

Introduction

This is the last in a series of reports issued by CMIP on the new Palestinian Authority (PA) textbooks, which gradually replaced the old schoolbooks published by Jordan (for the West Bank) and Egypt (for the Gaza Strip). It completes the former reports by covering in full the books issued in 2005 and 2006 for grades 11 and 12 – the last grades in the PA school system. It should be noted in this context that the books of each of these last two grades were published under specific political circumstances, different from those, which prevailed during the publication of their predecessors. The books for grades 1-10 had all been written under Yasser Arafat as president of the PA and reflected in many ways the official Palestinian position as envisaged by him. The books for grade eleven, on the other hand, were issued under his successor, Mahmud Abbas, which may explain some important changes appearing therein. The books for grade twelve were published under yet another government – that of Hamas, and, indeed, one can easily discern again changes in attitude. It has been therefore decided to divide the material quoted in this report within the various chapters into two separate consecutive parts in each sub-chapter, so that the reader will be able to see the difference between the two grades.

In addition, there are other books issued by the PA Ministry of the Endowments and Religious Affairs – not by the PA Ministry of Education – and used in religious schools and institutions. Though not constituting an integral part of the PA school system, they should be regarded as a product of the PA as a whole and therefore are treated as such within a separate appendix at the end of this report.

As done in our former reports, CMIP has followed the same criteria used throughout its coverage of the textbook publication process, namely, tracing any reference to the ‘other’ and to peace in the textbooks, taking it as is and inserting it in the report within its context in the appropriate chapter according to its specific subject, with minimum analysis. Clarifying notes are inserted in brackets within the quoted material or as footnotes. The analysis is done in the Conclusion based on criteria suggested by UNESCO and developed by CMIP itself, such as the following:

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?*

CMIP criteria of analysis

- 1. Are other peoples and communities recognized and respected, or are stereotyped and prejudiced?*
- 2. Does education foster peace and support the peace process?*

In translating Qur’anic verses from Arabic into English we have mostly relied on N. J. Dawood’s translation published by Penguin. Prophetic Sayings (Ahadith) were translated by the author of this report independently.