

Executive Summary

Following the two surveys by CMIP of school textbooks published by the Palestinian Authority in 2000 and 2001, for grades 1, 2, 6, 7, and (as to one textbook) for grade 11, this latest report examines a newer set of some 35 books in various subjects published by the Authority in 2002, mainly for grades 3 and 8. As in the earlier surveys, the contents of the books were scrutinized according to the criteria set by UNESCO and CMIP (see Introduction). The main findings of this survey are as follows:

- **Judaism is presented as a monotheistic religion** to which, by implication at least, Palestine is holy. Although this is something that was absent from the books published previously, the Jewish holy places in the country as such are still completely ignored.
- **The Jews are mentioned several times, mostly unfavorably, in historical contexts.** When they are mentioned in the context of the present conflict, they are demonized as "Tartars", oppressors, slaughterers and as people who do not hesitate to shoot peaceful travelers on the road. No attempt is made to present them as human beings with rights and interests, national and other, of their own and the Jew as an individual is never discussed. The historical, national and religious connection of the Jewish people with Palestine is never mentioned. On the other hand, the mention of their "trickery", to be found in an earlier textbook, is omitted in a newer book when it refers to the same episode.
- **The tendency to ignore Israel as a sovereign state continues.** Accordingly, Israel's name does not appear on any map. Moreover, some of the maps refer to the whole country as Palestine and Israeli cities and geographical sites are presented as Palestinian., The Palestinian Authority, however, unlike Israel, is referred to as an independent state.
- **Jerusalem is presented as an exclusively Arab city and as the capital of the State of Palestine.** The Jews' presence there and their historical religious and national connections with it are not mentioned, except for a brief reference to its being holy to "the three monotheistic religions". Jerusalem is also personified as a suffering Arab entity.
- **There is a systematic effort in the textbooks to demonize Israel and the Israelis.** The establishment of the State of Israel caused a catastrophe; Israel is an aggressive state; Israelis shoot civilians, demolish houses, "kill" cities and villages by expulsion and destruction, seize Palestinian land

for the establishment of Jewish settlements and cause economic distress and environmental pollution and even bring about family violence among the Palestinians. A major theme is the Israeli occupation, but there are passages that in this context clearly refer to parts of Israel within the pre 1967 borders and not just to the West Bank and Gaza.

- ***The blame for the refugee problem is placed exclusively on Israel.*** *The only solution to the problem envisaged in the textbooks is the return of all the refugees to their former homes.*
- ***Tolerance is advocated towards followers of other religions,*** *but, as in the earlier books published by the PNA, when it comes to a more detailed discussion, only relations between Muslims and Christians are addressed.*
- ***Peace, which is discussed in general terms, is a new phenomenon in Palestinian textbooks.*** *Peace with Israel, the peace process and the Oslo Agreements on which it is based, however, are still not discussed.*
- ***The liberation of Palestine,*** *on the other hand, is mentioned on three occasions, two of which refer by implication to the territory of Israel within the pre 1967 borders.*
- ***Jihad and martyrdom are prominent subjects in the textbooks.*** *Both are praised and encouraged. Jihad's main purpose is making the Muslim nation strong and dreaded by its enemies. In one place martyrdom is portrayed as a wedding party.*
- ***Terror is formally rejected, which too is a new phenomenon,*** *but such rejection basically turns on a question of definition and there are expressions indicating a positive attitude to members of the Palestinian armed organizations ("Fida'is") who also target civilians. Those of them who are jailed by Israel are called "prisoners-of-war".*

It is worth noting that the PNA have now produced their own books, in place of the Jordanian and Egyptian books previously in use, for 50% of the school grades. The Palestinian school textbooks in the third round of their publication still do not comply with the criteria set by UNESCO. Although some new positive nuances are to be found in them, they do not contain a real commitment to peace and reconciliation with Israel.