

## **Introduction**

In September 1993 the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed what came to be known as the Oslo Accords, which started a peace process between the two parties after long years of belligerency. Under the terms of the Oslo Accords Israel withdrew from most populated areas in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank in pre-1967 Jordanian political parlance) and the Gaza Strip, where Palestinian self-rule under the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established. It was an interim arrangement. The final settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was meant to take place later, and solve the more delicate issues of Palestinian statehood, boundaries, sovereignty over Jerusalem, the fate of the Israeli settlements in the aforementioned areas, and the Palestinian refugee problem.

The present violent confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis has dealt a severe blow to the Oslo Accords. Yet neither of the parties concerned has renounced its commitment to their essence: mutual recognition and a peaceful settlement of the conflict between the two peoples. The question that should be asked in this context is whether these two issues are present in the educational curriculum of both entities.

The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP) has previously conducted a survey of Israeli textbooks dealing with this issue (published in September 2000), as well as a survey of Palestinian textbooks. The Palestinian National Authority pointed out that hitherto, the textbooks in use had been published by the Jordanian and Egyptian Ministries of Education, and therefore the PNA had no responsibility for their content. They would take responsibility for the books they themselves publish. Indeed, the first series of 14 such textbooks appeared in 2000 (following 6 experimental books published in the 1990's), on which CMIP issued a preliminary report in November 2000.

The present survey covers all of the textbooks that have been published so far by the PNA for grades 1, 2, 6, 7 and 11. They consist of 58 books (including 3 experimental and 3 improved editions), as well as 2 teachers' guides, in various subjects, such as Language, Mathematics, Islamic Education, National Education, History, Geography, Civics etc. (For the full list of the books, see List of Sources below.) The other grades are still using the Jordanian and Egyptian textbooks.

The books were carefully scrutinized in the light of two sets of criteria:

### CMIP criteria of analysis

1. The image of the other peoples and communities (in this case the Palestinians and the Israelis). Does one side **recognize** the other? Are they **accepted**? Are they **respected**? Or are they **stereotyped** and **prejudiced**?
2. Peace and the peace process. Does education **foster peace**? Does it support the peace process? Is there room for improvement?

### UNESCO relevant criteria

1. Are the data given accurate and complete?
2. Are illustrations, maps and graphs up-to-date and accurate?
3. Are the achievements of others recognized?
4. Are equal standards applied?
5. Are political disputes presented objectively and honestly?
6. Is wording likely to create prejudice, misapprehension and conflict avoided?
7. Are ideals of freedom, dignity and fraternity being advocated?
8. Is the need for international cooperation, for the formation of common human ideals and the advancement of the cause of peace, as well as for the enforcement of the law, emphasized?