

Abstract

This essay delves into the intersection of education and genocide, examining how historical traumas and ongoing systemic injustices affect the educational experiences of marginalized communities, particularly Palestinians under Israeli occupation and Indigenous Americans in the United States. Drawing inspiration from the life and work of Raphael Lemkin, the essay explores how education can serve as both a tool for liberation and a mechanism of oppression. By analyzing the impact of biased curricula, cultural erasure, and political manipulation in public education systems, the essay highlights how genocidal intentions manifest through economic control, resource deprivation, and the perpetuation of trauma across generations. Through case studies of Palestinian and Indigenous American experiences, this essay explores the detrimental effects of genocide on children's access to education, social mobility, and mental well-being. Furthermore, it scrutinizes the role of state-sponsored education in perpetuating historical injustices and fostering societal divisions. The essay underscores the urgent need for accurate and inclusive education that confronts past atrocities, challenges dominant narratives, and empowers marginalized communities. By embracing education as a liberatory force and advocating for transformative pedagogies, societies can work towards preventing future genocides and building a more just and equitable world.

Raphael Lemkin had a passion for education. By the time he had gained his doctorate, he “spoke nine languages and was able to read fourteen.”¹ He also enjoyed being a professor at prestigious universities such as Duke, Yale, Newark Law School of Rutgers and finally Princeton.² He devoted his life to compassion, education, justice and recognition for those who could no longer speak for themselves, in the hopes of aiding in prevention and to help prevent things like the Holocaust from happening again. Dr. Lemkin’s personal history and ambitions helped me to be able to put into words what genocide means to me.

Genocide is a horrifying reality, and also an opportunity for endless growth and change on the part of humankind. I acknowledge that this may seem counterintuitive and belittling of the suffering of people, but that is simply not true, nor the point of this project. The topic of genocide marries my three special interests: conceptualization of history for the public through politics, and capitalism; children and education; and liberation efforts. Combining these with my meaning of genocide stated above, I will examine the role

¹“RAPHAEL LEMKIN: A Brief Biographical Sketch,” Pacific Lutheran University, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.plu.edu/holocaustconference/wp-content/uploads/sites/717/2023/12/lemkin-bio2.pdf>.

² “Raphael Lemkin.”

education plays/has played in the parallel genocides of Palestinians by the Israeli government and indigenous peoples by the U.S. government as a case study to create a greater understanding of my concept and how it can be applied.

Education is a vital piece in creating a brighter future, while at the same time public education can be a place of great damage depending on the societal and political climate of the day. This then begets the question: where do genocide and education meet? To tackle this large question, we must first ask, how does continual genocide affect children? I will first explore how genocide affects the past, present and what the future of children in target groups (“Members of social groups undermined by oppression, groups who are socially undervalued and denied equal access...”³) may look like when taking into consideration that much of their lives are dictated by the actions of agent group members (“Members of social groups with unearned advantage, who are socially overvalued and are granted easier access...”⁴), and that continual genocide is not just limited to the physical act of killing.⁵ I will then explore how genocide is often perpetuated through biased curricula and mass media that is taught and shown in schools. This will be an exploration of how children, education and genocide interact and effect each other, and how through education we can stop the current unending cycle of “never again.”

Before I tackle how education and genocide fit together, I think it is important to make clear that there are two two main reasons I want to talk about the commonalities between the genocides being perpetrated by the US and Israeli governments. First is that they are both ongoing, though in different capacities.⁶ As of writing this, the Israeli bombardment

³ Nieto et al., *Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment: A Developmental Strategy to Liberate Everyone* (Olympia: Cuetzpalin Publishing, 2014), 1.

⁴ Nieto et al., *Beyond Inclusion*, 1.

⁵ I chose to use these labels as other labels such as colonizer/colonized are too specific in terms of this project, and do not encompass the whole continued history of oppression of Palestinian and Indigenous peoples.

