

RESOLUTION

THE MTA RESOURCES ON THE ISRAEL/GAZA CONFLICT

Dr. Jesse Hefter

Brookline School Committee

jesse_hefter@psbma.org

May 1, 2025

WHY A RESOLUTION?

Support our teachers, our curriculum coordinators, and our district family (parents and students)

Express our concern as School Districts to the MTA

SET THE STAGE...

After the Hamas attack on Israel of October 7, 2023, the MTA assembled a set of resources for its member teachers "to help educators engage with their students on this crucial and difficult topic"

"The list is dominated by Palestinian and anti-Zionist voices, while voices humanizing Israeli experiences or representing a Zionist narrative are minimal" (Shira Schoenberg – Boston Globe Opinion, January 2025)

FOR EXAMPLE...

- The MTA introduced a dramatically one-sided set of “curriculum resources” to its members concerning “the history of Israel and occupied Palestine,” which demonizes the only Jewish State and threatens to politicize classrooms, **American Jewish Committee (AJC) New England**
- Of the 89 resources listed by the MTA, 67 characterize Israel as an illegitimate state and/or reduce a complex conflict to allegations of wrongful occupation (others discussed antisemitism, Islamophobia, teaching difficult issues, and modeling balanced presentations of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict).

FOR EXAMPLE...

During a legislative hearing (February 10, 2025), the House Chair of the **Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism**, Rep. Simon Cataldo, called an MTA resource page on the Israel-Hamas war "virulently antisemitic." Co-Chair Sen. John Velis said the materials were "incredibly one-sided."

<https://www.wbur.org/news/2025/02/20/mta-materials-israel-hamas-war-antisemitic>

FROM THE MTA RESOURCES

Here are some articles and short videos to deepen your knowledge of the conflict and current war.

-  ["Settler Colonialism in the Middle East and North Africa: A Protracted History,"](#) Middle East Research and Information Project
-  ["The Balfour Declaration: Enduring Colonial Criminality,"](#) Middle East Eye
- ["The Unfinished History Between America and the Muslim Brotherhood,"](#) Hudson Institute
- ["Connections with Muslim Brotherhood"](#)
- ["PLO/Fatah vs. Hamas,"](#) Aljazeera
-  ["What is Israel, What is Palestine, and What is the Nakba?"](#) Visualizing Palestine
-  ["Independence or Catastrophe? Teaching Palestine through Multiple Perspectives,"](#) Rethinking Schools
-  ["Palestine 101,"](#) US Campaign for Palestinian Rights
- ["What Palestinians Really Think of Hamas,"](#) Foreign Affairs
- ["Erase Gaza: War Unleashes Incendiary Rhetoric in Israel,"](#) New York Times
- ["Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism,"](#) The Public Eye Magazine

FROM THE MTA RESOURCES

-  [Zinn Education Project](#)

This organization was co-founded by Rethinking Schools and Teaching for Change and inspired by the work of Howard Zinn, whose work, "A People's History of the United States," challenged dominant narratives in American history. The project offers free resources to help educators teach lessons that are "engaging, accurate, and complex." This resource includes lessons and suggestions for teaching in the K-12 setting. The following articles may be of particular interest.

 - ["Teaching About Palestine-Israel and the Unfolding Genocide in Gaza"](#)
 - ["Teaching the Seeds of Violence in Palestine-Israel"](#)
 - ["Teaching Media Literacy on Palestine and Israel"](#)
 - ["Independence or Catastrophe? Teaching Palestine Through Multiple Perspectives"](#)

FROM THE MTA RESOURCES

-  **VISUALS & ART**
 - [Museum of the Palestinian People Virtual Tour](#)

The Museum of the Palestinian People, based in Washington D.C., is devoted to preserving and celebrating Palestinian history, arts and culture.
-  **NEA'S EFFORT TO COLLECT HUMANITARIAN AID FOR EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS IN GAZA**

NOTE: These are the ONLY resources listed under these headings (NOTHING ABOUT ISRAEL)

FROM THE MTA RESOURCES

- Documentaries and Films (17 listed as of 3/20/2025)
 - **Israel**
 - One documentary about the October 7, 2023, massacre at the Nova Dance Festival
 - **Palestine**
 - At least 13 of the other 16 express a pro-Palestinian narrative

