The purpose of this newsletter is to present the different and at times, contradictory, findings between a report prepared by CMIP on PNA school textbooks and those of three other reports produced in the last two years. A comparison of the reports reveals that the different criteria used by each researcher in his examination of the book is the basis for the disparity in the interpretations of their content.

**Criteria**

**Professor Nathan Brown’s “Democracy, History and the Contest over the Palestinian Curriculum”**, is “devoted to an examination of the Palestinian curriculum, especially as it approaches issues of history and identity …The treatment of history in the Palestinian curriculum will be examined in some detail. The purpose will be to present patterns both in what it covers and in what it declines to cover … The goals that motivate this coverage of history will be examined… [It will] focus on internal Palestinian politics and portrays textbooks as the outcome of domestic struggle more than products of international struggle.”

**Dr. Sami Adwan’s “Schoolbooks in the Making: From conflict to Peace, A critical Analysis of the New Palestinian Textbooks for Grades One and Six”** examines “what Palestinians teach their children in their newly produced textbooks … especially regarding the Israeli Palestinian conflict… Textbooks have to reflect the realities of a society - past present and future … education and textbooks are not neutral or objective … the analysis of textbooks cannot be done efficiently without a full understanding of the local language and culture [i.e. by a native speaker].”

**Goetz Nordbruch’s “Narrating Palestinian Nationalism, A Study of the New Palestinian Textbooks”** states “this study aims to determine whether the first Palestinian educational effort succeeds in conveying the values of peace... this study deals with the central ideas and

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1. Prepared for the Adam Institute in November 2001, no bibliography included. 15 of the new PA textbooks published in 2000 and 2001 were quoted. There are also quotations from 3 textbooks published in 1994. Professor Brown is Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at George Washington University.
2. Brown, pp. 1-2
3. Published in *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture, Vol VIII, No2, 2001*. It surveyed 29 textbooks, published in 2000, of which 13 were quoted. Also a second, unedited version which was obtained from *The European Commission Technical Assistance Office*, which will be identified as ECTA. Dr. Adwan is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Bethlehem University.
4. Adwan, pp. 58-60
5. Published by the *Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)* in 2001, 2002. It surveyed 20 textbooks published in 2000 and 2001, of which 14 were quoted. Goetz Nordbruch is a doctoral candidate in Berlin.
content of the new textbooks – ideas and values that will greatly determine the future development of the Palestinian autonomous territories. Palestinian history as taught in these texts lays the corner stone for the Palestinian society of tomorrow. Their self-portrayal reconstructs the Palestinian identity, its social roles and principles, and its view of the relationship between Islam, Christianity and Judaism.  

**Dr. Arnon Groiss**  “Jews, Israel and Peace in Palestinian Textbooks”⁶, A Survey of the Textbooks Published by the PNA in the years 2000 and 2001, writes: “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 … Are they recognized, accepted, 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?⁸

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**Jews and Tolerance**

**Prof. Brown**:  "Exploring the relationship between Palestinians on the one hand and Israel, Zionism and Jews on the other might logically be seen as central to any attempt to educate Palestinians about their past, their present, and even their geography. But such topics are treated only at the margins … The focus on the eternal nature of Arab and Palestinian identity … is generally not based on any active or hostile denial of other versions of history. Alternative versions are not refuted, but merely ignored. Students are instructed that Jews broke early agreements with Moslems… the set of ‘facts’ that students will retain will come from parents, colleagues, and the immediate environment, more than textbooks, in any case…[Commenting on criticism directed at earlier textbooks ] A unit on tolerance is criticized for omitting Jews, while a reading of the entire unit makes it perfectly clear that its topic is tolerance within Palestinian society⁹

**Dr. Adwan**: "Negative stereotyping of Israelis and Jews is absent. Jews are even presented in a favorable light …Palestinian pupils are learning to look positively towards others: no negative stereotypes of Israelis or Jews in school textbooks… [Jews are excluded from a unit on tolerance because] Palestinians still perceive Israelis as the main cause of their suffering… to try to change people’s thoughts and feelings, without changing the reality is a form of patronization, and it, too, can be perceived as a form of oppression and manipulation…

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⁶ Nordbruch, Preface and p.2  
⁷ Published by the Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP), in November 2001. It surveyed 60 textbooks published in 2000 and 2001, of which 29 were quoted.  
⁸ Groiss, pp. 9-10  
⁹ Brown, pp. 5, 8,10,11,26
Dialogue and negotiations as a means of learning and dealing with the Other are emphasized to a great degree. "