⁶ This means I will use more varied examples with indigenous people in the U.S., some older as there wasn't necessarily a specific war time period.

of the Gaza Strip continues, the death toll has now reached over 26,000 people on the Palestinian side with 65,000 injured.⁷ Aid from the United Nations has been cut dramatically after claims were made by Israeli leaders that 13 UN Aid workers participated in the attacks by Hamas on October 7th, 2023.⁸ This will only add to the death toll as food, clean water and medical supplies will now be harder to come by.⁹ The genocide of American indigenous peoples has been ongoing for hundreds of years at this point, both physically and culturally. Today the continued genocide is harder to see, but it is still very evident in statistics. Indigenous people have an average lifespan that is 5.5 years less than all other races, specifically with high rates of liver disease and cancer,¹⁰ 25.4% of native folks live at or below the poverty line the highest of all US racial groups,¹¹ they are 7 times more likely to develop tuberculosis,¹² The median wealth of native individuals is 5.7K compared to 65K which is the national median of all other ethnicities,¹³ and they are the most likely ethnic group to drop out of high school.¹⁴ On top of this settler colonial land use issues have also led to high rates of diabetes and tribal lands being considered food deserts.¹⁵ These issues are a product of systemic oppression, governmental policy, environmental racism and historical trauma.¹⁶ While the U.S. government is no longer outright killing indigenous people with

⁷ “Israel’s War on Gaza: List of Key Events, Day 117,” *Al Jazeera*, January 31, 2024, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/31/israels-war-on-gaza-list-of-key-events-day-117>.

⁸ Patrick Jackson, “Israel Gaza: UN warning that aid system could collapse if UNRWA funding is withheld,” *BBC News*, 30 January 2024, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-68150519>.

⁹ Jackson, “Israel Gaza.”

¹⁰ “Disparities,” Indian Health Service, accessed January 31, 2024, <https://www.ihs.gov/newsroom/factsheets/disparities/>.

¹¹ Asante-Muhammad et al., “Racial Wealth Snapshot: Native Americans,” National Community Reinvestment Coalition, last modified February 14, 2022, <https://ncrc.org/racial-wealth-snapshot-native-americans/>.

¹² “American Indian/Alaska Native Health,” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, accessed January 31, 2024, <https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/american-indianalaska-native-health>.

¹³ Asante-Muhammad, “Racial Wealth.”

¹⁴ “Status Dropout Rates,” National Center for Education Statistics, last modified May 2023, <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/coj/status-dropout-ratesd>.

¹⁵ Sara Usha Maillacheruvu, “The Historical Determinants of Food Insecurity in Native Communities,” Center of Budget and Policy Priorities, last modified October 4, 2022, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/the-historical-determinants-of-food-insecurity-in-native-communities>.

¹⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Tips for Disaster Responders: Understanding Historical Trauma and Resilience when Responding to an Event in Indian Country,” accessed January 31, 2024, <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep22-01-01-005.pdf>.

guns, neglect, continued abuse and broken promises seem likely to stretch far into the future and perpetuate the genocide that continues to exist. The second reason is that these two genocides are the direct product of settler colonialism and capitalism. Which offers a unique perspective on how colonial actions, specifically those that tie heavily to commercialism can create a situation of continual genocide through violent actions, economic oppression and repeated abuse. This makes these genocides specifically poignant to examine in relation to education and its role in perpetuating violence if we are to have a future without genocide.

Genocide is more than just the organized killing of target group individuals. It is also committed long term through less tangible avenues such as economic control, and the physical destruction of cultural centers and knowledge. Lemkin addresses this through his definition of Genocide by stating,

“It (Genocide) is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be the disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.”¹⁷

This broader definition offers an avenue to explore how education can be used as a weapon to limit economic and social viability of a target group through specific policies and physical barriers put in place by an agent group. Cultural and general education are vital to

¹⁷Jeffrey S. Morton, “The International Legal Adjudication of The Crime of Genocide,” accessed January 31, 2024, 333, <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&article=1314&context=ilsajournal/>.

the continuation of a people, and any trauma (even a trauma much more minor than genocide) can affect a child's ability to learn.¹⁸ Understanding the effects of continual genocide in relation children means highlighting three specific areas: politically enforced cyclical poverty, lack of resources and murder across generations, and trauma's effect on young minds overtime.

