



20th February 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you regarding the following book: Understanding History: Key Stage 3: Britain in the wider world, Roman times – Present by Michael Riley, Alex Ford, Kath Goudie, Richard Kennett, Helen Snelson, published by Hodder Education/Hachette UK (ISBN 1510454683, 9781510454682).

This book was brought to our attention recently through Facebook, where it was highlighted how one question in the book suggests that the creation of Israel is responsible for the terror attacks of 9/11.

Furthermore, a quick glance at the preceding paragraph states how Israel won what is commonly referred to as its War of Independence and “took even more land”. Whilst it is of course correct that Israel won the war launched against it by the neighbouring Arab states, it is absolutely incorrect that Israel “took even more land”. Israel only acquired the territories of the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights in 1967 when once again, neighbouring Arab states tried to destroy Israel. At best, this can be excused as shoddily researched by the authors and at worst, intentionally propagating a politically driven bias.

We therefore have a number of concerns which I list as follows:

1) With reference to the first paragraph of this letter, the question of Israel’s creation somehow being linked to the terrorist atrocities of 9/11 is entirely baseless, inappropriate and unacceptable, even more so when found in a textbook used for the education of children. Giving the book’s authors the benefit of the doubt, we would like to bring to your attention that anti-Israel activists, who rally for the destruction of Israel through the demonisation of Israel and Jews, regularly peddle the conspiracy theory that Israel was behind the 9/11 terror attacks which in turn has encouraged, and continues to encourage Antisemitism.

2) With reference to both the first and second paragraphs of this letter, we are very concerned that the content is liable to result in a lack of balance and the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of this book’s content.

As well as being extremely damaging, given the sensitivity of the subject and the risk of encouraging Antisemitism, we feel this breaches sections 406 and 407 of the Education Act 1996.

We therefore ask Hodder Education to withdraw this book from sale, and have it reviewed and revised by a person whose impartiality is widely recognised on all sides. A warning that the book has been withdrawn should also be issued to any schools that have purchased it.

We look forward to your response.

Yours faithfully

Joshua Forman

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