Mr. Nordbruch: "There is no reference to any Jewish presence now or in the past. That omission is especially striking in light of the fact that Jewish communities have lived in the area continuously since ancient times... The geographic definition of the Palestinian nation along the boundaries of the British mandate, totally disregarding Israel, is explained in as little detail as is the exclusion of the Jews from Palestinian society. Historical relationships between Moslems and Christians and between Moslems and Jews are both described as being rife with conflict; present day relations between Moslems and Christians are presented in a positive light... There are fewer references to Jews in the new textbooks... [the] impression of a tolerant attitude towards the Jews is, however, sadly contradicted by the stereotyping of Jews... Anti-semitic stereotypes portraying Jews still appear in the textbooks and present conflicts are tied to ancient religious disputes and enmity... The plurality of Palestinian society is accepted only within 'a unified goal: to serve the homeland and its citizens'" 11

Dr. Groiss: Reference to the Jews is minimal and does not provide the pupils with at least a basic knowledge of Jews and Judaism as one of the three monotheistic religions. There are several generalizations attributing traits of trickery, greed and barbarity, to the Jews... The Palestinian textbooks emphasize the need for inter-religious tolerance... but when the discussion assumes a more specific and practical nature, the Jews are no longer mentioned. 12

_Jihad and Martydom_

Prof. Brown: "... to imply that mentioning Al-Qassam is an implicit endorsement of suicide attacks and bus bombings is thus based on a hostile, inaccurate and even dishonest reading – what matters is not whether the textbooks cite him, but how they present him..." 13

Dr. Adwan: " In both Israeli and Palestinian textbooks, the heroes of the other side are considered monsters, terrorists and the 'bad guys'...Clearly the general orientation of Palestinian textbooks is to have pupils respect martyrs and hold them in high regard. The notion of martyrdom is greatly valued in Palestinian society. Examples can be found in the textbooks... They are asked for example to 'write a letter about the feelings of martyr's mother'... Jihad is a holy war, but it is not an act of aggression... In fact it is a defensive war in which Muslims are ordered to participate in accordance with certain conditions or stipulations...Clearly a misunderstanding of Jihad has arisen among certain parties, whereas Jihad is misconstrued as a belligerent and violent act. 14

Mr. Nordbruch: "Martyrdom is clearly a religious concept, the willingness to make sacrifices is described as a national obligation... Through various questions regarding the lives of the martyrs, students are encouraged to follow the lead of those heroes and to draw conclusions and analogies for their daily lives... Al-Qassam is also the historical hero of the Islamic Movement Hamas, which names its military wing after him... and which violently opposes the peace process. The textbooks encourage children to participate in Intifada activities. Lessons, tasks and questions... carry a call to join the resistance movement... Numerous references to child martyrs in the resistance movement against Israeli occupation are underpinned by an illustration of a youth carrying a Palestinian flag in a confrontation... Short explanations about Jihad are confined to the lessons on Islamic education, while the religious connotations of the

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10 Adwan, pp. 60, 62, 68
11 Nordbruch, pp. 9, 15, 16, 24-25, 29
12 Groiss, pp. 11, 61
13 Brown, p. 5
14 Adwan, pp. 62, 63,
The concept of Shahada appear in various educational units. Even in lessons in Arabic language, numerous texts and exercises call upon students to sacrifice their lives. The curriculum focuses the obligations of the individual to the community, parents, family, school and coreligionists. These obligations set the stage for the highest degree of the individuals loyalty to the Palestinian nation, culminating in nurturing the wish for self-sacrifice and martyrdom among the youth... textbooks assign this religious duty to Christians as well.  

Dr. Groiss: "Jihad continues to be glorified and martyrdom is praised. Special attention is given to the martyrs of Palestine".

Maps

Prof. Brown: "The issue of borders is not even raised, and the books give no clear message on the subject. Almost all in-depth descriptions of Palestine focus on the West Bank and Gaza, described in every book as "the two parts of the homeland"... If there is any issue that has attracted more international attention, it is the presence of maps in Palestinian textbooks that do not indicate the existence of Israel. ... The newer books... omit much more than Israel; they omit the borders of the Palestinian state... maps of the entire area of mandatory Palestine (including Israel) are sometimes historical or topographical in order to avoid drawing political boundaries. Israel is thus not indicated (nor are Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt)."