Poverty can be a form of genocidal intention, especially if it is paired with political actions that seek to enforce it. This can be seen in matters of land ownership, "property rights over housing (on homestead land or other forms of housing) provide shelter, dignity, and a means for accumulation."¹⁹ The taking of 'promised' land through political and military actions ensures that people are unable to create generational wealth and lack the economic token of land, exiling them from greater participation in our capitalist society, and thus perpetuating genocide. A main focus of the U.S. government in their genocide of indigenous Americans was the 'freeing-up' of land. By using coercive and illegal tactics such as withholding food and other resources necessary for survival, the U.S. government was given land concessions creating much smaller reservations than promised in treaties.²⁰ The government then enforced policy that allowed much of the treaty promised land to be under governmental control, specifically under the control of the department of the interior. This act makes it almost impossible for indigenous people to 'have' land that can be passed down as a form of generational wealth and limits commercial activities that can take place on the reservation.²¹ By 1934, only 34% of originally indigenous owned land was still in tribal

¹⁸ "How Trauma Impacts School Performance," Mental Health America, accessed January 31, 2024, <https://mhanational.org/how-trauma-impacts-school-performance#:~:text=Academic%20Performance%3A%20Trauma%20can%20undermine,new%20information%2C%20and%20reading%20comprehension.>

¹⁹ Ruth Meinzen-Dick, "Property Rights for Poverty Reduction?," United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Papers, last modified December 2009, https://www.un.org/esa/desa/papers/2009/wp91_2009.pdf.

²⁰ Adam Crepelle, "Federal Policies Trap tribes in Poverty," *Human Rights Magazines* 48, no. 2, (January 06, 2023), https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/wealth-disparities-in-civil-rights/federal-policies-trap-tribes-in-poverty/.

²¹ Crepelle, "Federal Policies."

hands, and to this day, native folks who want to own or work their land on various reservations must be approved on a case by case basis by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.²² This racist and geriatric method of ownership perpetuates genocide through limits to economic viability and poorer educational outcomes.

This forcible taking of land to enforce poverty by the government is also seen in the illegal settlement of Palestinian land by Israeli settlers. Land is often claimed for military purposes, but then used for civilian construction, in addition, statements made by officials of Israel demonstrating, “that Palestinian construction is seen as an impediment to settlements, requiring action such as confiscation, demolitions and displacement.”²³ Israeli government policies in regard to settlement have had the effect of cutting off resources, causing economic damage, and limiting social and cultural rights of Palestinians.²⁴ Ever since the official establishment of borders in the territory, Israel has been illegally eating up land that according to the Palestine plan of partition with economic union – General Assembly resolution 181,²⁵ is rightfully Palestinian, limiting growth and economic opportunities and furthering cyclical poverty.²⁶ Essentially, these governmental actions perpetuate poverty as a way of subtly continuing genocide. In both of these cases physical actions that can be considered covertly genocidal are used to limit the economic abilities of the target group members and ensure a lack of education through the enforcement of poverty thereby stunting mobility both physically and socially moving forward.

²² Raksha Koppam, “Data infrastructure and tribal sovereignty can help break down barriers for Native Americans to build wealth,” Washington Center for Equitable Growth, last modified March 2, 2023, <https://equitablegrowth.org/data-infrastructure-and-tribal-sovereignty-can-help-break-down-barriers-for-native-americans-to-build-wealth/>.

²³ “Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory illegal: UN rights commission,” United Nations News, Human Rights, last modified 20 October, 2022, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/10/1129722>.

²⁴ “Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory.”

²⁵ “Resolution 181 (II). Future government of Palestine,” Palestine plan of partition with economic union - General Assembly resolution 181, United Nations: The Question of Palestine, accessed January 31, 2024, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-185393/>.

