

# READIN', WRITIN', AND JIHADIN'

The Islamization of American Public Schools



by Robert Spencer

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Printed in the United States of America

\$3.00 Each  
\$1.00 each for orders of 25 or more

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## The Islamization of American Public Schools

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The commitment to “multiculturalism” that has now taken over K-12 education in America has been a godsend for Muslims anxious to use schools and textbooks to proselytize for Islam. Worried about appearing insufficiently “tolerant” and “inclusive,” too many public schools and individual teachers have succumbed to an organized campaign by U.S.-based

Islamic organizations and their primary benefactor, Saudi Arabia, to present a view of Islam that whitewashes its violent history and intolerant doctrines.

Many of the Islamic groups that are now allowed to evaluate American public school textbooks for their presentation on Islamic doctrine and history are Saudi-funded. They make sure that the Islamic instruction in these textbooks presents a picture of Islam that is so pristine and whitewashed that it sometimes crosses the boundary from mere pro-Muslim bias into outright Islamic proselytizing.

### **Proselytizing in class**

The taboo about teaching religion in the public schools, so zealously established and so well policed in strictures against Christian prayer by the ACLU and

the Supreme Court over the last few decades, is now increasingly set aside in American public schools, where presentations on Islam frequently cross the line between teaching facts about the religion and teaching the religion as fact.

In May 2018, a Mountain Ridge Middle School in Gerrardstown, West Virginia instructed students to copy out the Islamic profession of faith (*shahada*) under the guise of using it as a calligraphy exercise. Parent Rich Penkoski recounted: “I saw the assignment of writing the Shahada in Arabic. Their excuse was calligraphy. I was like, ‘Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!’ First of all, calligraphy was invented in China 3,000 years prior to Muhammad. The fact that they were trying to get my daughter to write that disturbed me. I said, ‘That is not happening. My daughter is not doing that.’ My daughter told me that if she didn’t do the assignment, then she

was going to get a [detention] slip.”<sup>1</sup>

Mountain Ridge Principal Ron Branch contradicted Penkoski, claiming: “The teacher has told her class several times that this is a study of world religions and that she is not trying to advocate for any religion over another. She has told her class that if they had questions about religious beliefs, that those conversations should take place with their parents.” He said that Christianity and Judaism were given “equitable treatment” in the same class.<sup>2</sup>

Penkoski’s daughter, Brielle, however, said that the class spent much less time on Christianity and Judaism than it did on Islam. Penkoski pointed out that the

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua Gill, “Christian Parent Furious After School Instructs Children To Write Out Their Submission To Allah,” Daily Caller News Foundation, May 17, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

accompanying exercises were also less extensive for Christianity and Judaism than they were for Islam: “Notice no Bible verses, no reciting the Ten Commandments or the Lord’s Prayer. [There’s] no practicing writing in Hebrew as compared to the Islamic packet.”<sup>3</sup>

Penkoski’s experience is far from unique. Such stealth propaganda on behalf of Islam is taking place nationwide. The previous January, parents filed a federal complaint against Chatham Middle School in Chatham, New Jersey, for forcing students to watch videos that proselytized for Islam. One video, according to the complaint, describes “Christians and Jews as ‘infidels’ and prais[es] Muhammad in gruesome detail for slaughtering them.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Nick Rummell, “Mom Says NJ School Assignment Recruited for Islam,” Courthouse News Service, January 24, 2018.

Parent Libby Hilsenrath characterized the accompanying assignment as “replete with biased, chastising statements encouraging the students...to follow the Quran and become Muslim.”<sup>5</sup> Another video, according to Hilsenrath, depicts a Muslim boy teaching his non-Muslim friend about Islam, after which both go to “learn how to pray.”<sup>6</sup>

The complaint adds: “Due to the fact that these doctrinal messages calling for conversion to Islam were included in video format with vivid images and text, they possess greater communicative impact and are more likely to be accepted by the students viewing them than information that is spoken in a classroom or even written in a book.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



Meanwhile, high school students in Newton, Massachusetts in October 2017, according to Fox News, “pretended to be Muslims in the ‘Islamic’ city of Jerusalem as part of a class assignment.”<sup>8</sup> The assignment also included a pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel article. *Judicial Watch* Senior Investigator Bill Marshall remarked: “Citizens of Newton have been waging a minor war with school officials for years now, trying to get them to use balanced curriculum in their teaching materials on the subject of Islam and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”<sup>9</sup> Dr. Bill Saxton, chairman of Citizens for National Security, said that the assignment was a “purposeful attempt to indoctrinate our impressionable high-schoolers with the ‘virtues’ of Islam at the expense of Christianity,

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<sup>8</sup> Caleb Parke, “High school assignment had kids simulate Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca,” Fox News, October 18, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Judaism and other religions.”<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, Georgia parent Michelle King noted in 2016: “My daughter had to learn the Shahid and the Five Pillars of Islam, which is what you learn to convert,” while not learning Christianity or the Ten Commandments. The absolute moral equivalence of Islam with Christianity and Judaism is a given in the curricula. One homework assignment in Walton County, Georgia, stated: “Allah is the [blank] worshiped by Jews & Christians,” with students having to fill in the blank with “same God.”<sup>11</sup>

