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Newsletter June 2000 – Knesset Education Committee

CMIP's newest report at the Israeli Knesset

The Knesset 's Education Committee, after hearing CMIP's newest report, adopted a unanimous resolution condemning the hatred found in Arab schoolbooks.

CMIP newest report "Anti-Semitism in Jordanian, Palestinian Authority and Syrian Schoolbooks: a Comparative Study" was presented by CMIP Director of research, Itamar Marcus at the Education Committee of the Knesset, during a special session devoted to "Anti-Semitism and the Negation of the Holocaust in the Arab World", on May 22, 2000.

The purpose of the comparative study was to ascertain to what degree the peace treaty with Jordan and the peace process with the Palestinians have influenced education. CMIP findings exhibited that the same messages of hatred, including the directive to seek Israel's destruction, appear in the three educational systems, irrespective of signed agreements.

The CMIP study prompted demands for the changing of Arab schoolbooks from all the MKs who took part in this session; a demand, which bridged political affiliation and party lines.

The chairman of the Education Committee, Zevulun Orlev (National Religious Party), said:

"In the Arab textbooks, we see racism and denial. In this situation it is impossible to establish a peace process built on trust and mutual recognition...I protest, that not even one Arab MK did attend this session , and that in spite of contacts with both the Palestinian Authority and Jordan's ambassador, inviting them to respond, they did not come to the meeting"

MK Avshalom Vilan (Meretz):

"It is impossible to build a long-term peace if such material appears in Arab schoolbooks. I expect to solve this with dialogue and comprehension, through the understanding their motives.

**360 Madison Avenue, 6th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10017 U.S.A. (212) 699-8823
4 Rav Ashe Street, Jerusalem 93309, Israel Tel: 972-2-6481660 Fax: 972-2-6482823**

e-mail: info@edume.org

<http://www.edume.org>

MK Limor Livnat (Likud):

"It is no wonder the call to disturbances, riots and violence found attentive ears among the Palestinian youth this week, since they grow up in an atmosphere of anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism".

MK Colette Avital (Israel Eh'at) called:

"to convey CMIP's reports to all the governmental and non-governmental agencies and organizations involved in the promotion of the peace process".

MK Ruby Rivlin (Likud):

"There will be no peace among the peoples as long as they continue to teach incitement and hatred of a people against the other. Peace between peoples will only be achieved through education".

Education Committee Unanimously Adopts Resolution

The Education Committee of the Knesset unanimously adopted the following resolution:

1. The Committee on Education and Culture heard the report of the "Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace" depicting the anti-Semitism and racism in the schoolbooks of the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Jordan".

The Committee unanimously condemns the very serious revelations on anti-Semitism , Holocaust denial, incitement and hatred against Jews and Zionism that were uncovered in the schoolbooks."

2. The Committee concludes that it is impossible to build true peace while anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial continue to be part of the education for the next generation. Therefore, it is the decision of the Committee to request that the Prime Minister turn to the leaders of the Palestinian Authority and the government of Jordan and demand an immediate revision of the schoolbooks. Likewise, the Committee recommends turning to UNESCO and to the countries supporting the peace process, to demand they take similar measures.
3. The Committee demands the Prime Minister give instructions to renew the activity of the trilateral committee against incitement in order to initiate a discussion on the issue of incitement in textbooks and to demand from the Palestinian Authority a fundamental change in the schoolbooks."

During the Knesset debate later that day, continuing the topic "Anti-Semitism and the Negation of the Holocaust in the Arab World", Rabbi Michael Melchior, Minister for Diaspora and Social Affairs, spoke on behalf of the Israeli government: "It is impossible to reach peace based on distortion, on lies, on incitement, simply the wildest incitement... I therefore say in the name of the Israeli government, to parents and teachers in the PA and Arab states, the next generation, ours and yours, deserves peace. Let us free them from the shackles of hatred, let us tell them the truth... "