²⁶ “Part IV: 1984-1988,” The Origins and Evolution of the Palestine Problem: 1971-1988, United Nations: The Question of Palestine, <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-210229/>.

Another aspect of continual genocide is the generational lack of access to vital resources such as food, medicine and shelter, as well as violence that results in deaths. Children who experience chronic food insecurity are more likely to miss out on education, carry more harmful stress, and be affected by infectious diseases.²⁷ Lack of proper healthcare combined with educational deficits leads to a decrease in longevity and poor social emotional outcomes,²⁸ both of which help to perpetuate genocide. When agent groups perpetuate physical violence against children in any of its forms, they are creating legacies of pain, poverty and lack of education that affect people moving forward and across generations. This can be seen in the death tolls of Palestinian and indigenous children and the continuing lack of resources to support them. As of January 25th, more than 10,000 children have died in the Gaza Strip since the beginning of the current Israeli governmental aggression on October 7th through direct violence or otherwise,²⁹ and the continued blockade of food, water and medical aid are only projected to expand this number.³⁰

As for indigenous peoples in the U.S., we are going to look at deaths that occurred specifically in schools run by the federal government as part of the policy of assimilation for indigenous children.³¹ As a result of abuse, lack of resources and trauma, one estimate puts the death toll of all federally run boarding schools at about 40,000 children.³² This number

²⁷ D. Tamiru and T. Belachew. The association of food insecurity and school absenteeism: systematic review. *Agriculture & Food Security* 6, no. 5 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40066-016-0083-3>.

²⁸ “Social Determinants of Health Literature Summaries: Early Childhood Development and Education,” Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Department of Health and Human Services, accessed January 31, 2023, <https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/early-childhood-development-and-education>.

²⁹ “Know their Names: Palestinian children killed in Israeli attacks on Gaza,” *Al Jazeera*, 2024, <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2024/israel-war-on-gaza-10000-children-killed/>.

³⁰ Jo Becker, “Israel/Gaza Hostilities Take Horrific Toll on Children: UN Chief Should Add Israel and Palestinian Armed Groups to ‘List of Shame,’” *Human Rights Watch*, published November 22, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/22/israel/gaza-hostilities-take-horrific-toll-children>.

³¹ This is because this paper specifically focuses on education and the fact that there is a lack of data on indigenous deaths as the federal government didn’t care or want people to know.

³² Brad Brooks, “Native Americans decry unmarked graves, untold history of boarding schools,” *Reuters*, June 22, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/native-americans-decry-unmarked-graves-untold-history-boarding-schools-2021-06-22/>.

does not include schools run by churches, or any of the other ways indigenous children were abused by the U.S. federal government and other agent groups, so there is a high probability that we will never know how many children actually died.³³ In both of these examples, due to strategic land acquisition and monetary resources, the agent group's government not only has a superior military force, but also had and continues to have specific control over resources such as food, medicine and other vital materials allowing them the power of life and death over the target group to an even greater degree. The physical destruction of a people through the death of the children of target groups by violence and/or lack of resources is another way genocide is continually perpetuated by agent groups.

Finally, genocide breeds trauma, which can be passed down from one generation to the next. This concept goes beyond parenting styles and family lore, intergenerational trauma can change DNA, and even the functioning of the brain in future generations.³⁴ Trauma from boarding schools and the treatment of indigenous people in the U.S. is not new and is passed down, leading to “a deep hurt, a deep pain” from the loss of community and intergenerational relationships.³⁵ The descendants of boarding school residents as far down as grandchildren have reported more mental health issues, higher suicide rates, more struggles in school and higher rates of Hep. C as a result of drug use, then descendants of those who did not attend boarding schools.³⁶ Trauma is lingering and layered, meaning that people can be re-traumatized by events similar to the experiences that caused the trauma to begin with. This means that investigations into boarding school deaths and other related topics can lead to old

³³ I always think about the time I spent with the Makah tribe, and how their language revitalization programs were run by women as the men were still too traumatized from the abuse that occurred when they spoke their native language in the boarding schools they were sent to.