FROM THE MTA RESOURCES

- **Eleven (11) books, 7 are problematic**
 - Adwan, et. Al – Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine
 - Aslan – a kids book about Israel & Palestine
 - Finkelstein – Gaza: An Inquest into its Martyrdom
 - Kalidi – The Hundred Year's War on Palestine
 - Pappe – ~~TEN MYTHS ABOUT ISRAEL~~
 - Said – The Question of Palestine
 - Shavit – My Promised Land

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE MTA'S RESOURCES ON THE ISRAEL/GAZA CONFLICT

WHEREAS, the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) has curated and disseminated resources related to the Israel-Gaza conflict and its history, which are deeply one-sided and contain unambiguous antisemitic elements; and

WHEREAS, these particular materials present an extreme and biased ideology that is harmful to the Jewish community and offensive to all those seeking a balanced and fair understanding of this international issue; and

WHEREAS, the MTA's agenda in releasing these materials has been critically and publicly exposed by the Massachusetts Governor's Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism; and

WHEREAS, the use of these materials in any school district could create an environment that undermines the values of impartial education and mutual respect among students and staff of diverse backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts public schools strive to foster an educational setting that is respectful, historically accurate, and free from discrimination;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the undersigned school committee, strongly cautions school districts across the state of Massachusetts from utilizing the MTA's materials related to the Israel-Gaza conflict; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the undersigned school committee, calls for school districts to follow Instructional Materials policy to prevent the dissemination of antisemitic discriminatory content in our public schools; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we, the undersigned, call for school districts to follow the guidelines reiterated by the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights in a letter dated May 25, 2023 of "schools' legal obligation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) to provide all students, including Jewish students, a school environment free from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, including shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics".

SIGNED:

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE MTA'S RESOURCES ON THE ISRAEL/GAZA CONFLICT

II

WHEREAS, the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) has **curated** and disseminated resources related to the Israel-Gaza conflict and its history, which are deeply one-sided and contain unambiguous antisemitic elements; and

WHEREAS, these particular materials present an extreme and biased ideology that **impacts** the Jewish community and is offensive to all those seeking a balanced and fair understanding of this international issue; and

WHEREAS, the MTA's agenda in releasing these materials has been critically and publicly exposed by the Massachusetts Governor's Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism; and

WHEREAS, the use of these materials in any school district could create an environment that undermines the values of impartial education and mutual respect among students and staff of diverse backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, Massachusetts public schools strive to foster an educational setting that is respectful, historically accurate, and free from discrimination;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the **Brookline School Committee** strongly cautions our district from utilizing the MTA's materials related to the Israel-Gaza conflict; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Brookline School Committee** calls for an Instructional Materials policy that prevents the dissemination of antisemitic discriminatory content in our District; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the **Brookline School Committee** call upon our District to follow the guidelines reiterated by the United States Department of Education Office of Civil Rights in a letter dated May 25, 2023 of "schools' legal obligation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI) to provide all students, including Jewish students, a school environment free from discrimination based on race, color, or national origin, including shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics".

RESOLUTION REGARDING THE MTA'S RESOURCES ON THE ISRAEL/GAZA CONFLICT

Resources:

1. U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, Letter of May 25, 2023 (<https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/antisemitism-dcl.pdf>)
2. U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, Fact Sheet: <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/ocr-factsheet-shared-ancestry-202301.pdf> (January 2023).
3. [Curriculum Guidelines](#) (Policy Manual - File: IJ - Instructional Materials; MA School Districts including Arlington, Bedford, Framingham, Lexington, Lynn, Malden, Newton, Plymouth, Swampscott, Watertown, Westborough, Worcester)
4. Appendix of AJC Report of Politicization of K-12 Classrooms and the MTA Curricular Resources - <https://url.us.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/xIDvCM85lgcyABAVhwf5c89UNZ?domain=ajc.org>

WHAT'S NEXT

SHARE RESOLUTION WITH...

School District Curriculum Staff

Massachusetts Association of School Committees

MA Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

State Attorney General Office of Civil Rights