



CENTER FOR MONITORING

THE IMPACT OF PEACE (R.A.)

<http://www.edume.org>

**CMIP's responses to Professor Nathan Brown's paper
presented at the Adam Institute**

The Anti-Peace Orientation of PA Textbooks

CMIP's response to Professor Nathan Brown's Paper to the Adam Institute,
November 2001

January 2002

Professor Brown's paper "Democracy, History and the Contest over the Palestinian Curriculum" delivered to the Adam Institute Conference "Attitudes toward the Past in Conflict Resolution" in November 2001, was reviewed in Ha'aretz daily newspaper under the title "The Textbooks' Bluff" in the Hebrew edition (29-11-2001 by Akiva Eldar) and in its English edition as "US Researcher: Criticism of Palestinian school curriculum as anti-Semitic is too harsh" (30-11-2001 by Tamar Hausman). Although CMIP's response was requested by Ha'aretz, it was not published on the grounds that it was too lengthy. After having obtained the full version of Professor Brown's paper¹, CMIP has decided that a comprehensive and point by point response is necessary to address the issues raised by Professor Brown and his contentions regarding CMIP's reports.

Professor Brown acknowledges the accuracy of the quotations in CMIP's 1998 and 2000 reports, and also confirms that the new PNA textbooks are not peace-oriented. However, he does not accept CMIP's methodology or interpretation of the books.

CMIP's response will, in the first instance, address the points raised in the previous paragraph including Professor Brown's criticism of CMIP's methodology, before finally highlighting a number of errors and inaccuracies contained in his paper.

**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>

¹ The article appears on website <http://www.diak.org/Democracy%20in%20the%20Palestinian%20Curriculum.pdf>

Do inaccuracies and fabrications exist?

Professor Brown's first allegation is that "while often highly misleading and always unreliable, most of the contents of the Center's (CMIP) reports are not fabricated. Clearly false statements are rare though when they occur they are far from minor." (Brown p. 3). The only two examples Professor Brown provides as illustration of false statements are:

The comment in CMIP's first report on Palestinian textbooks that "the PA Television is a division of the PA Ministry of Education", "allowed the report to saddle the Palestinian educational establishment with any broadcast on Palestinian Television." (Brown, p. 3). The exact and complete quote of the statement is: "Sporadic viewing of PA TV during the months March-August 1998 revealed that many of the educational messages that appear in the school books are broadcast regularly on PA TV." In no way can this sentence be described as "saddling the Palestinian educational establishment with any broadcast on Palestinian Television". Information about the incorporation of television into the PA Ministry of Education was given to CMIP by **PNA officials**, and was accepted by us at face value.

The second example refers to CMIP's claim that "the PA rejected international calls" to modify the Egyptian and Jordanian books still in use for the other grades. Professor Brown argues that this statement was fabricated as it was a well-known fact that "the plan to replace the textbooks in question was as old as the PNA and was proceeding according to a well- published schedule when the Center's report was issued." (Brown, pp. 3-4).

Although Professor Brown alluded to the use of Egyptian and Jordanian textbooks by the PNA during the period that Israel was responsible for education in areas now under PNA rule, he neglected to mention that these were reprinted after the material offensive to Jews and Israel had been removed. The PNA chose to adopt the older, un-censored, versions containing the offensive material – and it was this fact that CMIP was highlighting in its 1998 report, while querying the PNA decision, and not, as suggested by Professor Brown, holding the PNA responsible for the content of books not produced by themselves. Incidentally, these original versions are still in use today for those grades for which new Palestinian textbooks have not yet been introduced.

Where, then, does CMIP's claim that the PNA rejected "international calls" to modify books for the other grades come from? It refers to an official US proposal raised before the Trilateral Committee Against Incitement set up by the Wye Agreements. Under the proposal the US government was ready to provide funds for the immediate reprinting of all the old schoolbooks in use in the PNA, with their anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli rhetoric, including overt calls for Israel's destruction removed. The proposal was rejected by the PNA.

Given that the PNA are publishing their own school textbooks at the approximate rate of two grades a year, it would seem that these Egyptian and Jordanian books will be in use in PNA schools for some considerable time. Professor Brown does not refer to any of these points, and is presumably not aware of them.

Are PA textbooks nurturing the conflict?

According to Professor Brown, "the largest problem with the Center's work, is not with the reports themselves, but in how they have been read." (Brown p. 6).

Professor Brown denounces not only CMIP's incorrect interpretation, but also the conclusions reached by the apparent misreading of CMIP's reports by notables such as Charles Krauthammer, Berl Wein (Jerusalem Post), Senator Hilary Clinton, Senator Charles Schumer and Congressman Steve Israel who have not had the benefit of his more learned and sophisticated reading.