³⁴ Tori DeAngelis, “War’s enduring legacy: How does trauma haunt future generations?,” *American Psychological Association*, last modified December 5, 2023, <https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma/trauma-survivors-generations>.

³⁵ DeAngelis, “War’s enduring legacy.”

³⁶ Bombay A, Matheson K, Anisman H., “The intergenerational effects of Indian Residential Schools: Implications for the concept of historical trauma,” *Transcultural Psychiatry* 51, no. 3, last modified September 24, 2013, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1363461513503380>.

or new trauma responses. It goes without saying that living in an active war zone is enough to create a new layer of trauma on top of what already exists due to years of repeated conflicts.

Trauma in Palestine has been passed down, not only changing the DNA of people who live/lived there, but also creating a collective trauma that, “has been a potent force shaping social and political dynamics, adding another layer of complexity to this deep-rooted issue.”³⁷

Continual genocide traumatizes one generation after another, children are particularly susceptible. Trauma earlier in life can lead to behavioral and attachment issues, social emotional struggles, worse immune systems and therefore higher susceptibility to disease, malformations in brain functions, cyclical poverty and a harder time learning and problem solving.³⁸ At its base, young minds are/were being hurt in a way that is/will perpetuate genocide moving forward and lower the collective quality of life.

The horrifying reality is that genocide is currently and historically a fact that touches millions of lives around the world. It is important to note here that not all genocides that occur or continue to occur are considered “official.” As of right now, there are only three genocides officially recognized as such by the United Nations, but that doesn’t mean other instances of violence are not genocide.³⁹ For instance, the two genocides that are being discussed in this paper are not internationally recognized as such, which can allow for greater political manipulation of history through mass media and public education. Though this could change for Palestine depending on the current case in the International Court of Justice, in

³⁷ “Transgenerational Trauma in Palestine: A Cycle of Suffering and Survival,” Palestine Children’s Relief Fund, accessed January 31, 2024, <https://www.pcrf.net/information-you-should-know/transgenerational-trauma-in-palestine.html#>.

³⁸ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, “Tips for Survivors of a Disaster or Other Traumatic Event: Coping with Retraumatization,” Accessed January 31, 2024, <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/sma17-5047.pdf>.

³⁹ “When to Refer to a Situation as ‘Genocide,’” United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, accessed January 31, 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/publications-and-resources/GuidanceNote-When%20to%20refer%20to%20a%20situation%20as%20genocide.pdf>.

which South Africa has charged that Israeli governmental actions against Palestinians should be considered Genocide.⁴⁰ While not completely necessary, international recognition makes propagandizing in schools significantly harder, because genocide does not just ‘happen’ it is built. Hate is taught, bolstered and canonized for many reasons, but most nefariously it is fed to children as fact through public education. Again, genocide does not just ‘happen,’ there are perpetrators and will continue to be perpetrators until hate is not state funded and actively acknowledged.

One way that genocidal ideals can be perpetuated (even subconsciously) is through state mandated curricula. this means that there are some topics that MUST be taught, sometimes even including how and with which resources. This also means that no matter where you go within a state, students will be learning the same flawed ideas because they are a requirement to receive government funding. To start, how does the U.S. public education system present information on indigenous peoples in schools? The sad answer is, it really depends on the state one lives in, but the even sadder answer is that overall, it's not looking good. Two specific facts highlight this dismal state of affairs: “Eighty seven (87) percent of state history standards do not mention Native American history after 1900; and Twenty seven (27) states make no mention of a single Native American in their K-12 curriculum.”⁴¹ It is important at this point to understand why these statistics are so unfortunate, beyond the total lack of representation. History and civics are often left to the wayside in public education as school funding is based on test scores in reading and math where more resources are

⁴⁰ Mike Corder, “Read the full application brining genocide charges against Israel at UN top court,” *PBS News Hour*, last modified January 3, 2024, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/read-the-full-application-bringing-genocide-charges-against-israel-at-un-top-court#:~:text=South%20Africa's%2084%2Dpage%20filing,series%20of%20legally%20binding%20rulings>.

