quinones-Sanchez and Jamie Gauthier; State Sen. Nikil Saval; and State Rep. Danilo Burgos. State Rep. Joanna McClinton attended, according to her social media, but it is unclear if she spoke.

Kenney, Council members and others spoke in front of an array of Palestine Liberation Organization flags (Various Palestinian-Arab factions and groups each have their own flag or banner, and the flag commonly referred to as the “Palestinian flag” is actually the flag of the Palestine Liberation Organization.). The PLO is among the most prolific terrorist organizations in modern times. The PLO, led by Yasser Arafat and today led by Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, has murdered and maimed thousands of Jewish civilians and hundreds of American citizens. It hijacked passenger planes; detonated bombs in houses of worship, crowded eateries and other places; it mowed down customers at airline counters with machine-gun fire; and it assassinated two American diplomats.

Many in the crowd across from City Hall held aloft posters bearing the PLO flag and a clenched fist. Neither the terrorist flags nor violence-endorsing posters deterred the mayor and other elected officials from participating.

Neither did a plea a few days earlier by Israeli Consul General Ambassador Asaf Zamir asking Kenney not to attend the event. Reportedly, Mayor Kenney did not reply to the letter nor to phone messages.

In his letter to Kenney, Zamir wrote: “I write to you to express my concern with your decision to headline and support ‘Palestine Solidarity Day’ and the accompanying event scheduled for November 29, 2021 . . . I am equally dismayed with the decision by the Office of Immigrant Affairs of the City of Philadelphia to act as the leading organizer and sponsor of this event.”

Zamir noted that the US and 19 other nations voted against the UN resolution when the General Assembly created the observance. Zamir called the resolution that Kenney and the city were endorsing “morally bankrupt.”

Zamir added: “By choosing the anniversary of this date, this event is not making a stand for the Palestinians. It instead seems to be endorsing the violent rejection of the peaceful compromise plan presented 74 years ago that could have avoided the decades of bloodshed that followed.”

We were not able to find a video nor an audio recording of the full event. But elected officials who participated and/or attended it wrote about it on social media, and some expressed their thoughts about the issue of “Palestine” vs. Israel.

- State Sen. Saval (see photo on next page) did not post any of his rhetoric on his social media nor on his official website



but based on tweets by Philadelphia Inquirer editorial board member and occasional opinion writer Abraham Gutman, who attended the event and who himself regularly bashes Israel on Twitter, Saval was the most outspoken of the elected officials during the ceremony. According to Gutman, Saval said at the event: “ ‘It’s an honor to stand with the Palestinian people for whom there is still no home, no occupied[sic] state’.” Gutman wrote that Saval “ties together the right of return, Sheikh Jarrah, occupation. Ends quoting Mahmoud Darwish and closes with “ ‘Free Palestine’.” On his own Twitter, Saval retweeted Councilwoman Brooks’ tweet about the event.

- Apparently Rep. Burgos did not note his presence on social media.
- Councilwoman Brooks (above, right) wrote about her participation in the ceremony on her Facebook page, noting: “It is equally important that we advocate for the fair treatment of our Palestinian neighbors at home and abroad so that all people live with dignity, safety and sovereignty. We must recognize that the history into the present moment of Palestine is marked by struggle. For decades, Palestinians have faced discrimination, displacement, violence and occupation.”
- Councilwoman Gauthier posted on her Twitter: “We stand with our Palestinian neighbors. We see you, we value you, and we empathize with your struggle – to resist occupation and oppression, & to be recognized as a people.”
- State Rep. McClinton posted a number of photos on her Twitter, including one with a man carrying a huge PLO flag. She wrote: “Today, my office stood with brothers and sisters for the International Day of Solidarity with Palestine

People (PLO flag icon) Continue to stand&advocate[sic] for humanity!  
#PalestineDay”



Councilwoman Quinones-Sanchez apparently did not post on social media about the event. (In 2015, Quinones-Sanchez honored Laila Ghannam, the Palestinian Authority’s governor of Ramallah "in recognition of the impact and her extraordinary actions for her nation and her cause," despite Ghannam’s record of praising murderers of Jews, other terrorists and their enablers — according to a report by Palestinian Media Watch. Ghannam was quoted as saying – prior to being honored by Quinones-Sanchez: "We promise and swear to these mighty ones: We are still [following] your path... The President and icon, Martyr Yasser Arafat, Dr. George Habash [founder PFLP], comrade Abu Ali Mustafa [head of PFLP], Sheikh Ahmed Yassin [ Hamas founder], Fathi Shaqaqi [Islamic Jihad founder], Samir Ghosheh [Sec.-Gen. of PSF], Abu Jihad [a founder of Fatah] and all the great leaders." Ghannam also praised Hamas bomb-builder for homicide terrorists Abdallah Barghouti, who is serving 67 life sentences for complicity in the murder of 67 civilians. Subsequent to her honoring Ghannam, Quinones-Sanchez released a statement claiming that she has “consistently condemned terrorist



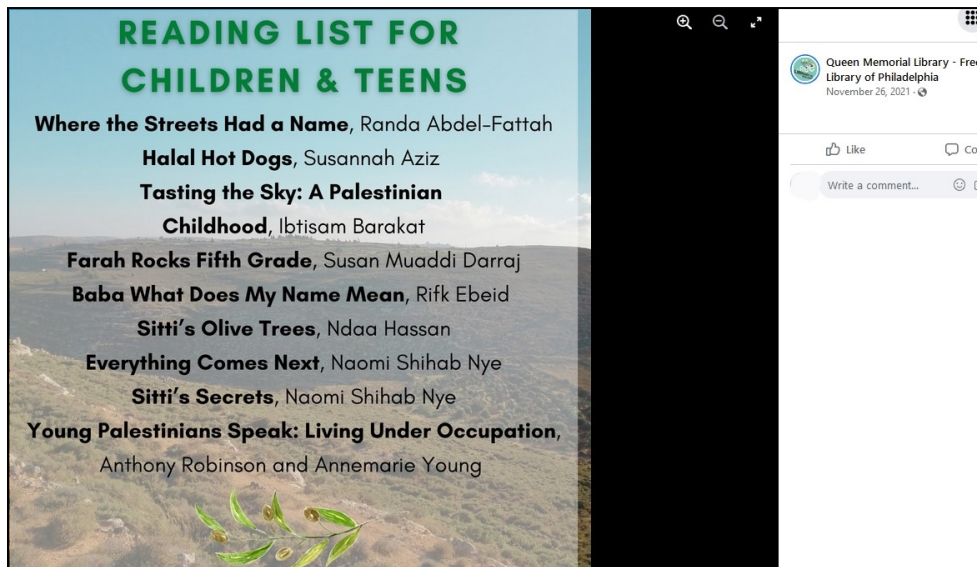
violence” and that she “denounce[d] the sentiments attributed to Governor Ghannam.”

At the Nov. 29 event, according to photos, there was a table from the Free Library of Philadelphia stocked with an assortment of books about “Palestine,” and Frisbees, and there was also a mobile “pop up” Free Library of Philadelphia library attached to a bicycle.

## Anti-Jewish Activities by the City’s Free Library of Philadelphia

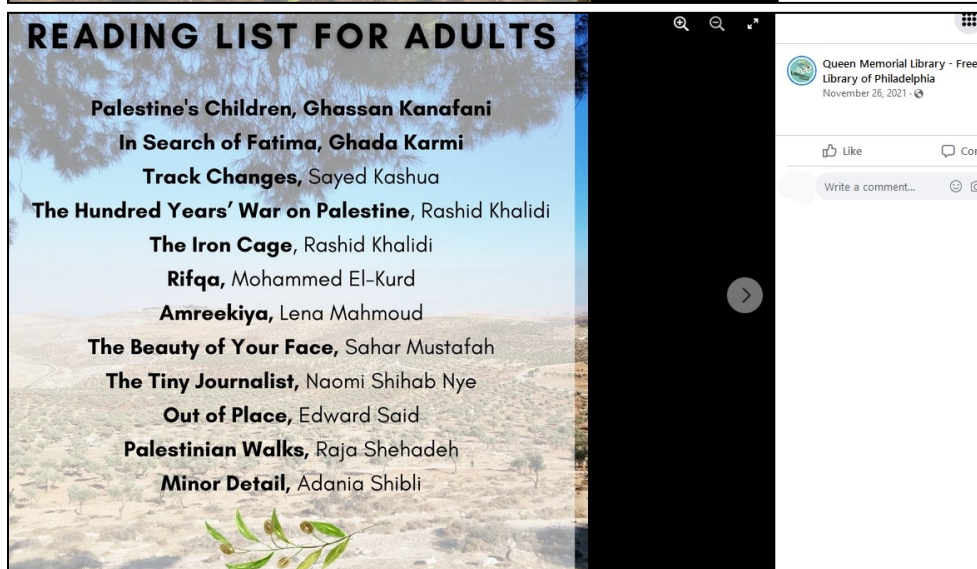
The Free Library of Philadelphia’s staff-driven promotion of a Palestinian-Arab narrative, replete with deliberate denials of Israel’s existence, erasing Israel from maps, accusations that Zionism is racist and asserting that Israelis (a k a Jews) commit violence and oppression against “Palestinians” -- all directed at very young children, their parents and caregivers – has been a fixture of the Library system at least since the spring. There has been at least a dozen events and activities highlighting Palestinian-Arabs — far more than on any other single group during the period. Many of these have had an anti-Jewish/anti-Israel element, while there have been none that portray Jews or Israel in a positive light.

The Free Library of Philadelphia is a city government agency that is part of the city’s Office of Children and Families. The



Office’s website notes that OCF “aligns the City’s policies, resources, and services for children and families.” The same web page states that the Office “oversees” the Library.

It was Nov. 29, 2021, marking that same “International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People,” that the Free Library hosted at least a half-dozen events at its branches. It presented at least two book readings for children that were available on the Library’s social media pages and/or on a Library children’s librarian’s YouTube channel. There were also “Palestinian” olive oil tastings and “olive tree craft kits.” Library social media encouraged patrons to “check out books about ‘Palestine!’” The Library offered at its branches a resource list about “Palestine” and “Palestinians,” and published on its social media pages lists of suggested books for children, teens and adults to read. This was in addition to the Library’s presence at the “Solidarity” ceremony.



A [www.freelibrary.org](http://www.freelibrary.org) (the Library’s official website) calendar listing promoting “Virtual Palestine Storytime with Sunita!” featured an image from the notoriously anti-Jewish, propaganda-saturated website “Teach Palestine” –

suggesting that Library staff use this website as a resource and perhaps disseminate propaganda from the website to Library patrons. The image is an illustration of the small portion of Israel’s security barrier that takes the form of a concrete wall, necessitated by Arab gunfire into Jewish communities. “Teach Palestine” is a project of The Middle East Children’s Alliance, endorsed by activists committed to the destruction of the Jewish state.

The lists of suggested books include picture books for the Library’s youngest users including one, “Baba, What Does My Name Mean?” which includes a map of modern-day Israel all labeled as “Palestine.”

The book list for adults includes works by anti-Jewish activists Edward Said, Angela Davis, Susan Abulhawa, Marc Lamont Hill, Noura Erakat and Rashid Khalidi.

Two of the Nov. 29 Library events were recorded on video. Each was a children’s “storytime” led by children’s librarians at the Queen Memorial and Donatucci branches who earlier in the year presented anti-Israel book-readings and their own anti-Jewish comments during videos for children.”

The Donatucci Branch children’s librarian began her Nov. 29 event by stating it was “a very special story time” and told her audience at the beginning and at the end that it was “International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.” She read from two books. The librarian told her young audience: “Today, we will show our solidarity through literature.” The introduction in one of those books, “19 Varieties of Gazelle,” which the librarian read, includes the phrase “the brutal occupation of Palestine.”

The event hosted by the Queen Memorial Branch children’s librarian began with her telling her audience at the outset: “Today, November 29, is International Day of Solidarity With the Palestinian People. If you come by the library, you can check out books for all ages about Palestine and by Palestinian authors. You can also get a grab-and-go olive tree craft kit.” After reading and commenting on the children’s picture book “Sitti’s Olive Tree” the librarian inserted: “Don’t forget that today is International Day of Solidarity With the Palestinian People.”