Professor Brown stresses from the outset that the issue of incitement, of hatred of Israel and Jews", is only "tangential" to his paper which focuses rather on "internal Palestinian politics and portrays textbooks as outcomes of domestic struggle more than producers of international conflict". (Brown p. 2). For him the "PA curriculum is not a war curriculum", although "it cannot be described as a peace curriculum", since this subject is systematically avoided and "while "highly nationalist, it does not incite hatred, violence and anti-Semitism". (Brown p.1) In other words, he attempts to explain why the PNA curriculum is evading sensitive issues related to Israel and the Jews and to justify the fact that it does not address reconciliation and peace.

This is precisely where CMIP differs totally from Professor Brown:

1) CMIP's stated purpose is to examine whether stereotypes and prejudice, or motifs of recognition, mutual respect, tolerance, reconciliation and peace do or do not appear in curricula and textbooks.

2) CMIP considers that textbooks can nurture and inflame international conflict, and that this is precisely the case with the Palestinian curricula and textbooks. Professor Brown claims the PNA is evading critical and sensitive issues, such as maps and borders, recognition of Israel's right to exist, reconciliation and peace with Israel, not out of malice, but as a kind of embarrassed silence, resulting from lack of agreement among the Palestinians themselves on these issues. If this is so, then he offers no plausible explanation for the fact that Israel is presented as the cause for all the Palestinian problems, or why the textbooks call for the liberation of all Palestine by Jihad and martyrdom, and further glorifies Jihad and martyrdom, or why the Jews are not included in the teaching of tolerance, why holy places are presented as exclusively Muslim and Christian, and that there are obvious inaccuracies in presenting historical fact.

3) CMIP also considers that it is not proper to evaluate the PNA curriculum from the Palestinian domestic point of view – arguably a legitimate academic exercise – but that it should be addressed from the international point of view, because of the crucial implications for the fate of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. The international community, notably, "the Donors Forum", has invested substantial funding to enable the PNA to adhere to and implement the Oslo agreements. This support was not intended to develop a "highly nationalist curriculum" that "cannot be described as a peace curriculum". The international community cannot content itself with explanations regarding the non-peace orientation of the PNA textbooks, but rather it is entitled to demand from the PNA that its new curriculum and textbooks serve the cause of peace, defend and promote recognition, reconciliation and peace, and not the contrary. A different position would be totally absurd.

Same criteria, different results

A further contention was that CMIP did not apply the same research methodology to the Israeli textbooks as it did to the Palestinian. In his words "The report on Israeli books followed a very different method: rather than quoting example after example of offending passages with little historical context or explanation (a method that would have produced a very damning report indeed), the report on Israeli textbooks is nuanced and far more careful. Incendiary quotations are explained, analyzed and conceptualized in the report on Israeli textbooks; they are listed with only brief and sensationalist explanations in the report on Palestinian textbooks. In short, the Center is fair, balanced and understanding for Israeli textbooks but tendentious on Palestinian books". (Brown p. 3).

This claim is not true. Exactly the same method was applied to the PNA and Israeli textbooks, in spite of the fact that the respective reviews were carried out by different researchers and covered completely different sets of books (360 Israeli textbooks, and 60 PNA textbooks). All research undertaken by CMIP, including that relating to Israeli textbooks as well as PNA textbooks, is carried out according to fixed guidelines and criteria, taking into account the variety of the subject matter and quantity of textbooks available for each country. These guidelines include UNESCO criteria on the one hand, which stress the need for uniform, accurate, honest and balanced presentation, and CMIP criteria on the other, which examine whether stereotypes and prejudice, or reconciliation, tolerance and peace, are or are not present. The researchers are asked to pinpoint and present all the relevant passages, without comments and with only strict minimal background when needed for non-specialist readers.

CMIP did indeed find a few really offensive passages in Israeli textbooks, all of them in textbooks used in the orthodox stream, i.e. not included in the list recommended by Israel's Ministry of Education. As with the Palestinian quotes, none of the quotations from Israeli textbooks were "explained, analyzed and conceptualized." (Brown p. 3).

In the case of the Israeli textbooks, several pro-peace passages were found: accepting the other, the Palestinians, viewing the Palestinians both as human beings and as a people, presenting their point of view on the conflict in their own words, addressing ways to identify stereotypes and to dispel the prejudices, displaying empathy for the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees, accepting partial Israeli responsibility for this tragedy, referring to peace and the peace process, to the meaning of the Oslo agreements, to Palestinian Autonomy, to its borders ...