⁴¹ National Congress of American Indians, *Becoming Visible: A Landscape Analysis of State Efforts to Provide Native American Education for All*, September 2019, 8, https://archive.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/prc-publications/NCAI-Becoming_Visible_Report-Digital_FINAL_10_2019.pdf.

devoted.⁴² Our current education system also allows for politics to have an undue influence over what is taught in schools, in terms of standards and requirements. This means that politicians who may be ignorant of their own nation's unvarnished history are deciding what is 'appropriate' for kids to know and why.⁴³ Add on the lack of oversight, and what is left is a mess of propaganda, whitewashing and strategic forgetfulness, essentially a breeding ground for misunderstanding, stereotyping and the perpetuation of violence against minority groups. The historical understanding of indigenous people as seen through the lens of public schools shows the continuation of their genocide in perpetuity. In viewing the state standards and textbooks from around the U.S. scholars found that indigenous people's representation was rife with stereotypes, mythologized portrayals and misinformation.⁴⁴ Another aspect of teaching indigenous history as related to genocide is the depictions of indigenous people past 1900. It was found that 86.66% of state standards are devoted to talking about indigenous people before 1900.⁴⁵ This essentially promotes the idea that indigenous history did not exist past 1900, perpetuating ideas of genocide and allowing Americans to not reflect critically on their treatment of a portion of the population as they 'do not exist anymore.' This form of education is teaching to forget.

Israeli standards on Palestine follow a different but similarly damaging route that focuses on the valorization of Israeli and the othering of Palestinian people through state mandated textbooks. Up until the mid-2010s, many of the most common Israeli textbooks didn't mention the Nakba or the Palestinian perspective of the founding of the state of Israel,

⁴² Patrick Kelly, "Nation's Report Card shows kids don't know US history. As a teacher, I'm not surprised.," *USA Today*, last modified May 3, 2023, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/opinion/2023/05/03/naep-results-decline-us-history-civics-concerning/70175722007/>.

⁴³ Kelly "Nation's Report Card."

⁴⁴ Sarah B. Shear, et al., "Manifesting Destiny: Re/presentation of Indigenous Peoples in K-12 U.S. History Standards," *Theory & Research in Social Education* 43, no. 1 (19 February, 2015): 73, https://www.teachingforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/SHEAR_ManifestingDestiny.pdf.

⁴⁵ Shear et al., "Manifesting Destiny," 81-82.

choosing instead to focus on the event as the War for Independence or Liberation.⁴⁶ I found this fact largely unsurprising, because of the political element of education. The state approves textbooks and curricula, meaning that they are looking for what portrays their actions in the best light as frequently as possible. This means that historians/textbook Authors have to tread very carefully in order to successfully have their work utilized.⁴⁷ There is also the fact that this is not a one-sided issue, and more recently Palestinian historians have been making textbooks and curricula of their own, which of course will have its own bias. This makes it important to acknowledge why I am choosing to specifically look at Israeli textbooks and not Palestinian ones as well. Simply put, Israel is the agent group in this situation, they control access to goods, their military is far larger, and realistically it is Israeli children who will grow up to have the most sway over their Palestinian counterparts. Understanding this means that what Israeli children learn will have more power over life and death in this continued genocide.⁴⁸ Something that happens commonly in textbooks from the 2010s and into today, is the dehumanization of Palestinians through two specific methods: the use of labels, and generalization. Textbooks rarely use the label Palestinian, “In Israeli social, political and educational discourse Palestinian citizens are called the demeaning label of ‘Israel’s Arabs.’”⁴⁹ Other times they are just denoted as ‘arabs,’ and their important places are denoted in similar ways, when Israeli populations, towns and locations in the same textbook are given specific names.⁵⁰ This impersonalization allows for the mental othering of the population and denotes them as less important.⁵¹ Generalization allows for the ability to

⁴⁶ The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education, “Arabs and Palestinians in Israeli Textbooks 2022-23,” *IMPACT-se*, September 2022, 2, <https://www.impact-se.org/wp-content/uploads/Arabs-and-Palestinians-in-Israeli-Textbooks-2022%E2%80%9323-Special-Report.pdf>.