The screenshot shows the top of the Free Library of Philadelphia website. The header includes the library's logo, a search bar, and navigation links for Catalog and Website. Below the header is a red navigation bar with links for Locations, Events, Programs & Services, About, and Support the Library. The main content area features a 'Find Explore Ask' sidebar and a 'Blog' section. The blog post is titled 'Palestinian Stories in Literature for Young People' and is dated Monday, June 21, 2021. The author is listed as Erin H. and Kayla H. The post begins with the text: 'What does it feel like to be a child living through war and displacement? How can young people in the United States learn to develop empathy for young people around the world? How do we explain to our children what they see or hear on the news?'. A book cover illustration for 'Where the Streets Had a Name' by Randa Abdel-Fattah is featured on the right side of the post.

The Free Library of Philadelphia began offering Arab language classes during 2021 through a partnership with Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, an organization which has distributed maps of the Middle East that omit the name Israel. See more on this group in the “School District of Philadelphia” section of this report.

In June, a member of the community alerted Greater Philadelphia ZOA to a June 21 post on the Free Library of Philadelphia’s official blog. The headline was: “Palestinian Stories in Literature for Young People” with the teaser: “What does it feel like to be a child living through war and displacement? How can young people in the United States learn to develop empathy for young people around the ... continue reading”. Children’s librarians at two

branches created and posted the blog entry. That the Library waded into a decades-long international conflict, and clearly was seeking “empathy” for one side in the conflict – the side that is making war against a staunch, long-standing American ally – raised a red flag at ZOA.

The blog-entry authors asked: “How do we explain to our children what they see or hear on the news?” Given the well-documented anti-Jewish/anti-Israel bias among most mainstream media outlets, it seemed natural that the two librarians might be looking for a way to explain the Jewish People’s and Israel’s position. But in fact it was the exact opposite. “We have compiled a list of resources for young people and their caregivers who want to learn more about what it means and feels like to be Palestinian today.”

The Free Library blog item highlighted writer Naomi Shihab Nye and noted: “With roots in both Palestine and Ferguson, Missouri, her writing is also shaped by the connected struggles for racial equity in the US and

The screenshot shows the bottom of the Free Library of Philadelphia blog post. It includes a 'Survey' section with a question about serving diverse populations in an urban public library setting. Below the survey is a 'FREE LIBRARY CAREERS' button. The post continues with the text: 'by Erin H. and Kayla H. What does it feel like to be a child living through war and displacement? How can young people in the United States learn to develop empathy for young people around the... continue reading'. A 'JUNETEENTH: A Celebration of Freedom and Cuisine' section is also visible, featuring an image of food. At the bottom, there are several buttons for 'TEENS', 'CHILDREN'S BOOKS', 'RECOMMENDATIONS', 'POETRY', and 'BLACK LIVES MATTER'.



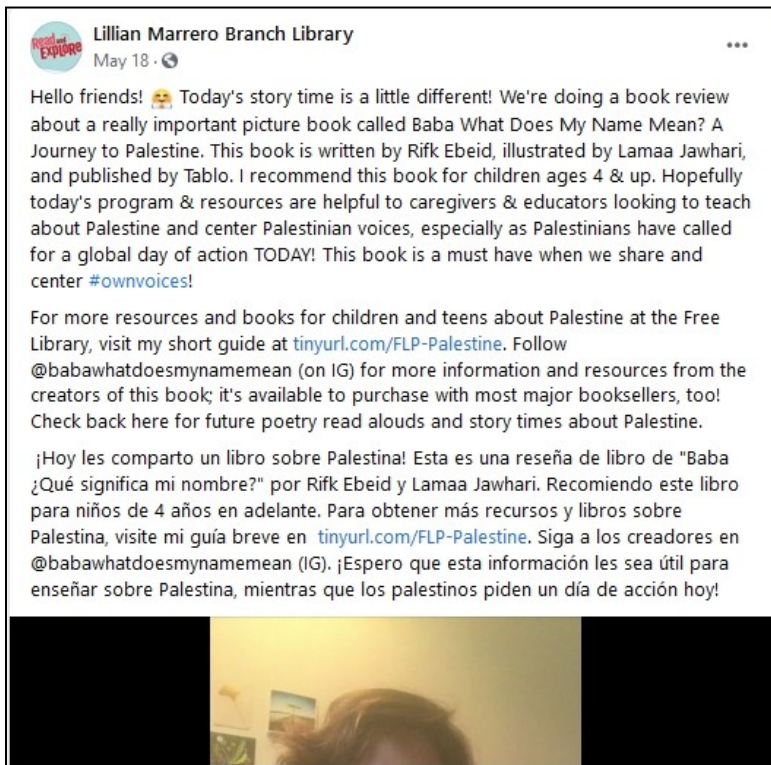
Palestinian liberation from occupation (see Nye’s note on "Yellow Glove" about Ferguson, racial violence, and segregation: "lines made by adults."). ‘Everything Comes Next’ offers children and their caregivers a moving introduction, and a human connection, to Palestinians’ ‘longing for a lost homeland’.” Ferguson was the epicenter of 2014 riots following the death of Michael Brown in that city. The two librarians were invoking “Intersectionality.” One of the “tags” on the blog post was “Black Lives Matter.” The blog post had a link to a “curated booklist” of 13 recommended books.

*Note: “Intersectionality” claims that disparate people who are “victims” of “oppression” or bias because of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual preference or other conditions should work together to defeat their oppressors. In practical application of “intersectionality,” the chief target of the activism has been the Jewish state of Israel.*

*Note: There was no blog post related to or reference about Hamas’ barrage of 4,400 rockets fired at Israeli civilians in May, 2021, nor the murderous attacks and terrorism directed at the Jewish people in Israel. There was no effort to invoke or solicit empathy for them; no curated list of books about Israel, Jewish heritage or connections to that land – which pre-dated any Arab connection to the land by more than 1,000 years.*

ZOA learned that these two librarians had added their names to at least one online anti-Israel campaign circulating among library professionals. A search of the Library’s website and branches’ social-media revealed a number of purportedly pro-“Palestine” events directed toward children, which included disturbing, false, hatred-inciting commentary by librarians about Israel and Zionism.

- May 12: An Eid Mubarak greeting on the Library’s Widener Branch Facebook page highlighted “our brothers, sisters and siblings in Palestine and announced that there would be “a special storytime posted next week.”



- May 18: A children’s “storytime” post and video on the Library’s Lillian Marrero Branch’s Facebook page. It featured the branch’s children’s librarian– one of the authors of the June 21 blog entry. In an introductory note on Facebook, the librarian wrote: “Today’s storytime is a little bit different! We’re doing a book review about a really important picture book called *Baba What Does My Name Mean? A Journey to Palestine*. She noted the name of the author and illustrator and then wrote: “I recommend this book for children ages 4 & up. Hopefully today’s program & resources are helpful to caregivers & educators looking to teach about Palestine and center Palestinian voices, especially as Palestinians have called for a global day of action TODAY! This book is a must-have when we share and center #ownvoices!” The librarian also translated the above in Spanish in that Facebook post.

Then the librarian added: “For more resources and books for children and teens about Palestine at the Free Library, visit my short guide at” and the url for a Google Documents document labeled “Palestine Reading List – FLP” as in Free Library of Philadelphia — consisting of

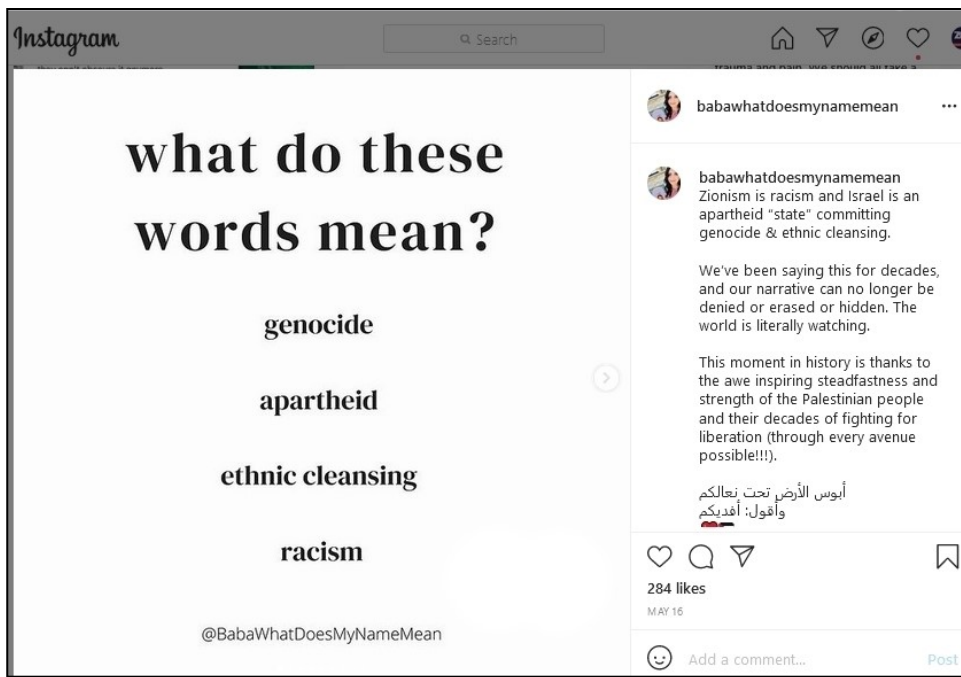
lists of anti-Zionist/anti-Israel/anti-Jewish websites -- including the aforementioned “Teach Palestine,” “Palestine 101 for Educators” and a Haymarket Book List that each, in turn, linked to multiple additional websites and/or materials loaded with propaganda that is counter-factual/counter-historic and anti-Jewish and anti-Israel. There is also a list of suggested books for children and teens. The librarian, continuing within the same Facebook post, encouraged children and their caregivers to follow the Instagram page for the book *Baba, What Does My Name Mean?* That Instagram page was laced with vicious anti-Jewish posts and graphics. One entry, a graphic, asked in large, bold type: “What do these words mean?”

“Genocide”

“Apartheid”

“Ethnic cleansing”

“Racism”



The graphic was accompanied by a message from the children’s book’s author: “Zionism is racism and Israel is an apartheid ‘state’ committing genocide & ethnic cleansing.

“We’ve been saying this for decades, and our narrative can no longer be denied or erased or hidden. The world is literally watching.

“This moment in history is thanks to the awe inspiring steadfastness and strength of the Palestinian people and their decades of fighting for liberation (through every avenue possible!!!).”

Back to the librarian’s Facebook post on the Library’s Lillian Marrero Branch page: The post featured a video of the

librarian reading *Baba, What Does My Name Mean?*, and displaying pages to the camera and adding her own commentary interspersed with the book text. One page the librarian showed included a large map of modern-day Israel labeled as “Palestine,” with all of Israel’s major cities in Arabic using their Arab names.