Unfortunately, no such similar pro-peace or peace inclined passages are to be found in the PNA textbooks. Professor Brown explains the absence of reference to recognition of the other, reconciliation and peace in PNA textbooks as the PNA's search for national identity. CMIP contends that the search for national identity within the textbooks does not contradict educating towards peace. One does not exclude the other.

Professor Brown further alleges that: "the Center's work on Israeli textbooks showed a far more generous spirit and proceed at a far more leisurely pace, taking years rather than months." (Brown p. 3). Obviously it takes far less time to review 14 PNA textbooks for grade one and grade six than to review 360 Israeli textbooks for twelve grades. There were 25 times more Israeli textbooks than PNA books, so it should have taken 25 times as long to review the Israeli

books. Given that it actually took considerably less time, we are not sure on what basis Professor Brown makes this allegation.

False and unwarranted affirmations

²Brown claims that "Critics charge that the Center's real purpose is to launch attacks on the Palestinian National Authority, **and it would be difficult to contest such a conclusion**. They point to the identity of the Center's first director, Itamar Marcus to support their suspicions" (Brown p. 3, emphasis added).

CMIP has not only reviewed PNA textbooks, but also Israeli and Syrian textbooks and has applied the same criteria and methodology in these endeavors. An ad hominem argument based on the identity of a researcher employed by an NGO is flimsy, irrelevant and dishonest as a means to infer its "real goal". CMIP's sole purpose is the elimination of incitement and anti-peace teaching in the curricula and textbooks of conflicting parties.

³Brown affirms that "the Center generally **ignores any historical context** in a way that renders some of its claims sharply misleading. In its 1998 report, the Center adduced numerous incendiary statements about Israel and the Jews from books in use in the Palestinian schools. The statements quoted were accurate. Some indeed were highly offensive to the Jews and sharply anti-Israeli. Yet they came not from books authored by Palestinians but from Egyptian and Jordanian books used in Gaza and the West Bank, respectively. The books were distributed by the PNA, to be sure, but they antedated its establishment. (The Center report does hold the PNA responsible for distributing the Egyptian and Jordanian books and therefore holds Palestinian responsible for the content. Here it **displays an odd double** standard: it does not note that Israel has distributed the exact same books in East Jerusalem, removing only the cover..." (Brown p. 4, emphases added).

Brown's reproach about CMIP's ignorance of historical context and its so-called display of "an odd double standard" is totally unfounded.

In its 1998 report CMIP mentioned explicitly that "there were two types [of textbooks reviewed]: original PA publications and texts based on books published in Jordan and Egypt". (Introduction, p2). In addition it was stressed that Israel "during the period when Israel was responsible for education in the areas now under the PA rule... republished Jordanian and Egyptian, books omitting offensive and anti-Semitic material" (ibid.).

Moreover, and in contradiction of Professor Brown's claim (Brown p.4), Israel did not distribute "the exact same books in East Jerusalem, removing only the cover", but their censored version. There is no "odd double standard" on the part of CMIP, but since this fact is well-known amongst researchers, it is puzzling that the information has eluded Professor Brown.

2 The article appears on website <http://www.diak.org/Democracy%20in%20the%20Palestinian%20Curriculum.pdf>

3 "Palestinian Authority School Textbooks", published in 1998 (Second Edition issued in March 2001), and "The New Palestinian Authority School Textbooks for Grades One and Six", published in November 2000.

Professor Brown mentions, between parentheses (ibid.), CMIP's view that it "holds the PNA responsible for the content" of the Jordanian and Egyptian textbooks that it is reprinting and using. But he does not mention the reasons for this view. The PNA had three possible options rather than to mechanically reprint the Jordanian and Egyptian textbooks.

a) It could have reprinted the versions censored by Israel, but was reluctant to do so since it was perceived as humiliating.

b) It could have adopted the recommendations implemented by a UN Committee between 1968 and 1995, according to which the Director General of UNESCO published a list of acceptable textbooks each year to be used in the territories administered by Israel. The PNA could have used this mechanism for the interim period of replacement of the various textbooks. Instead this device was abolished by UNESCO General Conference in October 1995 at the demand of the PLO and the Arab League.

c) The PNA could have accepted the US proposal to fund the reprinting of all the textbooks, free of their offensive expressions against Jews and Israel. But as already mentioned, the PNA rejected this option.

(3) Professor Brown claims that CMIP did not "compare the older, non-Palestinian books with the newer, Palestinian ones" (ibid.) and that CMIP's reports are written to obfuscate the distinction between the old and the new books." (ibid.).

