

Zinn Education Project: Schools Beware

The Zinn Education Project (ZEP) bills itself as a grassroots, educational initiative promoting a more “inclusive” approach to history. However, scrutiny of its curriculum exposes a pattern of radical indoctrination targeting K-12 students. The Project distorts history and employs deceptive jargon to advance an anti-American, anti-white, and anti-Israel agenda.

What is Zinn Education Project?

- Founded in 2008 and named after controversial historian Howard Zinn, ZEP remains true to its namesake’s revisionist history. In his book “A People’s History of the United States,” Zinn oversimplified America’s past by presenting it through a narrow oppressor-oppressed lens and portraying capitalism and U.S. policy as inherently exploitative.
 - For example, in chapter 7 of his book, Zinn portrays certain U.S. policies and events as deliberate efforts to exterminate indigenous cultures for economic gain and, in Chapter 12, portrays U.S. foreign policy as driven by imperialism to expand U.S. influence and control, ignoring more substantive explanations for these policies.
- ZEP is a joint project of two U.S.-designated non-profit organizations, Rethinking Schools and Teaching for Change, a structure that allows ZEP not to have to file its own annual tax disclosure and avoid public scrutiny of its activities and finances.

U.S. Portrayed as Racist, Oppressive

- Through a network of radical educators, unions, and activists, ZEP instills racial resentment and denigrates America’s progress in fulfilling its founding principles of freedom, democracy, and equality. ZEP materials portray the U.S. government and its institutions as complicit in maintaining white supremacy and systemic racism as pervasive today as in the past, despite ample evidence of progress made in racial matters.
 - ZEP contributors Matt Reed and Ursula Wolfe-Rocca describe the 2014-2016 water crisis in “majority Black” Flint, Michigan, as an “egregious example of environmental racism,” implying that every crisis has a racial component.

Hostility Toward Israel

- A January 2025 ZEP statement titled “Teaching About Palestine-Israel and the Unfolding Genocide in Gaza” expressed hostility toward Israel, framing it as a colonial and oppressive force, while promoting a heavily one-sided narrative favoring Palestinian victimhood.
- The statement alleged the “violent displacement” of Palestinians during the 1948 Arab-Israeli war when, in fact, the exodus of Palestinians was due to a combination of factors including voluntary flight, panic stoked by Arab leaders, and Arab aggression.
- Israel is smeared as an “apartheid” regime, despite the full legal rights and participation of Israeli Arabs in Israeli society, including government, armed forces, many professions, including as judges, and politics.
- ZEP contributors link U.S. domestic racial issues to global conflicts, particularly the Israel-Palestinian conflict, arguing that Israel’s actions toward Palestinians are a continuation of white colonial oppression.
- The January 2025 statement insisted teachers have a moral duty to teach the “truth” about Israeli “oppression” and integrate the conflict into larger discussions of imperialism, racism, and settler colonialism, directly linking Israel’s existence to these themes.
 - Black feminist writer Angela Davis is cited: “Our relation to Palestine says a great deal about our capacity to respond to complex, contemporary issues, whether we are talking about imperialism [or] settler-colonialism... Palestine is a litmus test.”

- At a National Education Association gathering in 2025, ZEP contributor Jesse Hagopian said, “There is a long tradition of Black solidarity with Palestine because there is so much overlap in our struggles against settler colonialism.”

This false analogy ignores that Israel is the historic homeland of the Jewish people and that Jews arrived as immigrants and refugees, not as colonial settlers from a mother country.

- ZEP co-director Bill Bigelow’s lesson “Teaching the Seeds of Violence in Palestine-Israel” justifies Palestinian violence against Israelis by tracing what he considers the “roots” of the Israel-Hamas war to the earliest days of Zionist immigration to British Mandate Palestine. He places the onus on Jewish immigration rather than Arab refusal to live in peace with their Jewish neighbors. Bigelow omits facts that contradict his argument, such as violence by Arabs against Arabs who favored accommodation with Jews and Arab rejection of the 1947 U.N. Partition Plan and subsequent peace proposals.
- ZEP aims to mold students into proponents of change, especially as advocates for the Palestinian cause, and rejects a neutral or balanced approach to teaching the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Instead, it insists educators favor Palestinian experiences and critiques of Zionism in their instruction and frame Israel as part of larger global systems of oppression.
 - ZEP’s January 2025 post states, “As educators, we must help students make historical explanations for today’s violence... Curricula must put empathy at the center,” rather than adhere to factual accuracy, “inviting students to critique policies and practices.”



For the full version of the Zinn Education Project report, scan the QR code.

Support for Activism and Defiance

- ZEP’s display of anti-Israel sentiment extends beyond its educational materials to public activism.
 - At the 2024 National Association of Independent Schools’ People of Color Conference, ZEP circulated a petition supporting two teachers who criticized Zionism and accused Israel of genocide. Conference leaders later rebuked the remarks as divisive and antisemitic and changed future speaker policies.
 - ZEP defended four teachers suspended in Montgomery County, Maryland, for anti-Israel comments. One teacher, Sabrina Khan-Williams, was cited for doubting facts surrounding the October 7 attack on Israel, sharing fake videos, and accusing Zionists of apartheid.
 - On social media, ZEP blamed the October 7 attack on alleged Israeli mistreatment of Palestinians and called for an immediate ceasefire, which would have preserved Gaza’s terrorist infrastructure:



Zinn Ed Project
@ZinnEdProject



K-12 educators have asked for teaching resources on Palestine & Israel that articulate stakes, complexity, & history that led to current tragedy & crisis.

We offer resources in <#> & add our voice to call for an immediate ceasefire. Full, growing list [↓](#)



zinnedproject.org
Teaching About Palestine-Israel and the Unfolding Genoc...
At Rethinking Schools and Teaching for Change we are outraged by the ongoing slaughter in Gaza, and the rising ...

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