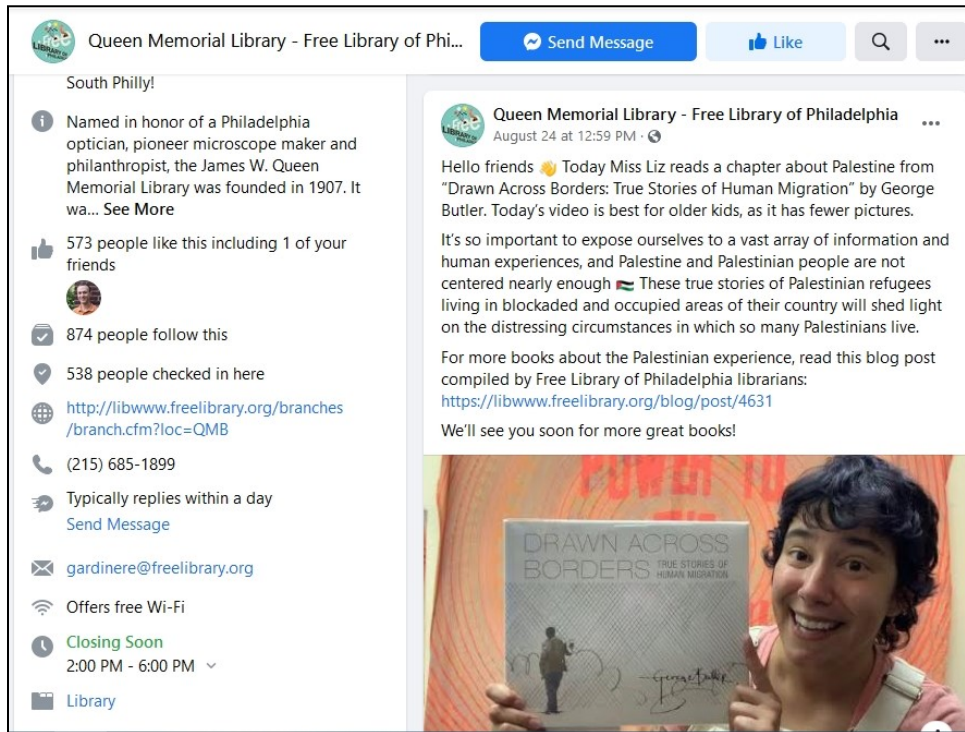
In the video, the librarian, asserts: “Children do see and hear what is happening including the violence by Israel ... develop empathy for different cultures ... people that they otherwise see being oppressed. When children and young people see and hear about what is happening to the Palestinian people today and for many decades they will probably see and notice that Zionism looks a lot like racism and it is important as the adults in their lives to name it and say it out loud. We should be highlighting and showing that support for the Palestinian struggle is global and rooted especially with support among black and brown people and as we’re seeing right now people across the world are rising up to reject Israel’s attempt to erase Palestinian people.”

*Note: It must be emphasized that this was said by a Free Library of Philadelphia/City of Philadelphia employee in a video posted to a library’s branch’s official Facebook page and that she works as a children’s librarian.*

- June 18: This same librarian, also on the Lillian Marrero Branch’s official Facebook page, did a storytime video for “middle grade” children. It featured her reading poems by “Palestinian American” Naomi Shihab Nye.
- June 21: The librarian created a post on the Marrero Branch’s official Facebook page about the blog entry on the Library’s main website soliciting “empathy” for Palestinian-Arabs. A note in the post read: “Check out this blog post & book list of resources curated from our collection! As we focus on uplifting the authentic stories of Black and brown people across the world, that must include showing there is a demand for more Palestinian authors & stories!!”
- July 26: the Marrero Branch children’s librarian presented her third children’s “storytime” event with a book about “Palestine.” She read from *Sitti’s Secrets* and offered her own commentary: “I think it’s imperative that parents, caregivers and educators use these amazing picture books as a tool and an opportunity to help instill empathy and a sense of justice in our young people. With that I want to say, that recently I shared a picture book called: *Baba, What Does My Name Mean? A Journey to Palestine* by Rifk Ebeid – a really beautiful picture book -- with the intention of instilling that feeling of care and justice to Palestinians -- and it was deleted from our pages because it received a complaint. That book will make a fine addition to our collection. So today I’m going to read the book *Sitti’s Secrets*. It’s about a young Palestinian child who is visiting her sitti – her grandmother -- in occupied Palestine for the first time.”

*Note: Greater Philadelphia ZOA brought this to the attention of Library leadership. Free Library of Philadelphia management deleted the video of Baba, What Does My Name Mean?, which included the librarian’s vicious, hateful, false comments about Zionism and Israel, because that book was not in the Library’s collection, according to an internal Library communique. Since then, this librarian and other anti-Jewish staff made certain to acquire this book for the Library’s children’s collection – despite the fact that the book and its author are anti-Jewish. Today, copies of the book are available at six different branches.*

- August 24: A post on the Library's Queen Memorial Library branch's official Facebook page promotes a "storytime" with the Queen Memorial Branch children's librarian who reads and discusses only the chapter about "Palestine" in the book *Drawn Across Borders: True Stories of Human Migration*. The Facebook post notes: "Today's video is best for older kids, as it has fewer pictures." Thus, the Library and the librarian are aware of who their primary audience is and what their objective for that audience – children -- is.



The Facebook post continues: "... Palestine and Palestinian people are not centered nearly enough (PLO flag icon). These true stories of Palestinian refugees living in blockaded and occupied areas of their country will shed light on the distressing circumstances in which so many Palestinians live." The librarian makes a similar comment in the opening of her video featuring the book and that one chapter.

*Note: The book has chapters on 12 places/situations including Syria, Tajikistan, Myanmar, Kenya, Iraq, Lebanon, the Balkans. Each has citizens from those places represented among Philadelphia's*

*residents – yet the librarian only singles out one of the chapters to discuss and read about: "Palestine."*

The "Palestine" chapter – or the librarian (it is unclear in the video) -- begins with a demonstrably false claim – a claim refuted by simply reading United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181. "In 1947 the United Nations divided Palestine into an Arab state: Palestine, and a Jewish state: Israel." In the UN resolution there was never any mention as to what either the Arab state nor the Jewish state would be called. It merely called for "an Arab state" and "a Jewish state." During that period, "Palestine" referred to Jews.

This chapter references the Gaza Strip. The author (or the librarian doing the program) notes that it is "blockaded by Israel" (Although it is not an actual "blockade" as thousands of tons of goods enter Gaza via Israel each day.).

*Note: What is not mentioned at this point is that Gaza is also bordered by Egypt and that Egypt also limits what comes in and out of Gaza. Egypt and Israel are both forced to place limitations on Gaza due to the terrorism, violence and attacks from the Palestinian-Arabs who control Gaza. Thus, this book is another example of anti-Jewish propaganda – mentioning the Jewish state but not the Arab state. The chapter does not mention that Gaza was illegally occupied by Egypt for 19 years, and that Egyptian and Palestinian-Arabs used Gaza as a base to attack Jewish civilians. The book also neglects to mention the Arab slaughter of Jews, and pogroms perpetrated by Arabs in what it labels "the West Bank." The chapter later does note that Egypt as well as Israel control what or who enters their respective territory from Gaza.*

The author claims to have traveled to "the West Bank" – specifically to "a small village that had been demolished by Israeli forces the day before." After reading this to the children in her audience, the librarian turned to the camera and asked her viewers: "Can you imagine how it might feel to see a place that you once called home demolished and tumbled to the ground? I can't imagine that it would feel good."

The book then references a Bedouin Arab who allegedly used to live in Hebron – an ancient Jewish city, though the book makes no mention of that. The author writes: "Like many Bedouin and many Palestinians in the West Bank, Ayad is no longer free to move around." His current house, according to the author, "is under a demolition order" by Israel. Once again, the librarian turned to the camera and asked the audience: "Imagine being in his place – knowing that the place that you're living can be destroyed at any time."

The chapter turns to the city of Bethlehem and alleged restrictions placed on the Arabs there by Israel. More anti-Jewish



propaganda from the author, and it is exacerbated by the librarian: “Think about that: You and me, we are so much freer to move around; not just our city of Philadelphia, but our state of Pennsylvania and the entire country of the United States.

The librarian asserts: “So many of the people in Palestine are unable to move around freely, and that is distressing, demoralizing. I can’t even imagine the pain, the fear and the sadness that so many Palestinians feel every single day.” Neither the author nor the librarian mention the tyranny imposed on Arabs by rulers Hamas and the Palestinian Authority — nor the distress and demoralization felt by Jews living under the constant threat of Palestinian Authority-sanctioned terrorism.

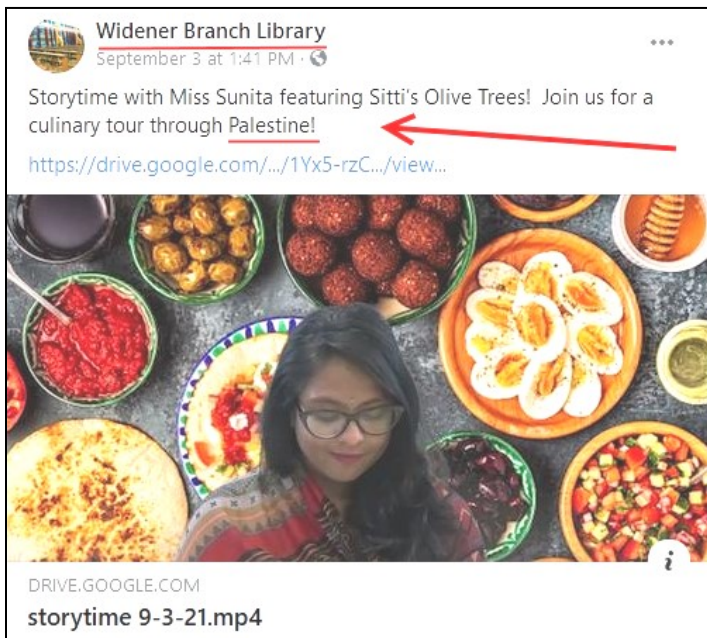
After noting that the book discusses other areas of the world, the librarian turns to the camera and ad libs again: “Now, that was just a small slice of the reality of so many Palestinians. And if you would like to learn more ...” she notes she will post the link for more materials about “Palestine” created by her Library colleagues.

This librarian has her own YouTube channel. The description accompanying her video of *Drawn Across Borders: True Stories of Human Migration* indicates: “Elizabeth Gardiner (Miss Liz) is a librarian living and working in Philadelphia, PA, USA. She loves providing storytimes for children at the Free Library of Philadelphia’s Queen Memorial Branch, and records these videos at home with her many adorable pets (yes, you’ll meet them all) and at the Queen Memorial Library Branch.

“Virtual Storytime began as a response to the shutdown of library buildings due to COVID-19. These books are being read on a non-commercial basis, in compliance with guidelines set by their publishers and fair use allowances. It is intended for these videos to provide entertainment, education, and a sense of community to children, families, and people in Philadelphia and beyond. You can find out more about the Queen Memorial Library and the Free Library of Philadelphia here: [freelibrary.org](https://freelibrary.org) And here: [Facebook.com/QueenMemorialLibrary](https://Facebook.com/QueenMemorialLibrary)”

- September 3: The Donatucci Branch children’s librarian presents a “storytime” on the children’s book *Sitti’s Olive Tree*. The video was posted on the official Facebook page of the Widener Branch Library. In the Facebook post promoting the event, it noted: “Join us for a culinary tour of Palestine!”

Mere seconds into the event, before she begins reading from the book, the librarian deliberately erases Israel from the planet. She tells her audience of children: “Today we will be reading about a country and place called Palestine. Palestine is in the continent of Asia and surrounded by the countries of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.” In her mind and in what she conveys to the children, Israel does not exist.



*Note: Even were one to consider the possibility that there would in the future be a “Palestinian” state in Judea, Samaria and Gaza – which is what the Palestinian-Arabs and their supporters claim is their goal and are demanding – then presumably one of the countries that border “Palestine” would surely be Israel. By not listing Israel as one of those neighboring nations and by not mentioning it in her geography lesson, the City of Philadelphia employee not only does not recognize Israel, but she erases it and replaces it in its entirety with “Palestine,” from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. She thus asserts that “Palestine” is a present-day country – lying to the children and their parents or caregivers. There is not nor has there ever been a country called “Palestine.”*

- September 17: The Queen Memorial Branch children’s librarian does a storytime video focusing on another book by a Palestinian-Arab author about “Palestine” called *The Ghoul*.

*Note: Based on research of video-recorded Library storytimes during 2021, no place or people was the subject of as many events as was “Palestine” or “Palestinians.” Clearly, the Free Library of Philadelphia has made a concerted effort to promote this alleged place – leaping from educational institution to propaganda operation. None of the politically charged rhetoric or comments from any Library employee – whether in a blog post, a Library social media page post or in a video -- carried a disclaimer stating that the opinions expressed were not the opinions or positions of the Free Library of Philadelphia. One must conclude, therefore, that the assertions and activities detailed above are indeed the positions of the Free Library of Philadelphia and the City of Philadelphia. Parents,*

undoubtedly, were counting on educating their children rather than exposing them to lies and verbal assaults against other minorities. Children should not be pawns in a disinformation campaign. In 2020, according to FBI statistics, Jews were the victims of approximately 50% of the religion-based hate crimes – though Jews are less than 2% of America’s population.

