



CENTER FOR MONITORING

THE IMPACT OF PEACE (R.A.)

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**Hate and violence in Palestinian textbooks, CMIP's response
to Mazen Chouaib's letter to the Canadian paper**

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Hate and Violence in Palestinian Textbooks

The title accorded Mazen Chouaib's letter of 27th April 2002, "No terror in textbooks", has nothing to do with its content. Palestinian school textbooks currently in use do indeed praise Jihad and Martyrdom in the context of liberating all the land of Palestine (including the State of Israel).

The Center for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP) is a not-for-profit organization based in New York, which studies curricula, teachers' guides and schoolbooks as an indicator the the view and values societies wish to instill in their youth. CMIP does not interpret the content of the textbooks it reviews but limits itself to providing examples of relevant texts. The quotes brought in its review on PNA textbooks clearly illustrate their hate, anti-tolerance and anti-peace orientation. (cf CMIP site www.edume.org).

Mazen Chouaib quotes Professor Brown's study on Palestinian curriculum. Professor Brown systematically minimizes the significance of the quotations in order to argue that the PA curriculum is not a war curriculum although in his own words "it cannot be described as a peace curriculum". He explains the absence of reference to recognition of the other, reconciliation and peace in PNA textbooks as the PNA's search for national identity. CMIP contends that the search for national identity within the textbooks should not contradict educating towards peace. One does not exclude the other.

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For example, teaching pupils to understand both the content and implications of the Oslo agreements and the difficulties in their implementation could have been a means of educating towards a more tolerance-based outlook. But the content of the Oslo agreements are not mentioned in the textbooks.

The tortuous and laborious excuses regarding Israel's borders cannot conceal the fundamental fact that the State of Israel never appears on any of the maps in Palestinian schoolbooks. What do Palestinian children learn from this?

Professor Bar-Tal's study on Israeli textbooks refers to those books in use until the 1980s and not to the present-day textbooks. (For a systematic survey of present-day textbooks, see CMIP's site "Arabs and Palestinians in Israeli Schoolbooks 1999-2000"). Any anti-peace and hate oriented schoolbook should be firmly criticized, and its amendment demanded, without exception. However, should allegedly offensive Israeli textbooks excuse or alleviate the hostile and anti-peace content of Palestinian textbooks?

The reference to Adir Cohen' study is misleading because it does not deal with school textbooks, which are under the responsibility and scrutiny of the public authorities, but rather with children's literature, which is not.

In conclusion, it is important to underline that the PNA textbooks reviewed by CMIP were written and partially introduced into the Palestinian school system during a time of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, and prior to the current Intifada. CMIP feels that the crucial issue of educating the youth should transcend all political agendas.

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