Parent Steve Alsup was disturbed by this cooked response: “It seemed like half the truth to me, they didn’t talk about the extreme Islamics.” Kim Embry, a

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ty Tagami, “Some parents concerned about how Islam is taught in schools,” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, August 28, 2016.

spokesperson for Walton County Public Schools explaining the assignment, said revealingly: “We are teaching the same stuff that everyone else is teaching.”<sup>12</sup>

Indeed. In 2015, students at Spring Hill Middle School in Spring Hill, Tennessee were forced as part of an assignment to write, “There is no god but Allah; Muhammad is his prophet.” Joy Ellis, who has a child in the school, remarked: “I didn’t have a problem with the history of Islam being taught, but to go so far as to make my child write the Shahada, is unacceptable.”<sup>13</sup> Another mother, Brandee Porterfield, observed: “It really did bother me that they skipped the whole chapter on the rise of Christianity and they spent three weeks just studying Islam....I spoke with the teacher and the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas D. Williams, “7th-graders in Tennessee made to recite ‘Allah is the only God’ in public school,” Breitbart News, September 10, 2015.

principal,” she said. “They are not going to learn any other religion, doctrines or creeds and they are not going back over this chapter. Even though they discuss Christianity a little bit during the Middle Ages, they are not ever going to have this basis for Judaism or Christianity later.”<sup>14</sup>

Maury County Director of Schools Chris Marczak gave a half-hearted endorsement of the curriculum: “It is our job as a public school system to educate our students on world history in order to be ready to compete in a global society, not to endorse one religion over another or indoctrinate.” Porterfield shot back: “They are not going over anything else. So for the students to have to memorize this prayer, it does seem like it is indoctrination.”<sup>15</sup>

And in North Carolina in December

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

2014, another concerned mother, Dianne Lynn Savage, made a video that went viral, alerting parents that a senior English class vocabulary and sentence completion exercise at Farmville Central High School was a covert proselytizing for Islam. Savage read some of the sentences in which the meanings of vocabulary words were illustrated, including:

*Aptitude*: “Although Muhammad did not have a formal education, he seems to have had a good *aptitude* for business.”

*Conducive*: “Muhammad was familiar with the teachings of Judaism and Christianity, and found solitude *conducive* to understanding proper faith.”

*Mosque*: “In 630, after war with the Meccans, Muhammad

entered the city of Mecca as a victor and proclaimed the sacred shrine, Ka'ba, to be a *mosque*. He first had to destroy the pagan idols before he could declare Ka'ba a house of worship.”

*Quantitative*: “His success could be measured not only in quantitative ways, the number of followers of Islam, but also in a *qualitative* way, the improvement in people’s lives.”

*Recur*: “Ramadan *recurs* every year as the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar. Ramadan is remembered as the time during which Muhammad received the Qur'an, Islam’s holy book, from the archangel Gabriel.”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Tom White, “Dianne Lynn Savage Reads Islamic Public School vocab lesson. Shocking,” YouTube, December 19, 2014.

Then Savage read the sentence completion exercises, in which the students were told to imagine taking a trip back to ancient Arabia: “Muhammad has just finished speaking when I arrive, but I hope the opportunity to hear him \_\_\_\_\_. I’d like another chance....There are such vast numbers of people who are anxious to spread the Muslim faith, that it would be impossible to give a \_\_\_\_\_ amount.”<sup>17</sup>

Imagine a public school exercise in which a student was taught about the teachings of Jesus, and imagined being excited to see him speak. Yet Brock Letchworth, the spokesperson for Pitt County Schools, gave an education speak defense of the lesson as part of the Common Core curriculum and claimed: “Our school system understands all concerns related to proselytizing, and there is no place for it in our instruction.”

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

However, this particular lesson was one of many the students in the class have had and will have that expose them to the various religions and how they shape cultures throughout the world.”<sup>18</sup> There was, however, no comparable lesson about Judaism, Christianity or any other religion.

The successful proselytizing for Islam in our schools had accelerated in recent years, but it has been going on for a long time. In Amherst, New Hampshire, in May 2007, seventh graders at Amherst Middle School set up what a local newspaper called a “Saudi Arabian Bedouin tent community” that was open to the town. Visitors were given Arabic names and asked to fill out a genuine Saudi customs form, complete with the legend across the top of the form,

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<sup>18</sup> “New Details: Viral video alleges Pitt Co. high school promoting Islam,” WNCT, December 19, 2014.



“Death for Drug Trafficking.” Student exhibits were sex-segregated, with girls modeling hijabs and veils, and “an Islamic religion station included a Muslim prayer rug with a compass imbedded in it to locate Mecca, readings on the Islamic faith, call to prayer items and prayer beads.”<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps it was an innocent nod in the direction of cross-culturalization, but it wasn’t the first time that it was hard to distinguish between role-playing and proselytizing for Islam in an American public school.