*Note: It appears, according to a notation on the Free Library of Philadelphia’s website, that currently, when the Free Library of Philadelphia has events featuring authors, it now purchases its books from Uncle Bobbie’s Coffee & Books. This book store is owned by Marc Lamont Hill. Hill is one of America’s most popular and ubiquitous spreaders of anti-Jewish propaganda. Hill accuse the Jewish people of “occupying” their own homeland, has called for the eradication of the Jewish state (“From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”) and has endorsed violence against Jews. In addition, he has worn a T-shirt celebrating terrorist and airline-hijacker Leila Khaled, and praised terrorist Ali Jiddah, who was convicted of planting a bomb near a Jerusalem hospital that wounded nine Israelis. Hill’s most recent book is among those anti-Jewish books on the Library’s list of recommended books about “Palestine.”*

## Pro-Palestinian (and Anti-Jewish) Activities Within the School District of Philadelphia

The School District of Philadelphia has in-school relationships with three organizations that have histories of past, recent or current direct or indirect promotion of anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel rhetoric or activity: the Muslim Students Association, the Black Lives Matter Organization and Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture. Given the toxicity of their anti-Jewish rhetoric and the forcefulness with which they typically convey it, it is not unreasonable to presume that there is the prospect of such content seeping into the classroom and/or being communicated to students. In one case, a prominent teacher frequently writes and speaks on social media about her animus against the Jewish state . This too can have a negative impact on students, since teachers are often role models, and students may espouse opinions to curry favor with a teacher.

Like the Free Library of Philadelphia, the School District of Philadelphia works closely with the Arab group Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture, which has distributed maps of the Middle East that omit Israel, and expresses false and hatred-inciting anti-Israel rhetoric on its social media sites. In addition, the school district does incorporate instructional material from the Black Lives Matter organization. The BLM organization is a partner of an organization (M4BL) that supports boycotting the Jewish state of Israel and has falsely accused the Jewish People of committing atrocities. At BLM-organized demonstrations, synagogues and Jewish-owned businesses have been attacked and vandalized. MSA, which has chapters in at least two Philadelphia high schools, has sponsored anti-Jewish/anti-Israel events at its chapters throughout the nation and hosted vicious anti-Jewish speakers at its chapters and nationally at its conferences. Meanwhile in at least one School District of Philadelphia elementary school (in a fifth-grade class), notorious anti-Zionist/anti-Israel activists Angela Davis and Huey Newton were promoted as role models for students, according to a news report that school district officials did not deny.

### Muslim Students Association:

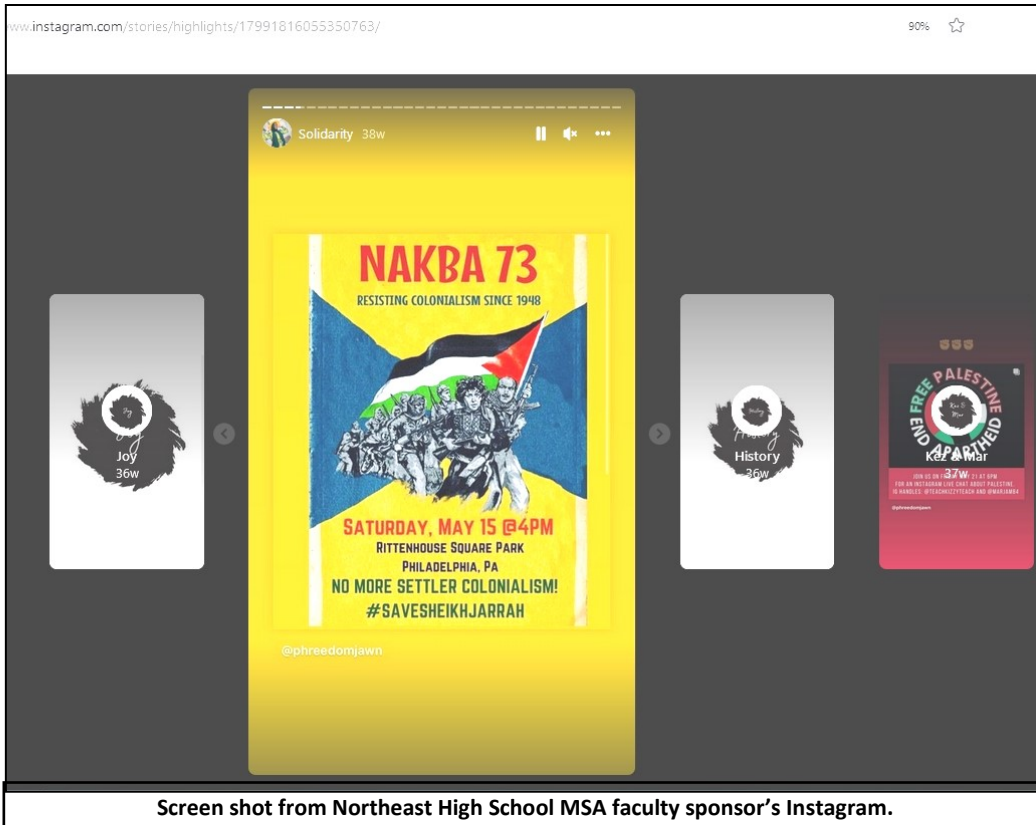


According to School District of Philadelphia websites, Muslim Students Association chapters are permitted and officially recognized in Northeast High School and William W. Bodine High School. The MSA has a record of anti-Zionist/anti-Jewish/anti-Israel activities and rhetoric.

At Northeast High School, the teacher who is the MSA faculty advisor/sponsor is an aggressive critic of the Jewish state and proponent of “Palestinianism,” on her social media and she has promoted anti-Jewish protests and demonstrably false accusations.

*Note: When a teacher promotes false histories and falsifies contemporary events, it raises questions about one’s fitness to be a teacher. A teacher who, for example, would misrepresent historical or scientific or*

Screen shot from Northeast High School MSA faculty sponsor’s Facebook.



Screen shot from Northeast High School MSA faculty sponsor's Instagram.

*mathematical facts would certainly be questioned.*

Numerous posts by the teacher promote the lie that Israel practices “apartheid.” Her Instagram page features promotion of and posters for anti-Israel rallies and events with hashtags including #freepalestine, #savesheikhjarrah (A reference to what is a landlord/tenant dispute involving Arab residents of Jerusalem properties who have not paid rent in some cases for decades to their Jewish landlords.). She has co-hosted a series of live chats on Instagram that both condemn Israel and disseminate falsehoods. She has created a list of books about “Palestine” called the “Free Palestine Book List” that she encourages people to read. Titles include: *The Ethnic Cleansing of*

*Palestine* and *The Hundred Years War on Palestine*, and anti-Zionist/anti-Jewish authors Rashid Khalidi, Susan Abulhawa, Marc Lamont Hill, Edward Said and Ilan Pappé.

On her Facebook page, this teacher promotes notorious anti-Jewish figures Angela Davis (see more on Davis below) and Marc Lamont Hill, and there are more false accusations that Israel commits “apartheid.” In response to one comment about one of her anti-Israel posts, the teacher claimed: “But the state sponsored racism is something serious and that’s coming from the government of Israel.”

There is no indication that this teacher brings any of this into her classroom or to MSA meetings. But what does she tell students if or when she is asked about “Palestinians” or Israel? Facts or propaganda? It is not known if any of her students or MSA members have been to her social media pages or if so, how often they visit them.

Other than a listing on the Bodine High School’s official website denoting that the school does have an MSA chapter for students, we were not able to locate any information about the group’s activities there or its faculty advisor or sponsor.

*Note: While what occurs in the MSA chapters in Philadelphia high schools is not known, rhetoric and activities at many MSA chapters and at the national level are known from published reports and social media:*

The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Muslim Students Association Students Express Their Thoughts						
News	Entertainment	Sports	Lifestyle	Op-Ed	Trending Now	Letters To The Editor
<p><b>How have you felt hearing about this conflict?</b></p> <p>“I have actually been aware of this conflict for a few years now. It’s not something new, in fact, it’s been going on for about 70 years, and I’ve always been conflicted about it because I wanted to understand both sides of the argument. But with these recent developments, we’ve seen so much inhumanity and injustice going on by the hands of Israel on Palestinians and while you could have been passive about it before, you just can’t ignore it anymore because there’s literally an ethnic cleansing going on. The fact that these people are majority Muslims makes them our brothers and sisters. We’re supposed to care for each other so it just hurts my heart that I’m not able to do anything other than share resources on social media and educate myself and others on what’s going on so that they could make an impact too.” – <i>[Redacted]</i></p> <p>Senior</p>						


- A June, 16, 2021 article in the student newspaper at Curtis High School on Staten Island, N.Y., features comments from students who are part of the Muslim Students Association chapter in the high school. Many of the comments reflect anti-Jewish attitudes and a twisted, false understanding of Middle East history and contemporary events.



## The Israel-Palestine Conflict: Muslim Students Association Students Express Their Thoughts

News Entertainment Sports Lifestyle Op-Ed Trending Now Letters To The Editor

### How do you feel the UN has handled this?

“Obviously, Israel has broken so many rules and regulations and the United Nations was made to keep peace throughout the world, so it wouldn’t lead to another World War and they’re not doing what they’re supposed to be doing. They should have held Israel accountable for what they had done. They’re not fighting soldiers against soldiers, it’s soldiers against kids and women and innocent people, you know. The United Nations has to do a better job of keeping Israel in their place.” –  Senior

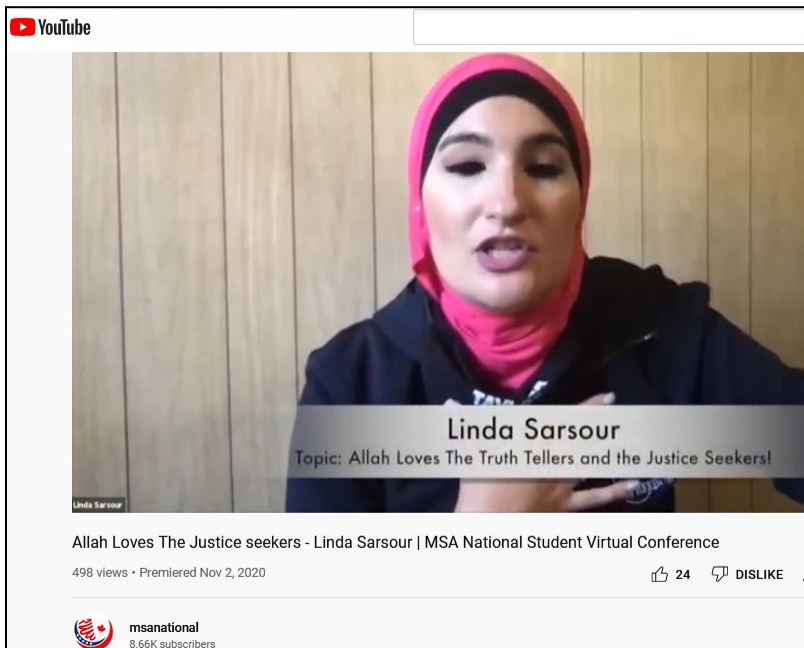
One student is quoted as saying: “...I think there’s a quote going around where Israel is saying that the bombs are not going to stop until it’s completely silent, as in every single Palestinian is dead because they won’t stop until they have complete control over the land.”

Another claims: “there’s literally an ethnic cleansing going on.” Yet another MSA member is quoted as

stating: “It’s very upsetting that the people of Palestine are going through this adversity during this day and age. It is shocking to hear that the Palestinians can’t do anything about this conflict because they are oppressed. I wish that Israelis and Palestinians could try to work something out but it’s not as easy as it sounds.

Thousands[sic] of people are dying every single day and all we can do is post about it.”

According to another MSA student quoted in the article: “Obviously, Israel has broken so many rules and regulations and the United Nations was made to keep peace throughout the world, so it wouldn’t lead to another World War and they’re not doing what they’re supposed to be doing. They should have held Israel accountable for what they had done. They’re not fighting soldiers against soldiers, it’s soldiers against kids and women and innocent people, you know. The United Nations has to do a better job of keeping Israel in their place.” In addition to believing or repeating outright lies, the students believe there to be a place or country called “Palestine,” which is factually incorrect. Are they getting these notions from the Muslim Students Association? Why isn’t the MSA explaining the facts and correcting the misinformation? Are teachers who lead the MSA chapters in Philadelphia schools explaining the facts and correcting students’ misperceptions?



