



ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

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VIA EMAIL

Ms. Jessica Ellison, Executive Director
National Council for History Education
13940 Cedar Road, #393
University Heights, OH 44118

Dear Ms. Ellison:

We write on behalf of the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) to express deep concern about the National Council for History Education's (NCHE) lesson plan titled "Plan Displacement and Resistance: The Nakba of 1948 Continues." The lesson plan is shockingly inaccurate and biased against Israel. It downplays and ignores critical facts in order to deny Israel's right to exist and its right to defend its people from violence and terrorism.

We urge you to ensure that this lesson plan is revised without delay. It not only fails to comport with NCHE's [mission](#) to support accurate and inclusive teaching and learning of complex histories, at the expense of teachers who may believe they can rely on NCHE as a professional, responsible resource. The lesson plan also raises serious legal concerns. The ZOA led the successful battle to ensure that Title VI of the Civil Rights would be enforced to protect Jewish students from antisemitic discrimination. Under Title VI, recipients of federal funding must ensure that their programs and activities are free from antisemitic discrimination, or risk losing their federal funding.

NCHE's funding comes [primarily](#) from federal grants, including from the U.S. Department of Education. If the lesson plan is not revised, we intend to alert the Department of Education that instead of providing factual and unbiased educational materials to educators and educational organizations, NCHE is using taxpayer money to promote false and biased information that encourages hatred of Israel and Jews.

Some of the many examples of the problems with the lesson plan are set forth in the attached. We would be pleased to work with NCHE to revise the lesson plan so that it satisfies NCHE's mission and its obligations under Title VI.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,

Morton A. Klein
National President

Susan B. Tuchman, Esq.
Director, Center for Law & Justice

Inaccuracies and Bias in the National Council for History Education's Lesson Plan Titled "Plan Displacement and Resistance: The Nakba of 1948 Continues"

- The historical context that NCHE gives for what it describes as "Palestinian displacement" paints a factually inaccurate picture of the inhabitants of the Land of Israel. The lesson plan states that Palestinian Arabs were "dispossessed of their land," omitting the critical fact – backed by mounds of archeological evidence – that Jews are indigenous to the Land of Israel going back more than 3,000 years. It is thus wrong and irresponsible for NCHE's lesson plan to promote to educators the falsehood that the creation of the state of Israel, the religious and ancestral homeland of the Jewish people, amounted to the dispossession of another people's land.
- NCHE's lesson plan inaccurately describes the Balfour Declaration as supporting "the statelessness, forced exile, and cultural marginalization" of Palestinian society. It did nothing of the sort. The Balfour Declaration recognized the Jewish people's ancient connection to the Land of Israel by expressing support for establishing "a national home for the Jewish people" in their ancestral homeland. Importantly, the Balfour Declaration expressly provided that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities" in the land – which is the opposite of what NCHE's lesson plan promotes to educators.
- NCHE's lesson plan inaccurately states that the partition plan to create an Arab state and a Jewish state was rejected by Arab leaders and representatives because they "saw it as unjust." In fact, the Arabs rejected the partition plan because they refused to accept the existence of a Jewish state in the region, which would be a critical point for educators to understand.
- NCHE's lesson plan inaccurately states that "war broke out between Israeli and Palestinian forces" after the state of Israel was established in 1948. To begin with, the forces were not "Palestinian." The armies of five Arab nations – Egypt, Syria, Transjordan, Lebanon, and Iraq – immediately invaded Israel to annihilate it.
- NCHE's lesson plan inaccurately suggests that Palestinian Arabs were expelled from their homes and prevented from returning during the Arab war against Israel in 1948. While some Palestinian Arabs were expelled, thousands left of their own volition in anticipation of war, and others left at the direction of Arab leaders. NCHE's lesson plan fails to make the critical point that had the Arabs accepted the partition plan and a Jewish state alongside another Arab state – instead of launching a war – there would have been no Palestinian Arab refugees.
- NCHE's lesson plan acknowledges the plight of Palestinian Arab refugees after the state of Israel was created in 1948, but neglects to mention the plight of the hundreds of thousands of Jewish refugees from Arab countries during the same period. Jews were persecuted in the Arab countries they were living in, some in communities that had existed for centuries. Jews in Arab countries were subjected to anti-Jewish pogroms and their property, businesses, and belongings were confiscated. Over 850,000 Jews from Arab countries were forced to leave their homes, communities, and livelihoods with virtually nothing. But they did not remain refugees for

long. Some went to Europe and North America and most rebuilt their lives in Israel. None of the Jewish refugees received any compensation from the Arab countries that oppressed them and forced them out.

- NCHE's description in the lesson plan of the so-called "new Nakba" in Gaza is a complete distortion of the facts. The lesson plan describes in detail Israel's alleged actions in response to Hamas' October 7, 2023, massacre in Israel. Yet it makes barely a reference to the events which preceded Israel's defensive actions.

On October 7, 2023, Jews endured the worst massacre since the Holocaust. There is nothing in the lesson plan that addresses the fact that Hamas, which had already been recognized by the United States as a terrorist group since 1997, breached Israel's border on that day and murdered, butchered and raped 1,200 men, women and children at a peaceful dance festival, and in their homes and communities, and then kidnapped hundreds of men, women and children, including babies, and held them hostage in Gaza, where some were murdered, and all were tortured and starved.

NCHE's lesson plan actually indulges the notion that Hamas' slaughter and savagery were "a legitimate response to Israeli occupation," omitting the critical fact that there was no "occupation" of Gaza. On the day of the massacre, there had not been a single Israeli civilian or soldier in Gaza for almost 20 years. Gazans were under the tyrannical, repressive rule of Hamas, not Israel.

- NCHE's lesson plan falsely depicts the effects of Israel's defensive war against Hamas and its allies in Gaza and blames Israel for the suffering of civilians in Gaza. In fact, Hamas bears primary responsibility for their suffering, by provoking the war and then maximizing the damage to and death of civilians in Gaza.

Tons and tons of food and other supplies were delivered to Gaza, but Hamas prevented aid from reaching civilians, instead of facilitating the process. Hamas intercepted and looted food convoys and blocked civilians from getting aid.

Also, instead of doing whatever it could to protect its people in a time of war, Hamas deliberately sought to increase civilian casualties by using civilians in Gaza as human shields. It used civilian homes, hospitals, schools and mosques for command operations and to store weapons, launch rockets, and house its soldiers. Hamas soldiers wore civilian clothing to blend in with the population in humanitarian zones. Before launching its attack on October 7, 2023, Hamas spent years constructing hundreds of miles of underground tunnels from which the terrorist group launched attacks, stored weapons, shielded its soldiers, and hid Israeli hostages. These tunnels were integrated into residential neighborhoods, houses, hospitals, mosques, schools and United Nations facilities.