Another notorious instance occurred in 2003, when several parents filed suit against the Byron Union School District in Byron, California, over several exercises that students were

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<sup>19</sup> “‘Open tent’ at Amherst Middle School,” *The Cabinet*, May 31, 2007.

required to complete during their study of Islam. The controversial exercises came in part from Houghton Mifflin's *Across the Centuries* text, along with a role-playing handbook that an Islamic group called the Council on Islamic Education helped develop. The exercises told students, "From the beginning, you and your classmates will become Muslims."<sup>20</sup> Students were directed to memorize portions of the Fatiha, the first chapter of the Qur'an and most important prayer in Islam, to adopt Muslim names and to shout "Allahu akbar" (Allah is greatest), the cry made famous by jihadists worldwide. Students were even encouraged to skip lunch in order to simulate the Ramadan fast. By way of contrast, a companion unit on Christianity did not require students to

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Sperry, "Look who's teaching Johnny about Islam: Saudi-funded Islamic activists have final say in shaping public-school lessons on religions," *WorldNetDaily*, May 3, 2004.

pretend they were any kind of Christian, recite any Scripture, or memorize any Christian prayer.<sup>21</sup>

The workbook on Islam, moreover, required students to make statements of Islamic faith in order to answer questions correctly – affirming, for example, that “Muhammad is the prophet of Allah,” rather than that “Muslims believe that Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.” Yet despite all this, a judge ruled that this program did not contain “any devotional or religious intent.”

Richard Thompson, chief counsel for the Thomas More Law Center, which pursued the case on the parents’ behalf, noted the double standard: “While public schools prohibit Christian students from reading the Bible, praying, displaying the Ten Commandments, and even

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

mentioning the word ‘God,’ students in California are being indoctrinated into the religion of Islam. Public schools would never tolerate teaching Christianity in this way. Just imagine the ACLU’s outcry if students were told that they had to pray the Lord’s Prayer, memorize the Ten Commandments, use such phrases as ‘Jesus is the Messiah,’ and fast during Lent.”<sup>22</sup>

Similarly, in May 2008 at Friendswood Junior High in Friendswood, Texas, principal Robin Lowe, without giving parents any notice, canceled a physical education class and required students instead to attend a presentation on Islam given by two women from the nearby Houston office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations. Students who attended reported being taught that there is one God, Allah, that Jesus

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<sup>22</sup> “Judge rules Islamic education OK in California classrooms,” *WorldNetDaily*, December 13, 2003.

is one of his prophets, that one should pray five times daily, and other basic tenets of Islam.<sup>23</sup> Lowe was apparently so intent on exposing students to this material that she even defied the district superintendent, who had told her not to allow the presentation to go on.<sup>24</sup> After an outcry from parents, the school district moved Lowe to another job.<sup>25</sup>

## **The Islamization of the Textbooks**

Increasingly assertive demands by Muslim minorities in the West have led to American public schoolchildren being indoctrinated with a partial and rosy view of Islam in textbooks that have

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<sup>23</sup> Bob Unruh, "Texas children roped into Islamic training," *WorldNetDaily*, May 30, 2008.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ericka Mellon, "Principal has new job after 'Islam 101' controversy: Parents outraged over assembly allowed by Friendswood Junior High leader," *Houston Chronicle*, June 5, 2008.

been vetted by organizations linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic supremacist organizations.

This, too, has been going on for well over a decade. In a study released in June 2008, the American Textbook Council, an independent national research organization that evaluates the quality of textbooks, issued a report finding that ten of the most widely used middle school and high school social studies textbooks “present an incomplete and confected view of Islam that misrepresents its foundations and challenges to international security.” Those textbooks are still widely used today, although they present highly controversial assertions as undisputed truth, make common cause with West-hating multiculturalists to bowdlerize the presentation of Islam, denigrate or downplay Christianity and Western

civilization, and transform many public school texts into proselytizing tracts.

California seventh graders, for example, use a text called *History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond*, produced by the Teachers' Curriculum Institute. In defining "jihad," for instance, the book tells students that "Muslims should fulfill jihad with the heart, tongue, and hand. Muslims use the heart in their struggle to resist evil. The tongue may convince others to take up worthy causes, such as funding medical research. Hands may perform good works and correct wrongs." This anodyne definition gives no idea that Muslims have ever viewed jihad as involving, in whole or part, warfare against unbelievers, or that they have ever waged war on the basis of its mandate. This text also holds that Muhammad, far from exhorting his followers to subjugate unbelievers,

“taught equality” and was a prototypical compassionate liberal who instructed Muslims “to share their wealth and to care for the less fortunate in society.”<sup>26</sup>

There are a few notable exceptions to the textbooks’ tendency to ignore or downplay violent jihad. For example, Holt’s *Medieval to Early Modern Times* offers a more honest account in defining jihad as referring not only to “the inner struggle people go through in their effort to obey God and behave according to Islamic ways,” but also to “the struggle to defend the Muslim community, or, historically, to convert people to Islam. The word has also been translated as holy war.”<sup>27</sup> [emphasis added.] Similarly, Prentice Hall’s *Medieval and Early Modern Times* at least admits that,

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<sup>26</sup> Gilbert T. Sewall, “Islam in the Classroom: What the Textbooks Tell Us,” American Textbook Council, June 2008. P. 6.