Dr. Adwan: "In the new Palestinian textbooks, the borders of the independent Palestinian state are supposed to be based on what was stated in the November 15, 1988, Declaration of Independence, i.e. UN resolutions since 1947... Some maps included in Palestinian textbooks... point to the boundaries of the Palestinian national territories as those of 1967. Other maps refer to Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip within the clearly delineated lines of the 1967 occupied territories... Maps as an issue should be looked at only after all borders and lines between the future Independent State of Palestine and the State of Israel are lined. Otherwise any criticism of maps either in texts or Atlases before that is done is [premature], irrational and unfair. I completely reject the accusations that [are] made against the Palestinians in regards to maps at this point. I totally accuse [those] who make these allegations of being unfair, not honest and are still one sided."

Mr. Nordbruch: "The geographical extent of the Palestinian nation, according to the textbooks, includes all the territory west of the Jordan River. Haifa, Jaffa, Acre and Nazareth are all listed as Palestinian cities, disregarding their present location in Israel... The maps of the region indicate only a Palestinian state in the territories formerly under the British Mandate... Israel still does not appear on the maps."

Dr. Groiss: "Natural, geographic and historical Palestine extends from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea... The pupils are presented with the actual existence of a "State of Palestine", although sometimes it is noted that such a state is still to be established. The State of Israel is neither mentioned in this context, nor does its name appear on any map. When the text refers to regions, cities, and sites that are within Israel's pre-1967 borders, they are presented as Palestinian. Jerusalem as well is depicted as wholly Arab, without any reference to its historical or religious importance to the Jews... Palestine, rather than Israel, is among the countries that are included in the region of Geographic Syria (Sham in Arabic)... None of these

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15 Nordbruch, pp. 17-18, 19, 20, 28
16 Groiss, pp. 6, 74
17 Brown, pp. 9, 13
18 Adwan, pp. 64-65, ECTA p. 17
19 Nordbruch, pp. 15, 29
maps bear the name “Israel”. In most cases, no names are given at all. In other cases, the name “Palestine” accompanies the country as a whole.  

It may be of interest to note that out of 27 maps dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian issue, 27 do not name Israel, 17 name Palestine, 10 carry no name at all and 5 give contours of the West bank and Gaza. 3 of 17 maps of the region name neighboring countries such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt.

**The Concept of Peace**

**Prof. Brown**: “…the Palestinian curriculum is not a war curriculum; while highly nationalistic, it does not incite hatred, violence, and anti-Semitism. It cannot be described as a “peace curriculum” either … The Palestinian educational system is designed to serve other goals, most prominently the inculcation of identity and legitimization of authority – largely ignoring the sensitive issues connected with peace … How can the Oslo Accords be explained when they both helped create Palestinian institutions but also compromised Palestinian nationalist aspirations? … The more recent textbooks … still fail to develop any sustained or coherent explanation of the Palestinian present… It is precisely because the curriculum is responsive to popular values and pressure that it emphasizes national identity and various forms of authority so consistently … The texts do not incite hatred; their silence is much more embarrassed than hostile…Exploring the relationship between Palestinians on the one hand and Israel, Zionism, and Jews on the other might logically be seen as central to any attempt to educate Palestinians about their past, their present, and even their geography. But such topics are treated only at the margins.”

**Dr. Adwan**: ”The Christian religious textbook … stresses tolerance and emphasizes the values of peace on earth … an attempt to warn pupils of the devastating effects of wars and conflicts. The text goes further and promotes tolerance and coexistence …The general description of Palestinians as victims of the Zionist ideology and Israeli occupation is clearly seen in the texts…How can Palestinians teach their children to love Israelis, when the only things they see and experience (from Israelis) are death, injuries, restrictions on movement, the destruction of their homes, the razing of their land and uprooting of trees, and starvations…Texts describe Israelis occupation and its practices from confiscating lands, building settlements illegally, putting Palestinians in prison, destroying Palestinians’ homes and putting the whole of Palestinian society under harsh living conditions…Palestinians need justifications to perceive Israelis in a more positive light…Palestinians need reasons/factors to love Israelis and Jews.”

**Mr. Nordbruch**: “The Oslo Agreement, of crucial importance as it marks formal mutual recognition between Israelis and Palestinians, is referred to but once…There is no discussion of Oslo, its importance, or the problems it entails for the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza…The revision of the curriculum was intended to ‘prepare the Palestinian people to restore all their national rights on their land and establish their independent state with Jerusalem as its capital’.”