⁴⁷ “Arab and Palestinians.”

⁴⁸ There is also the fact that a lot of Palestinian textbooks are only in Arabic and on paper and therefore not easily copy-and-paste-able into Google Translate.

⁴⁹ Nurit Peled-Elhanan, *Palestine in Israeli School Books: Ideology and Propaganda in Education* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2012), 51.

⁵⁰ Peled-Elhanan, *Palestine in Israeli School Books*, 56.

⁵¹ Peled-Elhanan, *Palestine in Israeli School Books*, 66.

not acknowledge the harm done to Palestinians because they are not seen as people, but as groups which can be viewed with less empathy. In terms of deaths, multiple textbooks give specific numbers for Israeli people who are killed or hurt, but Palestinian deaths are described in terms of estimated quantities.⁵² Thus, allowing for aggregation which, “eliminates the possibility to see these ‘corpses’ as individual human beings, and their elimination as a human tragedy.”⁵³ The dogma of textbooks is not just theoretical, as a survey from 2010 found that, “50 per cent of Israeli-Jewish high school students believe Palestinian citizens should not be granted equal civil rights and 56 per cent believe they should not be allowed to be elected to the Knesset.”⁵⁴ This data is terrifying and shows how much of an impact education has in shaping people’s perception within the context of continual violence.⁵⁵ With the continual march towards further and further right policies within America and Israel, accurate and balanced historical education is absolutely necessary, and seemingly less and less likely.

Education can be a powerful tool that can be used for better or worse. As stated earlier, the aftermath genocide can be a time for growth, because we can learn and do better. By learning from the decisions that led us to the point of genocide, internalizing those lessons, and identifying how we can avoid doing them again. Education, if done correctly, is a liberatory action that provides political power and incentive to change. That does not mean it is easy. Along with the issues in education already addressed, there is a lack of funding, a fear of progress, political involvement, violence, understaffing and so much more. Teachers struggle with a hard job where employers frequently ask for almost impossible things, but

⁵² Peled-Elhanan, *Palestine in Israeli School Books*, 67.

⁵³ Peled-Elhanan, *Palestine in Israeli School Books*, 67.

⁵⁴ Peled-Elhanan, *Palestine in Israeli School Books*, 58.

⁵⁵ I will acknowledge that this source was published in 2012, but the other sources I found were either clearly state media, older, or written by sources that did not offer direct translations of the textbooks.

they are vital. If we are to change, we need to recognize some truths, put beautifully by bell hooks in *Teaching to Transgress*:

“Students are eager to break through barriers to knowing. They are willing to surrender to the wonder of re-learning and learning ways of knowing that go against the grain. When we, as educators, allow our pedagogy to be radically changed by our recognition of a multicultural world, we can give students the education they desire and deserve. We can teach in ways that transform consciousness, creating a climate of free expression that is the essence of a truly liberatory liberal arts education.”

This idea of education as liberatory action can only be achieved if people are willing to make changes; hard changes like restructuring how we experience education, addressing inequities within our school systems, teaching in a way that may be uncomfortable but that is factual, and putting more value on educators facing fantastic odds. While that is a lot to ask for, it is not impossible, and we owe it to ourselves to try. We owe it to those who have died in genocides historically, those still experiencing them today and for our future, so that our children can live in a world without. Through education we can do more than remember, we can learn.

“The function of memory is not only to register past events, but to stimulate human conscious” - Raphael Lemkin

Pacific Lutheran University. "RAPHAEL LEMKIN: A Brief Biographical Sketch." Accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.plu.edu/holocaustconference/wp-content/uploads/sites/717/2023/12/lemkin-bio2.pdf>.

Nieto et al. *Beyond Inclusion, Beyond Empowerment: A Developmental Strategy to Liberate Everyone*. (Olympia: Cuetzpalin Publishing, 2014). 1.

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