<sup>27</sup> Sewall, pp. 19-20.



besides spiritual struggle, jihad “can also mean waging war to spread the Islamic faith,” before assuring students that “another factor helping the Arabs” in the early Islamic conquests “was their tolerance for other religions.”<sup>28</sup>

But such objective explanations of jihad are rare because of pressure from Islamic advocacy groups to whitewash this fundamental justification for violence. Usually, textbook explanations of jihad lack any reference at all to its violent component or even deny outright that such a component exists. A typical example is Houghton Mifflin’s middle school world history book, *Across the Centuries*, which was at the center of a failed attempt by non-Muslim parents in 2003 to stop Islamic indoctrination in

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<sup>28</sup> Sewall, p. 20.

California public school classrooms.<sup>29</sup> It defines jihad as a struggle “to do one’s best to resist temptation and overcome evil.”<sup>30</sup> Prentice Hall’s high school world history text *Connections to Today* offers a similar take, defining jihad as “effort in God’s service,” and explaining that “Jihad has often been mistakenly translated simply as ‘holy war.’ In fact, it may include acts of charity or an inner struggle to achieve spiritual peace, as well as any battle in defense of Islam.”<sup>31</sup>

Most egregious is *History Alive!*, which says that jihad “represents the human struggle to overcome difficulties and do things that are pleasing to God.” Might this struggle ever involve the force of arms? Why, yes: sometimes jihad can

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<sup>29</sup> “Judge rules Islamic education OK in California classrooms,” *WorldNetDaily*, December 13, 2003.

<sup>30</sup> Sewall, p. 18.

<sup>31</sup> Sewall, p. 18.

become a “physical struggle.” Muslims must “fight to protect themselves from those who would do them harm or to right a terrible wrong.”<sup>32</sup>

On the floor of the House of Representatives in 2004, then-Congressman Tom Tancredo (R-CO) described the result of obfuscation of the concept of jihad in the seventh grade text *Across the Centuries*: “When [a] child watches a program on television and this word [jihad] is used, and it is a word used in conjunction with someone who has just blown himself or herself up, and a lot of other innocent human beings around them, this kid is supposed to think that that is what somebody is doing in order to resist temptation and overcome evil. And if we condemn jihad against the United States, then we are condemning someone who is just simply trying to

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<sup>32</sup> Sewall, p. 19.

overcome evil. This is what we tell our children?”<sup>33</sup>

Yes, it is. And it gets worse.

## **No Jihad, No Dhimmitude**

In light of the attempt of many textbooks to whitewash the violence intrinsic to Islam, it's no surprise that the early spread of Islam is also generally presented in benign or even positive terms. The *History Alive!* text is typical when it implies that the spread of Islam was simply the result of peaceful missionary activity and voluntary conversion: “Although the first Muslims lived in Arabia, Islam spread through the Middle East.”

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<sup>33</sup> “Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo Speaks Out on Education,” *Yorktown Patriot*, April 1, 2004.

Similarly, McDougal Littell's *World History: Medieval and Early Modern Times* asserts that "there was much blending of cultures under Muslim rule. Over time, many peoples in Muslim-ruled territories converted to Islam. They were attracted by Islam's message of equality and hope for salvation." The American Textbook Council report notes that "McDougal Littell's Teacher's Annotated Edition reiterates this theme, telling instructors to stress that 'many conquered people became Muslims [because] they found Islam's message of equality and hope attractive.'"<sup>34</sup>

The experience of non-Muslims who were conquered and subjugated by the early jihad warriors, of course, tells a very different story. The early Muslim conquests saw the warriors of jihad sweep out of Arabia, sword and scimitar in

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<sup>34</sup> Sewall, pp. 15-16.

hand, and become the masters of a vast empire stretching from Spain to India within a century of Muhammad's death. Islam "spread" through the Middle East as a result of the indigenous populations in the conquered areas being subjugated as dhimmis (people who were allowed to continue to practice their non-Muslim religions, but with a severe deprivation of rights). What they had to do to be free of the onerous tax burden and the other discriminatory hallmarks of dhimmitude was convert to Islam. And over time, they did so, in large numbers. One would think that the coercive nature of Islam's dhimmi system would warrant a mention in these textbooks – particularly since it remains part of the system of Islamic law that jihadists are fighting, in various ways, to impose upon the West.