- A June 4, 2021 “pinned” post on the Facebook page of the MSA chapter at the University of Northern Iowa reads in part: “A HUGE thank you to all of our speakers, volunteers, cohosts, sponsors, and to the people that showed up in today’s rally. We are fighting for peace and justice for the Palestinian people and against an apartheid state that calls itself Israel.”

Among the speakers that the Muslim Students Association gives a platform to and promotes is notorious anti-Jewish propagandist Linda Sarsour. Sarsour (see screen shot from the YouTube broadcast of the MSA conference, at left) was a speaker at MSA’s 2020 national conference. Sarsour – to MSA members – said: “I am a steadfast supporter of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement.”

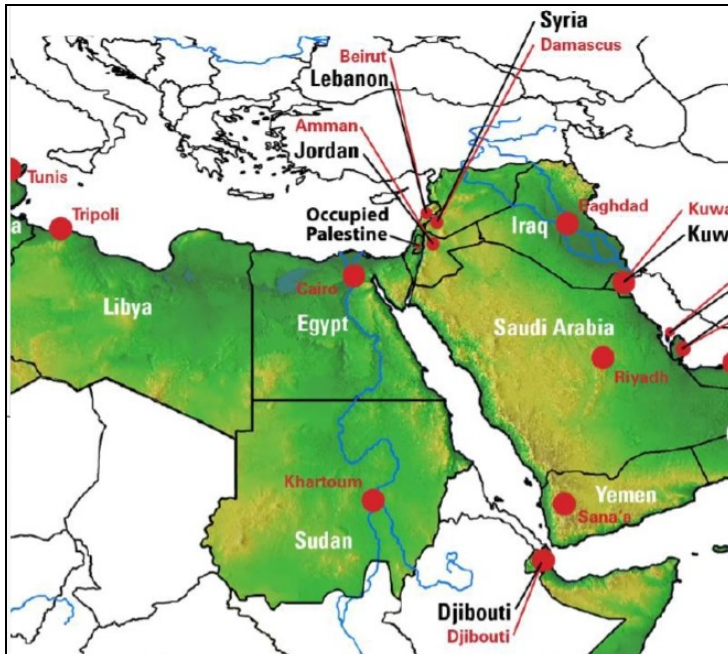
*Note: BDS is an international campaign begun by a notorious Palestinian-Arab activist who has repeatedly called for the destruction of Israel. The movement has*

*three goals: to get the world questioning Israel’s right to exist, to delegitimize Jewish self-determination, and to economically crush and isolate the Jewish state so that Arabs or Muslims can have an easier path to destroying Israel. The movement additionally focuses on transforming Jews into opponents of Israel’s existence. While BDS is portrayed as a grassroots effort, it is highly funded by governments, corporations, foundations, NGOs and philanthropists.*

The watchdog group Canary Mission lists dozens of active anti-Jewish/anti-Israel students who are Muslim Students Association members, participants and leaders throughout the United States. Thus, one could conclude that MSA attracts

students who are already anti-Jewish and brings them together to collaborate and have activities, and/or it is an incubator: transforming Muslim teens and young adults into those who espouse and commit vicious and even violent anti-Jewish rhetoric and actions.

## Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture:



Map distributed by Al-Bustan in Philadelphia schools, circa 2012

In 2012, Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture created “educational” material that was introduced into Philadelphia schools. In “Lesson 1—Introduction to the Arab World” it included a map of the Middle East that labels where Israel is as “Occupied Palestine.” The label “Israel” is omitted. Al-Bustan does not appear to recognize Israel on its website and blog. It includes several references to the place-name “Palestine” long after 1948.

Today Al-Bustan appears to be active in a number of Philadelphia schools – including elementary schools and at Northeast High School. While perceived as a cultural organization, as its name implies, or as an arts organization, it clearly has a political agenda, with examples of anti-Israel/anti-Jewish rhetoric and activities on its website and social media. How can the school district or Philadelphia government ensure that Al-Bustan’s political agenda does not seep into its school-district sanctioned activities?




- While Israeli civilian communities were bombarded by rockets fired by Palestinian-Arabs last May – compelling the

Israeli government to take steps to protect its residents and tourists – of all religions and ethnicities: Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Baha’I, Druze, Circassian and others, this is what Al-Bustan published on its website on May 19, 2021:

“Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture would like to acknowledge the recent outpouring of support for the Palestinian people and opposition to oppressive regimes, demonstrated by thousands who took to the streets in Philadelphia and across the globe in

Posted On: 24 December, 2020

News  
School Partnerships  
Teaching

SHARE   

Since 2007, Al-Bustan has brought talented teaching artists into the classrooms of the School District of Philadelphia to teach the musical traditions and visual arts of the Arab World. Our After-School Arab Arts Program, which began at **John Moffet Elementary School** and last year expanded to **Juniata Park Academy**, went virtual this Fall in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The end of 2020, therefore, marks the successful completion of our first virtually-held After-School Arab Arts Program, which served students from 15 schools! Despite the challenging circumstances, our dedicated teaching artists, **Hafez Kotain**, **Serge El Helou**, and **Lisa Volta**, adapted to share their love of percussion, singing, and visual arts with students each Friday afternoon on Zoom.

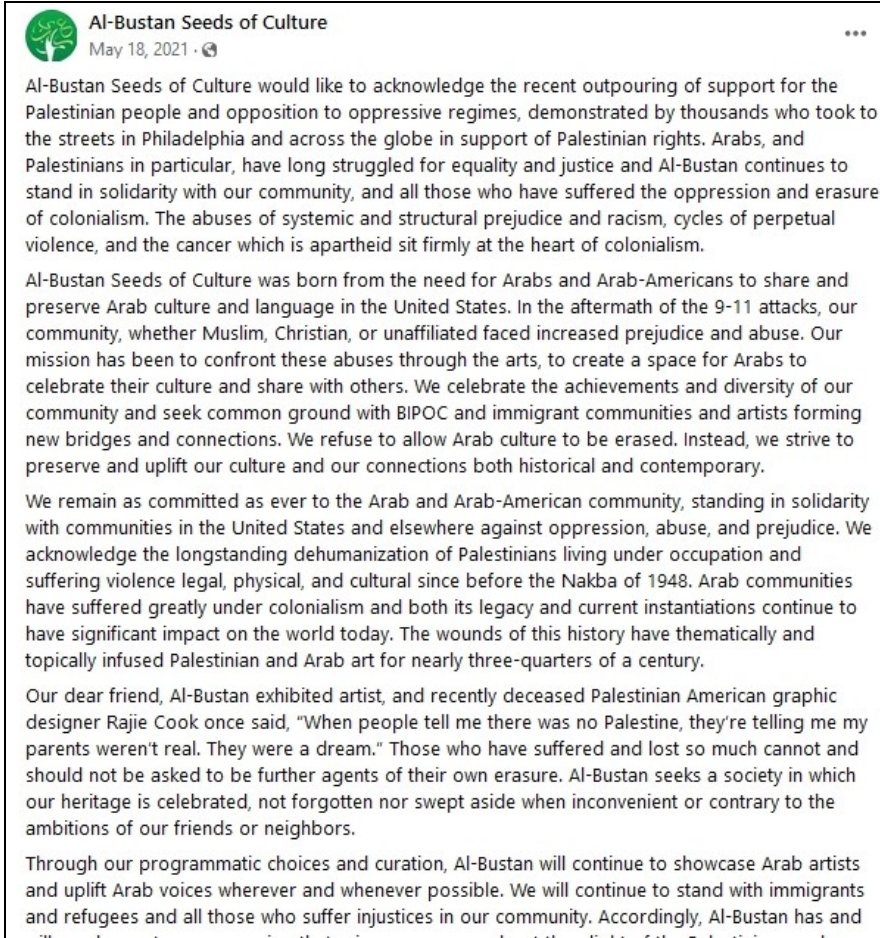
In Drumming with Hafez, students went from learning the basics of percussion on the *doumbek*—the *dūm* and *tak*—to stringing together rhythms, *Balady*, *Hajaa*, and *Fox Kabeer*. Each student took on a piece of a larger composition, creating a collaborative composition entirely over Zoom. Hafez’s experience as a longtime educator was instrumental.

Singing and Music Skills with Serge explored the sounds of Arab countries like Lebanon, Egypt, and Palestine, and taught students how to sing in Arabic. Each week, Serge inspired students to sing by introducing them to famous Arab musicians. Students learned breath control and how to read music as they applied what they learned to songs from across the Arab World.

Lisa drew the interest of many new students in her visual art class. Through delving into the works of Arab artists like Etel Adnan, Zena Assi, and Zahrah Al-Ghamdi, students created works of clay, watercolors, and even comic books! Students loved using their art supplies provided by Al-Bustan in this wildly popular class which was a true virtual space of creativity and collaboration amongst our young artists.



support of Palestinian rights. Arabs, and Palestinians in particular, have long struggled for equality and justice and Al-Bustan continues to stand in solidarity with our community, and all those who have suffered the oppression and erasure of colonialism. The abuses of systemic and structural prejudice and racism, cycles of perpetual violence, and the cancer which is apartheid sit firmly at the heart of colonialism.



...  
 “We acknowledge the longstanding dehumanization of Palestinians living under occupation and suffering violence legal physical and cultural since before the Nakba of 1948. ...”

*Note that there is no mention or condemnation of the rocket attacks or terrorism against Israeli civilians by Hamas.*

- In a similar post by Al-Bustan on its Facebook page during that same period, Al-Bustan encourages: “You can do your part to support Palestinians in this traumatic moment. Donate to #SaveSheikhJarrah, to protect Palestinian families and stop Israeli ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem:” followed by a web address.

*Note: The alleged “ethnic cleansing” was the legal eviction of Arab occupants of housing units in Jerusalem who for decades refused to pay rent to the Jewish owners of the properties. The eviction was tied up in the courts for years until the Israel Supreme Court found in favor of the owners of the properties. The Arabs resisted the*

*eviction orders and violence ensued. What the Arabs call “Sheikh Jarrah” is actually an historic Jewish neighborhood called Shimon HaTzadik from which Arabs drove out the Jews. These important details were deliberately omitted by Al-Bustan clearly to incite Jew-hatred.*

- On Nov. 26, 2021, on its official Facebook page, Al-Bustan featured and promoted the work of Kiki Salem, who it described in the post as “a Palestinian-American designer, academic and entrepreneur.” Al-Bustan gave her Instagram handle: @punk\_ass\_arab . Al-Bustan urged: “Check out some of the amazing merchandise from their store ... .”

At Salem’s @punk\_ass\_arab Instagram page, one finds a number of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel posts, such as the post on May 13, 2021 – more than six months prior to Al-Bustan’s endorsement of Salem. “Just poppin[sic] in to say Fuck Israel, and any of its allies/supporters/sympathizers.”

Salem notes that she named her enterprise inspired by a poem by Arab anti-Jewish poet Mahmoud Darwish, which, Salem noted, “highlights the racist practices of Israeli colonizers against Palestinians everyday[sic].” Salem claims falsely and outrageously, for example, that “settler lynch mobs chant ‘death to Arabs’ on stolen land.”

- On May 15, 2020, Al-Bustan featured on its Facebook page artist Mary Hazboun. Al-Bustan claimed in its post that: “Mary’s art explores the many sides of the trauma experienced by Palestinians in occupied Palestine and the lasting intergenerational wounds the loss of their homeland has left in the lives and memories of Palestinians throughout the world. This is most acutely expressed in her art through the embrace of a mother and the physical merger of figures with the symbols of occupation, trauma, and oppression such as the dividing wall.” Al-Bustan deliberately misleads visitors to its Facebook page, preferring propaganda over fact.

*Note: It is factual and verifiable that 90% of Israel’s security barrier – necessitated by constant terrorist attacks and attempted attacks by Arabs – is chainlink fence and not concrete “wall.” Where the barrier does take the form of a wall, it is to stop the hail of bullets that Arab terrorists were routinely firing at Jewish homes. The security barrier has saved countless*



*lives – lives of the Jews, Christians, Muslims and others who live in Israel. Al-Bustan again demonstrates that it is not interested in presenting facts or of being balanced. Students should be the recipients of either neutral, factual information, or balanced information coming from both sides in a conflict. Clearly this is not the case when it comes to the Middle East.*

Al-Bustan runs a summer camp for children. As part of the camp, according to Al-Bustan’s Facebook page, the camp includes a virtual “daily exchange with high school teen mentors from Ramallah Friends School.”

