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Clashing Narratives and Identities in Iraq's School Curriculum 2015–2022

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Executive Summary

The study examines 71 textbooks from the Republic of Iraq's national school curriculum, dated 2015–2022, for grades 1–12. The study focuses on humanities subjects, particularly history, Arabic language, Islamic Education, and social studies.

Main Findings

- Iraqi textbooks post-2003 broadly continue themes and narratives from the time of Saddam Hussein and earlier periods.
- A balance is sought between territorial Iraqi, pan-Arab, and minority Kurdish identities.
- History textbooks refrain from discussing events in Iraq post-1958 at the end of the monarchy, referring to the Ba'th (*Baath*) party-led regime as the "Buried Era." Certain specific instances of oppression of minorities during the Ba'thist period are mentioned. Yet students remain mostly in the dark on the 35 years of the era, nor do they learn anything about the post-Saddam age.
- Islamic textbooks tend to display a Shi'i (Shiite) bias in their narrative; however, Shi'is and Sunnis are rarely mentioned by name.
- Textbooks advocate for violent *jihad*, martyrdom, and self-sacrifice in battle, yet also condemn terrorism and those who use religion to justify it.
- Textbooks show potential evidence of Iranian influence in curriculum. The pro-Iranian Al-Hashd al-Sha'bi militia organization is praised for "liberating the homeland." Textbooks narrate Iran's history in objective terms, with no mention of the Iran-Iraq War, and display sensitivity when discussing Iranian-Iraqi relations.
- Some textbooks display a highly conservative understanding of women's place in society, endorsing unequal gender roles, polygyny, and the concept of family honor, and condemning subversion of gender stereotypes. Others call for gender equality and condemn gender-based violence.
- Iraq's ethnic and religious diversity is celebrated: Christianity is depicted positively, and the Kurdish language is taught to Arab students. At the same time, Islamic textbooks teach that "infidels" will face divine punishment for not believing in Islam. The civil war between Sunnis and Shi'is, which broke out immediately following the US coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003, is absent from the curriculum. Nor is there any discussion of the two major organizations which threatened the very existence of the new regime and that of the Iraqi state itself, namely Al-Qa'ida and ISIS.
- Jewish people are not recognized as part of Iraqi society and history. Textbooks are reluctant to offer any positive depiction of Jews or mention their persecution, so as not to grant them any legitimacy in modern times. There is a glaring omission of Iraq's rich Jewish history and the 1941 "Farhud" pogrom carried out against the Jewish population of

Baghdad. The Holocaust is ignored. The Jewish people are the focus of a substantial amount of hateful material. They are frequently portrayed as cowardly, treacherous, greedy, or otherwise immoral, both individually as well as collectively. Antisemitic tropes are employed, connecting Jews with undue wealth and power, both in ancient Islamic contexts as well as in relation to the modern-day Middle East conflict.

- The Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian cause are featured prominently, with non-recognition of Israel expressed through maps and epithets, and Jewish self-determination in the region wholly rejected. Israeli history is described with immense hostility, and peace is not considered an option.
- Iran, Turkey, and Britain are described negatively in historical descriptions of their rule of Iraq, but neutrally in a contemporary context.
- The curriculum avoids discussing the United States in the modern era. The characterization of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 as a "genocide" reflects a negative attitude towards Americans. In another lesson, the US is described as "a leader of the Western world and of imperialism" in the context of Zionist-American cooperation. The textbooks do not mention the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990, the 1991 Gulf War, or the 2003 US invasion.

On the whole, the textbooks appear to build on certain themes and ideas which originate in Saddam Hussein's rule (1979–2003) as well as in earlier periods, and only partially reflect major developments which have taken place in Iraq since the 2003 Coalition invasion. In addition, the textbooks were found to contain many factual errors, and seem to promote rote learning at the expense of critical thinking, especially in Islamic Education. Furthermore, the approach taken by the textbooks regarding certain topics, such as women's place in society or religious violence, is characterized by contradictions, inconsistency, and dissonance.

The textbooks seek to balance Iraqi, Kurdish, and Arab identities. Territorial Iraqi patriotism is cultivated across different subjects, celebrating national symbols, teaching the importance of national unity, and emphasizing military defense of the country. At the same time, Arab Iraqi students are exposed to the Kurdish language and some aspects of Kurdish culture and historical narrative. Arab identity is also promoted, through celebration of the Arabic language, emphasis on the history of Arab countries and disparagement of their historical adversaries, and the elevation of the Palestinian cause and its connection to Iraq.

Iraqi history textbooks focus almost exclusively on ancient Mesopotamia, Islamic history and early Arab nationalism, and generally avoid events that took place after the 1958 toppling of the Iraqi monarchy. Resistance against British rule pre-independence and the toppling of the monarchy are unequivocally praised, while unpleasant events and atrocities are generally ignored. However, isolated instances of content have been identified which

describe the oppression of minorities under the Saddam Hussein regime, typically referred to as the "Buried Era."

Islamic religious content permeates the curriculum, and the Qur'an is frequently quoted or referenced. In some instances, Islam is said to supersede other values, such as liberty. Female students are encouraged to dress modestly from a young age, in accordance with religious teaching. *Jihad* – understood in violent as well as non-violent terms – and martyrdom are held up as major values, while non-Muslims are described as "infidels" and said to expect torment in Hell. The Sunni and Shi'i sects of Islam are rarely mentioned by name; however, the textbooks adopt certain elements of Shi'i belief, such as advocating love and reverence for the Prophet's family, and often degrade the role of historical figures shunned by Shi'is.

Textbooks show potential evidence of Iranian influence in the curriculum. One textbook published after 2014 praises the pro-Iranian Al-Hashd al-Sha'bi militia organization for "liberating the homeland," and another describes them as "heroes" who "answered the religious call to defend the holy locations, the land, and dignity." Islamic textbooks display a Shi'i bias despite rarely mentioning Shi'is or Sunnis by name, which did not exist in the time of Saddam Hussein. Textbooks narrate Iran's history in objective terms, with no mention of the Iran-Iraq War nor Tehran's increased its influence over Iraqi affairs since 2003, a level of sensitivity which suggests possible Iranian involvement in the drafting of the curriculum.

The Iraqi curriculum's treatment of women is defined by ambivalence. Some textbooks advocate for gender equality and combatting gender-based violence, cultivate respect for mothers, and display women in both modern Western as well as traditional Islamic dress. Female individuals with outstanding contributions in civil service, sciences, and literature are celebrated. However, the greatest praise is accorded to women who participate, endanger their lives, or die, in battle. The curriculum teaches that women uniquely bear the duty of being obedient to their husbands, while men are uniquely worthy of bearing responsibility for the household as a whole. The traditional Arabian virtue of women's honor is taught as sacred, and polygyny is openly endorsed. Conversely, men and women who behave in a manner deemed inappropriate to their gender are condemned as acting on behalf of "infidel" influences, and as posing a threat to the whole of society.

The curriculum takes a uniquely hateful approach toward Jews and Judaism. Islamic textbooks stress the hostility between foundational Islamic figures and contemporary Jews, frequently describing Jews individually and collectively as disloyal, cowardly, or immoral, and threaten followers of Judaism with divine punishment. Antisemitic tropes, such as associating Jewish people with undue political and financial power around the world, are found both in Islamic contexts as well as in relation to the modern Arab-Israeli conflict, and one textbook teaches that treachery and cowardice are "intrinsic characteristics" of Jewish people. At the same time, Iraq's millennia-old Jewish

community is not mentioned in the textbooks, and Jews are excluded from discussions on Iraq's cultural diversity. Jewish history is not taught in the context of the ancient Near East, and Jewish ties to Jerusalem are ignored. The Jewish Holocaust and the contemporaneous Farhoud in Iraq are not acknowledged, but Iraq's allegiance to Nazi Germany in WWII is defended as serving the Palestinian cause.

The Arab-Israeli conflict occupies a prominent position in the curriculum, which adopts an openly hostile anti-Israel approach. Israel is exclusively referred to through epithets such as "the Zionists," and its territory is erased from maps. Conspiracy theories are employed to disparage Zionism as racist, violent, and dangerous to the whole region, and dismiss its political and military achievements as being the product of colonial intervention, international support, or Jewish influence in the US. Nationalist violence against Jews and Israel is glorified, and historical peace treaties between Arab states and Israel are ignored. Peace with Israel is not entertained as an option for the future of Iraq.

Some elements of democratization in Iraq are apparent. Textbooks advocate for establishing a transparent democratic regime, decry political incompetence, and criticize government neglect of public services and its failure to develop the economy. Violent interpretations of religion are likewise criticized. At the same time, one textbook calls for imposing restrictions on media. Textbooks celebrate and cultivate tolerance toward Iraq's diversity of ethnic and religious groups, excluding the Jews; they acknowledge some instances of historical mistreatment of minorities, and teach that Iraq's pluralistic nature is enshrined in the constitution. Christianity and Christians are frequently acknowledged, usually in a positive context.

Iraq's history of religious terrorism is alluded to, but rarely explicitly discussed. The idea that the Islamic faith is often misconstrued by certain parties to promote violence, terrorism, and internal conflict is often expressed, and one textbook directly accuses Al-Qa'ida (Al-Qaeda) and ISIS of doing so. Other textbooks call for national unity and religious moderation, and some laud Iraq's ongoing fight against "terrorism" in general terms. On the other hand, many textbooks glorify military service and death in battle, using and promoting Islamic concepts such as *jihad* and martyrdom to this end, while maintaining praise for certain Shi'i militant groups.

With the exception of Israel, the curriculum's approach to regional and global issues is generally muted and neutral. Iran and its history are usually described in objective terms, and textbooks merely allude to Iran's 21st-century involvement in Iraqi affairs. However, some textbooks describe historical Persian empires as oppressive to the people of Iraq. Likewise, the Ottoman Empire is characterized as colonialist and neglectful toward Iraq, while modern Turkey is rarely mentioned, and mostly in negative terms. Britain is portrayed negatively for its colonial history in Iraq, while the US is accused of "genocide" during WWII, but otherwise, mentions of Western powers in a modern context are sparse. English is only taught from the sixth grade, and English language textbooks contain little information about English-speaking culture, instead appearing to maintain conservative local values.

Foreword

The educational landscape of Iraq since 2003 has been shaped by a complex web of narratives, ideologies, and identities. The echoes of Saddam Hussein's rule continue to reverberate in textbooks, alongside attempts to reshape national identity in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion by the Coalition forces. The continued use of themes and narratives from the time of Saddam Hussein underlines the enduring impact of past regimes on the realm of education.

This period has seen the rise of sectarian influences within the educational system, with Shiite political Islam making significant inroads despite the presence of Americans and Kurds in Baghdad. Shiite parties and the Popular Mobilization Forces have succeeded in embedding elements of sectarian doctrine into the curriculum in recent years, revealing tensions within Iraqi society. Shiite interpretations of Islam are the most prevalent, and religious minorities are effectively suppressed. For example, the director of the "Directorate of Education and Training" in the Popular Mobilization Authority, Hussain Haider Jasim Al-Bakhiti, issued a statement to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education in November 2020, informing them of his decision to form a committee under his chairmanship and the membership of six others–five of whom hold doctoral degrees–to include topics about the Popular Mobilization Forces in the Ministry of Education curriculum. Thus, Shiite Iraq has repeated the same mistakes of Yasin al-Hashimi's government in the 1930s, when Sati' al-Husri (ساطع الحصري) 1880-1969 was instructed to design school curricula for Iraqi schools based on Arab nationalistic ideology.

In post-2003 Iraq, the struggle for control over educational content has become emblematic of broader societal divides. Historically, Iraq's education system has grappled with competing narratives and ideologies, often reflecting the political dynamics of the region. Dr. Ofra Bengio's comprehensive report, informed by her extensive knowledge of the ideological, social, and political history of the Middle East and Iraq, reveals that textbooks contribute to the construction of these contemporary identities, bringing to light the complex relationship that exists between Iraqi patriotism, Arab nationalism, and religious ideas. Simultaneously, the intricacies of Iraq's rich religious and ethnic tapestry attempts to balance the identities of the Kurdish people, the pan-Arab people, and the territorial Iraqi people.

Competing narratives and ideological currents in Iraqi society are echoed in its textbooks, including the taboo topics and silence prevalent in Iraqi educational discourse. Viewing sociopolitical developments in Iraq since 1958 through a selective historical lens contributes to the perpetuation of a fragmented narrative, which obscures the nuances of Iraq's contemporary past and glosses over truths considered to be uncomfortable. The glaring absence of Jewish history in Iraq, as well as

the marginalization of other religious minorities, highlights the elimination of diverse voices within the curriculum, which in turn perpetuates symbolic violence against groups who are already oppressed. Moreover, the myriad of contradictions within the Iraqi curriculum reflect the broader challenges of navigating societal ideals within higher education.

The historical forces that have shaped Iraq's education system present ongoing challenges in reconciling diverse identities and navigating ideological currents within the curriculum. The potential for a national identity that embraces variety, addresses taboos, and embraces the richness of Iraq's complex heritage lies within Iraq's educational curriculum, holding the possibility for healing, understanding, and the formation of a more unified national identity.

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Introduction: Deterioration of the Education System

Any examination of the contents of Iraqi textbooks should take into account the wider context of the education system, as well as the socio-economic and political situation as a whole. The impact of such textbooks on students can only be evaluated by examining the degree of their attendance in schools; the availability of these textbooks; the educational staff and their ratio in comparison to the number of students; and the atmosphere of and physical conditions in schools. Hence we start by outlining the ups and downs which the education system has witnessed in the last fifty years.

When the Ba'th party came to power in Iraq in 1968, and for the first fifteen years of its rule, it placed great emphasis on the education system. Thus, up to the early 1980s, Iraq's educational system was considered one of the best in the Middle East. The achievements of that period include free education for all levels, gender parity in enrolment, declining of illiteracy of the 15-45 group to less than 10%, spending on education totaling 20% of Iraq's government budget, and the government spending an average of $620 per student for education per year.[1] This policy came to serve various socio-political and ideological goals such as consolidating control over Iraqi society, indoctrinating the young generation along Ba'thist ideology, legitimizing the Ba'thist regime, and reinventing Iraq's image in the world as a progressive and modern state.

In parallel with this quantitative change and the expansion of the number of schools and students, there was a revolutionary change in learning content and quality.[2] As early as the Eighth Ba'th Regional Congress of 1974, the party announced "a far-reaching educational reform" which included, among other things, a curriculum overhaul and the purging from all schools of educational staff who were suspected of disloyalty to the Ba'thist ideology.[3]

The main guiding principles and contents of these books resulted in the politicization of Iraqi society, part of which was the education system, becoming ubiquitous. Pan-Arab ideology permeated textbooks, most notably those for history and civics. Students in the Kurdish region were similarly indoctrinated, even though they belong to a distinct nation, and despite the fact that their books were written in Kurdish. As noted by one researcher: "the contents of schoolbooks used in Kurdistani and Iraqi-Arab contexts were indeed very similar: both presented a Pan-Arabic curriculum in which the history and culture of

[1] Jinan Hatem Issa and Hazri Jamil, "Overview of the education system in contemporary Iraq," *European Journal of Social Sciences,* Vol. 14, No. 3 (2010), pp. 360-368.
[2] Nabil al-Tikriti, "War, state collapse and the predicament of education in Iraq," *World Yearbook of Education 2010* (Routledge, 2010), pp. 350-360.
[3] Ibid., pp. 351-352.

the ethnic majority Arab Sunnis was prioritized."[4]

In the aftermath of the outbreak of the Iraqi-Iranian war in 1980, the Ba'th used textbooks to demonize Iran. These textbooks portrayed Iran in a very negative light and described relations between the Persian and Arab nations as being that of eternal conflict.[5]

Islamic Education was another subject that gained momentum following the outbreak of the Iran–Iraq War. Initially, secularism, or semi secularism guided the regime. Thus, Islamic education in the early 1980s was minimal: 2 hours a week for grades 1-6, in comparison with 11 hours of Arabic and 6 hours of Mathematics. For grades 7-9, there was only one hour of Islamic education.[6] However, in the early-to-mid 1990s the number of hours increased significantly, and so did the status of the subject. The Ministry of Education published two new textbook series – the Qur'an for primary school pupils, and Islamic Education, teaching a wider range of Islamic subjects. Baram suggests that while the choice of the Qur'anic suras was quite problematic because of the difficulty in understanding them, the Islamic Education textbook was friendlier.[7]

The creeping Islamic tendencies in the textbooks reflected a general trend in society; this was a reaction to the Iranian Islamic Republic's ideological onslaught, and the fear that it would engulf Iraqi society, especially the more vulnerable Shi'I (*Shiite*) group. The war, which lasted for 8 years, also contrasted the symbols and messages of the Iranian regime which were effective in mobilizing its society with the purportedly secular and somewhat outdated Pan-Arabist ideology with which the Ba'th regime commenced its reign. Accordingly, after the war broke out, the Ba'th started employing Islamic symbols, such as terming the war "Al-Qadisiyya" (after the 636 battle in which Sassanid Persia was defeated by an Arab army), granting Islamic names to various military campaigns and weapons, and most importantly, later launching later the faith campaign (*hamla imaniyya*) which aimed at teaching the Qur'an to all groups in Iraqi society.[8] Saddam himself became so obsessed with the Qur'an that he ordered a copy be written in his own blood.[9] As early as 1994, Saddam Hussein initiated compulsory Islamic courses in schools at all levels, and the curricula included not only recitation of the Qur'an but also the teachings of Sunna and shari'a.[10]

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[4] Bareez Majid, "Towards an Understanding of Kurdistani Memory Culture: Apostrophic and Phantomic Approaches to a Violent Past," PhD Dissertation, Leiden University, 2021.
[5] Al-Tikriti, p. 352.
[6] Ghazwan Ala Al-Din Lutfi, "Images of males and females in primary and middle school textbooks in Iraq: A content analysis study," PhD Dissertation, Florida State University, 1990, pp. 18-19.
[7] Amatzia Baram, *Saddam Husayn and Islam, 1968-2003: Ba'thi Iraq from Secularism to Faith* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), pp. 281-282, 285.
[8] Ofra Bengio, *Saddam's Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 176-202.
[9] Ofra Bengio, "Iraq," in Bruce Maddy Weitzman (ed.), *Middle East Contemporary Survey: Volume 2000* (Tel-Aviv University, 2000), p. 260.
[10] Achim Rohde, "Change and Continuity in Arab Iraqi Education: Sunni and Shi'i discourses in Iraqi textbooks before and after 2003," *Comparative Education Review*, 57 (4), November 2013, pp. 711-734.

Samuel Helfont suggests that Saddam's instrumentalization of Islam should not be seen as evidence of ideological transformation, but rather the use of Ba'thification methods "to instill Ba'thist ideas and operatives in Iraq's religious landscape."[11]

Another unique feature of these textbooks was Saddam Hussein's cult of personality, which was so prevalent in all aspects of Iraqi life, and was ever-present in school textbooks. The Ba'thist regime enforced its legitimacy by emphasizing the heroic and charismatic characteristics of Saddam Hussein, connecting them to the elements of national integration. Thus, the textbooks described Saddam as a war hero. One history textbook stated: "Iraqis persisted in uniting their mother country. Saddam Hussein became the symbol of this unity by achieving victories in continuing wars and realizing peace."[12] Moreover, the following song was widespread among children in the 1980s: "We are Iraq and its name is Saddam; We are love and its name is Saddam; We are a people and its name is Saddam; We are the Ba'th and its name is Saddam."[13]

Journalists who were able to examine these textbooks reported the following:

> "Textbooks often bore a colorful picture of Hussein on the first page, smiling in his crisp battle fatigues. Inside, students encountered passages comparing him to the famous Arab warrior Saladin or to Nebuchadnezzar, the legendary Babylonian king.
> Propaganda afflicted every subject of study, including math and science.
> Here's a quick quiz from an Iraqi elementary-school textbook of the not-too-recent past:
> What do you get when you add three rocket-propelled grenades and four Kalashnikov rifles?
> If you guessed simply 'seven weapons', you're wrong. The correct answer, of course, is 'seven ways to kill the infidel enemy'."[14]

Other notable elements in the textbooks were math exercises that use S and H (for "Saddam" and "Hussein"), not X and Y, as variables; diatribes like this from a sixth-grade history text: "Our Great President is ordering us to stand against the Iranian, American, and Zionist forces that have occupied our religious cities"; and maps depicting Kuwait as a territory of Iraq.[15]

As mentioned above, since the 1990s the Iraqi education system has begun to gradually deteriorate, reflecting the political and military upheavals that engulfed Iraq during those years. The major developments which worsened the situation in Iraq were the Iraqi-Iranian war (1980-1988); the First Gulf War of 1991 and the ensuing

[11] Samuel Helfont, *Compulsion in Religion: Saddam Hussein, Islam, and the Roots of Insurgencies in Iraq* (Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 2-3.
[12] Dai Yamao, "Regime Change and National Integration Policy: Focusing on Iraqi school textbooks before and after 2003," in Keiko Sakai and Philip Marfleet (eds.), *Iraq Since the Invasion* (Routledge, 2020), p. 158.
[13] Bengio, Saddam's Word, p. 78.
[14] Jonathan Zimmerman, "Iraq's textbooks—and ours," *The Washington Post*, 13 July 2003.
[15] Simon Robinson, "Iraqi Textbooks: X-ing Out Saddam," *Time*, 21 July 2003.

sanctions; and finally, the 2003 War and the resulting collapse of the state system.