But this is not the case. Another text, Prentice Hall's *Medieval and Early*

*Modern Times*, even goes so far as to call medieval Muslim Spain a “multicultural society.” *History Alive!* says that in medieval Spain “a unique culture flourished in cities like Cordoba and Toledo, where Muslims, Jews, and Christians lived together in peace.”<sup>35</sup>

But constant repetition does not make this sort of thing true, and it has no business being in a school textbook where it can mislead students about exactly what kind of society jihadists wish to establish by imposing Sharia. Even historian Maria Rosa Menocal, whose book, *The Ornament of the World*, popularized the notion of a tolerant, pluralistic Islamic al-Andalus, acknowledged that Christians and Jews living in Muslim Spain had to abide by the laws of dhimmitude that enforced their second-class status. In return for

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<sup>35</sup> Sewall, p. 23.

a relative religious freedom, she writes, Jews and Christians “were required to pay a special tax — no Muslims paid taxes — and to observe a number of restrictive regulations: “Christians and Jews were prohibited from attempting to proselytize Muslims, from building new places of worship, from displaying crosses or ringing bells. In sum, they were forbidden most public displays of their religious rituals.”<sup>36</sup>

Historian Kenneth Baxter Wolf further observes that, once they conquered Spain, the new Muslim rulers enacted a series of laws largely “aimed at limiting those aspects of the Christian cult which seemed to compromise the dominant position of Islam.” After enumerating a list of such laws, he adds, “....most

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<sup>36</sup> María Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews, and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, Little, Brown, 2002. Pp. 72-3.



of [them] were simply designed to underscore the position of the *dimmi*s as second-class citizens.”<sup>37</sup>

A “multicultural society”? Not in the way that the students who use the Prentice Hall textbook will understand the term. Students subjected to these texts further learn that Sharia “makes no distinction between religious beliefs and daily life” (*Medieval to Early Modern Times*), and that it “helps Muslims live by the teachings of the Qur’an” (*History Alive!*). They hear nothing about stonings or amputation or the subjugation of women and *dhimmi*s. Sharia “is an Arabic word meaning ‘the way that leads to God,’” explains Prentice Hall, but says nothing about the fate that awaits those who, in this life, chose a way other than Islam.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *Christian Martyrs in Muslim Spain*, Cambridge University Press, 1988. Pp. 9, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Sewall, pp. 21-22.

## **Christian Aggression Against Islam**

The most glaring example of anti-Western cultural bias in these texts is the contrast between their treatment of Islam and the way they deal with Christianity. The Textbook Council notes, “While seventh-grade textbooks describe Islam in glowing language, they portray Christianity in harsh light. ... Islam is featured as a model of interfaith tolerance; Christians wage wars of aggression and kill Jews. Islam provides models of harmony and civilization. Anti-Semitism, the Inquisition, and wars of religion bespot the Christian record.”

The Crusades, which began as a response to a call for help from the Byzantine Emperor in Constantinople, and were a tardy and small-scale response to 450 years of jihadist aggression that had overwhelmed the formerly Christian

lands of the Middle East and North Africa, are uniformly presented as an atrocity of unprovoked aggression by Christian Europe against a pacifistic Islamic Middle East. Overlooking the fact that Islamic forces ultimately prevailed in the Crusades, *History Alive!* presents Muslims as victims. The Crusades were, according to the book, without context; they were nothing more or less than “religious wars launched against Muslims by European Christians,” and were “a terrible ordeal for many Muslims. An unknown number of Muslims lost their lives in battles and massacres. Crusaders also destroyed Muslim property.”

The Textbook Council report delivers the moral: “when Muslim groups attack Christian peoples, kill them, and take their lands, the process is referred to as ‘building’ an empire. Christian attempts

to restore those lands are labeled as ‘violent attacks’ or ‘massacres.’ A passage about the Second Crusade characterizes Christians as ‘invaders’—something they would have denied—while the Seljuks are simply ‘migrating’ into Christian territories.”<sup>39</sup>

## **Serving the Islamic Agenda**

This whitewashing of history serves political as well as educational agendas. UCLA academic Gary B. Nash, one of the authors of the *Across the Centuries* textbook, admits that there is today a battle to change history textbooks – to “redistribute historical capital” – in order to serve contemporary political programs.<sup>40</sup> If students learn that medieval

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<sup>39</sup> Sewall, p. 24.

<sup>40</sup> “Islam and the Textbooks: A Report of the American Textbook Council,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2003.

Muslims were tolerant, magnanimous, and peaceful, while Christians were bigoted, rapacious, and brutal, they internalize paradigms to which they may return in evaluating current events – and all too many teachers are no doubt very happy to help them with this exercise.

If Sharia is a benevolent system of law under which diverse peoples prosper, who could possibly object to the accommodation of various elements of it by Western institutions, in order to make Muslim immigrants feel welcome?

No hint is given in any of this material, of course, of the supremacist imperatives within Sharia to subjugate non-Muslims, or to deny them (especially women) equality of rights before the law. Nor is any hint given of the violence that lies at the heart of the Islamic doctrine of jihad. The political agendas lying behind

these texts become clearer in what the textbooks say about modern Islamic terrorism. Glencoe's high school text *World History: Modern Times*, for example, explains that some modern terrorists are "militant nationalists who want to create their own state or expand national territory." The book offers one example of this: the Irish Republican Army. "Other terrorists," it says, "work for one nation to undermine the government of another. This kind of terrorism is called *state-sponsored terrorism*. Militant governments in Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, and North Korea have sponsored terrorist acts. There are also states that secretly finance, train, or hide terrorists."<sup>41</sup>

*World History: Modern Times* also takes students on a lightning tour of common explanations for Islamic jihad terrorism:

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<sup>41</sup> Sewall, pp. 31-32.