**Dr. Groiss**: “The concept of peace with Israel is not to be found anywhere in the Palestinian textbooks.”

20 Groiss, pp. 41, 57  
21 Brown, pp. 1, 8, 11,12, 13, 17, 26  
22 Adwan, pp. 60, 61, 62, 68, ECTA pp. 18, 24  
23 Nordbruch, pp. 1, 23  
24 Groiss, p. 64
The Jews and Palestine

Prof. Brown: "...the Arab and Palestinian nations are timeless entities, stretching back to the beginning of history...Alternative versions are not refuted but merely ignored;...the history of Jews (either inside or outside of Palestine) is simply passed over in silence...The distant past is harnessed to serve current national needs; religious and national identities are consciously and carefully merged ... a Mandate-era stamp is illustrated, bearing the word “Palestine” in both English and Arabic, but the Hebrew has been erased."25

Dr. Adwan: "The general description of Palestinians as victims of the Zionist ideology and Israel occupation is clearly seen in the texts...[Palestinians] are presented as victims of Western Colonization and Zionist interests...Texts show how Zionist ideology (Zionism) aims at [Judaizing] Palestine including Jerusalem."26

Mr. Nordbruch: "There is no reference to any Jewish presence now or in the past. That omission is especially striking in light of the fact that Jewish communities have lived in the area continuously since ancient times ...The textbooks ignore the existence of the State of Israel despite the PLO’s recognition of the nation in the Oslo Agreements...The history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is important, not least because of its effect on Palestinian identity. Surprisingly, however, the State of Israel is virtually ignored...Many of these problems [which Palestinian society has to meet] are attributed to the existing state of conflict."27

Dr. Groiss: "...Palestinian textbooks ignore the historical links of the Jews to Palestine from the Roman period onwards... The Palestinian textbooks refer to the Jewish holy places in the Holy Land as Moslem holy places only and consider the Jews’ worship there as an attempt to Judaize them ...Jewish holy places in Palestine are ignored or presented as Muslim holy places usurped by the Jews. The Jews’ language – Hebrew – is not considered one of the languages of the land and is portrayed as a dialect... Israel’s image in the Palestinian textbooks is wholly negative. Israel alone is responsible for the results of the 1948 war. Israel is presented not as a legitimate neighbor who has its own legitimate rights and interests, but rather as an evil power whose policies and actions are all directed against Palestinian survival and well-being...The war of 1948, which was started by the Arab side, and its tragic results for the Palestinians, are depicted as a predetermined operation by the Jews, with the aim of occupying the land and exterminating and expelling the Palestinians. Such motives are attributed to Israel today as well ..."28

25 Brown, pp. 10, 14, 15
26 Adwan, p. 60, ECTA pp. 23, 24
27 Nordbruch, pp. 15, 22
28 Groiss, pp. 13, 24, 25
The Refugee Problem

Prof. Brown: "The responsibility for the refugee problem is squarely placed on Israeli shoulders and the right of return is unambiguously affirmed."²⁹

Dr. Adwan: "Dispossession, dispersion and life in the diaspora have characterized Palestinian society throughout its history...The Palestinian Society throughout its history is characterized by: people of the Diaspora and dispersion, the Palestinians are chased out [from] their land as a result of Israeli Occupation of Palestine and they suffered [from] many massacres and forced to go to neighboring countries."³⁰

Dr. Groiss: "The only solution to the refugee problem acceptable in the Palestinian textbooks is the return of every refugee to his original home. Sometimes such a return is perceived as part of the liberation campaign."³¹

Jerusalem

Prof. Brown: "... All mentions of locations in Jerusalem in the Palestinian-authored books refer only to the Old City and a few Arab neighborhoods... Jerusalem ... is repeatedly described as the capital of Palestine (though its precise borders are not mentioned, nor are any locations in West Jerusalem)."³²

Dr. Adwan: "In all Palestinian textbooks where Jerusalem (al Quds al Sharif) is mentioned, reference is specifically made to Arab East Jerusalem that was occupied by Israel in the 1967 war. This is a fact clearly stated in UN Resolutions ..."³³

Mr. Nordbruch: "In various illustrations appear the slogan 'Jerusalem is ours', ignoring the Jewish Israeli pre-1967 portion... Jerusalem is referred to as the capital in an excerpt from the Palestinian Declaration of Independence of 1988."³⁴

Dr. Groiss: "Jerusalem is depicted as wholly Palestinian. Its historical and religious importance to the Jews, as well as its present position as Israel’s capital are not mentioned, rather, it is referred to as the capital of Palestine."³⁵

²⁹ Brown, p.13
³⁰ Adwan, p.66, ECTA p.19
³¹ Groiss, p. 70
³² Brown, pp. 4, 13
³³ Adwan, p. 64
³⁴ Nordbruch, pp. 15-16
³⁵ Groiss, p. 55
Conclusions