The years which followed the 1991 Gulf War witnessed a serious deterioration in the Iraqi education system on all levels, as explained at length by Mayamin Altae:

> "The sanctions meant that Iraq was left behind for many years as far as the advances in education were concerned. Iraq was also deprived of the advances of the educational technology that started to be implemented in schools in other neighboring countries. The state of isolation that the country entered from 1991 until 2003 also hindered the introduction of modern curriculum advancement, especially in English language classes, where teachers could have accessed hundreds of online resources to help their learners learn in an interactive class. 'In education, Iraq was isolated from global trends.' During those years (1991–2003) Iraqis never knew the Internet, mobile phones and satellite TV channels, which made them unaware of the rapid development that was happening all over the world. Added to that was the government's perception of the education sector as a minor concern in comparison to other major issues such as defense and national security, or more precisely, the regime's security. As for the policies that were related to technology in education prior to 2003, they were either non-existent or much oppressed."[16]

The deterioration of the education system gained further momentum in post-Saddam Iraq. This was reflected in the number of schools, the number of students attending schools, and the teaching material itself. Schools were attacked by suicide bombers or hit by artillery fire, and militias threatened schools with changing their curriculum, or they would face an attack.[17] In a 2022 study, specialists warned against the danger of the spread of illiteracy In Iraq. While in the 1970s Iraq managed to significantly lessen this phenomenon, by 2022, Iraq was leading the list of countries with high illiteracy rates, whereby 40.2% of males aged 15 and over were illiterate. The reasons provided were illiterate parents, socio-economic difficulties, a lack of teaching materials, poor behavior in schools, and the anarchical situation in the country.[18]

By 2010, spending on education had dropped to merely 8% of the budget, while spending per student dropped to $47.[19] According to a UNICEF report, in later years less than 6% of the budget was earmarked for education, placing Iraq at the bottom rank of Middle Eastern countries. Accordingly, access to quality learning was curtailed drastically, with 3.2 million Iraqi children of school age not attending school. UNICEF further reported that the

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[16] Mayamin Altae, "An overview of the stages of development of the Iraqi English language curriculum," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, January 2020, p. 3.
[17] Rohde.
[18] "خبراء: العراق وشباب أطفال تهدد الأمية (Experts: Illiteracy Threatens Iraq's Youth and Children)," Basnews, 13 September 2022.
[19] Issa and Jamil, p. 363.

ongoing socio-economic crisis had created a huge gap between the wealthiest and poorer children, with a 73% graduation rate from secondary school for the wealthiest students, compared to just 23% of the poorest.[20]

UNICEF further reported that Iraq's infrastructure is in ruins in many parts of the country, and that one in every two schools is damaged and needs rehabilitation. Moreover, the war against ISIS (Daesh, the Islamic State), which broke out in 2014, exacerbated the issue, as the militant group turned schools into headquarters for its fighters.[21] This caused the additional problem of overcrowded classes, with some of them comprising 80 students.[22] A number of schools operate in multiple shifts in an attempt to accommodate as many students as possible, squeezing the little learning time that children have. A research study by the Education Consortium of Iraq, published in early 2022, found out that as many as 10,000 new school buildings were needed "to get children back into safe and quality education."[23]

Iraqi newspapers echo these problems, one of the most serious of which is caravan schools, which expose the children to many dangers and make learning unbearable in hot and cold weather. Hundreds of such schools initially intended as temporary additions, have become permanent.[24]

The shortage of textbooks was no less serious an issue. Thus, by 2004 the textbook-to-child ratio was one textbook per subject for every 5 or 6 students.[25] By 2016 the situation had further deteriorated due to corruption and a shrinking budget. According to the Ministry of Education the government decided in that year to reduce the budget allocated for the printing of books from $18 million to $6 million. The black market also flourished as a result.[26] The situation continued to deteriorate to the point that, in 2022, the Ministry of Education could not print any new textbooks, forcing it to call on students from earlier grades to hand in their textbooks so that other students could use them. While reflecting the severity of the situation, this plea did not solve the problem since many students had no textbooks at all, which had implications for their learning

[20] Alaa Hussain, "Shortage of buildings, truancy plague Iraqi schools," Diyaruna, 12 April 2018. https://diyaruna.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_di/features/2018/12/04/feature-01
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid. An education adviser said that some classrooms have up to 120 students: Ron Synovitz, "Iraqi schools more crowded than ever after reconstruction blunder," Radio Free Europe, 28 September 2012. https://www.rferl.org/a/iraq-schools-overcrowding-reconstruction-blunder/24723363.html
[23] "Iraq: 10,000 school buildings needed to get education back on track," Nonviolent Peaceforce, 13 March 2022. https://nonviolentpeaceforce.org/iraq-10000-school-buildings-needed-to-get-education-back-on-track/#:~:text=Damaged%20infrastructure%20and%20limited%20investment,education%2C%20a%20new%20report%20reveals
[24] "العراقي التعليم لتدهور مرآة الكرفانية المدارس" (Caravan Schools Reflect Iraqi Education's Deterioration)," Tariq al-Sha'b, 22 October 2022.
[25] Angela Commisso, "Textbook program in education in crisis: A case study in Iraq," UNESCO, 2004, p. 14.
[26] Wassim Bassem, "Iraqi students forced to study without textbooks," Al-Monitor, 17 November 2016. https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2016/11/schools-iraq-textbooks-education.html

abilities.[27] The situation became so desperate that the Ministry of Education made an unprecedented move by declaring 2021-2022 a year in which students would not fail classes.[28] Another unusual decision was the granting of a monthly stipend to primary school students, with a view to combating dropout rates.[29]

Consequently, the quality of education declined further, as summated in the following report by UNICEF:[30]

> "The quality of education has deteriorated after the 1990s. Factors responsible for the decline in quality are represented in the low level of education financing, lack of minimum standards in the form of teaching-learning materials (such as textbooks, libraries, laboratories), deteriorating infrastructure, outdated curricula, and overcrowding. Moreover, staff members are poorly trained, demoralized, and unmotivated. The followed teaching methods carry on being dependent on lecture with no emphasis on analysis, synthesis, or other forms of knowledge application. Innovation and initiatives to improve quality outside the rigid state-run education system were generally not encouraged. The gifted students' schools represent a very limited exception. Preparation of teachers and basic training is weak, and skills in communication and information technology are seriously limited. The teaching workforce is isolated from the outside world. Furthermore, professional development programs are lacking; opportunities for progressing education and clinical supervision are scarce. There is no encouragement for rural areas. A large number of qualified and well-trained teachers have been lost; they have been replaced by less qualified teachers."[31]

As this report will show, the content and quality of Iraqi textbooks reflect the general situation of the education system, and the upheavals that have taken place on a sociopolitical level since 2003.

An overview of revised textbooks post-Saddam

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[27] Husayn Hatim, "المسترجعة المناهج تعتمد والتربية ..تتجد الدراسية الكتب أزمة (Textbook Crisis Renews, as MoE Employs Revoked Curriculum)," Al-Mada, No. 5256, 3 September 2022. https://almadapaper.net/view.php?cat=272216

[28] "التربية تمنح تلاميذ الصف الخامس الابتدائي 5 درجات (MoE Awards Fifth Grade Students 5 Points)," Shafaq News, 23 October 2022. https://shafaq.com/ar/%D9%85%D8%AC%D8%AA%D9%80%D9%85%D8%B9/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D9%85%D9%86%D8%AD-%D8%AA%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B0-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B5%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AE%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%AA%D8%AF%D8%A7-%D9%8A-5-%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%AC%D8%A7%D8%AA

[29] "التربية تعلن وضع خطط للقضاء على ظاهرة التسرب من المدارس (MoE Announces Plans to End School Dropout Trend)," Shabakat al-I'lam al-'Iraqi, 30 October 2022.

[30] Issa and Jamil, p. 362.

[31] UNICEF IRAQ, "Education: every child in school and learning." https://www.unicef.org/iraq/what-we-do/education

Shortly after the 2003 war, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), UNESCO and UNICEF declared that they were working on revising Ba'thist textbooks. A document prepared for UNESCO detailed the plan for this revision, which included the goals of eliminating references to Ba'thist ideology; Saddam Hussein's cult of personality; discriminatory statements against ethnic, religious or other groups; and references that reinforce gender inequality. Another intriguing goal was that "the texts were required to be free from any religious references in order to comply with the American constitution. This served as the basis for progressive communication between donors and UNESCO principles of universal values."[32] However, this latest requirement was rejected by the Iraqi Ministry of Education. Similarly, the revision included the goal of removing sentences or statements that encourage fighting against the US or Israel.[33] In September 2005, Education Minister Falah Hasan declared that all schoolbooks printed before 2004 "were banned to avert the negative ideas of Saddam Hussein's regime."[34]

Indeed, as we shall see, while textbooks were purged of references, sayings, images, and ideological tenets of the old regime, certain ideas, teaching principles, concepts, and systems of learning persist in the revised ones. Thus, the textbooks examined here represent continuity and change not only within the Ba'thist regime itself, but in certain aspects within the monarchical era as well.

This study analyzed around 70 textbooks between grades 1-12, for the year 2021. Generally speaking, the textbooks examined are somewhat anachronistic, as most of them were written in 2009-2010 and reprinted in 2020-2021. Even those which were written in later years, such as in 2016, appear to be identical to previous versions. Therefore, they do not reflect the sociopolitical and military developments that have taken place in Iraq ever since, like the emergence of the two extremist organizations al-Qa'ida (Al-Qaeda) and ISIS, and the civil war which has raged in Iraq intermittently between 2003 and 2017. This was largely due to considerations of censorship, namely the need to "protect" students from the negative effects of these upheavals. The result is a sharp contrast between the harsh reality that the students witness in their daily lives, and the sterile perspective which is taught in the textbooks.

The tendency to present a sanitized world to students is seen, for example, in the adaptation of the famous European folktale "Little Red Riding Hood," which in Arabic was given the title "Layla and the Wolf." Unlike most older versions where the wolf eats the grandmother and the little girl, in the Arabic version the grandmother manages to escape thanks to Layla's uncle, who saves her.[35] Another example is "Ali

[32] Commisso, p. 23.
[33] Ibid, p. 26.
[34] "Iraq's education ministry bans books of Saddam's era," KUNA, 11 September 2005. https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=1578503&language=en
[35] *My Reading,* Grade 3, 2021, pp. 104-107.

Baba and the Forty Thieves," which is a famous story taken from One Thousand and One Nights. Unlike in the original story, in the textbook's version of Open sesame" no one dies, neither Ali Baba's brother nor the thieves, and Ali Baba gives the money which he found in the cave to the mayor, who returns it to the people.[36]

The desire to promote moral values is illustrated in all the textbooks through what is missing. For example, the famous poet of the ninth century Abu Nuwwas, who lived in Mesopotamia/Iraq and wrote avant-garde poetry for his time by endorsing drinking wine and homosexuality is not mentioned in any of the textbooks, nor is his poetry, in contrast to the other famous poet of the same era, Al-Mutanabbi, whose poems are quoted in many of them.

On the whole, the textbooks encourage rote learning, most importantly of Qur'anic verses. Part and parcel of this approach is that these textbooks do not encourage critical and independent thinking; thus, the questions at the end of each chapter do not lead to critical thinking, but rather to conformism and repetition of what the text had stated before. A study on the quality of questions in secondary school Islamic Education textbooks reveals that the number of questions on knowledge and comprehension are high, while the number of questions on application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are very low.[37]

Another major problem that pervades most of the textbooks is poor editing, reflected in the many factual and historical mistakes. For example, the date of the German-Soviet Non-aggression Pact of August 1939 is given as 1930.[38] Another example is the Algerian woman fighter Djamila Bouhired, who is reported in the textbook to have joined the Algerian War in 1945, while, in fact, she did so in 1954.[39] Similarly, one of the textbooks mistakenly suggests that the Assyrians came from the Arabian Peninsula to the north of Iraq, and established a great and strong empire (*dawla*).[40]

The subjects which are taught include Qur'an and Islamic Education, social studies (which more often than not includes historical subjects as well), geography, Arabic, biology, and mathematics. It is interesting to note that Christian studies start from the second grade and continue until the sixth, while English studies start only from the sixth grade. Kurdish reading is taught in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grades, and there is one lesson for French and philosophy in the eleventh grade. Kurdish studies are most probably directed at Arab students, or at Kurdish students who live in Arab areas. In this context, it is important to point out that our study does not include the textbooks of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), which has a system of its own and is completely different from the central Arab one. The KRI's textbooks are all in the Kurdish language, and they place an emphasis on various other topics.

[36] Ibid, pp. 117-119.
[37] Eman Ghanem, Nik Rosila Nik Yaacob and Hairul Nizam Ismail, "Analyzing Islamic educational textbook questions in secondary schools in Iraq according to teachers' opinions," *International Journal of Education and Research,* Vol. 1, No. 8 (August 2013).
[38] *Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America*, Grade 11, 2021, p. 91.
[39] *Arabic Language,* Grade 11, Vol. 2, 2021, p. 115.
[40] *Arabic Reading,* Grade 5, 2021, p. 156.

Iraqi students who are exposed to the narrative of history textbooks will learn a lot about the ancient past, as well as about Arab history and the modern history of various Arab countries, yet very little about Iraq in the modern day. Social studies, geography, and history textbooks include large sections on the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, including the Sumerians, Assyrians, and Babylonians.[41]

The emphasis on these periods is intended to hark back to the era when Mesopotamia was the cradle of civilization, and to arouse feelings of pride and identification with that past in the student. It is also intended to serve as a model for contemporary life, when the situation in Iraq appears bleak and stressful. While learning about ancient civilizations, the textbook explains that this is useful for "being proud of our past, which encourages us to continue the road of civilization."[42] In this sense, this replicates the main ideas of Iraqi textbooks from monarchical times, and the Ba'thist era as well.[43]

Another motive for learning about this period is to connect it with the rise of Islam. For the authors of these textbooks, there is a direct link between ancient civilizations and the main symbol of Islam. Thus, in one of the social studies textbooks that talks about the Sumerians, it is emphasized that Ibrahim, "the father of prophets," was born in Ur, and that he and his son Isma'il built the Ka'ba.[44] Similarly, the textbook places great emphasis on this region's contribution to the world in general, and the West in particular, in the fields of culture, science, law, and technology, which compare positively with the Western model. In this sense, there is continuity with the Ba'thist era, when Saddam Hussein placed great emphasis on resurrecting the ancient past and developing the myth of Babylon, with a view to creating common historical antecedents which could unite all Iraqis.[45]

When examining Iraq's modern history, one can immediately notice that the narrative is censored, distorted, and at times silent on many crucial historical events and periods. One glaring example is the fact that the narrative stops in 1958 with the revolution of 'Abd al-Karim Qasim against the monarchy, leaving more than six decades

[41] *Arabic Reading,* Grade 5, 2021, pp. 151-156.
[42] *Social Studies*, Grade 7, 2021, p. 7.
[43] See for example the statement by Iraqi nationalist Sami Shawkat in his book from 1939: "And we find while going through the histories of the Semitic empires, which were formed in the Fertile Crescent... what makes us lift our heads high and makes us believe that the foundations of today's civilization is standing on the foundations which were built by our ancestors;" Saman Nasser, "Arab nationalism in interwar period Iraq: A descriptive analysis of Sami Shawkat's al-Futuwwa youth movement," Master's thesis, James Madison University, 2018, p. 22. For his part Saddam Hussein called on educators "to fortify the citizen's pride in the history of his people and his nation and to make it the principal source of inspiration for his actions, his creativity and his sacrifice;" Bengio, *Saddam's Word*, p. 163.
[44] *Social Studies,* Grade 7, 2021, p. 26.
[45] Bengio, *Saddam's Word,* p. 92.

of Iraqi history untaught.[46] Students remain in the dark on the 35 years of the Ba'thist era, which include the eight year Iraqi-Iranian war (1980-1988), the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990, and the two Gulf wars of 1991 and 2003. Nor do they learn anything about the post-Saddam era, which stretches across some twenty years. One explanation for this phenomenon is that this content was removed by the US administration in Iraq, wishing to avoid politically sensitive issues in school textbooks, and was never reinstated.[47]

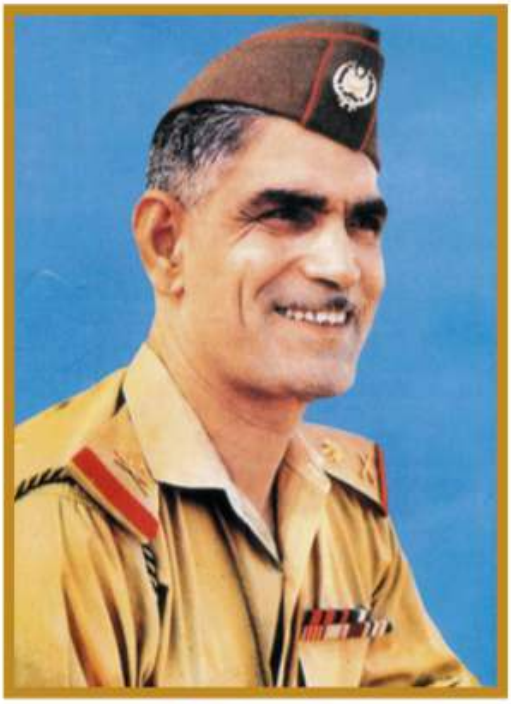
Moreover, even the period covered by the textbooks, which includes only about one third of Iraqi history, ignores significant events. For instance, the textbooks do not teach about the Assyrian massacre of 1933, which took place during the first year of independence. During this event, the Iraqi army killed between 300-500 people, and destroyed 121 villages in Simele and the surrounding region.[48] Nor do students learn about the struggle for power between different parties and forces under the monarchy, such as between ultra-nationalists and communists, or between liberal and Islamic trends.

Similarly, when the textbook narrates the 1958 Qasim revolution, it does so in a superficial way, and portrays it through a rose-tinted lens. One explanation for this attitude is that both the Shi'is and the Kurds regard Qasim as a benign ruler, in comparison to the Ba'th and Saddam Hussein. Accordingly, the textbook altogether neglects to mention the ruthless killing of all members of the royal family on the first day of the 14 July revolution. It enumerates all the positive achievements of the revolution, but does not mention the struggle for power between its leaders Qasim and 'Abd al-Rahman 'Arif, or between the Pan-Arabs and the communists. Nor does it reference the Kurdish-Iraqi war, which lasted from 1961 until the fall of Qasim and his own brutal killing in February 1963.[49]

[46] Interestingly, a history book which was written in Ba'thist era also ended in 1958. See: Al-Tikriti, p. 352.
[47] "When US administrators purged Iraq's history textbooks of Saddam, instead of rewriting the country's past they chose to leave it out. Large swathes of the 20th-century have been cut with the US-led coalition government anxious to avoid imposing a victor's version of events." Jack Fairweather, "US changes Iraqi history by omitting facts from textbooks," *The Irish Times,* 18 November 2003.
[48] For a discussion of this affair, see: George Donabed, Forging a *Forgotten History: Iraq and the Assyrians in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh University Sargon Press, 2015), pp. 109-128.
[49] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries,* Grade 12, 2021, pp. 146-147.



العقيد الركن عبد السلام محمد عارف
(١٩٢١-١٩٦٦م)



الزعيم الركن عبد الكريم قاسم
(١٩١٤-١٩٦٣م)

شكلت الثورة مجلس للسيادة بمثابة رئاسة للجمهورية ومجلس وزراء ترأسه الزعيم الركن عبد الكريم قاسم وضمت الوزارة عناصراً من احزاب المعارضة الوطنية .

حققت الثورة انجازات كبيرة على مختلف الصعد السياسية والاقتصادية والاجتماعية ومنها اصدار الدستور المؤقت والعفو عن السجناء السياسيين واعادة المفصولين الى وظائفهم . وفي المجال الاجتماعي اهتمت الثورة بنشر التعليم وتطويره في مختلف المراحل الدراسية والاهتمام بالجوانب الصحية وحل مشكلة السكن بتوزيع الاراضي على المواطنين المدنيين والعسكريين ومختلف الشرائح الاجتماعية وتشكيل الجمعيات ومنظمات المجتمع المدني .

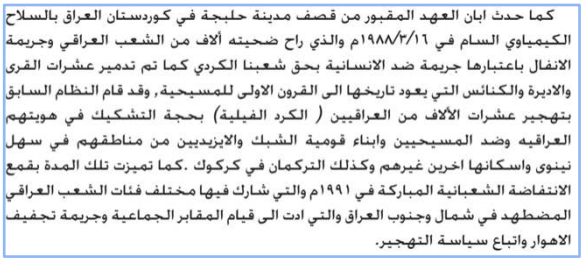
Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries, Grade 12, 2021, p. 147.

[*Right photo caption:*] *The Leader, 'Abd al-Karim Qasim (1914-1963)*
[*Left photo caption:*] *Colonel 'Abd al-Salam Muhammad 'Arif (1921-1966)*
[...]

The Revolution realized great achievements on various political, economic and societal levels. These included the promulgation of a temporary constitution, amnesty for political prisoners, and reinstatement of those who were fired from their posts. In the social arena, the Revolution was concerned with spreading education and developing it at all stages of learning; it was also concerned with healthcare, solving the housing problem by distributing plots of lands to civilians and military personnel from all social classes, and the creation of civil society organizations.

Students, including those in higher grades, learn almost nothing about domestic affairs, and the different social and political forces at play. They do not know that there was a Ba'th party or a Saddam Hussein, since these are not mentioned even once in any of the social studies and history textbooks. In very rare cases, they are mentioned implicitly using the term "the Buried Era" (*al-'ahd al-maqbur*).[50]

Another conflict that gains little coverage is that of the Kurds and the central government, which occurred intermittently from the establishment of the Iraqi state until the present day. While the Grade 12 Arab history textbook does cover the period between the establishment of the Iraqi state and its independence in 1932, it ignores other more problematic eras, such as the wars between the central government and the Kurds, which started in 1961 and later gathered momentum. Interestingly though, there is a curious passage that is artificially stuck in a completely different context and era, perhaps to answer the demand from the Kurdish community to incorporate this content. In the textbook, it is stated that while the Iraqi government did not support Egypt in the 1956 tripartite "Zionist," British and French war against it, the Iraqi people did come out in protest against the war, leading demonstrations across all of Iraq. Following this description, there is a short passage enumerating all the atrocities which the "buried regime" (*Ba'th*) committed against the Kurds (and other ethnic and religious groups). These include the chemical attack on Halabja on 16 March 1988 (in which some 5,000 people were killed); the Anfal campaign of 1987-1988 (which caused the death of some 180,000 Kurds); the persecutions of minorities such as Christians, Yazidis, Shabaks, Faylis, and Turkmens; as well as the suppression of the "Blessed Sha'ban Uprising," namely the March-April 1991 Shi'i and Kurdish popular revolution against the Ba'th.[51] This text did not appear in the 2018 version, and was newly introduced in the 2021 version, or shortly beforehand.[52]



كما حدث ابان العهد المقبور من قصف مدينة حلبجة في كوردستان العراق بالسلاح الكيمياوي السام في ١٩٨٨/٣/١٦م والذي راح ضحيته آلاف من الشعب العراقي وجريمة الانفال باعتبارها جريمة ضد الانسانية بحق شعبنا الكردي كما تم تدمير عشرات القرى والاديرة والكنائس التي يعود تاريخها الى القرون الاولى للمسيحية, وقد قام النظام السابق بتهجير عشرات الآلاف من العراقيين (الكرد الفيلية) بحجة التشكيك في هويتهم العراقيه وضد المسيحيين وابناء قومية الشبك والايزيديين من مناطقهم في سهل نينوى واسكانها اخرين غيرهم وكذلك التركمان في كركوك .كما تميزت تلك المدة بقمع الانتفاضة الشعبانية المباركة في ١٩٩١م والتي شارك فيها مختلف فئات الشعب العراقي المضطهد في شمال وجنوب العراق والتي ادت الى قيام المقابر الجماعية وجريمة تجفيف الاهوار واتباع سياسة التهجير.

***Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 144**

During the Buried Era, on 16 March 1988, the town of Halabja in Iraqi Kurdistan was bombed with toxic chemical weapons, an event which claimed thousands of victims from the Iraqi people. The Al-Anfal atrocity was also considered a crime against humanity against our Kurdish people. Similarly, dozens of villages, monasteries and churches, whose history goes back to the early centuries of Christianity, were demolished. In addition, the previous regime displaced thousands of Iraqis (Fayli Kurds), claiming their Iraqi identity was in doubt, Christians, members

[50] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 144.
[51] The same technique is used in a textbook on modern European and American history, where a similar text is stuck in a discussion on the establishment of UN and its principles. See: *Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America*, Grade 11, 2021, p. 107.
[52] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries,* Grade 12, 2021, pp. 142-144; compare Ibid., 2018, pp. 142-144. A virtually identical text was found in a 2018 textbook for the 9th grade, which likewise appears to have been inserted inharmoniously*: Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland*, Grade 9, 2018, pp. 82-83.

of the Shabak nation, and Yazidis, from their regions in the Nineveh plains, and settled others in their place; ditto for the Turkmens in Kirkuk. That period was also noted for the repression of the Blessed Sha'ban Uprising in 1991, which saw all parts of the oppressed Iraqi people in Iraq's north and south participate; this led to mass graves, the crime of swamp draining, and a policy of expulsion.

By contrast, the textbooks tend to glorify certain events and time periods, such as the 1920 revolution against the British occupiers. The below example describes the revolution as having united all groups of Iraqi people by their love to the homeland, and become a model for Iraqi and Arab revolutions.[53]



نتائج ثورة العشرين:

١. أثبت الشعب العراقي لصانعي السياسة البريطانية بأنه لايمكن السيطرة على العراق بشكل مباشر على الرغم من عدم التوازن في القوة العسكرية بين الطرفين.

٢. تعد ثورة العشرين واحدة من أبرز عوامل تأسيس الدولة العراقية الحديثة . إذ اجبرت بريطانيا على تغيير سياستها والموافقة على تأسيس الحكومة العراقية المؤقتة والتي تشكلت في تشرين الاول ١٩٢٠م.

٣. أفرزت ثورة العشرين اهمية التلاحم بين ابناء الشعب الواحد لمقارعة المحتلين . ولهذا يمكن عدها ثورة شعبية شملت كل انحاء العراق .

٤. ومن خلال ثورة ١٩٢٠م توحد أبناء الشعب العراقي بقومياته وأديانه ومذاهبه . وتحولت الصراعات القبلية الى مقاتلة العدو المشترك . فتجمعوا تحت راية الوطن وحبه .

٥. اثبتت ساحات الحرب ان الشعب العراقي له إرادة قوية في مقارعة قوات الاحتلال وكبدوه خسائر كبيرة .

٦. اصبحت ثورة العشرين نبراسا للثورات الوطنية والقومية في البلاد العربية.

Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries, Grade 12, 2021, p. 88

Outcomes of the 1920 Revolution:
[...]
4. Through the 1920 Revolution the Iraqi people united, regardless of nationality, religion or sect. Tribal conflicts transformed into a fight against a shared enemy, and they came together under the banner of the Motherland and love for it.
5. The fields of battle showed that the Iraqi people have a strong will to fight the occupation forces, and they inflicted heavy losses on them.
6. The 1920 Revolution became a beacon for national and nationalist revolutions across Arab countries.

The textbooks also seek to instill in students the idea of a 'just' war between the few against the many. Indeed, the 1920 revolution ended up becoming the founding ethos of the modern state of Iraq, which is lauded by all subsequent regimes. This contrasts with the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement, which textbooks condemn as "the ugliest colonialist deal in modern history,"[54] despite the fact that it played a similarly pivotal role in the creation of modern Iraq.



وقائع الثورة (٣٠حزيران ١٩٢٠م)

ثالثاً

تتمثل في انتشار الثورة في مناطق العراق الاخرى، مثل محافظة الانبار وكردستان العراق والتي كان لها دوراً فاعلاً في الثورة.

لقد امتدت الثورة من جنوب العراق الى شماله، واستمرت خمسة أشهر، أبدى فيها العراقيون بطولات فائقة وتضحيات تستحق الفخروالاعجاب رغم التباين الواضح في العدة والعدد، إذ قاتل ابناء العشائر والفلاحين بالاسلحة البسيطة والقديمة مثل (الفالة والمكوار)، أما أسلحة القوات البريطانية من المدافع والقنابل، إلا أن السلاح الحقيقي لابناء البلاد المحتلة كان تصميمهم على الاستقلال ومايمتلكوه من الارادة والعزيمة التي لاتقهر أبداً.

أسلحة ثورة العشرين

Social Studies, Grade 9, 2020, p. 109

Events of the Revolution (30 June 1920)
3. [...] The Revolution spread from the south of Iraq to its north, and lasted five months. During the Revolution, the Iraqis displayed extraordinary heroism and sacrifices worthy of pride and admiration, in spite of the clear disparity

[53] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, pp. 87-89.
[54] Ibid., p. 49.

in equipment and numbers. The tribespeople and farmers fought with simple, primitive weapons, like falah fishing spears and mikwar clubs, while the British forces were armed with artillery and bombs. The true weapon of the children of the occupied land, however, was their desire for independence, and their strong will and determination, which is something that cannot ever be defeated.

Kurdish involvement in fighting the British mandate is also praised. A Grade 9 social studies textbook describes the events of the 1920 Iraqi rebellion against the British mandate, and emphasizes the significant role that various ethnic groups played in it.



٣ الثورة في كردستان العراق

كان للكُرد دور بارز في احداث الثورة، ففي كفري منع فلاحو المدينة وصول الامدادات العسكرية البريطانية الى القوات الموجودة هناك، كما قاموا بأنزال العلم البريطاني معلنين انهاء الحكم البريطاني وإقامة حكومة كُردية مؤقتة فيها .

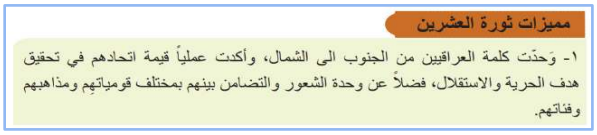
أما في أربيل فقد قام الثواربقطع الاتصال بين مدينتهم ومدينة كويسنجق تمهيداً لإقامة حكومة محلية فيها، كما امتدت الثورة الى مناطق خوشناو وراوندوز ودارت معارك عديدة تكبدت فيها قوات الاحتلال البريطاني خسائر كبيرة، ومن بين تلك المعارك المعركة التي جرت بالقرب من رافد الزاب الكبير في (١٥ايلول).

نشاط

كانت ثورة العشرين (ثورة العراق) التي امتدت من جنوبه الى شماله، وضح دور الاخوة الكرد في أحداث ثورة العشرين.

***Social Studies,* Grade 9, 2020, p. 112.**

3. *The Revolution in Iraqi Kurdistan*
The Kurds played a significant role in the Revolution [...] They removed the British flag, thereby announcing the end of the British rule and the foundation of an interim Kurdish government.
[Top left] Activity
The 1920 Revolution (the Iraqi Revolution) stretched from south to north. Clarify the role of our Kurdish brothers in the events of the 1920 Revolution.



مميزات ثورة العشرين

١- وَحدّت كلمة العراقيين من الجنوب الى الشمال، وأكدت عملياً قيمة اتحادهم في تحقيق هدف الحرية والاستقلال، فضلاً عن وحدة الشعور والتضامن بينهم بمختلف قومياتهم ومذاهبهم وفئاتهم.

***Social Studies,* Grade 9, 2020, p. 113.**

The characteristics of the 1920 Revolution
1. It united the Iraqis from the south and the north, and openly demonstrated the extent of their unity to achieve the goal of freedom and independence. Furthermore, [it demonstrated] the unity of mutual feelings and solidarity between them, including all their different nationalities, denominations, and sects.

Rather than encourage critical thinking among the students, the Grade 12 textbook tasks students with collecting pictures of the most important figures of the revolution, hanging them on the wall, and writing a passage about each one of them.[55] The same instructions are given for the Qasim revolution of 1958, in which students are asked to collect pictures and stamps and hang them on the wall.[56] While such activities might be suitable for pupils in earlier grades, it may be somewhat inappropriate for 17 year olds.

At times, the textbook avoids mentioning uncomfortable events, or includes inaccurate historical facts. For example, the Grade 12 textbook completely disregards the toppling of King Faysal by the French in Syria in July 1920. Similarly, while discussing the referendum for King Faysal in 1921 in Iraq, it reiterates the myth that he secured 96% of the votes.[57] The textbook ignores the fact that this was far from the actual figure, as historian Phebe Marr asserted that the Kurds, pro-Turkish groups, Iraqi notables and some Shi'i leaders did not support him.[58]

[55] Ibid., p. 89.
[56] Ibid., p. 147.
[57] Ibid., p. 90.
[58] Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Westview Press, 1985), p. 36.

The books fail to mention, let alone discuss in detail, the civil war between Sunnis and Shi'is, which broke out immediately after the US coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003. Nor is there any discussion of the two major organizations which threatened the very existence of the new regime and that of the Iraqi state itself, namely Al-Qa'ida and ISIS. The same is true for the lack of reference to the division within the Shi'i community, namely between the different forces which pull Iraq apart – the pro-Iranians and the pro-Americans. Thus, the treatment of Iraq's own history appears shallow, selective, and avoids discussing sensitive or controversial domestic issues.

The authors of these textbooks employ such methods of selective historiography and censorship, which verge on falsification of history, to "protect" students from the effects of negative or unpleasant events in Iraq's past by evading sensitive and problematic issues. However, by presenting an idyllic and selective picture of the past, the textbooks are likely to create cognitive dissonance in the students' minds, given that it is most likely they will learn about the true facts from different sources, such as stories from their own relatives, newspapers, books, and their own experience in life. In this case, their trust in the system may be shattered, increasing tensions rather than decreasing them.

Islamic Education and its Shi'ization

The Iraqi education system considers Islamic Education the most important topic for students, and consequently, unlike some other subjects, it is taught across all twelve grades. In the introduction to textbooks on the Qur'an and Islamic Education, starting from the first grade onwards, the teacher is told to make this lesson the student's favorite.

وأملنا بكلِّ المعلمين في أن يقوموا بدورهم الحقيقي وأن يجعلوا درس التربية الإسلامية أحبّ الدروس لتلاميذنا الأعزاء لما له من خصوصية عظيمة.
كما تقع على عاتق كل التربويين وأولياء الأمور مسؤولية حفظ الدين ووحدة المسلمين.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 1, 2021, p. 4.**

We hope that all the teachers will fulfill their true mission and make the lesson of Islamic Education, for its great distinctness, the most beloved one by our dear students. In addition, the educators and the guardians have the responsibility to defend religion and Muslim unity.

The same message is repeated in other textbooks, such as in those for the second and third grade.[59] Interestingly, this message is echoed in a textbook for the fifth grade, asserting that he loves the Qur'an and Islamic Education more than all other topics.

وإنّ أفضلَ التعلّم هو تعلّم القرآن الكريم وتعليمه كما قال رسولُ الله (ص): ((خيرُكم من تعلّم القرآنَ وعلّمه)).

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education**, Grade 5, 2021, p. 31.**

The most preferable study is that of the noble Qur'an and teaching it, as the Messenger of God (S) declared: "The best among you is he who studies the Qur'an and teaches it."

Furthermore, religious messages are not limited to the textbooks of the Qur'an and Islamic Education; they are interspersed in various other subjects, such as social studies, Arabic reading, grammar, and history. Students in all grades are asked to memorize a certain sura (chapter) of the Qur'an, or part of it, depending on its difficulty and messages therein. For example, in a first grade Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education textbook, first graders are asked to memorize the opening sura (***surat al-fatiha***) as well as the following passage, even before learning the alphabet:[60]

Allah is our God
Muhammad is our prophet
Islam is our religion
The Qur'an is our book
The Ka'ba is our qibla [the direction of prayer]
Muslims are our brothers
Muslim women are our sisters.[61]

The parents are expected to explain to their children the meaning of the shahada

[59] ***The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education***, Grade 2, 2021, p. 4; Ibid., Grade 3, 2021, p. 3.
[60] Interestingly, students only begin learning the alphabet in the second grade: ***My Reading***, Grade 2, 2021, p. 15. It is assumed that the teacher reads the sura loudly, and asks the pupils to repeat it.
[61] ***The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education***, Grade 1, 2021, p. 6.

(the declaration of faith: there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger) and the importance of prayer in mosques, whereby the child will show a willingness to join his father in prayer.[62] This is evidenced by the below image of a little boy praying.



The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, Grade 1, 2021, p. 8.

Such images are repeated in other grades, featuring mostly boys. However, the reminder that the obligation of prayer starts at the age of ten and that the father should beat (*darb*) his son if he does not obey the duty of prayer implies that the children are likely unenthusiastic about joining prayers.[63]

Young girls also have their own religious duties. This is exemplified in a story about an eight-year-old girl whose father bought her a dress. However, she refused to wear it because it was too short, and the family was happy with her decision even though she did not reach the age of nine, namely the age of duty (*taklif*) when she should dress modestly. Similarly, the girl expressed her happiness when she learned that she would start fasting with the family at the age of nine.[64]

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, Grade 5, 2021, p. 93.



[The girl Huda wears a dress with long sleeves]

Another story discusses the hijab. A girl who had reached the age of ten received a hijab as a present from her mother.[65] When she asked if this was not too early for her to wear it, her mother explained that she was a "precious treasure" (*kanz*) that should be protected accordingly, adding that, at the age of ten, the girl must fulfill all religious duties, such as praying

[62] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 1, 2021, pp. 22-29.
[63] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 7, 2021, p. 107.
[64] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 5, 2021, pp. 93-95.
[65] In the secular era of the Ba'th the girls in the textbook of 1978 do not wear hijab. Baram, p. 283.

and fasting.[66] Notably, the girl in the story is told to follow the example of Fatima, the Shi'i paradigm of femininity, as well as the "Mothers of the Believers," their Sunni counterparts. Fatima's chastity is exemplified by stating that, according to tradition, she even wore a hijab before a blind man.[67]

When discussing the issue of garments in general, the mother says that women should dress in a modest way, and not wear stretchy or transparent dresses, or ones that resemble men's garments. The text accompanies the dialogue between the mother and girl with an image of the child wearing a hijab.[68]


أمسكت الأم بيد شمسَ وأجلستها إلى جانبها ثم قالت لها: حبيبتي اليوم أصبحتِ مُكلفة شرعاً بتأدية العبادات من صلاة وصوم وسائر العبادات الأخرى.

قالت شمسُ: بنفسٍ راضيةٍ ووجهٍ ضاحك سعيد ـ أنا أحبُّ أن أكونَ كنزاً ثميناً يُحافظ عليه، وأنْ أقتدي بالزهراء (ع) وبأمهاتِ المؤمنين (رض) والآن ساعديني أمي على ارتدائه .

***The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 6, 2021, pp. 71-72.**

The Mother took Shams's hand, sat her beside her, and told her: "My love, today you have become legally obligated to perform the duties of prayer, fasting, and other duties."
[...]
Shams said – with a willing soul and a smiling and happy face: "I would like to be a well-guarded precious treasure, and to follow the example of [Fatima] al-Zahra' and the Mothers of the Believers [Muhammad's wives]. Now, mother, help me to wear it [the hijab]."

The importance of the Qur'an, another element of religious studies, is instilled in students in textbooks across multiple grades, and is a continuation of Saddam's project regarding the Qur'an. In the current textbooks, the Qur'an's significance is emphasized via different stories: thus, for example the healing power of the Qur'an is presented in a story about the young child Wa'il who became sick, but as soon as his mother read from the Qur'an his condition improved.[69]

Older students are taught that anyone who wishes to live happily should do so "with the noble Qur'an," as it represents "a way for a noble life and its laws" and because it is "superior to all the other holy books."[70]


الدرس الثاني :

أهميةُ القرآن الكريم في حياة الإنسان

لا بدّ للإنسان الذي يريد أنْ يحيا حياةً هانئة ، وأنْ يعيشَ عيشةَ السعداء أنْ يحيا مع القرآن الكريم والذكر الحكيم ففيه استحضارٌ لعظمة الله، وقراءته عبادة وفي آياته شفاء لصدور المؤمنين واستذكارللذنوب والندم عليها.

***The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 7, 2021, p. 22.**

[66] This contradicts an earlier textbook which puts the age of duty at nine.
[67] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 6, 2021, pp. 73.
[68] Ibid.
[69] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 1, 2021, p. 29.
[70] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 7, 2021, pp. 22-24, 50.

Lesson 2: The Importance of the Qur'an in Human Life
It is incumbent upon a human being who wishes to live happily and fortunately to live with the noble Qur'an. For it evokes God's greatness, and reading it is an act of worship, and its verses bring cure to the hearts of the believers, and recollection of sins and regret for them.

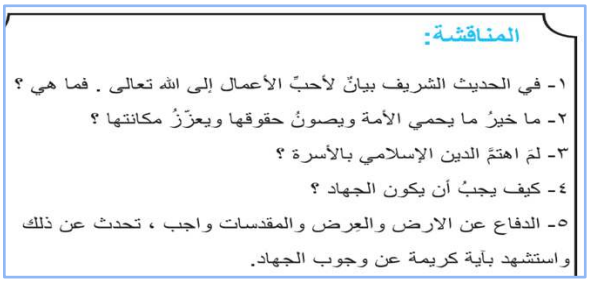
Accordingly, the students are told repeatedly about the importance of learning the Qur'an and memorizing it. Such learning can be carried out in different ways and through various means such as television, radio, etc. It can also be undertaken through recitation (*tartil*).[71] The contribution of the Qur'an to the world of science is emphasized in the biology textbook written in English. It says:


Contributions of Muslim and Arabic scientists to Biology

Allah (c.c) ordered to all people to be open to the knowledge and science in Holy Qur'an. Consequently Muslim and Arabic scientists contributed to development of biology and become useful for humanity. Dar'ul Hikmet college in Baghdad contributed to development of science and many scientific books are translated from Greek to Arabic in there. This studies passed to the Europe by aid of Andalusian and helped the Europian to awake from the deep darkness.

Biology 1 (English), **Grade 7, 2021, p. 8.**

The students are taught about the important ideals they should ascribe to in Islam, one of which is *jihad*. It is emphasized that *jihad* is one of God's three most beloved things: praying on time, respect for parents (birr al-walidayn), and *jihad*.[72] *Jihad* is important because it "protects the nation," "preserves its rights," and "strengthens its standing."[73]


المناقشة:

١- في الحديث الشريف بيانٌ لأحبِّ الأعمال إلى الله تعالى . فما هي ؟
٢- ما خيرُ ما يحمي الأمة ويصونُ حقوقها ويعزّزُ مكانتها ؟
٣- لمَ اهتمَّ الدين الإسلامي بالأسرة ؟
٤- كيف يجبُ أن يكون الجهاد ؟
٥- الدفاع عن الارض والعِرض والمقدسات واجب ، تحدث عن ذلك واستشهد بآية كريمة عن وجوب الجهاد.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 7, 2021, p. 106.**

Discussion:
[...]
2. What is the best thing to safeguard the nation, protect its rights, and strengthen its position? [the answer being jihad, according to the text].
[...]
4. How must jihad be carried out?
5. Defending the land, honor and sacred things is a religious duty. Discuss this point and refer to a Qur'anic verse on the legal incumbency of jihad.

Older students are taught that true *jihad* (literally: "exertion") is that of the soul (*jihad an-nafs*), and that the believer is he whose heart is bound to the mosques, the building of mosques, engaging with people in the mosques, and engaging in different discussions with them.[74] On the other hand, another textbook equates *jihad* with "fighting the infidels."[75]

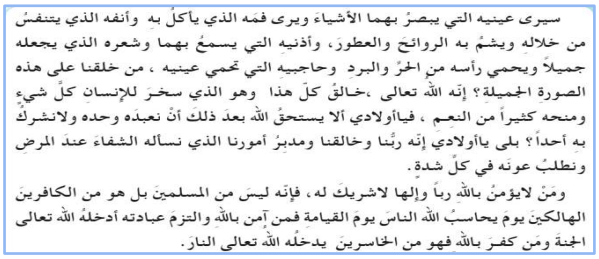
Another important ideal is martyrdom (*shahada*). A Muslim is encouraged to sacrifice his life and become a martyr in order to protect his religion and himself, as well as his property and honor.[76] This idea is

[71] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 4, 2021, pp. 62-64.
[72] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 7, 2021, p. 103.
[73] Ibid., p. 106.
[74] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 60.
[75] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 7, 2021, pp. 75, 105.
[76] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 9, 2021, pp. 82-83.

expressed in Arabic language poems as well.[77]

For the authors of the textbooks, Islam stands above all other ideals. For example, it is stressed that freedom (*hurriya*) should be within the limits of the famous Islamic ordinance "command the good and forbid evil" (*al-amr bil-ma'ruf wan-nahy 'an il-munkar*). If evil is perpetrated in the name of freedom, the Islamic ordinance stipulates that it must be rooted out.[78] Therefore, it is emphasized that acting negatively in the name of freedom is against God's orders.[79] Similarly, it is stated that ancestral, national, Pan-Arab, and other forms of "bigoted bonds" become weak with regards the religious bond.[80]

Textbooks likewise take an intolerant approach to a lack of belief in Islam. More than one textbook uses the loaded, negative term "infidel" (*kafir*), and includes the idea that people described as such will be punished by spending eternal torment in Hell. The idea of physical, infernal torture of sinners is introduced as early as the first grade.[81] A fourth-grade textbook teaches that "infidels" will be tortured in the fires of Hell,[82] and a fifth-grade textbook specifies that they will face "extreme suffering" in Hell for disbelieving in God.[83] In the seventh grade, students learn that even uttering "a word of unbelief" will condemn one to Hellfire.[84]



سيرى عينيه التي يبصرُ بهما الأشياء ويرى فمَه الذي يأكلُ به وأنفه الذي يتنفسُ من خلاله ويشمُّ به الروائحَ والعطورَ، وأذنيه التي يسمعُ بهما وشعره الذي يجعله جميلاً ويحمي رأسه من الحرِّ والبردِ وحاجبيه التي تحمي عينيه ، من خلقنا على هذه الصورة الجميلة؟ إنّه الله تعالى ،خالقُ كلّ هذا وهو الذي سخرَ للإنسان كلَّ شيءٍ ومنحه كثيراً من النعم ، فيأولادي ألا يستحقُّ الله بعدَ ذلكَ أنْ نعبدَه وحده ولانشركُ به أحداً؟ بلى ياأولادي إنّه ربُّنا وخالقنا ومدبرُ أمورنا الذي نسأله الشفاءَ عندَ المرض ونطلبُ عونه في كلِّ شدةٍ.

ومَنْ لايؤمنُ بالله رباً وإلهاً لاشريكَ له، فإنّه ليس من المسلمينَ بل هو من الكافرين الهالكينَ يومَ يحاسبُ اللهُ الناسَ يومَ القيامة فمن آمن بالله والتزمَ عبادته أدخلَهُ اللهُ تعالى الجنةَ ومَن كفرَ بالله فهو من الخاسرينَ يدخلُه اللهُ تعالى النارَ.