Some analysts say this terrorism is rooted in the clash of modern and Islamic cultures. They argue that because many states in the former Ottoman Empire did not modernize along Western lines, Muslims have not accommodated their religious beliefs to the modern world. Other analysts note that the Christians and Muslims have viewed each other with hostility since at least the time of the Crusades. Others suggest that poverty and ignorance lie at the root of the problem—extremists find it easy to stir up resentment against wealthy Western societies. Finally, some say terrorism would be rare if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be solved.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Sewall, p. 32.

Nowhere does the book offer the possibility that Islamic terrorists are committing violence against unbelievers and pursuing a supremacist agenda as a result of the imperatives of the Islamic religion. But they can perhaps be forgiven for this since, as we have seen, so few analysts anywhere along the political spectrum are prepared to consider this possibility.

The Prentice Hall high school text *World History: The Modern World* is even worse, echoing the jihad terrorists themselves (as well as many mainstream leftist analysts) by blaming Islamic terrorism on the West and Israel: “Increasingly, the Middle East has become a training ground and source for terrorism. One historical reason for this has been Western colonial domination in the region. The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 helped focus



anti-Western resentment among many Arabs.”<sup>43</sup> How Western “domination” or the establishment of the State of Israel gave rise to Islamic jihad terrorism in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Kashmir, Chechnya, Nigeria, and elsewhere is not explained. The book informs students with reasonable accuracy that “Islamic fundamentalism refers to the religious belief that society should be governed by Islamic law,” but once again attributes its rise to causes outside Islam altogether: “Islamic fundamentalism was encouraged by a lack of basic resources in many Arab nations. Islamic fundamentalists found it easy to make Israel or Western nations scapegoats for their problems. In the past few decades, terrorist attacks have increased against these scapegoats.”<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Sewall, p. 34.

<sup>44</sup> Sewall, p. 35.

Glencoe's *World History: Modern Times*, suggests that aggressive Islamic jihad activity arose because of the West's dependence on oil:

One reason Middle Eastern terrorists have targeted Americans can be traced to developments in the 1900s. As oil became important to the American economy in the 1920s, the United States invested heavily in the Middle East oil industry. This industry brought great wealth to the ruling families in some Middle Eastern kingdoms, but most ordinary citizens remained poor. Some became angry at the United States for supporting the wealthy kingdoms and families.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Sewall, p. 37.

Like the academic Marxists who probably taught them in college, the textbook's authors deny the possibility of an ideologically-driven Islamic jihad movement and attribute all its excesses to anger at economic inequalities caused by the West.

*American Vision* does acknowledge the existence of “new movements” in Muslim countries:

Calling for a strict interpretation of the Quran — the Muslim holy book — and a return to traditional Muslim religious laws. These Muslim movements wanted to overthrow pro-Western governments in the Middle East and create a pure Islamic society. Muslims who support these movements are referred to as fundamentalist militants.

Although the vast majority of Muslims believe terrorism is *contrary* to their faith, militants began using terrorism to achieve their goals.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, however, the notion that “the vast majority of Muslims” view terrorism as un-Islamic, nearly universal in these texts, remains unproven despite its almost rote repetition. Nor is it certain that those Muslims who are said to reject terrorism have in mind exactly what Westerners mean by the word.

### **The Council on Islamic Education’s “Bloodless Revolution”**

How did all this political and religious propaganda about Islam get into our public school textbooks? Some of it,

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<sup>46</sup> Sewall, p. 42.

no doubt, has to do with the current fad for “multiculturalism.” But this development has also been the result of careful and determined effort by Islamic organizations – particularly the Council on Islamic Education (CIE), a California-based group that describes itself as providing “a number of services, resources and research-based tools to K-12 school textbook publishers, state education officials and policymakers, curriculum developers, and teachers. Specifically, they assist education professionals in covering world history and related subject matter in a balanced, comprehensive and sensitive manner.”<sup>47</sup>

CIE founder and director Shabbir Mansuri has waged, according to a 2001 interview, “what he calls a ‘bloodless’ revolution: promoting an

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<sup>47</sup> “Council on Islamic Education,” <http://www.cerisnet.pitt.edu/resource/council-on-islamic-education>

increased emphasis on world cultures and faiths — including Islam — inside American junior high and high school classrooms.”<sup>48</sup>

Mansuri has written a six-step guide on “how to get religious accommodation in the public school system,” specifically directed toward getting public schools to provide prayer rooms for Muslim students, time out of classes for Islamic prayer, and days off for Islamic holidays. In this interview, he explains, “In the United States, one of the strongest arguments in favor of seeking religious accommodation for your child is former President Bill Clinton’s 1995 statement of principles addressing the extent to which religious expression and activity are permitted in public school. This was given to every school district in the US.”

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<sup>48</sup> Nick Schou, “Pulling His Cheney,” *Orange County Weekly*, October 25, 2001.