*Note: The Ramallah Friends School has indoctrinated students to hate Jews, Zionism and Israel, and has promoted and taught false history of the Middle East. It is closely linked to the notoriously anti-Jewish American Friends Service Committee. In fact the current general secretary of the AFSC, Joyce Ajlouny, is the former director of the Ramallah Friends Schools. Among the American Friends Service Committee’s varied anti-Jewish activities is the persistent promotion of the anti-Jewish Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement. Currently 35 U.S. states have laws on the books prohibiting BDS, including Pennsylvania. The American Friends Service Committee aggressively promotes BDS on America’s campuses and actually trains students to spread BDS.*

- On January 11, 2022, Al-Bustan created a post on its Facebook page highlighting the children’s book *Baba, What Does My Name Mean?* As noted above in the section on the Free Library of Philadelphia, this book includes a full-page map of modern-day Israel all labeled as “Palestine,” with the Arab versions of city-names in Arabic. The Instagram page for this book has a litany of both false and anti-Jewish posts than can only serve one purpose: to demonize Jews, Jewish heritage and Jewish history, and to incite Jew-hatred.
- On November 29, Al-Bustan sponsored an event in conjunction with “International Day of Solidarity With the Palestinian People.” This event is discussed in detail in the first section of this report.

## Black Lives Matter:

“Black Lives Matter Week of Action” has become an annual fixture of the school district’s year. It includes programming and curriculum. The School District of Philadelphia was one of the first school districts in the nation to embrace it, beginning in 2017. The “Black Lives Matter Week of Action” was instituted by School District of Philadelphia teachers to propagate the Black Lives Matter organization’s ideology to a younger, captive audience.

As ZOA noted in our 2017 letter to the School Reform Commission, which had oversight of the School District of Philadelphia in lieu of the school board: “In August 2016, a collective of more than 50 organizations associated with the Black Lives Matter movement formed the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL). They released a detailed platform – ‘an

The screenshot shows the Black Lives Matter website at <https://blacklivesmatter.com/partners/>. A red arrow points to the URL bar. A red circle highlights the 'The Movement for Black Lives' section, which includes the text: 'Black humanity and dignity requires Black political will and power. In response to the sustained and increasingly visible violence against Black communities in the U.S. and globally, a collective of more than 50 organizations representing thousands of Black people from across the country have come together with renewed energy and purpose to articulate a common vision and agenda. We are a collective that centers and is rooted in Black communities, but we recognize we have a shared struggle with all oppressed people; collective liberation will be a product of all of our work.' A logo for 'OF CHANGE' is visible, and a logo for 'THE MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES' is also present. The URL [colorofchange.org](https://colorofchange.org) is visible in the text, and [policy.m4bl.org](https://policy.m4bl.org) is at the bottom.

articulation of our collective aspirations as well as a document that provides tangible resources for groups and individuals doing the work’ – which includes demonizing lies about Israel and the United States.”

The Black Lives Matter organization (as opposed to the concept that indeed, black lives do matter) has had strong anti-Jewish elements since its founding – including falsely accusing the Jewish state of practicing “apartheid,” calling for an end to U.S. military aid for Israel’s self-defense and aggressive advocacy of BDS – as well as the BLM organization’s founders’ open anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel rhetoric. National ZOA and Greater Philadelphia leadership wrote to the School Reform Commission expressing our concern that these anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel elements would be introduced directly or indirectly to Philadelphia students.

The Caucus of Working Educators – a group of School District of Philadelphia teachers – City of Philadelphia employees – announced that it was

organizing a week to bring the Black Lives Matter movement into Philadelphia public school classrooms. They were pressing for teachers to use Black Lives Matter curriculum resources for daily lesson plans and activities, and they encouraged teachers and other staff to wear BLM T-shirts in the classroom. In our letter, ZOA called on the School Reform Commission to prohibit these from happening. We pointed out, for example, that “Black Lives Matter” is a political movement. District policies specifically prohibit political activities on school property and on school time. The Commission failed to do so.

According to the Black Lives Matter organization’s website, [blacklivesmatter.com](https://blacklivesmatter.com), it is a partner of an entity called The Movement for Black Lives, or M4BL. On its website, today, M4BL has a series of manifestos or position papers on a variety of topics, which M4BL calls “Statements.” At least two of the 19 statements target the Jewish state of Israel, the largest Jewish community in the world.

The headline for one of the statements falsely accuses the Jews of committing “apartheid.” The M4BL statement includes this: “Our response: We welcome Ben & Jerry’s decision to stop sales in illegal Israeli Jewish-only settlements, and we call on Unilever to align with the Ben & Jerry’s board to end all business with apartheid Israel. Until then, the boycott continues.” The statement continues:

“The Movement for Black Lives made the final push to pressure Ben & Jerry’s to support Palestinian rights, in keeping with their Vision for Black Lives policy agenda, which recognizes “our shared struggle with all oppressed people: collective liberation will be a product of all of our work.” Their advocacy was a powerful illustration of Black-Palestinian solidarity,

<https://m4bl.org/statements/end-us-complicity-in-israels-abuses-of-palestinians/>

**Among the more than 100 Palestinians who have been killed this week, at least 31 were children. Their names are now added to the list of thousands of Palestinians who have been killed in the past two decades. Each death an execution backed by resources from the United States government.**

**The fight for Palestinian rights and dignity is integral to the fight for human rights everywhere. For more than a quarter of a century, Palestinians and their allies have demanded an end to Israeli occupation, settler colonialism and violence.**

Palestinian organizers on the ground and in the United States have been clear: the U.S. must stop funding Israel’s human rights abuses.

We demand that the U.S. divest the \$3.8 Billion of public dollars that goes to Israel in military funding each year. We also demand that the Biden Administration impose sanctions until Israel stops its apartheid practices and settler colonial project.

We are inspired by the people of Palestine who are rising up against Israel’s continued apartheid. Black movement is rooted in a tradition of radical love and resistance. It is that same love that calls us to rise in solidarity with oppressed people everywhere. That includes our Palestinian family. We’re calling on people of conscience everywhere to do the same. The world is watching.

**Tell Congress: End U.S. complicity in Israel’s abuses of Palestinians**

just as the Black and Palestinian liberation movements have supported each other for decades.”

A second statement is headlined with the false accusation: “END U.S. COMPLICITY IN ISRAEL’S ABUSES OF PALESTINIANS.” It contains additional lies, distortions and intentional omission of context so as to mislead all those who visit the group’s website. Among them: “The bombing of civilians in Gaza, the threat of removing families in Sheikh Jarrah, settler violence against Palestinian citizens in Israel, and the use of Israeli military force at the Al Aqsa Mosque— all represent the violent and ruthless escalation of repression and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.”

Some who promote Black Lives Matter in the schools partner with or use materials and resources from the Zinn Education Project. Among the anti-Jewish items on the Zinn website is a feature headlined “When South African Apartheid Was Overthrown: Lessons for the Movement for Black Lives Today.” In conjunction, Zinn presented a virtual workshop for teachers in May, 2021 featuring Jesse Hagopian, described as a teacher and co-adviser to the Black Student Union at Garfield High School in Seattle and an editor for “Rethinking Schools,” and Gerald Lenoir, “an analyst at the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society.” <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/gerald-lenoir-lessons-for-blm/> Hagopian also is the co-author of the book *Black Lives Matter at School: An Uprising for Educational Justice*.

Some 39 minutes into the workshop, the presenters make a dramatic shift in topic and proceed with a seven-minute anti-Jewish diatribe filled with hearsay while lacking any historic nor present-day context.

Some of the dialogue:

Hagopian: “I have a last question that I think is really critical for us to grapple with today in terms of the importance of the

movement against apartheid in South Africa, and that's the movement against apartheid in Palestine. Human Rights Watch just released a report calling it 'apartheid.' ” Hagopian asked Lenoir to discuss “what's happening in Palestine and the parallels to South Africa.”

Lenoir said he had been there twice.

“It was really striking to me, the similarities between the systems in Palestine and Israel, and South Africa. The dispossession of land; the taking the best land; the caste system,” said Lenoir. He claimed that he saw Israeli guards with automatic weapons board a public bus, checking the papers of every “Palestinian” and removing one from the bus. He added: “We witnessed people lining up to go through metal detectors to go to Jerusalem to go to work.”

Lenoir continued: “I was in Hebron and saw the apartments that were taken over by Israeli settlers. We went through the market there. Above the market where the Palestinians were selling their wares in the market – above them were the apartments they used to live in, they had a netting across the top of it because the Israeli settlers would throw garbage down on the Palestinians.”

*Note: Hebron is one of the Jewish People's oldest cities. All of the Patriarchs and three of the Matriarchs of the Jewish faith are buried there in a cave purchased by Abraham, the founder of the Jewish People. Until 1929, when Arabs massacred the Jewish community there, murdering scores of Jews, there had been a Jewish presence in the city for thousands of years. Jews returned to Hebron following the liberating of the region in 1967 after the Jordanian army (which illegally occupied the region) attacked Israel. Jews still had legal deeds to many of the properties in Hebron.*

Hagopian, who was on the same trip, chimed in, claiming that in addition to garbage, the Jews threw acid from their apartments at the Arabs below.

Lenoir: “It is not an exaggeration that apartheid lives in Israel and Palestine. The settlements in the West Bank are there to try to make the two-state solution impossible. They continue to grow.” He claimed that in one Arab village, “the Israeli government had walled off the vineyards that the Palestinians work in to make a living ... . There's one entrance in and out of this village – they sealed off all the rest of it. Above the village is where the Israeli settlers were so they could look down on the village and have an advantage point if any trouble started.”

Lenoir claimed there are “apartheid roads” where Palestinian-Arabs would be arrested if they drove on them, and that the Jews “blocked off water resources for the Palestinian villages.”

Lenoir concluded: “It's really critical that we understand the ways that Palestine resembles South Africa.”

Hagopian said that he placed a link in the chat showing Black Panther support for “Palestine,” and he promoted and displayed a new anti-Jewish book for young adults “that makes the connection with black struggle here at home for youth to see that I'd recommend educators use to introduce this topic and the connection to Palestine.”

At the end, teachers who attended the event are seen and heard thanking Lenoir and Hagopian.

*Note: Like every other anti-Jewish propagandist, there is no mention of Palestinian-Arab terrorism; no mention of infiltration of terrorists into Jewish civilian areas; no mention of weapons smuggling; no mention of terrorists trying to avoid Israeli security. Instead Lenoir and Hagopian present inconveniences that some Palestinian-Arabs must unfortunately endure because their leadership incites Jew-hatred, and promotes and rewards terrorism. Nor is there mention of the tyranny and oppression of Palestinian-Arabs by their Hamas and Palestinian Authority leaders. Plus, the speakers fail to mention that Palestinian-Arabs are not Israeli citizens.*

On the Zinn website where this teacher's seminar is discussed, teachers who participated offered their feedback. Among the observations by teachers:

“Freedom struggles are all tied together. Apartheid, Palestine, white supremacy are all dimensions of the same issue!”

Another wrote: “I think the most interesting thing I learned was connecting the South African apartheid laws to what is actively going on between Israel and Palestine. I never thought about doing this, but it would be perfect since I teach both of these topics back to back.”

From another teacher: “I have taught about South African apartheid before, but I really want to focus more of my own study to it so that I can do it more justice. I want to spend more time delving into it and the transnational connections.



https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/gerald-lenoir-lessons-for-blm/

**ZINN EDUCATION PROJECT**

TEACHING MATERIALS NEWS CAMPAIGNS SUPPORT ABOUT

TEACHING PEOPLE'S HISTORY

**What will you do with what you learned?**

Today's class will help me share deeper connections between the colonialism in South Africa and that in Palestine.

Will dive into Bigelow's teaching resource (it was shared in the chat), and help students see the connections between Jim Crow laws and apartheid in South Africa.