Prof. Brown: "...far from inciting schoolchildren, the books generally treat sensitive political questions as tangential ... the more recent textbooks – those for grades one, two, six, and seven, issued in 2000 and 2001 – break some of the silences of the earlier books, but they still fail to develop any sustained or coherent explanation of the Palestinian present... On areas where a clear national consensus exists among Palestinians, or where the Palestinian leadership has given clear and authoritative declarations of a position, the textbooks’ authors lose all bashfulness ...But those issues that remain ambiguous or hotly contested among Palestinians - such as borders, the nature of a final settlement with Israel, and even methods of resistance against Israeli occupation – receive elliptical treatment when they are dealt with at all... The purpose of history in the Palestinian curriculum goes beyond inculcating a sense of Palestinian identity to supporting the authoritative structures in Palestinian society. God, government, school, and parents are all to receive respect and obedience from children."

Dr. Adwan: "The textbooks of any nation should be able to reflect the life of its people– their collective narrative and memories. Pupils have the right to read about their history, their culture, their pain and suffering, their joys and happiness. Otherwise, textbooks become irrelevant and alien to pupils who will consequently lose all interest in them. How can Palestinians teach their children to love Israelis when the only things they see and experience (from Israelis) are death, injuries, restrictions on movement, the destruction of their homes, the razing of the land and uprooting of trees and starvation. For Palestinian children, Israelis are, so far, seen only as soldiers, settlers, and bulldozer operators... Children cannot be duped into believing or learning the opposite of what they see and experience. It is too much and too soon to request Palestinians to produce textbooks so far removed from reality."

Mr. Nordbruch: "The new Palestinian textbooks reflect a general attempt to lower the virulence of anti-Israeli venom. Direct incitement has significantly declined, explicit calls for violence have been radically reduced and a serious effort has been made to enhance values such as democracy and freedom. However, the paramount goal of the new textbooks to maintain the claim of a unique, distinct and homogeneous Palestinian nation as the basis for creating a Palestinian state seems to have marred the end product of five years of preparation... The curriculum focuses on the individuals obligations to community, parents, family, school and co-religionists. These obligations set the state for the highest degree of the individual’s loyalty to the Palestinian nation, culminating in nurturing the wish for self sacrifice and martyrdom among the youth. The concept of freedom is related solely to external oppression and not to domestic repression. The opportunity to enhance the era of peace and reconciliation through the new textbooks has been missed... anti-Semitic stereotypes portraying Jews still appear in the textbooks and present conflicts are tied to ancient religious disputes and enmity. Moreover, the new textbooks do not nurture positive attitudes towards the west... the new Palestinian textbooks focus primarily on what is needed to successfully confront the Nation’s enemies. Sadly the opportunity to educate Palestinian schoolchildren in the spirit of nation-building as part of the peace-process was missed ..."

Dr. Groiss: “The struggle to end occupation, viewed by most international and Israeli circles as legitimate, is being used to teach a systematic rejection of Israel and to promote hatred towards it. It is disturbing that even the very young pupils of six and seven years are exposed to the rejection of mutual recognition, tolerance, respect and peace, in favor of glorifying martyrdom and Jihad. The terminology and style employed, particularly in the textbooks for higher grades, are more consistent with journalistic technique than with education ... All children should be entitled to a factual, comprehensive and bias-free education, seeking to favor a culture of peace and tolerance. With the passing of every school year, and the

36 Brown, pp. 9, 13-14, 15
37 Adwan, pp. 67-68
38 Nordbruch, pp. 28, 29
introduction of the news textbooks by the Palestinian National Authority, CMIP is concerned by the lack of sufficient progress towards an education of reconciliation incorporating truly democratic values. ”

Beyond the obvious differences in the number of textbooks surveyed by each researcher and the specific criteria used to review them, there is a noticeable contrast between the conclusions reached by Dr. Adwan and Prof. Brown on the one hand and Nordbruch and Groiss on the other.

Adwan and Brown tend to interpret texts, sometimes according them a different meaning than their literal one. They also tend to explain and justify voids, minimizing the impact of curriculum and textbooks on the young generation and emphasizing the import of reality.

Groiss and Nordbruch address disturbing voids and texts in the schoolbooks, taking into consideration their cumulative impact upon the youth, especially when their content is one-sided and partial information presented. They consider that curriculum and textbooks greatly influence the ideas and views of the young generation.

39 Groiss, p. 81