But while it defends students' rights to pray privately and in informal groups on school grounds, Clinton's statement said nothing about requiring school administrators to provide special accommodation for religious practices.<sup>49</sup> Mansuri adds that element himself, that accommodating Muslims in this regard is simply a matter of "constitutional rights." He advises Muslim parents to kill their opponents with kindness, inviting recalcitrant school administrators over to dinner to convince them to grant the accommodation. If administrators remain reluctant, Muslim parents should begin to write letters to the school and ultimately take their complaint to the school district, but always in a

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<sup>49</sup> President Bill Clinton, "Memorandum on Religion in Schools," July 12, 1995. <http://www.cofc.edu/~whitel/ClintonSchoolReligion.htm>

polite and non-confrontational way.<sup>50</sup>

The American Textbook Council Report says that groups such as the CIE are “willing to sow misinformation, are active in curriculum politics. These activists are eager to expunge any critical thought about Islam from textbooks and all public discourse. They are succeeding, assisted by partisan scholars and associations.”<sup>51</sup>

The Report gives specifics: “From 2001 on, *Connections to Today*, Prentice Hall’s market-dominant high school world history then and now, and several spin-off versions customized for California and other states, listed Shabbir Mansuri and Susan Douglass of the Council on

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<sup>50</sup> “How to get religious accommodation in the public school system: a 6-step guide,” SoundVision.com. <http://www.soundvision.com/Info/education/pubschool/pub.guide.asp>

<sup>51</sup> Sewall, p. 9.



Islamic Education (CIE) as academic reviewers. One enthusiastic article describes CIE as ‘the only national faith-based organization in the United States that is directly involved in the process of reviewing public school textbooks from a multicultural perspective.’”<sup>52</sup> Houghton Mifflin editor Abigail Jungreis, who has praised Douglass’s breadth of knowledge, remarked about CIE, “We’ve had a really good relationship with them over the years. Their reviewers are knowledgeable.”<sup>53</sup> According to one estimate, CIE and Douglass have trained over 8,000 public school teachers.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Samana Siddiqui, “Profile: Council On Islamic Education,” SoundVision.com. <http://www.soundvision.com/Info/education/pubschool/pub.cie.asp>

<sup>53</sup> Paul Sperry, “Look who’s teaching Johnny about Islam: Saudi-funded Islamic activists have final say in shaping public-school lessons on religions,” *WorldNetDaily*, May 3, 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Patrick Poole, “Georgetown University - Wahhabi Front,” *FrontPageMagazine.com*, February 22, 2008.

The effects of this are manifest:

The American Textbook Council report notes that as early as 2002 another high-profile textbook, *Patterns of Interaction*, a high school world history textbook published by Houghton Mifflin under the McDougal Littell imprint, did not mention jihad. Houghton Mifflin's multigrade series then dropped jihad from textbooks; by 2005 Houghton Mifflin had apparently removed jihad from its entire series of social studies textbooks. The advisory role of the Council on Islamic Education in making these editorial decisions remains unclear.<sup>55</sup>

What is clear is that back in 2008, the

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<sup>55</sup> Sewall, p. 18.

CIE, trading on its influence with textbook publishers, initiated a website for the shadowy Institute for Religion and Civic Values. It offered “consulting, training and resources pertaining to issues of religion, identity, freedom, and pluralism to policymakers, educators, the media, organizations and communities, in order to strengthen civil society.”<sup>56</sup>

The language of civic responsibility may be reassuring, but the agenda that lies behind it is not. CIE is endeavoring to inculcate into American students a healthy dose of self-hatred. “American children need to know that genocide was part of the birth of this nation,” declared CIE board member Ali A. Mazrui of the State University of New York at Binghamton in the early 1990s.

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<sup>56</sup> Sewall, p. 48.

“The Holocaust began at home.”<sup>57</sup> A 2003 *Middle East Quarterly* report observes that “since its creation in 1989, the Council has repeatedly allied itself with academics and journalists who take an antagonistic view of the U.S. and Western civilization.”<sup>58</sup>

The American Textbook Council concludes that CIE now enjoys “virtually unchecked power over publishers” and is an “agent of contemporary censorship,” exercising its authority haughtily, informing publishers that it may “decline requests for reviewing published materials, unless a substantial and substantive revision is planned by the publisher.” Yet despite this high-handedness, “for more than a decade, history textbook editors have done the

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<sup>57</sup> “Islam and the Textbooks: A Report of the American Textbook Council,” *Middle East Quarterly*, Summer 2003.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

Council's bidding, and as a result, history textbooks accommodate Islam on terms that Islamists demand."<sup>59</sup>

And those terms coincide perfectly with the aims and goals of the forces of political Islam in the United States.

Nor is the Council on Islamic Education the sole Islamic organization involved in vetting textbooks. Journalist Stanley Kurtz reported as far back as 2007 that the Saudis had bought their way into the process: "The system of federal subsidies to university programs of Middle East Studies (under Title VI of the Higher Education Act) has been serving as a kind of Trojan horse for Saudi influence over American K-12 education." These university programs design "lesson plans and seminars on the Middle East for America's K-12 teachers," which are

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

then adopted “without being subject to the normal public vetting processes.” The Saudi-funded university programs impart the Saudi perspective to the K-12 level through these lesson plans and seminars.

