

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – MAIN FINDINGS**

*Despite the deterioration in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians since September 2000, no negative changes were noted in the new textbooks with regard to the image of the Arabs, the description of the conflict, the presentation of Islam, questions of war and peace and education to tolerance and conciliation. On the contrary, the positive trends noted in the earlier report have, if anything, been strengthened.*

*There are some innovations, as in a textbook published by the Ministry of Education, which presents the pupils with information on an issue little known even to the majority of the Jews: those Arabs who are the “absent present”<sup>1</sup>. The textbook also deals with the Israel Lands Law, 5720-1960, and its implications for the Arabs of Israel.*

*A number of textbooks have aroused public controversy by certain groups, who have accused them of “post-Zionism” and “self-hatred”. These textbooks were reviewed in the previous report and with one exception<sup>2</sup>, are still included in the list approved by the Ministry of Education.*

### **A: State and State Religious Stream**

#### **▪ Education to reconciliation, tolerance and peace.**

*In no book is there any call for war or violence against the Arabs. Peace is presented not only as a Utopian aspiration, but also as a reachable political goal.*

*The majority of the textbooks place responsibility for the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli wars on the Arabs. Two textbooks contain a critique of Israeli policy regarding the Yom Kippur War and the battle on the Golan heights during the Six-Day War.*

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<sup>1</sup> Inhabitants of Arab villages who, out of security considerations, were during the War of Independence in 1948 evacuated to neighboring villages with the intention of remaining there until the end of the war, but were in fact never allowed to return to their original villages.

<sup>2</sup> “World of Change”, a history book for the ninth grade, dealing with the period between the end of the First World War and the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, published by the Ministry of Education and Ma’alot. This textbook was removed after a committee of academic experts severely criticized its quality.

*The new textbooks give information about the peace agreements between Israel and Arab countries and the Palestinians, in particular on the question of the borders between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.*

- ***Factual presentation of the Arab and Palestinian political position.***
- ***The Palestinians' struggle is presented as that of a national movement whilst not identifying with their aims.***

*The conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians continues to be presented as a clash between two national movements, thus legitimizing the existence of the Palestinian national movement. None of the new textbooks contains indoctrination against the Palestinians as a people.*

- ***Islam is presented in a positive light and its doctrines factually explained.***
- ***Information is provided about Muslim holy places and sites holy to both Muslims and Jews.***

*Places holy to the Jews and also held holy by the Muslims or Christians are mentioned. Traditions that have developed around Jewish holy sites or personalities that are shared by both Jews and the Muslims are depicted in one of the textbooks.*

- ***No instance of education to hatred of the Arabs or of any other people was found.***

*In the new editions of literature readers, stories depicting Arabs in a positive light continue to appear. The textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education still include literature readers that contain stories written by Palestinian and other Arab authors.*

- ***No illustrations or caricatures depicting Arabs in a negative light are to be found in the books.***
- ***New elements are introduced to heighten the pupils understanding of the Arab point of view concerning the conflict.***

*Textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education continue to present the Palestinian point of view both with regard to the unfolding of the conflict and responsibility for the refugee problem. Some textbooks blame the Arab leadership for bringing about the flight of the Arabs. A new dimension is the reference to towns of mixed Jewish and Arab population and the chain of events that led to the flight of the Arabs from these towns.*

- ***Civics textbooks present the pupil with details of the debate over the national character of the State of Israel: Israel as a Jewish state vis-à-vis Israel as a state for “all its citizens”.***
- ***The national and cultural identity of the Israeli Arabs is discussed in detail.***
- ***The main atlases provide information on Palestinian Authority areas.***

*The atlas most commonly used in the State and State Religious schools continues to include a map which shows the area of the West Bank with its division into Areas A, B and C. In the 2002 edition the map of the areas of the Autonomy is updated to include the latest changes. (see **Appendix I**)*

*In the other atlas the “Area of the Palestinian Autonomy” is colored gray within the map of Israel. On the physical maps in both atlases the political borders with Jordan and Egypt are marked, without any indication of the green line.*

- ***Use of multidisciplinary textbooks***

*There is a growing tendency to use multi-disciplinary textbooks that integrate history, geography, environmental studies, archeology and Jewish thought in an effort to encompass multi-faceted and complex issues.*

## **B: Ultra-Orthodox Stream**

- ***There is a marked difference between the textbooks of the State and State Religious schools and those of the ultra-Orthodox stream, whose approach to sensitive issues continues to highlight trends contrary to those listed above.***

*The differences detailed in the previous report still exist.*

*Language is used that conveys an air of superiority and negative expressions appear.*

*The map of Israel always includes all of the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the River Jordan. Many of the textbooks show maps of the Middle East on which only Israel's name appears, the territories of the surrounding Arab countries being depicted without indication of their names.*