However, Professor Brown himself mentions explicitly that CMIP compared these textbooks: "The Center's 2000 report actually admitted that changes had occurred in the Palestinian- authored books but then attempted to undermine its own admission", continuing: "A few changes were noted in the new PA books..." (Brown p. 6). So, after accusing CMIP of "failing to live up to its name" in not comparing the older to the newer textbooks, Professor Brown acknowledges that CMIP did in fact compare them.

CMIP's interpretation regarding the meaning and significance of these changes is different from his interpretation. Indeed, CMIP does not view these change as an improvement. It does not regard reducing references to Jews to the minimum, while at the same time attributing to them traits of trickery, greed and barbarity and insinuating that they do not keep agreements and treaties as Muslim do, as an improvement. Nor does it consider a shift from an explicit to an implicit call for the destruction of Israel to be an improvement.

It is therefore misleading to label this as "undermining its own admission". Unfortunately the tendency to reject and delegitimize Israel that was prevalent in the PNA textbooks for grade 1 and grade 6, introduced in school year 2000-2001, was confirmed in the textbooks for grade 2 and grade 7 introduced by the PNA last September for school year 2001-2002. (See CMIP's last report "Jews, Israel and Peace in Palestinian School Textbooks 2000-2001 and 2001- 2002" published in November 2001).

Professor Brown often refers to "the 1994 books", and contends that "in one of [CMIP's] rare falsehoods, the Center claims that in the 1994 series, Israel does not exist", though according to him, "Israel is indeed referred to". (Brown p. 4). CMIP has never reviewed the "1994 series". CMIP reviewed PNA textbooks on "National Palestinian Education" that were published in 1995 and 1996. Footnotes 5 and 6 of Professor Brown's report refer the reader to CMIP's supposed mention

of the 1994 series, sources which, when we checked them, turned out to relate to other topics.

(4) According to Professor Brown: "Any evidence that contradicts the Center's harsh message is ignored, obscured or dismissed such as maps that clearly draw Palestinian governorates as covering only the West Bank and Gaza, an extended and laudatory treatment of Gandhi's nonviolence, or a tour of Palestinian cities that includes only those under PNA rule. Other evidence is interpreted inaccurately. For instance, a topographical map of Palestine (inserted most likely to avoid drawing any sensitive political issues regarding borders) is presented as a denial of Israel's existence. Many of the selections included are presented in a highly tendentious manner: a unit on tolerance is criticized for omitting Jews, while a reading of the entire unit makes perfectly clear that its scope is tolerance within Palestinian society." (Brown pp. 4-5)

Regarding maps, Professor Brown contends (Brown p. 9)) that "maps of the entire area of mandatory Palestine (including Israel) are sometimes historical or topographical in order to avoid drawing political boundaries", "Israel is thus not indicated (nor are Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt)". This is clearly not correct. See for instance "National Education" for Grade 2, part 1, on page 16, a map under the title "Lesson 4: Palestine is Arab and Muslim", where Palestine is named as well as all the countries around it, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, but not Israel. (p.42 of CMIP's 2001 Report). Again in "The Geography of Palestine" for Grade 7, on page 6 under the title "The position of Palestine in relation to the equator and the Greenwich Meridian", Palestine is named together with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, but not Israel. (p.58 of CMIP's 2001 Report). Furthermore, the map of the governorates on page 42 of "National Education, Sixth grade" leaves undefined a large green area, between the two areas where the "governorates" are marked. On page 11 of same textbook a table listing the inhabitants of Palestine mentions four areas: 1) the West Bank, 2) Gaza 3) Palestinians Inside 4) Palestinians in the Diaspora. In other words the undefined green area can be nothing but inside Palestine. There is not one map, topographical, historical, political or any other, that mentions Israel. By contrast, on most of these maps it is the name of Palestine alone that appears. Not only do maps not mention Israel, but the texts too studiously refrain from doing so, preferring instead such euphemisms as "the interior" (al-dakhel), "the green line" or "the lands of 1948" (see pp. 46-48 of the 2001 report), thus reinforcing the tendency apparent in the maps.

Professor Brown's contention that "a tour of Palestinian cities" includes "only those under PNA rule" (Brown p. 4) is patently incorrect, since it includes cities such as Jaffa and Acre, internationally recognized as being under Israeli sovereignty.

Regarding the Unit on Tolerance, Professor Brown's claim that the Jews are omitted because its scope is "tolerance within Palestinian society" is false. A thorough reading of the entire unit shows clearly that it also deals with tolerance from both the Muslim and historical point of view, and not only with "tolerance within the Palestinian society". This is but one of the reasons that led CMIP to translate almost the entire unit. (CMIP's 2001 Report, pp.61-63).