Since education authorities at the federal level have “effectively abandoned oversight” of these programs, according to Kurtz, the Saudis have stepped in to fill the gap, “lavishly funding several organizations that design Saudi-friendly English-language K-12 curricula,” and then working to “convince the ‘outreach coordinators’ at prestigious, federally subsidized universities to purvey these materials to America’s teachers. And wouldn’t you know it, outreach coordinators or teacher-trainers at a number of university Middle East Studies centers have themselves been trained by the very same Saudi-funded

foundations that design K-12 course materials. These Saudi-friendly folks are happy to build their outreach efforts around Saudi-financed K-12 curricula.”

The result was that the “government-approved K-12 Middle East studies curriculum” has actually “been bought and paid for by the Saudis” -- and “the American government is asleep at the wheel.”<sup>60</sup>

Thus, through a mix of petrodollars and U.S.-based Islamic pressure groups, Saudi values connived their way into the U.S. education system.

## **Not Just the Books**

Resourceful and well-informed teachers may be able to work around the textbooks’

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<sup>60</sup> Stanley Kurtz, “Saudi in the Classroom,” National Review, July 25, 2007.

biased presentations about Islam, but such teachers are rather thin on the ground these days. More common, in public education and in other fields, are teachers and administrators who are all too happy, in the name of multiculturalism and tolerance, to go along with and actively further the textbooks' unabashedly pro-Islamic teachings. Few, if any, principals and teachers want to go against the prevailing winds and sacrifice their jobs by standing against the proselytizing for Islam that goes on in our schools.

But while whitewashing Islam and proselytizing for it are now common in K-12 education, some schools go even further by granting Muslim students special privileges and accommodations that are not granted to other students. In May 2018, Rancho Cucamonga High School in Rancho Cucamonga, California pub-



lished its annual yearbook, containing two lavishly illustrated pages on Islam, with the heading “ALLAH AKBAR.” No yearbook pages were devoted to the glories of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, or any other religion.

Similarly, it came to light in March 2017 that Liberty High School in Frisco, Texas, had established a prayer room for Muslim students, drawing a rebuke from Texas Deputy Attorney General Andrew Leonie. “Liberty High School’s policy,” Leonie noted, “should be neutral toward religion. However, it appears that students are being treated different based on their religious beliefs. Such a practice, of course, is irreconcilable with our nation’s enduring commitment to religious liberty.”<sup>61</sup> But in response, Liberty High School doubled down, and

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<sup>61</sup> Mary Lou Lang, “Prayer Room At Public High School Raises Legal Concerns,” Daily Caller, March 17, 2017.

kept its Islamic prayer room.<sup>62</sup>

Along the same lines, it has become increasingly common for public high schools to celebrate World Hijab Day, a celebration whose goal is standing in solidarity with Muslim women who are supposedly harassed for wearing the hijab. (It ignores the more serious problem of women who have brutalized or even killed for not wearing the hijab.)<sup>63</sup>

Some schools have even repressed students' free speech to accommodate Muslim sensitivities. In October 2017 at Liberty High School near Kansas City, a student named Alex Lonsdale got into what he thought was a friendly debate with

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<sup>62</sup> Stella M. Chávez, "Prayer Rooms Are Just One Way Public Schools Accommodate Students And Religious Freedom," KERA News, March 23, 2017.

<sup>63</sup> Robert Spencer, "Today is Hijab Day at NP3 High School, a public charter school in Sacramento, California," Jihad Watch, January 28, 2015.

a Muslim classmate. According to *The College Fix*, “he pointed to pro-terrorist sentiment among British Muslims, as indicated in polls by ICM Research for the 2016 Channel 4 documentary ‘What British Muslims Really Think.’”<sup>64</sup>

The Muslim student, Faraz Pervaiz, asked Lonsdale: “Why are you making my religion out to be like that?”<sup>65</sup> Lonsdale explained to *The College Fix*: “I wasn’t saying that ‘you’re a bad kid because you’re Islamic.’ I wasn’t being rude. I didn’t personally attack him at all.”<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, three days later, the school’s principal and vice principal summoned Lonsdale and demanded that he explain his statements in his conversation with Pervaiz. Lonsdale

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<sup>64</sup> Kayla Schierbecker, “Student suspended for debating Islamic extremism with Muslim peer in debate club,” *College Fix*, December 7, 2017.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

recounted that Pervaiz had “claimed that I said all Muslims are terrorists; all kill...I don’t know how you could even get any of that from this.”<sup>67</sup> The administrators accused Lonsdale of “creating an emotionally unsafe zone,” and suspended him.<sup>68</sup>

It should come as no surprise that encroachments of Islam in our public schools have been constant and growing under the reign of multiculturalism, which insists on respect for every culture except one’s own. The embarrassment, regret, and even self-hatred mandated by multiculturalism in American public school students for decades now has created a vacuum, which Muslims have shown themselves to be all too eager to fill. Certainly those who are furthering the Islamization of the schools would

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

deny that they would like to see Islamic law implemented in the United States, and would indignantly reject the claim that their efforts were furthering that end in any way. They would say that they are doing it all for tolerance, pluralism, and multiculturalism.

Unfortunately, in the end it amounts to the same thing.

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