***The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 3, 2021, p. 8.**

[...] Who created us in this beautiful form? It is God Almighty. He created all this and He made it all subservient to Man, and gave him many blessings. So, children, after all this, does God not deserve us to worship Him alone, and not share His position with any other [deity]? Of course he does, children. He is our Lord, our Creator, he controls us. It is Him we ask for health from when we are ill, and it is Him Whose aid we seek in any trouble.
Whoever does not believe in God as one singular deity is not a Muslim. He is of the doomed Infidels on the Day when God judges mankind, the Day of Resurrection. Whoever believes in God and makes sure to worship Him, God Almighty will allow them to enter Paradise, and whoever disbelieves in God is of the Losers, and God Almighty will have them enter Hellfire.

Throughout the textbooks, students are taught about the right way to pray, eat and drink (using the right hand) as well as the most important basics of Islam, the fast of Ramadan, and other religious duties.

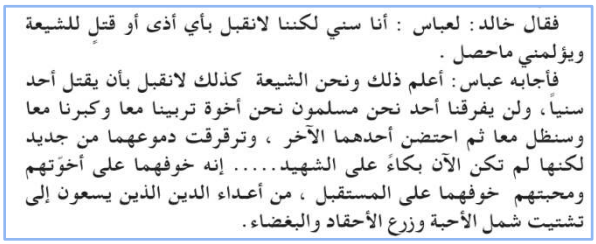
Among the most dramatic changes which took place in the aftermath of the 2003 War was the Shi'i ascent to power for the first time in hundreds of years of Mesopotamian/Iraqi history. This, in turn, triggered serious clashes between certain groups

[77] Cf. *Arabic Language*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 43.
[78] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 8, 2021, p. 40.
[79] Ibid., p. 109.
[80] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 7, 2021, p. 114.
[81] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 1, 2021, p. 54.
[82] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 4, 2021, p. 52.
[83] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 5, 2021, p. 7.
[84] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 7, 2021, p. 42.

among the Sunnis who lost power, and the Shi'i-led government. It also catapulted the notion of sectarianism to a central place in Iraqi political discourse.[85] This sudden change is reflected in the textbooks as well.

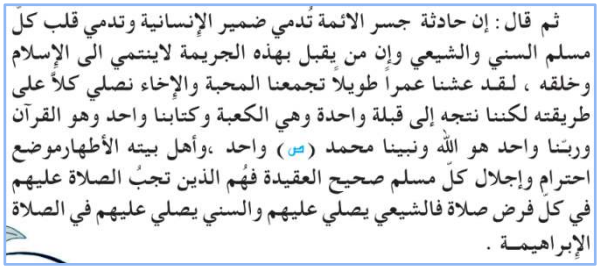
Teaching Islam in a state like Iraq, which has a majority of Shi'i population (c. 60%), has always been challenging.[86] Under the Sunni elites who ruled Iraq until 2003, the treatment of the subject of Sunni-Shi'i identity was very cautious, to the extent that the terms Shi'i or Sunni were rarely used in public discourse, and certainly not in textbooks. The main concern was not to evoke controversial issues. The same is true in the textbooks of post-Saddam Iraq, even though the Shi'is have ascended to the helm in the meantime. Thus, in most of the textbooks analyzed, neither the terms Shi'i nor Sunni appear as an identity marker.

One exception appears in a Grade 9 Islamic education textbook, which as an attempt to combat sectarian bigotry between the two factions, underlines the coexistence between Sunnis and Shi'is in Iraq, and their freedom of religion. The textbook illustrates a conversation between Khaled, a Sunni, and Abbas, a Shi'i, who are two neighbors, which takes place after the 2005 Al-A'imma bridge stampede, in which 953 Muslims of both denominations died. This conversation illustrates the relationship between Sunnis and Shi'is in Iraq: it is repeatedly emphasized that Shi'is and Sunnis are brothers, sharing one God, holy book, and prophet, and that whoever tries to blame or harm people from one denomination does not belong to Islam. It is explicitly stated that the future of Iraqi society depends on the positive relationship between Shi'is and Sunnis. It is worth mentioning that on page 119 there is an emphasis on freedom of religion, and it is said that people in Iraq "must sustain the relations of affection and coexist with all denominations and religions." The textbook even questions: "Who would we be if we accuse anyone of unbelief?"



فقال خالد: لعباس : أنا سني لكننا لانقبل بأي أذى أو قتلٍ للشيعة ويؤلمني ماحصل .
فأجابه عباس: أعلم ذلك ونحن الشيعة كذلك لانقبل بأن يقتل أحد سنياً، ولن يفرقنا أحد نحن مسلمون نحن أخوة تربينا معا وكبرنا معا وسنظل معا ثم احتضن أحدهما الآخر ، وترقرقت دموعهما من جديد لكنها لم تكن الآن بكاءً على الشهيد..... إنه خوفهما على أخوّتهم ومحبتهم خوفهما على المستقبل ، من أعداء الدين الذين يسعون إلى تشتيت شمل الأحبة وزرع الأحقاد والبغضاء.

Khaled said to Abbas: "I am Sunni, but we will not accept any harm or killing against Shi'is. I am hurt by what has happened."
Abbas answered: "I know that. We Shi'is won't accept the killing of Sunnis as well. None will ever tear us apart. We are Muslims. We are brothers. We were brought up and raised together and we will remain together."
Then they hugged each other, and their tears flowed again, only this time they did not cry for the martyred, but fearing for their fraternity and affection, for the future, for the enemies of religion that try to disrupt the union of loved ones and spread hatred.



ثم قال: إن حادثة جسر الائمة تُدمي ضمير الإنسانية وتدمي قلب كلّ مسلم السني والشيعي وإن من يقبل بهذه الجريمة لاينتمي الى الإسلام وخلقه ، لقد عشنا عمراً طويلا تجمعنا المحبة والإخاء نصلي كلاً على طريقته لكننا نتجه إلى قبلة واحدة وهي الكعبة وكتابنا واحد وهو القرآن وربّنا واحد هو الله ونبينا محمد (ص) واحد ،وأهل بيته الأطهارموضع احترام وإجلال كلّ مسلم صحيح العقيدة فهُم الذين تجبُ الصلاة عليهم في كلّ فرض صلاة فالشيعي يصلي عليهم والسني يصلي عليهم في الصلاة الإبراهيمـة .

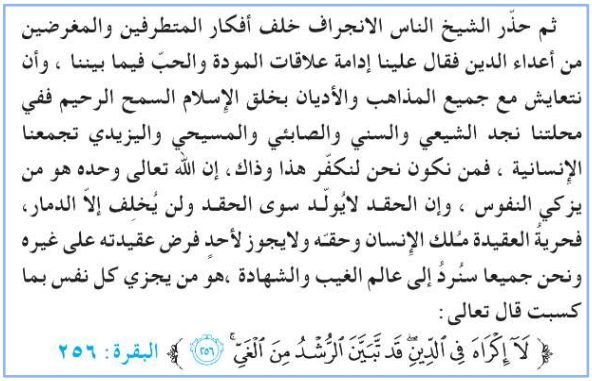
[85] See Fanar Haddad, *Understanding "Sectarianism": Sunni Shi'a Relations in the Modern Arab World,* (Hurst & Company, 2020), pp. 265-317.
[86] Haddad suggests that 60 percent of all Shi'i Arabs are Iraqis. Ibid., p. 174.

Then [the Sheikh] said: "The [2005] Al-A'imma Bridge Incident makes any human heart bleed and makes any Sunni or Shi'I Muslim's heart bleed. Whoever accepts this crime does not belong to Islam [...] We have lived a long life of accumulating affection and fraternity, and we both have prayed in our own ways, but the direction of our prayer is one – toward the Ka'ba, our book is one – the Qur'an, our God is one – Allah, and our prophet is one – Muhammad. The pure people of his house have an honorable and respected status to every Muslim whose faith is right [...] so both the Sunni and Shi'i pray the Abrahamic prayer for them.


قال رسول الله (ص) : (من صلّى صلاتنا واستقبل قبلتنا وأكل ذبيحتنا فهو منا ونحن منه) ، وإن من قام بهذا الفعل لاينتمي إلى مذهب بل لاينتمي إلى الإسلام فلا يجوز لنا أن ننسب أخطاء القتلة والمجرمين إلى مذهب ؛ لأن الإسلام بريء من كلّ القتلة الذين يدّعون الانتماء إلى مذهب من مذاهب الإسلام ،والإسلام منهم براء فهو سلم وسلام ورحمة وتآخ ، وتعاون على البرّ والتقوى ونصرة للضعفاء ، والدليل على هذا الإخاء مجلس العزاء إذ يضمّ الشيعة والسنة ولن نسمح لأعداء الإسلام بتمزيق وحدتنا ، بل اننا في داخل أسرنا نجد السني والشيعي فقد تزوج الكثير من أبنائنا وإخواننا من أبناء المذهب الآخر فاصبح البيت الواحد يضم المذهبين وأصبحنا كما يقال في أمثالنا العامية (الخال وابن الأخت) ،

وإن هذا الفكر الغريب والدخيل ،انما هو فكرٌ متطرف أراده أعداء الإسلام والمنتفعون لتمزيق الأمة ، وتشويه صورتها فوجب على الجميع أن يحذر الإنسياق خلف مخططات أعداء الإنسانية والدين ، ثم استطرد الشيخ

[...] We should not relate the sins of killers to any denomination, because Islam is innocent of all these killers who claim to belong to an Islamic denomination [...] Islam is peace, compassion, and fraternity [...] Proof of that is the condolences tents which included Sunnis and Shi'is. We will never let the enemies of Islam tear our unity apart. Within our families we find Sunnis and Shi'is, and many of our sons and brothers marry those of the other denomination, so our home became one, including both denominations [...] This curious foreign idea is an extreme one, desired by the enemies of Islam and those who profit from the nation's disruption and distortion of its image. Therefore, it is everybody's duty to beware of being carried away by the plans of the enemies of humanity and religion [...]


ثم حذّر الشيخ الناس الانجراف خلف أفكار المتطرفين والمغرضين من أعداء الدين فقال علينا إدامة علاقات المودة والحبّ فيما بيننا ، وأن نتعايش مع جميع المذاهب والأديان بخلق الإسلام السمح الرحيم ففي محلتنا نجد الشيعي والسني والصابئي والمسيحي واليزيدي تجمعنا الإنسانية ، فمن نكون نحن لنكفّر هذا وذاك ، إن الله تعالى وحده هو من يزكي النفوس ، وإن الحقد لايُولّد سوى الحقد ولن يُخلف إلاّ الدمار، فحريةُ العقيدة مُلك الإنسان وحقه ولايجوز لأحدٍ فرض عقيدته على غيره ونحن جميعا سنُردُ إلى عالم الغيب والشهادة ،هو من يجزي كل نفس بما كسبت قال تعالى :

﴿ لَآ إِكۡرَاهَ فِي ٱلدِّينِۖ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ ٱلرُّشۡدُ مِنَ ٱلۡغَيِّۚ ﴿٢٥٦﴾ ﴾ البقرة: ٢٥٦

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, Grade 9, 2021, pp. 117-119.

The Sheikh warned the people of being carried away by the opinions of prejudiced and extremist enemies of religion. He said: "We must sustain the relations of love and affection among us and coexist with all denominations and religions [...] in our neighborhood we have Shi'is, Sunnis, Sabeans, Christians and Yazidis [...] Who would we be if we accuse this and that of unbelief [...] Freedom of faith is a right of any person, and none may force their faith upon others [...] Allah has said: 'Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood' (2:256)."

Nonetheless, as discussed later on, the authors found various means to emphasize the Shi'i-centric orientation of teaching Islam, among others, by using the allegedly objective term Al al-Bayt al-Shi'i. Achim Rhode explained this phenomenon, saying that "openly acknowledging the theological differences between Sunnis and Shi'is in a nonjudgmental way is still considered a taboo in Iraq, and schools avoid touching these issues. Ministry of Education officials and Iraqi members of Parliament explained this practice as a necessary step to avoid sectarian conflict from breaking out inside schools."[87]

[87] Rohde, p. 725.

In his study on Iraqi textbooks, Dai Yamao emphasized that the historical perspectives found in the old textbooks were Sunni-based, as large numbers of the political elite were Sunni Muslims under the former regime.[88] While concurring with this description, Amatzia Baram found indications of a certain balance between Sunni and Shi'i traditions.[89] Achim Rhode, too, discovered that "during the 1990s, the regime symbolically acknowledged a Shi'i perspective in textbook narratives. However, emergency revisions carried out on behalf of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) by international agencies in 2003–4 strengthened the Sunni bias in Iraqi textbooks, rather than erasing signs of sectarianism from the textbooks. Since the CPA was dissolved in 2004, the government has gradually introduced more references to the Shi'i tradition into textbook narratives."[90]

The textbooks examined here present a major shift from the Ba'thist era and the first few years of post-Saddam Iraq, in the extensive shi'ization of all educational materials. The most significant example is the veneration of Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib. According to Shi'i doctrine, "the Imam is the person who is appointed by God and introduced by the Prophet, and then by each preceding Imam by explicit designation [...] to lead the Muslim community, interpret and protect the religion and the law (*shari'a*), and guide the community in all affairs. The Imam is the Representative of God on earth (*khalifat Allah*) and the successor of the Prophet. He must be infallible and possess divine knowledge of both the exoteric and the esoteric meaning of the Qur'an."[91]

'Ali bin Abi Talib was the cousin and son-in law of the Prophet Muhammad, the husband of Fatima (*al-Zahra'*), the Prophet's daughter, and father of the Imams Hasan and Husayn and their descendants, altogether all twelve Shi'i Imams. The textbooks stress the importance of these family bonds, and the special status of Fatima as the prophet's beloved and reliable daughter, as the mother of Hasan and Husayn, and the most noble and pious woman.[92]

'Ali, Fatima, and their descendants are named "Al al-Bayt" (People of the Household) – namely, the biological family of Muhammad. According to Shi'i beliefs, 'Ali was the legitimate holder of authority in the Muslim community, and was appointed by the Prophet himself to be his rightful successor. However, this authority was "usurped" by the three first caliphs: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthman, who reigned from 632-656. 'Ali himself was the fourth caliph for only five years (656-651) before he was assassinated.[93]

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[88] Yamao, p. 160.
[89] Baram, pp. 282-285.
[90] Rohde.
[91] Mohamad Ali Shomali, "Discovering Shi'i Islam," Al-Islam.org. https://www.al-islam.org/discovering-shii-islam-mohammad-ali-shomali/chapter-3-doctrines.
[92] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 9, 2021, p. 114.
[93] 'Uthman was also assassinated and his family accuses 'Ali of the deed. Textbooks of the Ba'thist era describe the three caliphs in a very positive way but 'Ali too. He is referred to as "Imam": Baram, p. 284.

In accordance with Shi'i tradition, the Prophet Muhammad is referred to as follows: "Blessings of God be upon him and his family [al], and grant him peace" (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa-'alihi wa-sallam*). This is different to the one primarily used by Sunnis: "Blessings of God be upon him, and grant him peace".[94] Nonetheless, the textbook adds the phrase "and his [Muhammad's] Companions [wa-suhbihi]," perhaps in an attempt to appease the Sunnis.[95] Similarly, in the declaration of faith, students are presented with the Shi'i formula which includes in the latter part: "O God, pray for Muhammad and his family [al]:"

((أشهدُ أنْ لا إله الا الله وأشهدُ أنّ محمداً رسولُ الله اللهم صلِّ على محمد وآل محمد)) . وكل ذلكَ من فضلِ اللهِ عليكَ يا محمد (ص) .

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 3, 2021, p. 6.**

[The shahada]: "I testify that there is no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God. O God, pray for Muhammad and the family of Muhammad." All of this [demonstrated] God's favor for you, O Muhammad.

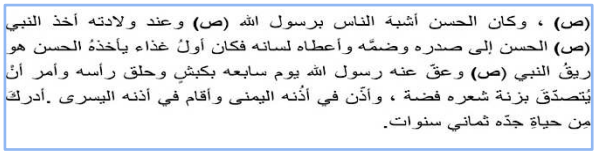
The textbooks reinforce the idea of the unique role of 'Ali in Islam by making a point of highlighting the intimacy and closeness between the prophet and 'Ali. For example, fourth grade students are taught that the Prophet befriended 'Ali in particular, who was a muhajir (among the first emigrants from Mecca to Medina, following Muhammad) like him.[96] A fifth grade student learns that the angel Gabriel (*Jibril*) came to Muhammad and taught him to ablute (*wudu*) and pray, after which he taught his wife Khadija and his cousin 'Ali to do the same. 'Ali's loyalty to Muhammad is exemplified in the fact that he accompanied him during the secret prayers which lasted for three years.[97] In another famous story illustrating 'Ali's sense of loyalty to and sacrifice for the prophet, "the courageous young man [fata]" 'Ali slept in Muhammad's bed when the latter went from the Arab Meccan polytheists to Al-Madina in order to mislead the Prophet's enemies, who sought to kill him.[98]

The high regard in which Muhammad 'Ali is underscored in the recounting of a tradition where he gave 'Ali his flag with which he conquered the Jewish settlement of Khaybar. 'Ali's success came after the failures of other Companions (implying the first three caliphs – Abu Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthman).[99] 'Ali's courage and preeminence over all the other Muslim leaders and fighters is illustrated in the narration of the conquest of Mecca: while historically speaking, other prominent Islamic figures participated in the conquest, the textbook mentions only that of 'Ali.[100] 'Ali also played an important role in the death rites for Muhammad.[101]

[94] It must be mentioned that in the late Ba'thist era the textbooks employed the Sunni version. Baram, p. 282.
[95] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 1, 2021, p. 9.
[96] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 4, 2021, p. 37.
[97] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 5, 2021, pp. 15-16.
[98] Ibid., p. 69.
[99] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 6, 2021, p. 36.
[100] Ibid., p. 38.
[101] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 8, 2021, p. 23.

The textbooks give the impression that more emphasis is placed on the unique characteristics of 'Ali than those of Muhammad, and the need to use the former as an example. This is done with the help of stories and quotations from his sayings. For example, third grade students are taught about the compassion 'Ali had for animals and his strict protection of public property.[102] In other textbooks, 'Ali is praised for his predisposition for equality, tolerance,[103] and honesty.[104] Others describe 'Ali's wisdom, courage, heroism, sacrifice (*istishhad*), as well as his writings and contribution to Islamic thought.[105]

The textbooks throw into relief the Prophet's love for and special bond with 'Ali and his sons Hasan and Husayn, as illustrated in various stories and episodes. For example, the Shi'i ethos has it that when Hasan was born, it was Muhammad who named him, and upon his birth he put his tongue into Hasan's mouth so that the prophet's saliva was his first food.


(ص) ، وكان الحسن أشبه الناس برسول الله (ص) وعند ولادته أخذ النبي (ص) الحسن إلى صدره وضمّه وأعطاه لسانه فكان أولُ غذاء يأخذهُ الحسن هو ريقُ النبي (ص) وعقّ عنه رسول الله يوم سابعه بكبشٍ وحلق رأسه وأمر أنْ يُتصدّقَ بزنة شعره فضة ، وأذّن في أذُنه اليمنى وأقام في أذنه اليسرى .أدرك من حياةِ جدّه ثماني سنوات.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, Grade 7, 2021, p. 109.

Hasan was the person looking most similar to the Messenger of God (S). When he was born, the Prophet took Hasan to his chest, embraced him, and gave him his tongue so the first meal Hasan had was the Prophet's saliva. When he was seven days old, the Messenger of God slaughtered for [Hasan] a ram, he shaved his hair and ordered to give alms of silver in the weight of his hair. He also called two formulas of prayer in his right and left ears. He was 8 years old when his grandfather [Muhammad] died.

It was also the Prophet who named Husayn, a name hitherto unknown. Upon Husayn's birth, Muhammad started weeping because he prophesied that evil people would kill him.[106] The special relationship between the two is expressed in Muhammad's saying: "Husayn is from me and I am from Husayn."[107] The Prophet, who had many horses, granted one named Dhu al-Janah to Husayn, and the latter was riding this horse on the day he was martyred in Karbala'.[108]

The textbooks underscore the preeminence of Al al-Bayt, emphasizing how beloved Hasan and Husayn were by Muhammad and his Companions, and demonstrating the virtue of expressing love towards Al al-Bayt.[109] Accordingly, the students are encouraged to love Al al-Bayt as they love the Prophet, to espouse their ways and follow in their footsteps. Love for Al al-Bayt is mentioned as the second-most encouraged display of spiritual love, after love for God and Muhammad, and before love for the Companions (*sahaba*) of the Prophet and love for the Muslim

[102] _The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education_, Grade 3, 2021, pp. 24, 59, 70-71.
[103] _Social Studies_, Grade 5, 2019, pp. 52, 54, 63.
[104] _Arabic Reading,_ Grade 6, 2021, p. 45.
[105] _The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education_, Grade 9, 2021, pp. 85-90.
[106] Ibid., p. 148.
[107] Ibid., p. 149.
[108] _Arabic Language,_ Grade 10, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 13.
[109] _The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education_, Grade 7, 2021, p. 110.

believers.[110] This may indicate that textbook authors are attempting to acknowledge the lofty status of the Companions (revered by the Sunna) alongside the Shi'i Imams. In invoking a famous tradition (hadith) by Muhammad, the text presents Al al-Bayt as one of two weighty, indispensable things (*thaqalayn*) that Muhammad bequeathed to the Islamic community, the first being the Qur'an.[111]

The Shi'is seek support for the special status of Al al-Bayt in the Qur'an. It should be noted that interpreting a specific Qur'anic utterance as a textual reference to Al al-Bayt bolsters the legitimacy of the Shi'i interpretation of Islam. Therefore, even though the Qur'an does not mention Al al-Bayt by name, the narrative in the textbook presents a Qur'anic commentary of the Al-Insan Sura, arguing that the sura refers to them implicitly:


بيّنَ لنا علماءُ التفسيرِ الذينَ فسّروا القرآن ان هذه السورة تتحدث عن فضلِ الإمامِ علي بن أبي طالب (ع) وزوجته فاطمة (ع) بنت رسول الله محمد (ص) وولديهما الحسن والحسين (ع) الذين وصفَهم الله تعالى في القرآنِ الكريم بقولهِ تعالى:
﴿ إِنَّ ٱلْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِن كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا ۝٥ ﴾

***The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 6, 2021, p. 61.**

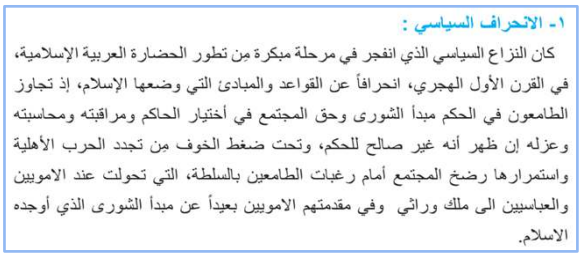
The scholars of Qur'an exegesis [tafsir] have clarified for us that this sura speaks of the favor of Imam 'Ali bin Abi Talib, and his wife Fatima daughter of the Messenger Muhammad, and their children Hasan and Husayn, whom God described in the noble Qur'an in his saying: "Indeed, the virtuous will have a drink flavored with camphor."