1) I'm sending the picture of Rosa Parks to my students who wrote about her this year.  
2) This information continues to build my understanding of how people are working for justice. I stand in awe.

I will try to learn more about the international approach — boycotts, etc.

It will inform my work with pre-service and in-service educators.

I have taught about South African apartheid before, but I really want to focus more of my own study to it so that I can do it more justice. I want to spend more time delving into it and the transnational connections.

This informs my organizing and engagement in groups here in the United States, particularly as it relates to the struggle for Palestinian liberation and the fight against Israeli apartheid.

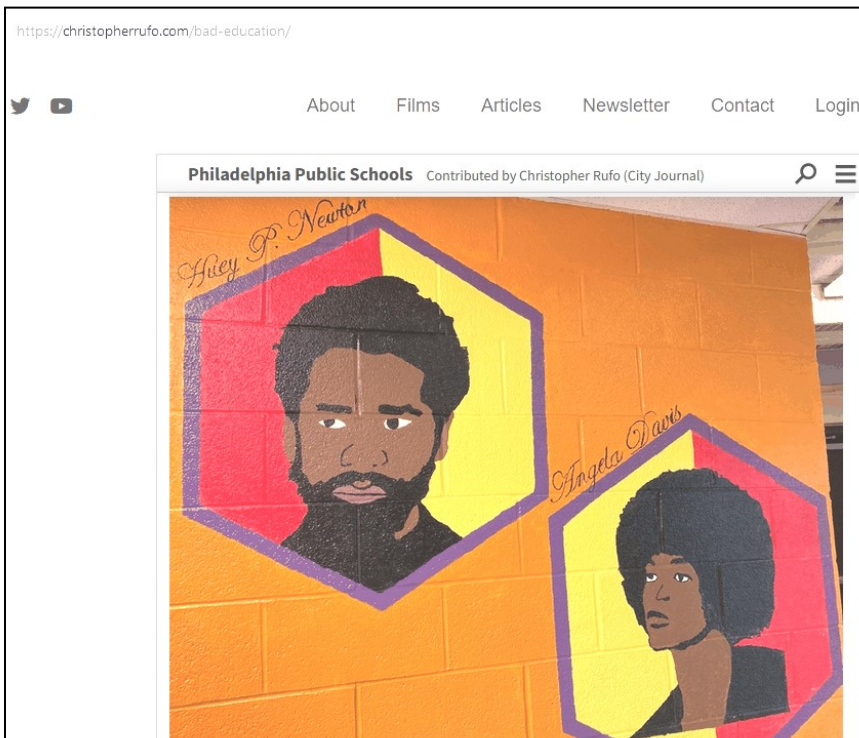
Yet another: “Honestly, just hearing testimony was critical. Mr. Lenoir’s stories made me remember where I was during all the fights of the 70s. I wonder what stories my students will recall in 40 years.”

One more: “This informs my organizing and engagement in groups here in the United States, particularly as it relates to the struggle for Palestinian liberation and the fight against Israeli apartheid.” <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/gerald-lenoir-lessons-for-blm/>

Clearly the false accusations and distorted history is having an impact on teachers and making its way into classrooms throughout America. In response to the survey question “What will you do with what you learned?” one teacher vowed: “Today’s class will help me share deeper connections between the colonialism in South Africa and that in Palestine.

## Promoting anti-Jewish activists Angela Davis and Huey Newton

According to a report in the publication “City Journal,” faculty in one School District of Philadelphia school, the William D. Kelley School, promoted notorious anti-Jewish activists Angela Davis and Huey P. Newton as role models to its fifth-grade students. The two figures are the subjects of a mural in the school. Writer Christopher F. Rufo offered detailed evidence, including photos that were leaked to him.



Rufo wrote: “At the conclusion of the unit, the teacher led the ten- and eleven-year-old students into the school auditorium to ‘simulate’ a Black Power rally to ‘free Angela Davis’ from prison, where she had once been held while awaiting trial on charges of conspiracy, kidnapping, and murder. The students marched on the stage, holding signs that read ‘Black Power,’ ‘Jail Trump,’ ‘Free Angela,’ and ‘Black Power Matters.’ They chanted about Africa and ancestral power, then shouted ‘Free Angela! Free Angela!’ as they stood at the front of the stage.”

According to Rufo: “The William D. Kelley School has long been one of the most troubled in the district. The school’s student population is 94 percent black and 100 percent ‘economically disadvantaged’.”

“Even the school’s newest public artworks illustrate this politicization. Administrators

recently commissioned a mural of Davis and Huey P. Newton, ... .”

Rufo’s article generated quite a controversy, and prompted the School District of Philadelphia to issue a statement. The

Philadelphia news website “Broad + Liberty” reported on the controversy. They wrote: “District spokeswoman Monica Lewis said the materials were not a part of the district’s main curriculum, but that the lesson was appropriate all the same.

“ ‘The School District of Philadelphia has taken a stand to acknowledge and dismantle systems of racial inequity,’ Lewis told “Broad + Liberty.” ‘There is a plethora of research and data that shows disparities in K-12 education, disparities that can only be rectified through a thoughtful and sensitive approach.

“ ‘Only by creating an equitable and inclusive climate in all schools and offices, can we fully achieve our mission to deliver on the civil right of every child in Philadelphia to an excellent public-school education and ensure all children graduate from high school ready to succeed, fully engaged as a citizen of our world,’ she added.”

*Note: We realize that to some in the Black community, those who took part in the Civil Rights Movement but who did not embrace non-violence are considered heroes or role models. Some of these individuals were virulently anti-Jewish during the turbulent 1960s and 1970s and some remain aggressively anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel today.*

Angela Davis has been an outspoken anti-Jewish activist since the 1970s. For example, according to a 1979 editorial by the *San Francisco Jewish Bulletin*, Davis addressed the topic of Soviet Jews, who were banned by the USSR government from



Davis (right) with convicted Palestinian-Arab terrorist Rasmia Odeh, charged in the murder of two Israeli Jews in a supermarket.

openly practicing and teaching Judaism -- and those who defied the ban were imprisoned in Siberia. Further, they were denied the opportunity to emigrate so that they could have religious freedom. These conditions were well-documented by the U.S. government and human rights organizations. Yet, the editorial noted that Davis said: “The problems of Jews in the USSR were ‘grossly exaggerated and inaccurate’.”

Later, Davis expanded her repertoire to include anti-Zionist and anti-Israel activities, and she has gotten more aggressive in her efforts to destroy Israel as she has advanced in years. For example, she is the featured speaker in a video promoting the so-called “Israel Apartheid Week” in 2021.

*Note: “Israel Apartheid Week” is an annual international orgy of Jew-hatred, lies, and false accusations on campuses around the world that was created for the purpose of destroying the world’s only Jewish state and denying Jewish People their right to self-determination in their historic and legal homeland.*

<https://bdsmovement.net/news/israeli-apartheid-week-2021-back-unitedagainstracism>

Davis penned a 2014 op-ed in *The Detroit News* in support of convicted Palestinian-Arab terrorist Rasmia Odeh. Odeh was convicted for her role in the 1969 bombing of a Jerusalem supermarket that murdered two Hebrew University students.

After being freed in a prisoner exchange, Odeh became a naturalized U.S. citizen. She was later convicted for lying on her naturalization application – she did not state that she had served time in an Israeli prison for the terrorist attack. She was ordered deported. Davis ended her column with: “As many people in Chicago and Detroit once joined the call to “Free Angela Davis,” I hope they will now join the campaign to “Free Rasmia Odeh.”” In 2015, Davis gave the keynote address at a Chicago rally in defense of Odeh.

According to accounts of other speeches and remarks by Davis:

- Davis has sought to equate apartheid in South Africa with the Jewish state. “We are reminded that just as we fought together to defeat apartheid in South Africa, we need to forcefully challenge Israeli apartheid as it is deployed against the Palestinian people today” is an Angela Davis quote placed front and center on the prominent anti-Jewish website bdsmovement.net. See: <https://bdsmovement.net/iaw>
- In a 2009 speech titled “From Palestine to the Prison Regime” at the University of California – Riverside, Davis said, “[In] 1961 and 1962, that to challenge the colonial, colonialist, expansionist policies of the state of Israel was in the interest of global freedom.” *Note: Israel gained control over the Gaza Strip and Judea and Samaria (what many*

*erroneously and falsely claim are “the Palestinian territories”) in a defensive war in 1967. Thus, Davis is challenging Israel’s very right to exist at all.*

- Davis endorsed the U.S. Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel), a movement that advocates against Israel’s legitimacy and the Jewish right to self-determination. Organizers have stated “All Israel is occupied Palestine,” have equated Israel with the Third Reich and asserted that Hamas-controlled Gaza where the population continues to grow an “Israeli extermination camp.”
- In 2009, Davis stated, “We should ... be cognizant of the extent to which the appalling Nazi genocide continues to be evoked by some people as an excuse for genocidal policies on the part of the state of Israel.”

*Note: Davis is a role model for anti-Jewish activist and author Marc Lamont Hill, a professor at Temple University who has advocated for violence against Jews and who has called for Israel’s destruction.*



Huey Newton with Yasser Arafat

As for Huey Newton, a co-founder of the Black Panther Party who died in 1989, his anti-Jewish rhetoric included: “Israel was created by Western imperialism and is maintained by Western firepower” and “The Jewish people have a right to exist so long as they solely exist to down the reactionary expansionist Israeli government.”

Newton met with Yasser Arafat in Beirut, Lebanon in 1980. There is a photo of the two of them shaking hands, with Newton grinning ear-to-ear.

According to the book *Black Power and Palestine: Transnational Countries of Color*: “When an interviewer asked him [Newton] what had been the greatest inspiration for the BPP, Huey Newton replied, “I think that not only Fidel [Castro] and Che [Guevara], Ho Chi Minh and Mao [Zedong] and Kim Il Sung, but also all the guerrilla bands that have been operating in Mozambique and Angola, and the Palestinian guerrillas who are fighting for a socialist world’.”

## Activities by other city agencies and departments

There are other examples that further reflect and are indicative of a mindset and attitude no-doubt shaped by the pervasive propaganda campaign intended to tear down and destroy the Jewish state and delegitimize the Jewish People. This attitude encroaches across a swath of city government from the top down, and is then perpetuated and disseminated to others by Philadelphia municipal employees at the lowest levels of government.

### The Unity Cup:

On several occasions, the city has hosted a soccer tournament featuring teams based on some of the many ethnic groups and nationalities among Philadelphia’s residents. The winning team receives the Unity Cup. The announcement from Mayor Kenney’s office prior to the 2019 tournament noted that there would be five new teams in the tourney that year. “The new countries competing this year are:

Burkina Faso

Romania

Lesotho

Iran

Palestine

“For the first time, representatives from the tournament’s 52 teams will march in a special opening ceremony. Each team will carry flags representing their country.” Thus, the City of Philadelphia has declared that there is a country called “Palestine.” It has committed an act that the White House and the State Department have not taken.



## Philadelphia Reentry Coalition:

Oddly enough, there was a severe example of anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel material placed on the website of a City of Philadelphia agency that helps former prison inmates adjust to life among the general population: the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition.

The website featured verbatim an article from the Marxist Workers World website about the City of Philadelphia's official proclamation and ceremony recognizing "International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People."

As per the article:

"On Nov. 29, 1947, the U.N. General Assembly adopted the colonialist resolution on the partition of Palestine, which led to the Nakba (the Catastrophe), the destruction of Palestinian society and homeland as it existed in 1948 and the displacement of most of the Palestinian people by the Zionist Israeli state.

"Nakba is also used to describe the ongoing Israeli persecution, illegal displacement and deadly occupation of Palestine and its Indigenous inhabitants, both in the occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip and in Palestinian refugee camps throughout the region.

"In Philadelphia many participants celebrated their solidarity later in the day at Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture's event in front of The Soul of Black Bottom mural in West Philly, featuring the Dabke troupe, Al-Bayan.

"Such acts of solidarity fly in the face of Zionist propaganda, which refuses to recognize the very existence of the Palestinian people. The participation of both progressives and mainstream-elected officials in recognizing the people of Palestine reflects the growing movement of people here and around the world to 'Free Palestine!'"

