

## Introduction

The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP) issued a comprehensive report in November 2001 on the textbooks published by the Palestinian Authority in the years 2000-2001 for grades 1, 2, 6, 7 and 11<sup>1</sup>. Since then, more books have been added to the Palestinian curriculum, which necessitated a follow-up study. The present complementary report deals with 14 newly received books, in addition to 26 high school final examinations in various subjects from the years 2000 and 2002. Though constituting an integral part of the official curriculum and a clear indication to core issues emphasized by the educational establishment each year, these exams have never been studied by CMIP, nor included in CMIP reports. They add a new dimension to the report by revealing some of the current trends prevailing among Palestinian educators on the highest levels. In order to understand some of the questions better, textbooks of the higher grades - which were not published by the Palestinian Authority - have been consulted for the answers. Though not specifically targeted by the present survey, and their content is not commented upon, it is interesting to see what use the Palestinian educational system makes of textbooks originally published in Jordan and Egypt, and their choice of subject matter from these books for examinations.

The material in both the textbooks and the examinations has been scrutinized according to the same guidelines used in previous reports, namely, according to CMIP and UNESCO's criteria, as follows:

### The CMIP criteria

1. The image of other peoples and communities (in this case, the Palestinians and the Israelis). Does one side recognize the other? Are they accepted? 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?

### The 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?

<sup>1</sup> The PNA is still using textbooks from Jordan and Egypt grades (4,5,9,10,11 and 12). These textbooks were reviewed in CMIP's report: Palestinian Authority School Textbooks Second Edition, March 2001. New textbooks for grades 3 and 8 are currently being issued.

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 the enforcement of the law, emphasized?

Findings:

For the first time, there is mention of Jerusalem's importance to "the three religions". The old themes still remain in force in these newly received books. Israel's name does not appear on any of the maps, and several Israeli cities, as well as an archaeological site, a region and mountain are defined as Palestinian. Jerusalem is presented as a Palestinian city. When the Temple is discussed in the context of the life of Jesus, nothing is said about its Jewish character and reference to the Jews is negative. Peace is not mentioned at all, while war against Israel as a usurper, occupier and aggressor is implicitly encouraged. Israel is presented as an occupier and aggressor in one of the final exams. The refugee issue is also mentioned within the context of the destined return to the 1948 homes.