In contrast with the idealization of 'Ali and his sons, there is a tendency in the textbooks to subtly afford less importance to the other three Companions. Rather than curse them, as some radical Shi'i traditions do, they are referred to by the phrase "May Allah be pleased with him" (*radiya Allahu 'anhu*). In contrast, 'Ali is referred to with the phrase "Peace be upon him" (*'alayhi al-salam*), which is typically reserved in Sunni Islam for any prophet or messenger.[112] A positive relationship between 'Ali and other caliphs is suggested by anecdotal stories, for example, 'Ali educating Abu Bakr's son Muhammad.[113]

One of the most vilified Sunni rulers is Mu'awiya, whom the Shi'is blame for opposing the rightful caliph 'Ali and persecuting him and his followers. Some textbooks reflect this former enmity by belittling Mu'awiya and mentioning his name without any title, such as that of caliph or "Commander of the Faithful," (*amir al-mu'minin*) as he is often referred to by Sunnis.[114] In contrast, a textbook from the Ba'thist era showed a picture of Mu'awiya, and presented him in positive light.[115]

[110] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 10, 2021, pp. 53-56.
[111] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 9, 2021 pp. 31-32.
[112] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 5, 2021, p. 16.
[113] *Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2021, p. 49.
[114] *History of the Arab Islamic Civilization*, Grade 10, 2021, p. 147.
[115] Baram, p. 284.

In another example, there is implicit criticism of those who seized power from 'Ali and his progenies. The textbook maintains that the political conflict which broke out during the first century of Islam was a departure from true Islam by those who were power-hungry and acted against "the right of society to choose its ruler."



١- الانحراف السياسي :

كان النزاع السياسي الذي انفجر في مرحلة مبكرة من تطور الحضارة العربية الإسلامية، في القرن الأول الهجري، انحرافاً عن القواعد والمبادئ التي وضعها الإسلام، إذ تجاوز الطامعون في الحكم مبدأ الشورى وحق المجتمع في أختيار الحاكم ومراقبته ومحاسبته وعزله إن ظهر أنه غير صالح للحكم، وتحت ضغط الخوف من تجدد الحرب الأهلية واستمرارها رضخ المجتمع أمام رغبات الطامعين بالسلطة، التي تحولت عند الامويين والعباسيين الى ملك وراثي وفي مقدمتهم الامويين بعيداً عن مبدأ الشورى الذي أوجده الاسلام.

History of the Arab Islamic Civilization, **Grade 10, 2021, p. 147.**

The Political Deviation:
The political conflict which had broken out at an early stage in the consolidation of Arab and Islamic culture, during the first Hijri century, constituted a deviation from the foundations and principles that Islam had introduced. At that time, those greedy for power violated the principle of consultation [shura] and the right of society to choose its ruler, inspect him, hold him to account, and depose him if he proved unsuitable for rule. In fear of renewing the civil war and prolonging it, society yielded to the demands of the greedy. Under the Umayyad and Abbasids, governorship became hereditary, far remote from the Islamic principle of consultation.

Additionally, the revisionist Shi'i narrative is exemplified by textbooks bringing to the fore various poets or writers of Shi'i origin, and quoting from their works. One such example is the poet Muhammad Sa'id al-Habbubi (1849–1915), who was born in Najaf, and wrote a poem about lovers; however, the textbook interprets this as his love for Iraq. Another example is the poet 'Abd al-Muhsin al-Kazimi (1865–1935), who was born in Kazimiyya and was famous for his love for Iraq, but was forced to leave the country as a result of Ottoman persecution.[116] Unsurprisingly, the famous Shi'i poet Muhammad Mahdi al-Jawahiri (1900–1997), who was born in Najaf, is described as "the Arabs' greatest poet," after Al-Mutanabbi (915–965) – the famous Abbasid poet. The textbook quotes an excerpt of a poem demonstrating his patriotism and yearning for Iraq.[117]

The literature textbooks contain texts referring to Imam Husayn. For example, Muhammad 'Ali al-Khafaji, who was born in Karbala' is quoted in a piece entitled "Husayn will return again." (*thaniyan yaji'u l-Husayn*) It commences in the year 61 AH (680 AD) in Karbala': Husayn's brother warns him of the dangers awaiting him there, but he insists on going and announces his readiness to die if it were to be necessary.[118] The Egyptian poet Amal Dunqol is also quoted in a poem which speaks about suffering, of which Husayn is taken as an example. In the explanation, the textbook emphasizes that Husayn is "a righteous man to be imitated and belongs to all the Muslims" (*rajul umma wa-mulk li-kull al-muslimin*), as well as a symbol for all people who search for justice.[119]

As for the Ba'thist period, even though the textbooks do not mention it by name, they do refer to the persecution of Shi'is under its rule. A textbook on the Qur'an and

[116] *Literature and Texts (Sciences Track)*, Grade 12, 2021, pp. 16, 18.
[117] Ibid., pp. 21-25.
[118] Ibid., pp. 58-63.
[119] Ibid., pp. 67-69.

Islamic education refers to the renowned Ayatullah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr, who wrote one of the most important books in Islam, namely *Iqtisaduna* ("Our Economy"). The textbook mentions the date of April 9, 1980, when he and his sister Bint al-Huda were executed by the regime, emphasizing that it corresponds to the date of the collapse of "the ancient regime" (*al-hukm al-ba'id*) on 9 April 2003.[120] Interestingly, the textbook remains silent about the al-Da'wa party, of which al-Sadr was one of its founders, and which ascended to power in post-Saddam Iraq.

The new curriculum on religion has raised concern among many parties. Minorities such as Christians and Mandeans felt that this curriculum isolated them; even though Christian students were permitted to skip religion classes, they did feel marginalized. The foremost critics of this program were, however, Sunni politicians and educators, who criticized the textbooks biased in favor of the Shi'i narrative. Thus, for example, 'Ala' Makki, a Sunni member of parliament and head of a parliamentary committee on education, said that the new curriculum was unbalanced: "The current changes have a huge sectarian impact [...] The updating process should focus on the shared aspects [of Islam], not on a specific sect." Mithal al-Alusi, an independent Sunni legislator who has adopted a secular platform, went as far as to say: "Our Islamic curriculum does not even represent Islam. It is aimed at creating a fascist religious identity [...] I am concerned that we will have a new Taliban in Iraq when the current generation graduates from schools." One of the notions which he criticized most was *jihad*: "There is no need for *jihad* as long as there is a lawful government and parliament in Iraq [...] The curriculum should be decided by experts – not by clerics or politicians."[121]

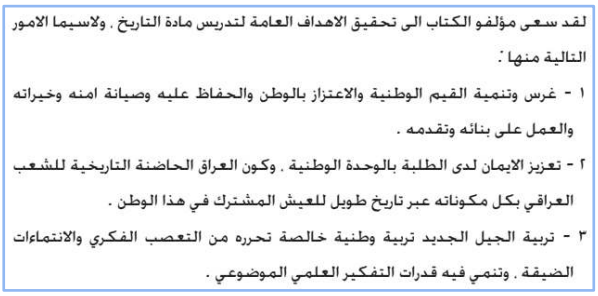
[120] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 91.
[121] Abeer Mohammed, "Iraqi School Books Criticized for Sectarian Bias," IWPR, 15 February 2010.

In Search of Identity: Between Iraqi Patriotism, Kurdish Nationalism, and Pan-Arabism

Throughout Iraq's modern history, two trends of nationalism were vying for influence in the Iraqi narrative and among public opinion: territorial nationalism, and Pan-Arabism. While this held true for many other Arab countries, the motives behind Iraq's stance were unique. When the Sunni Arabs were in power, they had to juggle between these two ideals due to both their ambition to lead the Arab world, and given that, being a minority, they needed the strategic depth of the Arab world. Simultaneously, they sought to reinforce Iraqi patriotism against the domestic Kurdish threat, and the external Iranian one. Under the Ba'th, the same trend continued to play an important role: initially the Ba'th had placed a greater emphasis on Pan-Arabism for ideological reasons, however with the passage of time and the outbreak of different wars, their focus shifted toward Iraqi patriotism.[122]

Post-Saddam Iraq is caught in the same identity dilemma. Even though the Shi'i majority ascended to power and no longer harbored dreams of Pan-Arabism, the leadership still had to juggle between the two ideals. Indeed, rather than subsiding, the domestic threats increased significantly, either due to the rise of radical and revisionist forces from among the Sunnis, such as Al-Qa'ida and ISIS, or due to fears of Kurdish separatism. Externally, the need to reinforce the feeling of Arabism, as well as Arab ties, was due to fears of Iranian expansionism.

The narrative in the textbooks reflects these opposite trends, though in a very subtle or roundabout manner. On the one hand, they place great emphasis on Iraqi patriotism, which is highlighted in the introduction to the Grade 12 history textbook. It is stated that the goal of the study is to instill in students the feelings of Iraqi patriotism (*wataniyya*), a sense of Iraqi unity which includes all Iraqi entities, and to raise the new generation along the lines of a purely patriotic education which will free them from fanatic thinking. Nowhere does the text mention Arab nationalism (*qawmiyya 'arabiyya*).



لقد سعى مؤلفو الكتاب الى تحقيق الاهداف العامة لتدريس مادة التاريخ . ولاسيما الامور التالية منها :

١ - غرس وتنمية القيم الوطنية والاعتزاز بالوطن والحفاظ عليه وصيانة امنه وخيراته والعمل على بنائه وتقدمه .

٢ - تعزيز الايمان لدى الطلبة بالوحدة الوطنية . وكون العراق الحاضنة التاريخية للشعب العراقي بكل مكوناته عبر تاريخ طويل للعيش المشترك في هذا الوطن .

٣ - تربية الجيل الجديد تربية وطنية خالصة تحرره من التعصب الفكري والانتماءات الضيقة . وتنمي فيه قدرات التفكير العلمي الموضوعي .

Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries, **Grade 12, 2021, p. 3.**

The textbook's authors sought to realize the general objectives of history teaching, including the following matters:
1. Cultivation and development of national values, taking pride in the nation, protecting it, defending its security and resources, and working for its construction and progress.

[122] Bengio, ***Saddam's Word,*** pp. 95-96.

2. Strengthening students' faith in national unity, seeing as Iraq is the historic cradle of the Iraqi people, including all of its constituent components, throughout a long history of coexistence in this territory.
3. Raising the new generation with truly national education, which would free them from ideological extremism and constrictive identities, and in which they would develop scientific objective thinking skills.

On the other hand, as we shall see, the frame of reference and tone of the textbooks remains that of Arabism and the Arab world. Inculcating love of the homeland is sometimes employed in the context of a religious framework. For example, second grade pupils learn that "God taught us ... we shall build and protect our homeland."[123] The connection between patriotism and religion is again emphasized for seventh graders: a text speaks about "our beloved homeland," and reminds students that the Qur'an insists on the importance of unity among the people, and rejects the opposite way.[124] Another textbook mentions at once love for the homeland and love for God.[125]

The Iraqi national anthem is another means of inculcating love for Iraq and reinforcing national indoctrination. Pupils learn the anthem from a young age, and repeat the phrase: "Iraq is my homeland.[126] I love Iraq as I love my home."[127] In the fourth grade, pupils are asked to memorize the national anthem by heart. Fifth grade students are called upon to write the sentence "I love my homeland Iraq," and read it loudly, as well as to repeat the Iraqi anthem in class.[128]

The introduction to a social studies lesson explicitly states that one of its aims is to "reinforce the sense of patriotism for our country Iraq."[129]

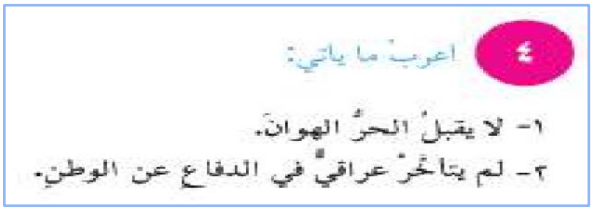
Pupils are taught that in addition to loving the homeland, they should also respect the government and its laws, a reflection of the serious sociopolitical situation resulting from the civil war raging at that time.[130] A father tells his children that loving the homeland and keeping it clean and beautiful is compulsory, and that a "progressive" country can be seen as an example to follow.[131] In a grammar lesson, pupils read sentences such as: "we are loyal soldiers to the land and Iraq is brave," (*batal*), learn that the national guard (*al-haras al-watani)* defended the homeland, and the students raised the Iraqi flag.[132]

Similar ideas are repeated to fifth grade students, in addition to the idea of sacrifice for the homeland. Defending the homeland is the subject of a story featured in a social studies textbook, illustrated with an image of soldiers protecting the homeland, loving it, and sacrificing for it.[133]

[123] *My Reading*, Grade 2, 2021, p. 24.
[124] *Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 111.
[125] *Arabic Language*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 100.
[126] *My Reading*, Grade 2, 2021, p. 47.
[127] Ibid., 38.
[128] *Social Studies*, Grade 5, 2019, pp. 85, 89, 94.
[129] *Social Studies*, Grade 4, 2021, p. 3.
[130] Ibid., p. 49.
[131] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 4, 2021, p. 39.
[132] *Arabic Language Grammar*, Grade 4, 2021, pp. 43-44, 51.
[133] *Social Studies*, Grade 5, 2019, pp. 85, 89, 94.

Instilling in students Iraqi patriotism is likewise emphasized for teachers of the sixth grade; in the introduction to a social studies textbook, they are told to reinforce the "national personality" of the students.[134]

Teaching Arabic grammar is also used as a platform to emphasize love and loyalty to the homeland, and unity of the Iraqi people. Students are tasked with using the following sentences for learning grammar: "The Iraqis believe deeply in the unity of the people"; "love for the homeland makes one happy"; "the Iraqi was not late in defending the homeland"; "the soldiers are courageous"; "the Iraqis stood as one man for defending the homeland." The Iraqi flag is displayed again and again. The army, the police, and the national guard are duly mentioned. Similarly, Iraqi women are also mentioned as taking part in building the homeland.[135]


٤ اعربْ ما ياتي:
١- لا يقبلُ الحرُّ الهوانَ.
٢- لم يتأخرْ عراقيٌّ في الدفاع عن الوطن.

Arabic Language Grammar, **Grade 6, 2021, p. 69.**

Vocalize the following:
[...]
2. No Iraqi has ever faltered in defending the homeland.

The role of the flag is highlighted in Arabic classes as well. In the below example, three girls state: "the flag is the symbol of our country's independence," "we celebrate our flag each week and we stand in the schoolyard and raise [it]," "we love our flag because it is the symbol of our independence and freedom."



Arabic Reading, **Grade 6, 2021, p. 68.**

Dialogue and Written Expression
*My Country's Flag**

In addition to quoting different poems about love of and loyalty for the country, a Grade 6 textbook quotes the story of Zarqa' al-Yamama (blue-eyed Yamama) who lived in pre-Islamic times, renowned for her keen sight and ability to see from far away, and to alert her tribe of the advancing enemy. In one instance, despite her warning that the enemy was hiding behind the trees, her tribe did not believe her, and therefore suffered the consequences. She herself was blinded and crucified by the enemy, but the narrative in this textbook skips this part of the myth, probably in order to shield the students from such a distressing scene. Instead, students are

[134] ***Social Studies***, Grade 6, 2021, p. 3.
[135] ***Arabic Language Grammar,*** Grade 6, 2021, pp. 6, 51, 69, 72, 80, 83, 86, 87, 90.

asked to suggest the kinds of modern equipment the army would use to discover enemy movement, had they been using Zarqa's eyes.[136]

In a textbook published after the rise of ISIS in 2014, students are reminded of the fact that "the army and the [pro-Iranian Shi'i militias] Al-Hashd al-Sha'bi participated in liberating the homeland," adding that "the Iraqi himself defends the homeland and builds it."[137] Notably, by 2022 Al-Hashd al-Sha'bi would become the main political force in the country. In a more straightforward question, a Grade 10 student is asked: "Will you defend your homeland when it is exposed to danger?"[138]

Textbooks across various grades are full of poems and sayings about love for the homeland. One textbook explains the importance of the homeland, quoting from the famous polymath scholar Al-Jahiz (776–868) about his longing for the homeland (*hanin ila l-'awtan*). In addition, it quotes the Iraqi poet Yahya al-Samawi (1949–) who left for Australia in 1997 and wrote the poem "my homeland," (*watani*), which describes his deep love for Iraq.[139]

The formation of Iraqi national identity clashed with the Kurdish identity. The Kurdish issue has been a core problem facing all Iraqi regimes: from the inception of the Iraqi state the Kurds, who account for some 15-20 percent of the population, have been struggling to gain legitimacy for their own national identity, separate from the Iraqi one. At the same time, they have been demanding the right to self-determination ranging, according to political circumstances, from autonomy to independence. The central government in Baghdad has taken an opposite approach by attempting to erase the unique Kurdish identity, force the Kurds into the national crucible, and make their region an inseparable part of state territory.

This pattern of power relations changed dramatically after the 1991 Gulf War, when the Kurdish political elite began to establish an autonomous Kurdish entity. Another important crossroads was the 2003 War, which accelerated the position of the Kurds to partners in Baghdad's system of power, and transformed the Kurdish entity into part of a federal arrangement under the constitution. All of these issues and political fluctuations are reflected in the textbooks.

The idea of Iraqi unity is frequently emphasized against the backdrop of an idyllic picture of coexistence between all the different communities. Thus, for example, fourth grade students learn that a group of people live on the land of Iraq in their different ethnic (*qawmiyyat*) and religious (like Arabs, Kurds, Turkmans, Christians Sabeans, Mandeans, Shabak and Yezidis) groups, "all of whom love it and defend it." The pupils also learn about the significance of the land itself (*al-'ard*), as it is an important basis for the homeland, and no

[136] *Arabic Reading,* Grade 6, 2021, pp. 110-114.
[137] *Arabic Language*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2021, p. 87.
[138] *Arabic Language*, Grade 10, Vol. 2, 2021, p. 3.
[139] *Arabic Language*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2021, pp. 19, 20, 35.

state can exist without it.[140] The textbooks highlight the notion that the Kurdish north is an integral part of Iraq by using expressions such as "Irbil, Dhok and Sulaymaiyya in our beloved north."[141]

A similar idea is presented to fifth grade students. One passage speaks about common ties of the homeland, a common destiny, common goals, and a common civilization: "The sons of our Iraqi society lived together, loving each other from the north to the south, united by one homeland, that is Iraq, with no difference in terms of ethnicity (*'irq*), nationality (*qawmiyya*), and religion."[142] To illustrate this point, the teacher shows a map of Iraq and explains that "the green color includes (*shamala*) large swaths [of the country], signaling that Iraq is one."[143] In a grammar lesson, students learn that "Iraq is united."[144]

On the other hand, there is room in the textbooks for a separate Kurdish identity, a narrative made possible by the Kurdish political elite's new role in the country. Arab students are expected to study Kurdish in grades 9 and 10, and to become familiar with Kurdish society through language lessons. The Kurdish textbooks highlight some important Kurdish cultural and national traits. For example, ninth grade Arab students learn about the Kurdish anthem, "Ey Reqîb," and its author, the poet Dildar. They also learn about the Kurdish national festival of Nowruz, and the mythical story surrounding it. Similarly, they learn that the Kurds have distinct names for the months which are different from the Arab/Muslim ones, as well as a calendar which goes back to the year 2722 – that is to say, about one thousand years older than the Muslim calendar.[145]

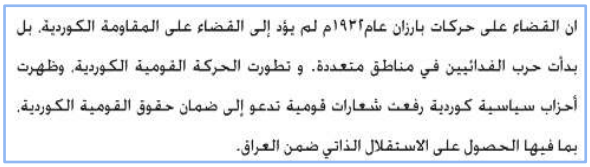
The introduction to a tenth grade textbook explains the goals behind learning Kurdish. It mentions that the constitution states that Kurdish is the official language of the state, and it is a connecting bond (halqat tawasul) between the Arab and Kurdish nationalities. Another goal is to help develop ties when people go to "summer resorts in the north of the homeland," and to deepen the fraternity and national partnership (sharaka wataniyya).[146] In later years, however, there has been an attempt to dilute the importance of Kurdish lessons. Thus, in 2022, the Iraqi Ministry of Education issued a memorandum officially informing all of its provincial departments that a failure to pass Kurdish classes in high school would not be counted for the school year: "The Ministry of Education does not consider the student failing in the Kurdish language class if a passing grade isn't obtained."[147]

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[140] *Social Studies*, Grade 4, 2021, p. 56.
[141] Ibid., pp. 28-29.
[142] *Social Studies*, Grade 5, 2019, p. 82.
[143] *Arabic Language* Grammar, Grade 5, 2021, p. 18.
[144] Ibid., p. 29.
[145] *New Kurdish Reading*, Grade 10, 2021, pp. 3, 100, 123, 137.
[146] Ibid., p. 3.
[147] "Kirkuk Minute," Washington Kurdish Institute, 7 October 2022. https://dckurd.org/2022/10/07/kirkuk-minute-october-7-2022/

The impact of Kurdish authors on the narrative is evident in history textbooks, primarily for the twelfth grade. When discussing the British mandate, the textbook mentions article 8, which leaves open the possibility of establishing an "independent government" in the Kurdish governorates.[148]

The textbook also presents a brief and piecemeal history of the Kurds during the 1920s and early 1930s, but ends the narrative here. It speaks openly about "the Kurdish problem" (*al-qadiyya al-kurdiyya*), the referendum on Mosul vilayet in 1925, and the decision to make the vilayet part of Iraq on the condition of granting the Kurds certain rights, like using their native tongue. It also mentions the "Black September" event in 1930, when Kurds organized demonstrations against the police and saray (government building) in Sulaymaniyya, which were quelled by the army's use of force. The narrative mentions the quelling of the "Barzan Movement" in 1930, yet emphasizes that it did not stop the Kurdish resistance, but rather instigated the War of the *Fida'iyyun* (fedayeen, those willing to die) in various regions. Concurrently, the "National Kurdish Movement" was emphasized by raising nationalist slogans, and demanding the right to self-determination.[149] The pluralistic message behind this text is reinforced by subsequent assignments, one of which is to hang items of clothing representing "the components of the Iraqi people" on the classroom wall, including Kurds, Assyrians, and Turkomans, among others.[150]


ان القضاء على حركات بارزان عام١٩٣٢م لم يؤد إلى القضاء على المقاومة الكوردية. بل بدأت حرب الفدائيين في مناطق متعددة. و تطورت الحركة القومية الكوردية. وظهرت أحزاب سياسية كوردية رفعت شعارات قومية تدعو إلى ضمان حقوق القومية الكوردية. بما فيها الحصول على الاستقلال الذاتي ضمن العراق.

***Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries,* Grade 12, 2021, p. 113.**

The foiling of the Barzan Movements in 1932 did not put an end to Kurdish resistance. Rather, the War of the Fida'iyyun began in various areas. The National Kurdish Movement developed, and Kurdish political parties raised nationalist slogans calling to guarantee the national rights of Kurds, including self-determination within Iraq.

The third element in the complex identity triangle is Pan-Arabism.[151] As mentioned previously, during the Ba'thist era most Shi'is were reluctant to wholeheartedly adopt Pan-Arab ideology, fearing that it might result in unity among Sunni Arab states, and thus further marginalize them. Accordingly, in post-Saddam Iraq, when Shi'is were in a position to dictate political and ideological trends, they relinquished

[148] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 69.
[149] Ibid., pp. 110-113.
[150] Ibid., p. 124.
[151] It should be noted that Pan-Arab ideas began to be floated in the Arab world in the 1930s. One definition for Pan-Arabism is that it is "an idea and a movement that recognizes the close affinity shared by the Arab people and attempts to give that affinity some meaningful practical expression... The nature of this expression has ranged from intergovernmental cooperation between the sovereign states in military, political, cultural and economic matters—the raison d'être of the Arab league—all the way to the establishment of a single Arab state for a united Arab nation." Stewart Reiser, "Pan Arabism revisited," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 37, No. 2 (Spring 1983), p. 218.

the idea of Arab unity, but continued to uphold Arab identity, Arab culture and Arab ties. For example, the narrative on Iraq's history is contained in the title of a Grade 12 textbook: Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Countries (*ta'rikh al-bilad al-'arabiyya al-hadith wa-l-mu'asir*, for example 12th grade). The textbook covers the history of each and every Arab country from the Ottoman period, from the colonial period to the independence movements.

Secondly, Palestine and the Palestinian cause, which have been a central tenet of Pan-Arab ideology, are discussed at length in the textbook.[152] Remarkably, Iraq's new national anthem, "Mawtini" ("My Homeland"), which was adopted in 2004 and which students are asked to learn by heart, is in fact the Palestinian anthem which had been in force from the late 1930s until 1996. The writer is the Palestinian poet Ibrahim Toqan, and the composer the Lebanese Muhammad Filayfil.

Similarly, Arab identity, as well as emotional and historical bonds to Arabism, are emphasized throughout textbooks. One important dimension of that bond is the Arabic language. Third grade students are told to love Arabic because it is the language of the Quran.



***My Reading*, Grade 3, 2021, p. 32.**

Handwriting: Write in your notebook in clear writing 5 times:
"I love Arabic because it is the language of the Qur'an."

In higher grades too, students laud the beauty and genius of Arabic, explaining that when they read the Qur'an they feel the magic of the language.[153] Thus, the Qur'an and the hadith are important components of the textbooks, including sentences and phrases aimed at teaching grammar and other subjects.

Iraqi students are taught to be proud of the language in public by commemorating World Arabic Language Day, which is celebrated every year on December 12.[154] The textbook notes the Gordian knot between Islam and the language, explaining that "the rise of Islam has given the language very wide ranges (*masaha shasi'a jiddan*)," and that the Muslims cared about the language and developed it. The contribution of Imam 'Ali to Arabic is also highlighted, since "the first brick of learning the Arabic language was placed by Imam Ali." Another cause for pride, the student is told, is that Iraq was the cradle of the two schools of Arabic language – the Basrawi and the Kufi

[152] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, pp. 167-170.
[153] *Arabic Language*, Grade 10, Vol. 1, 2021, pp. 107-108.
[154] The date coincides with the day in 1973 when the UN adopted Arabic as the sixth official language of the organization. However, Arabs started to commemorate the date only in 2012.

– from which all Arabs and other people have benefitted.[155]

The contribution of the Arabs to world culture is expounded in all the textbooks. A Grade 10 textbook, for example, reinterprets the term Jahiliyya, the period preceding Islam. While in the past it used to connote ignorance and barbarism, the new narrative suggests that this term was used not because people were ignorant, but because they worshiped idols (*as-nam*).[156] As proof of the high culture of Arabs in that period, it is mentioned that they excelled in many areas, especially in poetry. One example is the *Mu'allaqat*, a collection of seven pre-Islamic Arabic odes.[157]

Many textbooks illustrate the bond of Arab culture and identity through discussion of, and quotations from, Arab writers and poets. The choice of these is, however, quite selective: The textbooks give priority to such poets and writers who tend to laud *Al al-Bayt*, promote patriotism and love of Arabic, laud Arab achievements and their contribution to humanity, as well as defend the Palestinian cause. For example, the Palestinian writer and politician Qadri Toqan is quoted as extolling the superiority (*fadl*) of the Arabs over the rest of the world, having excelled in mathematics, chemistry, medicine etc.[158] Another example is a poem by the Lebanese poet Fawzi al-Ma'luf (1899-1930) who calls for building a homeland whose foundation is learning (*hubbu ila l-majd, nunshi'u watanan qiwamuhu l-'ilm*).[159]

The most explicit means of demonstrating ties to the Arab Muslim world is illustrated in history textbooks. Interestingly, as mentioned above, there are no specific history textbooks about Iraq; this information is included either in social studies textbooks, or in *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*. The history textbooks, which are quite outdated, cover, among others, the history of Arab Muslim civilization, the Muslim conquests, the Umayyad and Abbasids period, the Middle Ages, the Ottoman period, and modern times. The textbook on *History of the Arab Islamic Civilization* describes in great detail the contribution of the Arab Muslim civilization to humanity. In the introduction, the authors maintain that "only thanks to Islam, Arab Muslim civilization had such great impact" on humanity.[160] They further add that when the present generation looks with pride and admiration at the achievements of that civilization, "it is able to heal its wounds" which were caused by unfair judgment and wrong interpretation of that period.[161]

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[155] *Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2021, pp. 146-147.
[156] This interpretation echoes that of President Saddam Hussein who opined that it was erroneous "to look at our history as if had been empty or shameful before Islam." Bengio, Saddam's Word, p. 168.
[157] *Arabic Language*, Grade 10, Vol. 1, 2021, pp. 22-24.
[158] *Arabic Language*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 90.
[159] Ibid., p. 82.
[160] The idealization of the Arabs seems to have drawn from Sami Shawkat who stated the following: "From here marched the soldiers of the Arab Empire to open up the world from China to the East to Central Europe to the West. We guided one third of the world, taught them to believe in God and taught them 'The Chief of Wisdom is to fear God.' Also, the language of half of the Near and Central East is Arabic." Nasser, p. 15.
[161] *History of the Arab Islamic Civilization,* Grade 10, 2021, p. 3.

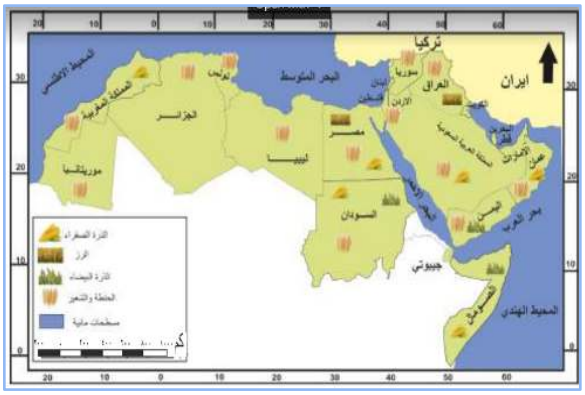
The textbook highlights the Arab Muslim conquest of Andalusia by Tariq bin Ziyad in 711, describing it as a major means of transmitting Arab Muslim civilization to Europe, and thus "turning its darkness to light and its backwardness to progress and civilization." In light of this, the textbook emphasizes that "the Muslim conquest of Spain was not an act of military occupation as is claimed by some, but rather an important civilizational event and a movement of liberating the Spanish peoples."[162] While the textbook describes at great length the flourishing of culture among Muslim and Christians in that period thanks to the former (Jews are not mentioned), it avoids mentioning the fact that Arabs surrendered in 1492, and had to leave Andalusia.

Textbooks addressing the history of Arab lands under the Ottoman Empire are quite critical of the Ottoman era; obviously, the same is true for Western imperialism. In this regard, it is important to note that the history of each Arab country under imperialist powers is described in great detail. However, there is no mention of intra-Arab relations, or the burgeoning ideas of Pan-Arabism. Furthermore, the narrative concerning the history of all Arab countries ends with their independence. For example, the narrative on modern Syria ends with Syrian independence in 1946,[163] while that of modern Egypt ends with the rise of Gamal Abd al-Nasser to the presidency in 1954.[164] From such periodization, it seems evident that the authors of the textbooks sought to avoid discussing the ideology of Pan-Arabism, which was widespread during the 1950s-1960s, as well as the establishment of the United Arab Republic in 1958–1961 – namely, the unity between Egypt and Syria. In this way, it also avoided discussing the controversial issue of Pan-Arabism and its impact on Iraq, especially under the Ba'th.

All in all, the textbooks attempt to strike a balance between three kinds of nationalism: Iraqi, Kurdish, and Pan-Arabism. However, such a balancing act might confuse the student, rather than lead to a cohesive identity framework.

[162] *History of the Arab Islamic Civilization*, Grade 10, 2021, p. 165.
[163] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 179.
[164] Ibid., p. 174.

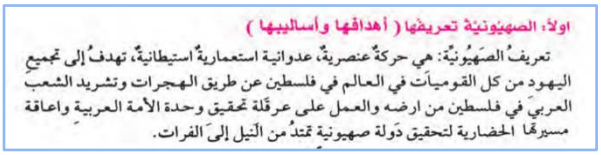
A core element of Pan-Arabism has always been the Palestinian issue, and in this sense, all the Iraqi regimes have been deeply involved in and committed to it. In Iraqi textbooks, the discussion on Palestine is part and parcel of the narrative on the Arab states. The maps of the Arab world display only Palestine as if it were a state, but not Israel, as if the latter does not exist.



Social Studies, **Grade 8, 2021, p. 46.**

In fact, in all of the textbooks examined here, the name Israel is not once mentioned. To bypass this issue, the textbooks use various terms such as "the Zionist entity," "the Zionist aggression," "the imperialist Zionists," etc. This is in line with the Ba'th regime, which sought to delegitimize the very name of Israel by the use of quotation marks around the word.[165]

References to Zionism are overall inflammatory. When teaching about the Palestinian issue, a Grade 9 history textbook states that Zionism is a racist, aggressive and colonialist movement that aims to establish a Zionist state stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates. This geographic designation is based on the biblical outline of the "Promised Land" (Exodus 23:31), but is not known in texts disseminated by Zionist thinkers.



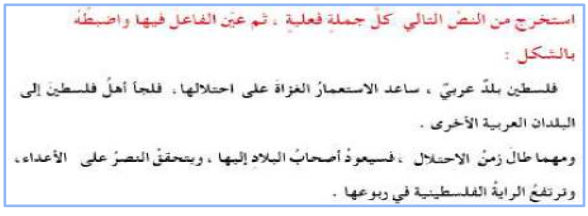
اولاً: الصهيونيّة تعريفها (أهدافها وأساليبها)

تعريفُ الصَهيُونيّة: هي حركةٌ عنصريةٌ، عدوانيةٌ استعماريةٌ استيطانيةٌ، تهدفُ إلى تجميع اليهود من كل القوميات في العالم في فلسطين عن طريق الهجرات وتشريد الشعب العربيّ في فلسطين من ارضه والعمل على عرقلة تحقيق وحدة الأمة العربية واعاقة مسيرتها الحضارية لتحقيق دَولة صهيونية تمتدُ من النّيل إلىَ الفرات.

Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland, **Grade 9, 2019, p. 53.**

First: Defining Zionism (Goals and Methods)
The definition of Zionism: a racist, aggressive, colonialist settler movement, aiming to gather the Jews of all world nations in Palestine via immigration and expulsion of the Arab people in Palestine from their land, and laboring to impede the creation of a unified Arab nation, and block its civilizational journey in order to create a Zionist state stretching from the Nile to the Euphrates.

The narrative for a Grade 5 textbook on Palestine reads as follows:



استخرج من النص التالي كل جملة فعلية ، ثم عيّن الفاعل فيها واضبطه بالشكل :

فلسطين بلدٌ عربيّ ، ساعد الاستعمارُ الغزاة على احتلالها ، فلجأ أهلُ فلسطين إلى البلدان العربية الأخرى .

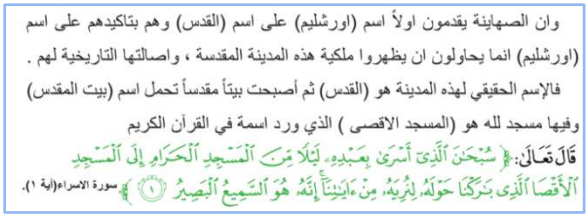
ومهما طالَ زمنُ الاحتلال ، فسيعودُ أصحابُ البلاد إليها ، ويتحققُ النصرُ على الأعداء ، وترتفعُ الرايةُ الفلسطينية في ربوعها .

[165] Ofra Bengio, "In the eyes of the beholder: Israel, Jews and Zionism in the Iraqi media," in Tudor Parfitt and Yulia Egorova (eds.), ***Jews, Muslims and Mass Media*** (Routledge Curson, 2004), p. 113.

Arabic Language Grammar, Grade 5, 2021, p. 16.

Palestine is an Arab country [balad]. Imperialism helped the invaders [ghuzzat] to occupy it, so the people of Palestine became refugees in other Arab countries. But however the occupation lasts, the owners of the country will return to it, they will be victorious over the enemies and the Palestinian flag will be lifted on its lands [rubu'iha].

Another textbook discusses the controversial theme of Jerusalem, "Al-Quds." It emphasizes that Al-Quds is an Arab Muslim city, negating its Jewish past of c. three thousand years altogether. It maintains that "the Zionists prioritize the name Jerusalem (*Urshalim*) over Al-Quds... and in this way they are trying to prove their ownership of this holy city and its historical authenticity for them." The text attempts to explain away the fact that the name Al-Quds does not appear in the Qur'an, asserting that its real name was Al-Quds, but it later became Al-Bayt al-Muqaddas, "the Holy Place" (in Hebrew Beit ha-Miqdash). To prove this, it quotes a Qur'anic verse which mentions the term Al-Masjid al-'Aqsa, which is holy (*muqaddas*) to Muslims. According to this narrative, the "Zionists" started using the name 'Jerusalem' again after the 1967 war, believing that this name would come to be accepted for this holy place, but the textbook affirms that the name Al-Quds will be eternal.


وان الصهاينة يقدمون اولاً اسم (اورشليم) على اسم (القدس) وهم بتاكيدهم على اسم (اورشليم) انما يحاولون ان يظهروا ملكية هذه المدينة المقدسة ، واصالتها التاريخية لهم . فالإسم الحقيقي لهذه المدينة هو (القدس) ثم أصبحت بيتاً مقدساً تحمل اسم (بيت المقدس) وفيها مسجد لله هو (المسجد الاقصى) الذي ورد اسمة في القرآن الكريم

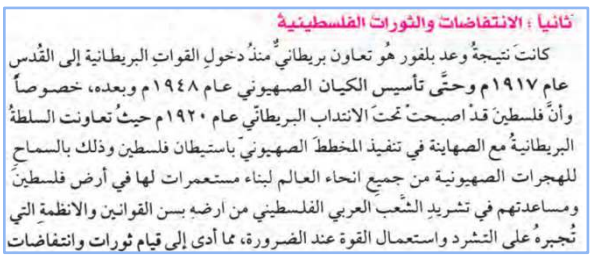
قَالَ تَعَالَىٰ: ﴿ سُبْحَانَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَسْرَىٰ بِعَبْدِهِۦ لَيْلًا مِّنَ ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ إِلَى ٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْأَقْصَا ٱلَّذِى بَـٰرَكْنَا حَوْلَهُۥ لِنُرِيَهُۥ مِنْ ءَايَـٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلسَّمِيعُ ٱلْبَصِيرُ ﴿١﴾ ﴾ سورة الاسراء(آية ١).

History of the Arab Islamic Civilization, Grade 10, 2021, p. 124.

The Zionists prioritize the name Jerusalem [Urshalim] over Al-Quds, and by affirming the name Urshalim they are trying to prove their ownership of this holy city and its historical authenticity for them. But the true name of this city is Al-Quds, which then became a "holy abode" bearing the name Bayt al-Maqdis [literally, "the holy abode"], where a place of worship for God is found, namely Al-Aqsa Mosque, whose name is mentioned in the holy Qur'an.

The word of the Sublime: "Glory be to the One Who took His servant [Muhammad] by night from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We may show him some of Our signs. Indeed, He alone is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing." (17:1)

Criticism of Zionism is also tied to anti-colonialism, particularly with regards to the British. When teaching about the British mandate of Palestine, it is stated that, from 1917, "the British government collaborated with the Zionists to implement the Zionist plan to build settlements in Palestine by agreeing to Zionist immigration from all over the world," and "helping them to expel the Palestinian people from their land." This claim is false, as during the early British Mandate for Palestine the British prosecuted and limited the arrival of Zionist activists. Notably, the text explains that Palestinian acts of violence – rebellions and intifadas – resulted from the British laws and policies that targeted the Palestinians.


ثانياً : الانتفاضات والثورات الفلسطينية

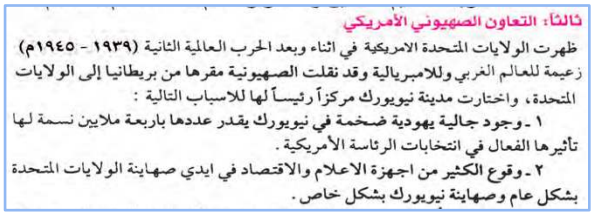
كانت نتيجةً وعد بلفور هُو تعاون بريطانيٌ منذُ دخولِ القواتِ البريطانية إلى القُدس عام ١٩١٧م وحتّى تأسيس الكيان الصهيوني عام ١٩٤٨م وبعده، خصوصاً وأنَّ فلسطينَ قدْ اصبحتْ تحتَ الانتداب البريطاني عام ١٩٢٠م حيثُ تعاونت السلطةُ البريطانيةُ مع الصهاينة في تنفيذ المخططَ الصهيونيّ باستيطان فلسطين وذلك بالسماحِ للهجرات الصهيونية من جميعِ انحاء العالم لبناء مستعمرات لها في أرض فلسطينَ ومساعدتهم في تشريدِ الشّعبَ العربي الفلسطيني من ارضهِ بسن القوانين والانظمةِ التي تُجبرهُ على التشرد واستعمال القوة عند الضرورة، مما أدى إلى قيام ثورات وانتفاضات

Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland, **Grade 9, 2019, p. 55.**

Second: The Palestinian Intifadas and Rebellions
The result of the Balfour Declaration was British collaboration [with Zionism], from the British forces' entrance into Jerusalem in 1917, until the foundation of the Zionist entity in 1948 and later on. That is especially true as Palestine fell under the British Mandate in 1920, when the British government collaborated with the Zionists to implement the Zionist plan to settle in Palestine, by allowing Zionist immigration from all over the world, building colonies for them in the land of Palestine, and helping them expel the Palestinian people from their land. [This was accomplished] by formulating laws and mechanisms that compelled [the Palestinian people] to disperse and to use force when needed, resulting in rebellions and intifadas.

In a chapter on WWII, Grade 11 students learn about the impacts of this war on Arab countries. One of the impacts is British leniency toward its previously strict restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine. The evidence of this, as claimed, is the increase in the number of Zionist terrorist organizations that engaged in violence against the Arab population of Palestine.[166]

Zionism is also vilified through its connection to the US, with textbooks invoking antisemitic tropes. When teaching about the cooperation between Zionists and the US, students are taught that the reasons the Zionist movement transferred its headquarters to New York are, inter alia, (1) the existence of a large Jewish community in New York that had a practical impact on the US presidential election, and (2) the fact that most media and the economy were in the hands of US Zionists. Both claims are false, and invoke antisemitic tropes of Jewish control over the media and politics.


ثالثاً: التعاون الصهيوني الأمريكي
ظهرت الولايات المتحدة الامريكية في اثناء وبعد الحرب العالمية الثانية (١٩٣٩ - ١٩٤٥م) زعيمة للعالم الغربي وللامبريالية وقد نقلت الصهيونية مقرها من بريطانيا إلى الولايات المتحدة، واختارت مدينة نيويورك مركزاً رئيساً لها للاسباب التالية :
١ ـ وجود جالية يهودية ضخمة في نيويورك يقدر عددها باربعة ملايين نسمة لها تأثيرها الفعال في انتخابات الرئاسة الأمريكية .
٢ ـ وقوع الكثير من اجهزة الاعلام والاقتصاد في ايدي صهاينة الولايات المتحدة بشكل عام وصهاينة نيويورك بشكل خاص .

Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland, **Grade 9, 2019, p. 62.**

Third: Zionist-American Cooperation
The United States of America emerged during and following WWII (1939–1945) as a leader of the Western world and imperialism. Zionism transferred its dwelling from Britain to the US, and chose the city of New York as a primary center for the following reasons:
1.The existence of a large Jewish diaspora in New York estimated to consist of four million people, actively influencing the US presidential elections.
2.The fact that many media and economic mechanisms are controlled by US Zionists in general, and New York Zionists in particular.

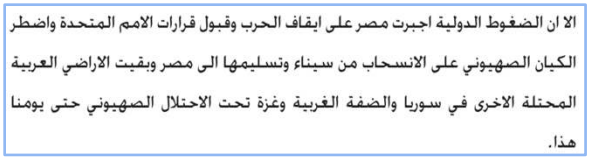
The Grade 12 textbook had the more difficult task of obscuring the Jews and Israel's military achievements. For example, it suggests that following the establishment of the British mandate, the Palestinian national movement was opposed to it and armed Palestinians, fida'iyyun, to attack "the Zionist gangs." However, it is stated that "British forces intervened to support the [those] Zionist gangs." Later, in 1929, it is taught that the "Al-Buraq Wall Revolution" (*thawrat al-buraq*) was triggered by the Palestinians and took place against the Zionists. According to this narrative, the

[166] *Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America*, Grade 11, 2021, p. 108.

Western Wall ("Al-Buraq Wall") is holy to Muslims, too.[167]

The text goes further in falsifying historical facts, one example of which is its narrative on the 1948-9 war. According to this description, "the Arabs gained great victories, and when it became clear that the Zionists were vanquished, they asked help from the Great Powers in stopping the war, whereby the Security Council imposed the truce."[168] In reality, it was the Israeli army's military successes which moved the UN to call for a truce.

The same false narrative recurs regarding the 1973 October war. Textbooks teach that it was international pressure that forced Egypt to stop the war and accept the UN's decisions, and that this same pressure forced Israel to withdraw from Sinai and hand it over to Egypt.


الا ان الضغوط الدولية اجبرت مصر على ايقاف الحرب وقبول قرارات الامم المتحدة واضطر الكيان الصهيوني على الانسحاب من سيناء وتسليمها الى مصر وبقيت الاراضي العربية المحتلة الاخرى في سوريا والضفة الغربية وغزة تحت الاحتلال الصهيوني حتى يومنا هذا.