At the bottom of the article on the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition website was a link to the article on the Workers World website. Greater Philadelphia ZOA reached a volunteer leader of the Coalition who agreed that the article did not belong on the agency's website. He said that he would have it removed, and a short time later it was.

## Israeli flags attacked on three occasions:

The City of Philadelphia has a display of flags of nations that line and adorn the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. Most are arranged in alphabetical order, but the flag of Israel is an exception: It hangs above the city's official Holocaust memorial, where the Parkway intersects with 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

In May, 2021, a video surfaced of an attack on this flag. A male in his late teens or early 20s is seen in broad daylight climbing up the flag pole and attempting to tear down the flag. When he is unable to, an accomplice hands him a lighter and he attempts to set the flag on fire -- but the flag does not ignite.



Greater Philadelphia ZOA placed numerous calls to local and federal law enforcement agencies to find out if the perpetrators had been arrested or if law enforcement was trying to locate them – since their faces are clearly seen in the video. Eventually we were told by a police officer that one of the perpetrators was picked up by police, he was questioned and was then released. No explanation was given. We were told that charges were not filed by the District Attorney's office. We were unable to get any details.

On May 15, 2018, the Israeli flag at the same location was also defaced in broad daylight – and there was also video of the attack. A perpetrator can be seen spraying red paint (perhaps to simulate blood) on the flag and staining the vertical lower half of it. An arrest was made, but the suspect who was arrested clearly was not the perpetrator seen in the video. As best as is known, neither the Police Department nor the District Attorney aggressively pursued those who actually committed the vandalism.

Mayor Kenney issued a statement about the 2018 attack. Kenney's



statement included: “Hate and anti-Semitism have no place in the City of Philadelphia. While I understand that emotions are running high and there are many viewpoints stemming from recent violence against Palestinians and other protesters in the Gaza Strip, it doesn’t warrant acts of vandalism.”

*Note: The mayor made no mention of the attacks on Jewish communities in Israel by Palestinian-Arabs which precipitated Israeli efforts to halt the attacks. Nor did Kenney specifically condemn the attack on the flag – a symbol of both Israel and the Jewish People.*

In July 2016, as the city of Philadelphia hosted the Democratic National Convention inside the Wells Fargo Center, protests took place regularly near the perimeter of the venue. One evening, anti-Jewish protesters set an Israeli flag afire. The act was captured in both still photos and video. Mayor Kenney did not condemn this despicable attack. Greater Philadelphia ZOA wrote to Kenney to ask that he condemn the attack against Israel and Jewry. ZOA received a reply from Philadelphia Deputy Mayor Nina Ahmad outrageously questioning whether the Israeli flag was actually ignited. She referred to the incident as “the alleged burning of an Israeli flag ... .” In a follow-up phone call to ask Ahmad what she meant by “alleged,” she said that the Israeli flag may not have actually been set on fire – that it could have been a case of a doctored photo and video.

## Steps that the City of Philadelphia and Its Agencies Must Take to Alleviate and Counter Jew-Hatred

As we have carefully documented, the government of Philadelphia and its agencies — in some cases deliberately and in other cases perhaps due to ignorance — are actively engaged in erasing Jewish heritage and history; revising contemporary and recent activities in the Middle East; and endorsing a cause and a movement that has as its primary goal the destruction of Israel, the lone Jewish-majority nation and the world’s largest Jewish community. Were this movement to achieve its ends, it would deal a severe blow to Jewry worldwide. What we have found on the part of the city are acts of Jew-hatred/antisemitism that are at least as impactful and dangerous to Jews as is a swastika. The propaganda that the city has disseminated, the assertions and endorsements by elected officials, the imagery of the mayor and City Council members standing alongside PLO terrorist flags and the indoctrination of young children will turn the public against the Jewish state and incite more Jew-hatred amid a period of already increasing Jew-hatred.

That some who endorse or participate in anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel activities and rhetoric are Jewish does not excuse nor diminish the toxicity or danger that the activities and rhetoric detailed herein pose to the Jewish People in the city, in the region and beyond.

The Jewish People are a tiny minority. Persecution of other minorities would not be tolerated and those responsible for it would be reprimanded, compelled to undergo sensitivity training, suspended or fired – or all of the above.

This crisis of official city Jew-hatred must be addressed with the same tenacity that would be applied if the target was a different minority, and it must be addressed rapidly and thoroughly. Some 90 miles up the road, Jews are routinely attacked and beaten on the streets. Officials must not wait for similar to happen in Philadelphia before acting.

Remedies must include mandatory sensitivity training about Jewry, Zionism and Israel; a mandatory, factual workshop about the Middle East in history and in contemporary times; city-wide policy directives and oversight to bring to a halt this anti-Jewish campaign; corrective materials and information made available to those who were exposed to lies and Jew-hatred; and reprimands for those who deliberately sought to mislead the public and incite Jew-hatred.

In both internal communications and public declarations, those who have deliberately promoted Jew-hatred and those who have been promoting the Palestinian-Arab cause have vowed to increase their efforts and activities. Thus, more city departments and agencies will be pressed – and indeed coopted -- to promote an agenda that is inherently anti-Jewish. It is for this reason that pre-emptive action must be taken to prevent even accidental transmission and dissemination of material which could and is likely to promote Jew-hatred.

Today, every synagogue, Jewish school and Jewish community center must have sophisticated security systems to protect people, and most and perhaps all have armed security guards at all times or when there is an event or worship services. Jews have been murdered in synagogues, in Jewish businesses and at holiday celebrations and recently a rabbi and two congregants were held hostage in a synagogue.

Greater Philadelphia ZOA has had limited success in addressing some manifestations of official Philadelphia promotion of Jew-hatred: Two anti-Jewish “storytime” videos and the social-media posts promoting them (which also contained anti-Jewish content) were removed by Library leadership following our calls and letters. Library leadership also removed a librarian-created list of internet resources that disseminated false and hateful lies against the Jewish People. Our earlier report on the Free Library of Philadelphia’s anti-Jewish activity received local and national media coverage.

We met with the acting Library director, Library Board chairwoman and other leadership who promised that they would place safeguards to limit such anti-Jewish activities going forward. But instead, the attacks became more frequent and have expanded. Also present at this meeting were the president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, and the acting director of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

At the meeting, Greater Philadelphia asked for an official public apology from Library leadership for demonizing and lying about Jews and for inciting Jew-hatred; for the Library to immediately place corrective materials and announcements and offer activities on the social-media sites where the anti-Jewish materials had been and in some cases still was; and we asked that there immediately be an activity for children that will portray Israel in a positive light. The other Jewish communal leaders did not support our requests – and none of our requests have occurred.

The vile anti-Jewish article from the Marxist Workers World that had been on the website of the Philadelphia Reentry Coalition was removed from the website following our intervention.

## **What must happen now and going forward:**

- Continued vigilance is needed both within the Jewish community and frankly by all decent people. Some Free Library of Philadelphia staff wield tremendous power within the Library system. Through their aggressive activities, an executive director of the Library system was fired and the previous chairwoman of the Library’s Board was forced to step down. Oversight of employees is essential and there must be a clearinghouse for child-centered activities.

Materials and activities that falsify the historical record and/or contemporary activities – unless labeled as “fiction” such as novels – that demonize the Jewish People or Jewish values should be kept from young children who are not able to access counter-points or facts.

Immediately the Free Library of Philadelphia must place on its website and branch social-media pages factual materials that correct the staff-driven lies – for children and adults – and which will hopefully mitigate the Jew-hatred the Library incited. The Library must offer to staff (and perhaps insist that they attend) a class or workshop that provides the factual history of the Middle East, contemporary developments and an overview of the Muslim and Arab war against the Jewish People – which often compels Israel to take action to fend off attackers – as well as the Jewish People’s legal rights to the Land of Israel.

Finally, we continue to believe that the Free Library of Philadelphia leadership owes its patrons and the Jewish community a public apology.

- As for the School District of Philadelphia: Continued vigilance and monitoring is necessary. There is no place in a government school where minors are compelled to attend for incitement of hatred of another people nor the delegitimizing of a People’s legitimate rights. Nor is it a place for alternative histories and denial of historical and contemporary events. Philadelphia children deserve to be educated, not mis-educated. Groups that erase the world’s largest Jewish community from its maps or that demonize a people, its rights and its history cannot be trusted to keep those sentiments and views from the eyes and ears of impressionable children. Groups that deny the existence of the homeland of the Jewish People or that are engaged in trying to harm Israel or that are tied to an organization that has one of its goals the destruction of the Jewish state have no place in public schools nor should it have access to children. They should not be welcome in schools.
- Mayor Kenney, other elected officials, other government staff and agencies: Mayor Kenney and others who participated in the November 29 event must publicly apologize for their participation and their anti-Jewish remarks.



Perhaps they did not fully understand the motive of the U.N. when it created its “International Day of Solidarity With the Palestinian People” observance that city officials chose to amplify locally; perhaps they are unfamiliar with events in the Middle East over the past 100 years. They deserve the benefit of the doubt and the opportunity to explain this if it is correct. They – and all city employees – need exposure to the facts as well as the sensitivity training that would be demanded were another minority group attacked. Also: The city needs to ban all hate symbols from city property. The PLO flag and all that it represents and all of the actions that were done under that banner are as hateful as is a swastika, a noose or any other such symbol. It represents not only hatred but also violence. The mayor and City Council should recognize the Israeli community and all of their contributions to the betterment of Philadelphia.

- The Greater Philadelphia region is a hotbed of anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel activity. While outside of the scope of this report, a number of regional media outlets have stepped up their anti-Israel/anti-Jewish campaigns during the past year — most prominently *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. In addition, some well-known personalities including now-former local NAACP leader Rodney Muhammad and now-former Philadelphia Eagle DeSean Jackson made headlines with anti-Jewish or anti-Israel activities on social media in recent years. In addition, the University of Pennsylvania’s influential Middle East Center, which has a well-documented history of promoting anti-Israel/anti-Jewish propaganda, offers workshops about the Middle East led on occasion by instructors with anti-Israel histories or participation in anti-Israel groups, to K through 12 teachers from the area. Other campuses throughout our region have notorious anti-Jewish/anti-Zionist/anti-Israel faculty members and student organizations, and at least one has endorsed a boycott of Israel.

Other than the work by the Zionist Organization of America to expose and challenge some anti-Jewish propaganda and hatred-inciting rhetoric by official Philadelphia, the local Jewish establishment and local leaders within the Jewish community have largely been publicly silent in response to all of the attacks and transgressions described and detailed throughout this report. In fact, the day after Mayor James Kenney proclaimed “International Day of Solidarity With the Palestinian People” on Nov. 29, he was welcomed by leaders of three Jewish establishment organizations at an event they created that was intended to oppose antisemitism. Jewish communal leaders, organizations and institutions must publicly condemn Jew-hatred and name those who spread and foster lies about the Jewish People and incite Jew-hatred. These leaders must alert the Jewish community of the dangers that individual Jews and Jewish institutions could face as a result of official Jew-hatred incited by actions by Philadelphia government and its agencies and departments. There is no telling who in the community at-large could be triggered by false accusations about the Jewish state and the Jewish People.

They must do as ZOA does: to educate the community with the facts about the Jewish People’s history and rights in the Middle East, the facts about Israel’s and the Jewish People’s enemies, and the history of the peace process. And like ZOA they must encourage both vigilance and advocacy. These must all take place preemptively before there is a serious attack here. While the Jewish establishment focuses on security at Jewish facilities, fighting Jew-hatred and its causes is also an important line of defense.

Greater Philadelphia ZOA and National ZOA are available to lead or help with any efforts to improve or remedy what is an intolerable situation for the benefit of the entire community.

*This report is produced by the Greater Philadelphia Chapter of the Zionist Organization of America in March, 2022. ZOA is America’s oldest educational and advocacy group to promote the re-establishment of the Jewish state of Israel and to ensure that Israel be strong, secure and vibrant. We also bolster the mutually beneficial United States-Israel relationship, and we expose and combat Jew-hatred.*

*Greater Philadelphia ZOA is one of ZOA’s chapters throughout the nation.*

*To reach Greater Philadelphia ZOA, email [office@zoaphilly.org](mailto:office@zoaphilly.org) . To reach National ZOA, email [info@zoa.org](mailto:info@zoa.org) .*