(5) Professor Brown claims that CMIP was misleading the reader in presenting "**Our Country Palestine**" firstly as a reference book, and secondly as part of the curriculum. Furthermore there was no banner proclaiming "**There is no alternative to destroying Israel**" to be found in the book, and that CMIP is mistaken when it claims that this **book is dedicated** to "those who are battling

for the expulsion of the enemy from our land", as the dedication is to "those who strove to maintain the Arabness of Palestine".

"Our Country Palestine" is indeed a reference book, which is part of the PNA curriculum. In a PNA sixth grade textbook "Our Beautiful Language" its eighth lesson is devoted to its author, Mustapha Murad Dabbagh. The lesson begins with the list of its goals. One of the goals is to ask the pupils to write a detailed account of the importance of their town or village, and not simply "[to look] up the name of their town or village in the book " as written by Professor Brown, (Brown p. 8). Afterwards, there is a short laudatory paragraph about Dabbagh's monumental work, presented as a systematic survey of Palestine from the geographical, historical, demographic, cultural, educative, botanical and zoological points of view. Later, two and a half pages are devoted to an excerpt from Dabbagh's introduction to the first volume of his book. All this would strongly suggest that "Our Country Palestine" is indeed intended to be used as a reference book for the sixth grade.

The banner "There is no alternative to the destruction of Israel" appears under the title "The Geographical Part" on page 13 of Volume 1 , Part 1, of the first edition published by Dar al-Taliah in Beirut in 1965. In the second edition of this volume published in 1973 by the "Printing house of the University Graduates of the Province of Hebron", again on page 13, the text of the banner was changed to an even harsher version, "There is no alternative to the complete destruction of Israel".⁴ These are copies in use in school and municipal libraries. CMIP has seen and consulted a copy of Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the first edition of this book that belonged to the library of one of the intermediate school in Hebron. There is indeed an edition published in 1991 by Dar al-Huda in Kafr Qara in Israel, under Israeli supervision, which omits this banner.

With regard to the dedication. In the aforementioned editions of Volume 1, in 1965 and 1973, both sentences appear, one under the other: "to those who are battling for the expulsion of the enemy from our land" "to those who strove to maintain the Arabness of Palestine".

Curiously, Professor Brown does not refer or contest the presence of other no less offensive sentences appearing in Dabbagh's book, notably the one in the introduction of Vol 2, Part 2⁵ that "Perhaps Allah brought the Jews to our land so that their demise would be here, as it was in their wars with Rome" on page 6 and page 7, both in the first edition in 1966 by Dar al-Taliah in Beirut and in the second edition in 1985 by the "Printing house of the University Graduates of the Province of Hebron".

In conclusion, CMIP identifies with Professor Brown's frustration and disappointment at, what he terms a "a retreat from this generosity" (Brown p. 15) in the present PNA stand regarding the content of its textbooks compared with the promising position advocated in the very first years of the PNA between 1994 and 1996.

4 These editions can be found both at the library of the Truman Institute of the Hebrew University, Mount Scopus or at the National Library, Givat Ram. CMIP has provided photocopies of all the relevant passages to Dr. James Zogby and to the "Gulf News", and these can be viewed on CMIP's website.

5 The article appears on website <http://www.diak.org/Democracy%20in%20the%20Palestinian%20Curriculum.pdf>

CMIP has also pointed to some promising and encouraging statements found in the "Comprehensive Plan for the Development of the First Palestinian Curriculum for General Education", with regard to peace and the peace process, namely that "the transition from a state of war and armed opposition to co-existence with the peoples of the region, especially with the Israeli people, requires the crystallization of such an educational philosophy" (p. 620).

CMIP cannot accept attempts such as Professor Brown's to legitimize and excuse such a reversal, since this would mean accepting the further undermining of reconciliation and peace between the two peoples and an acceptance of the sacrifice of the future of yet another young generation by diverting its energy to hatred, violence and war.

February 2002

CMIP notes with regret the lack of substance in Professor Brown's rejoinders to its "Anti-Peace Orientation of PA Textbooks". Professor Brown has chosen to ignore the main issue, namely the actual content of the present PA textbooks.

While Prof. Brown relies mainly on his paraphrasing of the material in the textbooks, CMIP brings the actual quotes to the attention of the public. Although the interpretations may differ, by his own admission, Prof. Brown cannot contest the accuracy of these quotes.

For the record, and notwithstanding Prof. Brown's assertion to the contrary, the founding Chairman of CMIP is Mr. Andr? Marcus, businessman and philanthropist, who founded CMIP in 1997.