History of the Modern and Contemporary Arab Countries, **Grade 12, 2021, p. 202.**

However, international pressure obligated Egypt to stop the war and accept UN resolutions, and the Zionist entity was forced to withdraw from Sinai and return it to Egypt. To this day, the rest of the occupied Arab lands in Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza have remained under Zionist occupation.

Any objective historical account of that war would provide a contrary description: after the first few days of Egyptian military successes in Sinai, Israel managed to regain the territory, and even send forces into Egyptian territory itself. To this end, Egypt was forced to accept the truce. Furthermore, the textbook deliberately disregards the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, which laid the groundwork for the withdrawal of Israel from Sinai, and to which Iraq was strongly opposed.

The textbooks highlight Iraq's identification with the Palestinian cause. A case in point is the participation of the Iraqi army in the Arab-Israeli wars, such as the 1967 war (it is admitted that Iraqi forces entered late into the fighting) and the 1973 war.[169] Another means of indicating such sympathy is by mentioning examples of Palestinian intellectuals who came to Iraq, one of whom was 'Abd al-Rahim Mahmud, a Palestinian poet (1913–1948). Students learn that Mahmud struggled for the Palestinian cause, then came to Iraq, was a teacher there, and participated in the 1941 Iraqi intifada (the Rashid 'Ali revolt against the British). Then he went back to Palestine and became a martyr *(shahid*) in 1948. The textbook quotes his poem, "The Martyr," which was written before these events.

[167] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 197.
[168] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 199.
[169] Ibid., pp. 200-202.



له قصيدة بعنوان (الشهيد) ، يتمنى فيها الشهادة مدافعاً عن وطنه فلسطين ويحث على الدفاع عن الوطن يقول فيها :

(للدرس)

سأحملُ روحي على راحتي ... وأُلقي بها في مهاوي الرَدى (١)
فإمـّا حياةٌ تُسرُ الصديـــق ... وإمّا ممـــــاتاً يغيظ العِدا
لعَمرُك إنّي أرى مصرعـي ... ولكن أعَدُّ إليه الخُطـــــا
وجسم تجندل فوق الهضـاب ... تناوشه جارحاتُ الفـــلا (٢)
فمنه نَصيبٌ لطير السمـــاء ... ومنه نصيبٌ لأُسْد الشَـرى
كسا دمُهُ الأرضَ بالإرجوان ... وأثقل بالعِطر ريحَ الصـبّا
وبان على شفتيه ابتســـام ... معانيه هزءٌ بهذي الدُنـــا
ونـام ليحلم حلمَ الخلـــود ... ويَهنأ فيه بأحلـــى الرؤى

Literature and Texts (Humanities Track), Grade 12, 2021, p. 87.

He [ʻAbd al-Rahim Mahmud] composed a poem entitled "The Martyr," in which he hopes to become a martyr in defense of his country Palestine, and calls others to defend it, saying:
I shall take my soul in the palm of my hand / and cast it to the chasms of doom
[I choose] either a life which gladdens the friend / or a death that agitates the enemies
By your life, I see my death / but I haste towards it
Many a body fallen above the hills / is provoked by birds and beasts of prey
A portion from it [the body] is for the birds in the skies / and another portion for the mountain lions
His blood covers the ground with crimson / and heavily perfumes the scent of youth
On his lips a smile became visible / meaning contempt for this world
He fell asleep, to dream the dream of eternity / where he will enjoy the finest visions.

Similarly, the textbooks quote other Palestinian poets such as Samih al-Qasim,[170] Fadwa Toqan, and Mahmud Darwish,[171] all of whom have contributed to what is referred to as "the poetry of the Palestinian question" (*shiʻr al-qadiyya al-filastiniyya*).

In the activity section students of a Grade 12 textbook, students are asked to discuss the 1967 "Zionist aggression" against the Arabs with their teacher. Another student activity is to start a discussion on Facebook regarding the Arab identity of Al-Quds.



نشاط

- يشارك الطلبة في حلقة نقاشية باشراف المدرسة / المدرس لمناقشة العدوان الصهيوني عام ١٩٦٧م على العرب .
- افتح باباً للحوار على موقع التواصل الاجتماعي (الفيسبوك) لمناقشة عروبة مدينة القدس .

History of Modern and Contemporary Arab Countries, Grade 12, 2021, p. 203.

Activity:
- The students will participate in a discussion under the guidance of the teacher on the Zionist aggression of 1967 against the Arabs.
- Launch a discussion portal on the social media site (Facebook) to discuss the Arabic nature of Jerusalem.

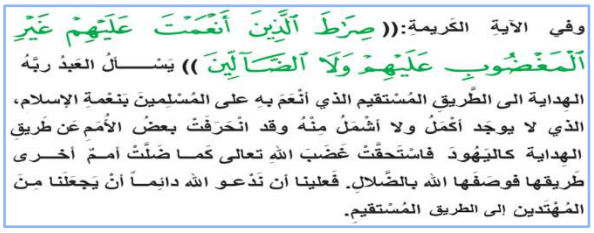
Another example is to launch a Facebook discussion on "Balfour's promise," and its impact on the Palestinian cause.[172]

The approach to Jews in the textbooks draws upon various sources: Shi'i ideology, the Qur'an and hadith, modern antisemitic trends, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. According to Meir Litvak, like Sunni Islam, Shi'ism "blamed the Jews for rejecting the teaching of the Prophet Muḥammad, for distorting and falsifying the true scriptures given to them by Moses, and for a host of immoral activities."[173] This approach is reflected in the textbooks, and is exemplified in various suras from the Qur'an and in modern stories.

[170] *Arabic Language*, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2021, p. 17.
[171] *Literature and Texts (Sciences Track)*, Grade 12, 2021, pp. 67-68.
[172] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 170.
[173] Meir Litvak, *Know Thy Enemy* (Brill, 2021), p. 75.

For Muslims, both Sunnis and Shi'is, the Qur'an is not just a holy book but a living source of worldview, human values, and a guide to daily life. Hence, it is important to observe which verses are selected for portraying the Jews, and how they are interpreted for the student.

Second-grade students are introduced to the portrayal of Jews via Surat al-Fatiha, the very first sura of the Qur'an, the seventh verse of which states the following: "The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray." The verse itself does not clarify the three groups which are mentioned in the text; nonetheless, Islamic tradition identifies the first with Muslims, the second with Jews, and the third with Christians.[174] In addition to the sura that the pupils are asked to memorize, there is an explanation for the seventh verse which, interestingly, does mention the Jews as those who evoked God's anger, but fails to mention the Christians. Clearly, the authors did not wish to allude to Christians in a negative manner, so as to display the tolerance of the new regime toward them and to curry favor with the Americans who were behind the revision of the textbooks, at least in the first period of post-Saddam Iraq.


وفي الآية الكريمة:((صِرَٰطَ ٱلَّذِينَ أَنعَمتَ عَلَيهِم غَيرِ ٱلمَغضُوبِ عَلَيهِم وَلَا ٱلضَّآلِّينَ)) يسأل العبد ربّه الهداية الى الطّريق المُستقيم الذي أنعمَ به على المُسلمين بنعمة الإسلام، الذي لا يوجد أكمل ولا أشمل منه وقد انحرفت بعض الأمم عن طريق الهداية كاليهود فاستحقّت غضب الله تعالى كما ضلّت أمم أخرى طريقها فوصفها الله بالضّلال. فعلينا أن ندعو الله دائماً أن يجعلنا من المُهتدين إلى الطريق المُستقيم.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, Grade 2, 2021, p. 8.

And in the honorable verse: "the Path of those You have blessed—not those You are displeased with, or those who are astray," the worshiper asks his God for guidance in the righteous path, by which He has graced the Muslims with the grace of Islam, of which there is nothing more perfect and encompassing. And some nations strayed away from the path of guidance, such as the Jews, for which they were deserving of God's wrath. Other nations also went astray - God described their path as "error" [dalal]. Thus we must always ask God to make us among the guided in the righteous path.

A more openly pejorative portrayal of the Jews is evident in a fifth-grade textbook, where the Jews assume the role of plotters against the Prophet and the Muslim community as a whole. The Jews as a general group, and not the particular Jewish tribes that dwelled in Arabia, are described as warmongers and traitors; thus, it is maintained that they encouraged the enmity between the well-known Arab tribes Aus and Khazraj. Moreover, students learn that the Prophet Muhammad signed an agreement with the Jews of Al-Madina so that all would live peacefully together, but the Jews betrayed him and the Muslims by collaborating with their enemies.[175] The truth of the matter is, however, shown to be that the Jews were not ready to

[174] Some Muslim modernists like Muhammad 'Abduh do not accept this interpretation and suggest that they refer to prophets, righteous men and martyrs from previous nations which preceded Islam. Israel Shrenzel, "Verses and reality: What the Koran really says about Jews," *Jewish Political Studies Review*, Vol. 29, No. 3-4 (4 September 2018).

[175] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 5, 2021, p. 34.

recognize Muhammad as their Prophet, hence their depiction as warmongers and traitors.[176]

A similar phenomenon occurs in the higher grades. For example, Grade 6 students learn that "many Jews" plotted against Muhammad in the Battle of the Trench (627 AD), but that he was able to conquer them in the Battle of Badr (624 AD), after their collaboration with the polytheists during the battle.[177] The same disloyal behavior attributed to the Jews recurred in the famous battle of Khaybar (628 AD).[178] Yet, history tells us a different story: according to Shrenzel, "the tradition tries to obscure Muhammad's responsibility for the killing of hundreds of Jews by accusing them of violating agreements, but this charge lacks any solid historical basis. The anti-Jewish campaign concluded with the conquest of the Khaybar oasis north of Medina in 628, the deportation of some of its residents, and the turning of others into tenant farmers."[179]

The role of Al al-Bayt in defeating the Jews in this battle is amplified by the story of 'Ali's role. The textbook recounts that during this battle, the Prophet gave him a flag, and it was 'Ali who managed to conquer the Jews after the other Companions of the Prophet had failed to do so.[180] Grade 8 students are told a similar story in which 'Ali excelled in fighting "the Jews."[181]

Students are taught that the Jews of Banu Qaynuqa', Banu Nadir, and Banu Qurayza tribes all plotted against the Muslims and betrayed them. In a description of the Battle of Khaybar, which involved the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza, it is specifically mentioned that "the Jews" partook in usury, which made them immensely wealthy; thus combining the Islamic narrative of Jewish hostility with antisemitic stereotypes of Jewish wealth and treachery.



موقف اليهود من عهودهم مع رسول الله (ص)

١. الموقف من بني قينقاع/ ٢هـ

بدأ يهود بني قينقاع خيانتهم وغدرهم على اثر انتصار المسلمين في غزوة بدر ، لذا سار اليهم النبي (ص) وحاصرهم مدة (١٥ ليلة) فاستسلموا له وتم اخراجهم من المدينة المنورة .

٢. الموقف من بني النضير / ٤هـ

لقد تآمر بنو النضير على المسلمين الى درجة انهم أرادوا قتل النبي (ص) بعد غزوة احد فاوحى الله سبحانه وتعالى الى الرسول الكريم (ص) بذلك ، فقرر (ص) طردهم من المدينة المنورة سنة ٤ هـ بعد حصار دام (٦ ليال)، فذهبوا الى خيبر .

٣. الموقف من بني قريضة / ٥هـ

لقد نقض بنو قريضة عهدهم مع الرسول (ص) في غزوة الخندق سنة (٥ هـ) وتعاونوا مع المشركين فافشل الرسول خطتهم، فلما انتهت المعركة بانتصار المسلمين توجه (ص) اليهم بجيشه فحاصرهم خمسة وعشرين يوماً، وافقوا بعدها على حكمه فيهم وتم اخراجهم من المدينة المنورة، وبذلك تخلص الرسول الله (ص) والمسلمون من خيانة وتآمر اليهود في المدينة المنورة ، ولكنهم ذهبوا الى خيبر واستمروا في تآمرهم على المسلمين وتحريض القبائل ضد الرسول والمسلمين ، لذا قرر الرسول في السنة السابعة للهجرة القضاء عليهم في معركة خيبر ، كما ورد في قوله تعالى

قال تعالى: ﴿ وَإِمَّا تَخَافَنَّ مِن قَوْمٍ خِيَانَةً فَانبِذْ إِلَيْهِمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْخَائِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ ﴾

The Jews' position in respect of their treaties with the Prophet (S)
1. The position of Banu Qaynuqa' (year 2 H) [...]
2. The position of Banu Nadir (year 4 H) [...]
3. The position of Banu Qurayza (year 5 H)
[...]

[176] Shrenzel.
[177] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 6, 2021, p. 19.
[178] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 6, 2021, p. 36.
[179] Shrenzel.
[180] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 6, 2021, p. 36.
[181] *Social Studies*, Grade 8, 2021, p. 127.

And thus the Prophet and the Muslims rid the enlightened Medina of the treachery and scheming of the Jews, but they went to Khaybar where they continued their scheming against the Muslims and incitement of the [polytheist Arab] tribes against the Prophet and the Muslims. Hence, in year 7 H, the Prophet decided to defeat them in the battle of Khaybar, as is mentioned in the words of God: "And if you O Prophet see signs of betrayal by a people, respond by openly terminating your treaty with them. Surely Allah does not like those who betray." (8:58)



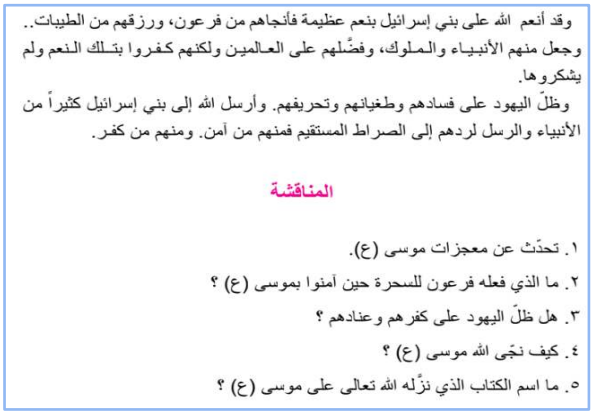
٤ غزوة خيبر (٧ هـ) /٦٢٨ م

قاد رسول الله (ص) جيوش المسلمين البالغ عددها ألفاً وأربعمائة مقاتل في غزوة خيبر للقتال مع جيوش يهود خيبر بقيادة مرحب في السنة السابعة للهجرة / ٦٢٨ م ، بدأت وقائع غزوة خيبر بعد مرور عشرين يوماً على عقد صلح الحديبية، وقال حينها رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مقولته المشهورة : «لأعطينَّ الراية غداً رجلاً يحُب الله ورسولهُ ويُحبُّهُ الله ورسولهُ ،يفتحُ الله على يديه كرَّار وليس بفرارٍ» وكان المقصود من المقولة الصحابي الجليل علي بن أبي طالب(ع)، وتعد هذه الغزوة بمثابة بداية خطة طريق رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في توحيد شبه الجزيرة العربية في ضمن الدولة العربية الإسلاميّة، وجعلها قاعدة لانطلاق الدعوة الإسلاميّة ونشرها في أنحاء العالم كافة ، ووقعت معركة خيبر في مدينة خيبر ، وهي من المدن ذات الحصون والقلاع، وتجري فيها العديد من الأنهار، وعرفت خيبر بثرائها نظراً لتعامل اليهود بالربا مع الدول المحيطة بها، وكانت تعد وكراً للاستفزازات العسكرية، وبمثابة موطن للتآمر والدس وإشعال شرارة الفتن والحروب، ومن أكثر مظاهر تعرضهم للإسلام هي إثارة بني قريضة وحثهم على خيانة المسلمين وغدرهم، وألحقوا بالمسلمين ظروفاً صعبة بسبب ما أعدّوه لهم من مكائد، وتعدّ غزوة خيبر الأولى بعد صلح الحديبية بين المسلمين وبني قريضة، وانتهت بانتصار جيوش المسلمين على اليهود.

Social Studies, **Grade 8, 2021, pp. 128, 130.**

Battle of Khaybar, 7 AH/628 AD
The Messenger of God commanded the Muslim forces, which numbered 1,400 men, in the Battle of Khaybar against the forces of the Jews of Khaybar [...] The battle of Khaybar took place in the city of Khaybar [...] Khaybar was known for its wealth due to the Jews dealing with usury with the surrounding countries, and it was considered a den for military provocations, and as a home for conspiracy, plotting and igniting the spark of strife and wars. One of the most common manifestations of their opposition to Islam is Banu Qurayza's incitement and call to betray the Muslims. They inflicted difficult conditions upon the Muslims because of the schemes they had prepared for them. The Battle of Khaybar is considered the first after the Treaty of Hudaybiyya between the Muslims and Banu Qurayza, and it ended with the victory of the Muslim armies over the Jews.

This negative image is further reinforced in a Grade 8 Noble Qur'an lesson, where the Jews are described as corrupt, tyrannical, deviant, and even as infidels. Notably, this point is not ignored, but invoked in the discussion section. The same textbook also presents a story about a Jew greedily selling water to Muslims at inflated prices,[182] and another example accuses "Jewish and colonialist movements" of "distorting the image of Islam",[183] thus maintaining a distinctly antisemitic tone throughout.



وقد أنعم الله على بني إسرائيل بنعم عظيمة فأنجاهم من فرعون، ورزقهم من الطيبات.. وجعل منهم الأنبياء والملوك، وفضّلهم على العالمين ولكنهم كفروا بتلك النعم ولم يشكروها.
وظلّ اليهود على فسادهم وطغيانهم وتحريفهم. وأرسل الله إلى بني إسرائيل كثيراً من الأنبياء والرسل لردهم إلى الصراط المستقيم فمنهم من آمن. ومنهم من كفر.

المناقشة

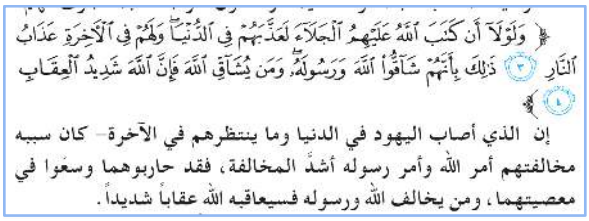
١. تحدّث عن معجزات موسى (ع).
٢. ما الذي فعله فرعون للسحرة حين آمنوا بموسى (ع) ؟
٣. هل ظلّ اليهود على كفرهم وعنادهم ؟
٤. كيف نجّى الله موسى (ع) ؟
٥. ما اسم الكتاب الذي نزّله الله تعالى على موسى (ع) ؟

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 8, 2021, p. 61.**

God had graced Banu Isra'il with great favors, and rescued them from Pharaoh, and provided them with good things. He appointed from among them prophets and kings, and gave them preference over other nations. However, they were ungrateful for such favors [...]. And the Jews remained corrupt, tyrannical, and falsifying [the words of God]. Thus God sent unto Banu Isra'il many prophets and apostles to return them to the righteous path, and some among them became believers and others infidels.
Discussion: [...]
3. Have the Jews remained infidels and antagonistic?

[182] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 8, 2021, p. 90.
[183] Ibid., p. 46.

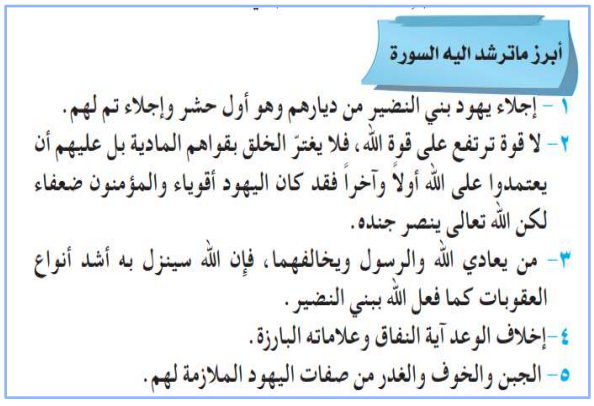
The same negative image is repeated in a Grade 9 textbook.[184] This textbook goes one step further, explicitly teaching that "cowardice, fear and treachery are intrinsic characteristics of the Jews," and that "whatever hurt the Jews in this world and the next" is their punishment for defying God.


﴿ وَلَوْلَآ أَن كَتَبَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْجَلَآءَ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ وَلَهُمْ فِى ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ عَذَابُ ٱلنَّارِ ﴿٣﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَآقُّوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ ۖ وَمَن يُشَآقِّ ٱللَّهَ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ شَدِيدُ ٱلْعِقَابِ ﴿٤﴾ ﴾

إن الذي أصاب اليهود في الدنيا وما ينتظرهم في الآخرة- كان سببه مخالفتهم أمر الله وأمر رسوله أشدَّ المخالفة، فقد حاربوهما وسعَوا في معصيتهما، ومن يخالف الله ورسوله فسيعاقبه الله عقاباً شديداً.

"And if not that Allah had decreed for them evacuation, He would have punished them in this world, and for them in the Hereafter is the punishment of the Fire. That is because they opposed Allah and His Messenger. And whoever opposes Allah – then indeed, Allah is severe in penalty." (59:3-4)

Whatever hurt the Jews in this world and what awaits them in the Hereafter is because of their extreme violation of Allah's decree and his Messenger's decree. They fought them both and attempted to rebel against them, but whoever contradicts Allah and his Messenger is to be punished gravely by Allah.


أبرز ماترشد اليه السورة

١ – إجلاء يهود بني النضير من ديارهم وهو أول حشر وإجلاء تم لهم.
٢ – لا قوة ترتفع على قوة الله، فلا يغترّ الخلق بقواهم المادية بل عليهم أن يعتمدوا على الله أولاً وآخراً فقد كان اليهود أقوياء والمؤمنون ضعفاء لكن الله تعالى ينصر جنده.
٣ – من يعادي الله والرسول ويخالفهما، فإن الله سينزل به أشد أنواع العقوبات كما فعل الله ببني النضير.
٤ – إخلاف الوعد آية النفاق وعلاماته البارزة.
٥ – الجبن والخوف والغدر من صفات اليهود الملازمة لهم.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 9, 2021, pp. 14, 19**

The key takeaways of this Sura [Al-Hashr]:
1. The Jews of Banu Nadir were exiled from their homes, and this was the first gathering and exile done to them.
2. [...]
5. Cowardice, fear, and treachery are intrinsic characteristics of Jews.

When the Qur'an does not explicitly mention the Jews, the explanation in the text does so. For example, in Surat al-Baqara, the explanation for verse 159 is that Jews and Christians who do not accept God's prophecy will be cursed. It should be noted that this explanation originates in canonical Sunni and Shi'i commentaries *(tafsir)* on the Qur'an.


قَالَ تَعَالَىٰ: ﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَآ أَنزَلْنَا مِنَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَٱلْهُدَىٰ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ ۙ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ ٱللَّٰعِنُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُوا۟ وَأَصْلَحُوا۟ وَبَيَّنُوا۟ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَأَنَا ٱلتَّوَّابُ ٱلرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾ ﴾
البقرة: ١٥٩ – ١٦٠

إن الذين يخفون ما أنزلنا من الآيات الواضحات الدالة على نبوّة محمد (ص) وصدق ما جاء به. وهم أحبار اليهود وعلماء النصارى وغيرهم ممن يكتم ما أنزل الله وأظهره للناس في التوراة والإنجيل. أولئك يطردهم الله من رحمته. ويدعو عليهم باللعنة ملائكةُ الله والمؤمنون.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 12, 2021, p. 14.**

[God] may he be praised, said [in the Qur'an, 2: 159-160]: "Those who remain silent on the clear proofs and guidance that We have revealed—after We made it clear for humanity in the Book—will be condemned by Allah and all those who condemn. As for those who repent, mend their ways, and let the truth be known, they are the ones to whom I will turn in forgiveness, for I am the Accepter of Repentance, Most Merciful."
Those who hide the clear signs that we have revealed, which indicate the prophethood of Muhammad and the truth of his message. They are the Jewish and Christian scholars, and others who remained silent on what God had revealed and demonstrated to the people in the Torah and the Gospel. God shall banish them from his mercy, and the angels and the believers will curse them.

[184] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 9, 2021, p. 9.

In contrast, Christians are, on the whole, referred to in a more positive way, such as through the personality of Jesus. It is stated that while Jews fought against Jesus, the latter gave a prophecy according to which a prophet would come after him and be named Muhammad.[185] Jews and Christians are collectively accused, however, of deifying their clergy[186] and removing references to Muhammad in their respective holy books.[187]

Concurrent with the negative representation of the Jews, there are attempts to draw them to Islam. For example, Grade 10 students learn from Surat al-Baqara that Ibrahim (Abraham) told his sons, as well as Jacob (his grandson), not to die before they become Muslims. After recounting Jacob's life story, the narrative ends with his burial in Palestine.[188] Another story is that of a Jew who used to throw garbage on the path which the Prophet Muhammad used to pass, but when that Jew fell ill, the Prophet went to visit him in person; so surprised was the Jew by this gesture that when Muhammad told him Islam is a religion of peace, he immediately adopted Islam.[189]

Whereas the Qur'an and religious education lessons place a great emphasis on the Jews and their negative characteristics, history textbooks erase them altogether. Thus, the history of Mesopotamian Jews which goes back around three thousand years, and which preceded both Arabs and Islam, is not discussed at all in any of the textbooks; likewise, textbooks about the ancient Near East refrain from discussing ancient Israel or the origins of Judaism, although Jews and Judaism are occasionally mentioned in passing.[190] A notable exception occurs in an eighth grade social studies textbook, which offers students a brief introduction to Judaism in the context of other pre-Islamic religions of the Arabian Peninsula. The example notes the monotheistic nature of the religion, and that "it spread to some areas of the Levant and Iraq," which contrasts with the same textbook's unambiguous stance on Christianity originating "in Palestine."[191] Instead, the text largely focuses on the place of Judaism in ancient Arabia, informing students that because of the Jews' "tendency for isolation... and their belief that they are God's chosen people" they have not assimilated into Arabian society.



٢.الديانة اليهودية:

وكان النبي موسى بن عمران (ع) الذي اقترنت الديانة اليهودية باسمه من ذرية يعقوب ابن اسحاق بن ابراهيم، وكان ليعقوب اسم آخر هو اسرائيل، لذا فقد دعي ابناؤه ببني اسرائيل.

ان بني اسرائيل تكاثروا في مصر، وعبر موسى(ع) بهم الى صحراء سيناء وأرض فلسطين، . تعرف موسى (ع) على النبي (شعيب) في مدين وتزوج من ابنته، وقد أشير الى ان شعيباً كان نبياً مبعوثاً الى اهل مدين وكان لسانه عربياً.

ومن خلال الصحف التي نزلت على موسى (ع) والتعاليم الدينية التي جاء بها بقية الانبياء من بعده على بني اسرائيل ظهرت الديانة اليهودية وانتشرت في بعض مناطق بلاد الشام والعراق واليمن والحجاز، وكان ابرز ما يميز الديانة اليهودية الدعوة الى توحيد الله ومحاربة الوثنية والايمان بالأنبياء والرسل، والكتاب المقدس لليهود هو(التوراة).

كما اكتسب اليهود بعض الصفات التي ميزتهم عن اقوام شبه الجزيرة العربية نتيجة للظروف التاريخية التي مروا بها، وكان أبرزها ميلهم الى الانغلاق والعزلة واعتقادهم انهم شعب الله المختار.

***Social Studies*, Grade 8, 2021, p. 80.**

[185] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 6, 2021, p. 68.
[186] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 11, 2021, pp. 146-147.
[187] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 5, 2021, p. 45.
[188] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 10, 2021, pp. 21-23.
[189] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 9, 2021, p. 118.
[190] *Cf. Social Studies*, Grade 7, 2021, p. 94, which mentions the spread of Judaism in Himyarite Yemen.
[191] *Social Studies*, Grade 8, 2021, p. 81.

2. Judaism:
The Prophet Moses, son of Amram (peace be upon him), with whose name Judaism is associated, was from the offspring of Jacob, son of Isaac, the son of Abraham. Jacob had another name, Israel, so his sons were called the Children of Israel [Banu Isra'il].
The Children of Israel multiplied in Egypt, and Moses crossed with them to the Sinai desert and the land of Palestine. Moses met the Prophet Shu'ayb [Jethro] in Madyan and married his daughter. It has been pointed out that Shu'ayb was a prophet sent to the people of Madyan, and his language was Arabic.
Through the Scriptures that were revealed to Moses, and the religious teachings that the rest of the prophets brought after him to the Children of Israel, the Jewish religion emerged and spread in some areas of the Levant, Iraq, Yemen, and the Hijaz. The main characteristic of Judaism is the call to believe in one God, combatting idolatry, and belief in the prophets and the messengers. The holy book of the Jews is the Torah.
The Jews also acquired some characteristics that distinguished them from the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula, due to the historical circumstances they went through. The most prominent of these was their tendency toward closedness and isolation, and their belief that they are God's chosen people.

The Jews of modern Iraq are treated in a similar manner. Notwithstanding the crucial contribution of the Jewish community to the political, economic, cultural, and educational spheres of the country, they do not exist at all in the historical narrative. Nor do the textbooks mention the harassment of the Jews under the monarchy, most importantly the Farhoud of June 1941 in which 179 Jews were killed, 2118 wounded, and 48,584 whose property was ransacked.[192] Evidently, the authors of the textbooks are reluctant to depict any positive image of the Jews or to mention their persecution, so as not to grant them any legitimacy in modern times.

The authors of the textbooks are wary of mentioning the history of persecution of Jews, not only in Iraq but even in Nazi Germany, which in effect, amounts to Holocaust denial. In this they echo the Ba'thist stance, which depicted the Holocaust as "a Zionist fiction."[193] In the Grade 11 history textbook, students learn about the Nazi party headed by Adolf Hitler, his rise to power in 1934, and the militarization of German society. The text briefly mentions Nazi ideology as it is represented in Hitler's book Mein Kampf, but fails to mention the antisemitic ideas that pervade it and became the ideological foundation for the Holocaust. The students also learn about WWII and its different phases, but are left completely ignorant of the Holocaust and the killing of 6 million Jews. By contrast, the textbook does use the term 'genocide' for the American atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan in August 1945, which caused the deaths of 120,000 people.[194]

أما من ناحية حقوق الإنسان، فإن الأمر لا يقتصر على كونه إبادة جماعية، بل يتعداه الى محاولة حرمان آلاف البشر من حق الحياة الذي كفلته القوانين السماوية والقوانين الوضعية، ولاسيما إذا ما علم أن القنبلتين أودتا بحياة ١٢٤ألف شخص، وجرحت ١٢٠ ألف شخص.

Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America, Grade 11, 2021, p. 103.

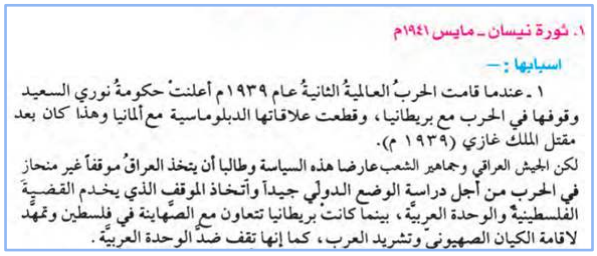
In respect of human rights, the issue is not merely genocide, but exceeds it, being an attempt to deny thousands of human beings the right to live, which is guaranteed by divine and man-made laws. This is especially [true]

[192] Zvi Yehuda, *Be-Yisurei Ge'ula: Gerush ha-Yehudim me-'Iraq* (The Agony of Redemption: the Expulsion of the Jews from Iraq; Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, 2021), p. 50.
[193] Bengio, "In the eyes of the beholder," p. 114.
[194] *Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America*, Grade 11, 2021, pp. 94, 99, 100, 104.

considering the two bombs that took the life of 124 thousand people and injured 120 thousand people.

In this regard, it should be pointed out that this argument echoes writings of other Arab writers who use this same idea in order to describe the US as the true villain of the war, rather than Nazi Germany.[195] This discrepancy may be explained by the urge to tarnish the image of the US, which was still considered an enemy by large groups of Iraqi people, and to absolve Germany of its deeds, which was for a short while an Iraqi ally in 1941.

A discussion on the 1941 coup d'état in Iraq – referred to sympathetically as a "revolution" – lists as one of its causes the Iraqi government's decision to join WWII on the side of Britain and the Allies, and to cut off ties with Nazi Germany. The textbook explains that the "masses of the people" wanted a non-aligned position that would "best serve the Palestinian cause," as Britain is accused of collaborating with the Zionists.



١. ثورة نيسان ـ مايس ١٩٤١م

اسبابها :ـ

١ ـ عندما قامت الحربُ العالميةُ الثانيةُ عام ١٩٣٩م أعلنتْ حكومةُ نوري السعيد وقوفها في الحرب مع بريطانيا، وقطعت علاقاتها الدبلوماسية مع ألمانيا وهذا كان بعد مقتل الملكِ غازي (١٩٣٩ م).

لكن الجيش العراقي وجماهير الشعب عارضا هذه السياسة وطالبا أن يتخذ العراقُ موقفاً غير منحاز في الحرب من أجل دراسة الوضع الدولي جيداً وأتخاذ الموقف الذي يخدم القضيةَ الفلسطينيةَ والوحدة العربيَّة، بينما كانتْ بريطانيا تتعاون مع الصهاينة في فلسطين وتمهد لاقامة الكيان الصهيونيّ وتشريد العرب، كما إنها تقف ضدّ الوحدة العربيَّة.

Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland, **Grade 9, 2019, p. 78.**

April-May 1941 Revolution
Causes:
1. When WWII broke out in 1939, the Nuri al-Sa'id government declared its stance in the war on the side of Britain, and cut off diplomatic ties with Germany. This took place after King Ghazi was killed (1939). However, the Iraqi army, and the masses of the people, were opposed to this policy. They demanded that Iraq take a non-aligned position in the war, in order to have a thorough examination of the international situation, and take the position which best serves the Palestinian cause and Arab unity. Britain, on the other hand, was collaborating with the Zionists in Palestine, and paving the way to establishing the Zionist Entity and expelling the Arabs; it also stood against Arab unity.

[195] Meir Litvak and Esther Webman, *From Empathy to Denial: Arab Responses to the Holocaust* (Hurst Publishers, 2009), p. 276.

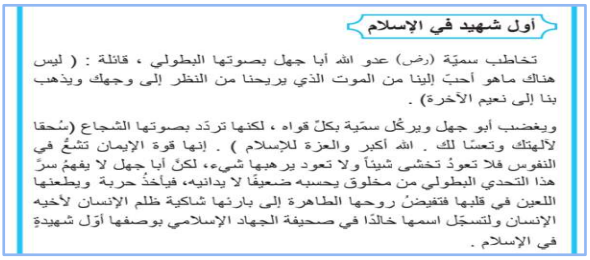
The Ambivalent Status of Women in Iraqi Society

The narrative in the textbooks sends mixed messages regarding women and their status in Iraqi society. On the one hand, they are glorified, but on the other hand, they are degraded and objectified. On the face of it, textbooks call for equality for women; in practice, and when going into detail, the woman is expected to obey her husband, serve him, sacrifice for him, bring up and educate children, and accept the Muslim tradition of polygamy. In short, feminism is completely rejected, and patriarchal relations are promoted. This is indeed a reflection of all modern Islamist movements, Sunnis and Shi'is alike, which according to Litvak "view feminism as a major manifestation of Western cultural imperialism and an assault on Islamic culture and way of life."[196]

The mixed messaging regarding the traditional and modern role of women in society is also highlighted through imagery. For example, in one of the textbooks there are pictures of a woman riding a horse, and another traditional dress.[197] On the whole, however, most images of women show them wearing a hijab and a long dress. For instance, in a second grade textbook, a photo of all the mothers and teachers shows women in traditional dress.

The glorification of Iraqi women is illustrated in the following grammar sentences: Iraqi women became cultured (*muthaqqafat*), Iraqi women showed courage (*butulat*), the Iraqi woman is ready to defend her homeland.[198] A saying by Imam 'Ali on women's aspiration for progress is offered in one textbook.[199]

The textbooks recount different stories about women in ancient and modern history who excelled in fighting the enemy, or initiating brave acts. One of these is Umm 'Imara Nusayba al-'Ansariyya, who participated in the Badr campaign, and was among those who physically defended the Prophet Muhammad. In this way "she has become a model for us in defending our land and honor."[200] Similarly, Asma' bint Abu Bakr was a heroine who supported the prophet.[201] Another woman, Sumayya, was the first martyr in Islam, turning her name into a symbol of *jihad*.



أول شهيد في الإسلام

تخاطب سميّة (رض) عدو الله أبا جهل بصوتها البطولي ، قائلة : (ليس هناك ماهو أحبّ إلينا من الموت الذي يريحنا من النظر إلى وجهك ويذهب بنا إلى نعيم الآخرة) .

ويغضب أبو جهل ويركل سميّة بكلّ قواه ، لكنها تردّد بصوتها الشجاع (سُحقا لآلهتك وتعسًا لك . الله أكبر والعزة للإسلام) . إنها قوة الإيمان تشعُّ في النفوس فلا تعودُ تخشى شيئاً ولا تعود يرهبها شيء، لكنّ أبا جهل لا يفهمُ سرَّ هذا التحدي البطولي من مخلوق يحسبه ضعيفًا لا يدانيه، فيأخذُ حربة ويطعنها اللعين في قلبها فتفيضُ روحها الطاهرة إلى بارئها شاكية ظلم الإنسان لأخيه الإنسان ولتسجّل اسمها خالدًا في صحيفة الجهاد الإسلامي بوصفها أوّل شهيدةٍ في الإسلام .

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, Grade 7, 2021, p. 85.

[196] Litvak, p. 268.
[197] *Sciences,* Grade 1, 2021, pp. 165, 200.
[198] *Arabic Language Grammar*, Grade 5, 2021, pp. 73-76.
[199] *Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2021, pp. 40-41.
[200] Arabic Reading, Grade 5, 2021, pp. 141-142.
[201] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 8, 2021, p. 112.

The First Martyr [shahid] in Islam
Sumayya addresses the enemy of God, Abu Jahl, in her heroic voice, saying: "There is nothing dearer to us than the death that will relieve us from gazing upon your face, and will bring us to the graces of the Afterlife."
[...]
He took a spear, and the accursed stabbed her heart. Her pure soul ascended to its creator, protesting the man's wrongdoing against his brethren. And her name is forever inscribed in the pages of Islamic jihad, describing her as the first martyr in Islam.

Arab women are also extolled for their role in modern times as a struggle against imperialism, in the mountains, in the cities, and in the countryside. One such woman was "the struggler" (*al-munadila*) Djamila Bouhired, who fought in the Algerian war of liberation against the French, and is considered the Joan of Arc of the Arabs.[202]

The textbook praises Iraqi women who reached the apex of Iraqi society, and thus became leaders among other Arab women. Notably, the Iraqi women presented herein do not wear any traditional Islamic clothing or hijab. Two examples are Zakiyya Haqqi who became a judge in 1959, and Naziha al-Dulaymi who was the first female minister, also in 1959.[203]



***Arabic Language*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2021, p. 34.**

Another textbook brings the story of Umm Qusayy, a woman from Salah al-Din Governorate who saved the life of a group of young men from the south who were attacked by "the enemies" (no details given) in Camp Speicher. She endangered her life and that of her family in order to bring them back to their parents.[204] [205]

The textbooks also make a point of mentioning pioneering women in the world at large, like Marie Curie and Elizabeth Blackwell, who excelled in the field of science and should be a model for Iraqi women in their quest of learning (*talab al-'ilm*).[206] In the field of literature, textbooks quote many female poets like Lami'a 'Abbas 'Amara (1929–2021), or Nazik al-Mala'ika (1923–2007), who is described, correctly so, as a leader (*ra'ida*) in modern Arabic poetry thanks to her use of free rhyme.[207]

[202] *Arabic Language*, Grade 11, Vol. 2, 2021, pp. 114-115.
[203] *Arabic Language*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2021, pp. 35-36.
[204] *Arabic Language*, Grade 10, Vol. 2, 2021, p. 85. The Camp Speicher massacre occurred on 12 June 2014, when ISIS killed between 1,095 to 1,700 Iraqi people in an attack on Camp Speicher in Tikrit, Iraq.
[205] Patrice Taddonio, "Meet a Woman Who Helped Her Town Save Some 850 People Threatened by ISIS," *PBS*, 14 July 2020. https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/woman-and-town-helped-save-hundreds-from-isis-massacre/
[206] *Arabic Language*, Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2021, p. 46; *Arabic Language*, Grade 11, Vol. 2, 2021, p. 41-43.
[207] *Arabic Language*, Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 116.

One textbook describes the standing (*manzila*) of women, asserting that the woman is not half but the entirety of society, and if she is given her rightful place, society will be strong. Accordingly, "granting her the status she is entitled to will open the road for fulfilling her role in life side-by-side with men."[208] This echoes the saying of the 14th century theologian Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, without mentioning him by name, to the effect that "women are one half of society who give birth to the other one, so they are seemingly the entire society."[209]

Islam is praised as a guarantor of women's rights. One social studies textbook asks students to create representations of the slogan "stop violence against women and girls" in the context of women's mistreatment in pre-Islamic Arabian society, and to discuss how Islam has improved women's standing.[210]

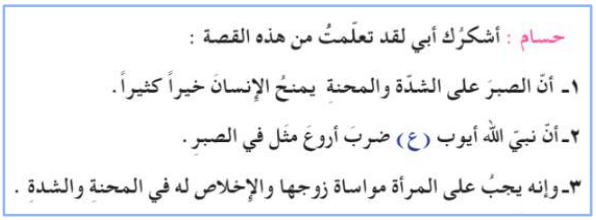
Of all women, mothers are taught as having a unique standing. The Prophet Muhammad is quoted as saying: when someone asked him "who should be my best friend he said your mother, and then your mother, and then your mother and [only] then your father."[211] On another occasion, the Prophet asserted: "Paradise is under the feet of mothers."[212] The mother is presented as a symbol of modesty and sacrifice, as exemplified in the following story: a mother who had one eye was a cook in her child's school. The son, who was ashamed of her throughout his life, traveled far away in order not to be seen with her. When he came back to the village after her death, the people handed him a letter from her in which she told him that she gave her eye to him because he was born blind in one eye.[213]

In contrast with the glorification of women and the disingenuous support for gender equality, the textbooks reflect a completely different outlook on real life. Students are taught that wives should be loyal to their husbands, but not vice versa. One textbook recounts the story of the Prophet Ayyub (Job) and his patience (*sabr*), emphasizing the fact that only his wife remained with him, thus proving her loyalty to him. The lesson to be learned from the story, the pupils are told, is that the wife should be loyal to her husband and console him in hard times.[214]



The loyal and patient wife of Ayyub who withstood the loss of her family, loved ones, and her husband's sickness.

[208] *Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 127.
[209] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350) was an important medieval Islamic jurisconsult, theologian and spiritual writer.
[210] *Social Studies*, Grade 8, 2021, pp. 72-73.
[211] *Arabic Language*, Grade 11, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 87.
[212] Ibid., p. 121.
[213] Ibid., p. 122.
[214] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 5, 2021, pp. 36-39.

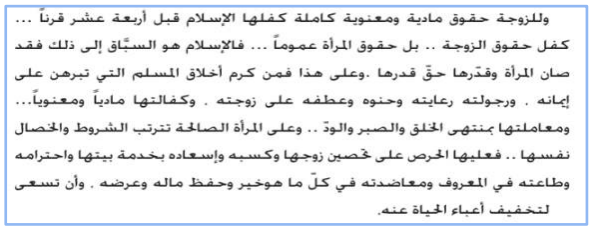

حسام : أشكرُك أبي لقد تعلّمتُ من هذه القصة :
١ـ أنّ الصبرَ على الشدّة والمحنة يمنحُ الإنسانَ خيراً كثيراً .
٢ـ أنّ نبيّ الله أيوب (ع) ضربَ أروعَ مثَل في الصبر .
٣ـ وإنه يجبُ على المرأة مواساة زوجها والإخلاص له في المحنة والشدة .

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 5, 2021, p. 38, 39.**

Husam: Thank you father, I learned from this story [about Ayyub]:
[...]
3. That a woman must console her husband and be loyal to him upon trials and hardships.

Textbooks also teach that the virtuous woman should obey her husband. One example is that of Imam 'Ali, who said about his wife and Muhammad's daughter Fatima al-Zahra' after her death: "I did not annoy her *(aghdaba*)... nor did she annoy me... nor did she disobey any of my orders (*wala 'asat li amran*)."[215] Notably, Fatima is considered the female paradigm in Shi'i literature, but she is also revered by Sunnis. Other important values which should be adopted by women are virtuousness (*'afaf*), modesty, honesty, decency, and purity. These values are shown to be important not just for women, but for men too, as they protect the family's honor (*'ird*).[216] The very use of the term 'ird is problematic, as it reflects an endorsement of this pre-Islamic value. 'Ird is not mentioned in the Qur'an, but is a Bedouin value which puts the onus of male honor on the female's chastity and sexual behavior. According to Dodd, "'ird can only be lost by the misconduct of the woman."[217] Indeed, deviation from the rules may end with the killing of the woman.

A Grade 12 Noble Qur'an textbook valorizes how beneficial Islam is for women. It mentions the husband's duties toward his wife, stating that the man bears "responsibility" (*mas'uliyya*) and "guardianship" (*qiwama*) over the woman and the household, and that he "has more control of his emotions." Therefore, the textbook argues that it only makes sense that women must obey their husbands, and not vice versa.[218] The textbook also mentions the wife's manifold duties toward her husband.


وللزوجة حقوق مادية ومعنوية كاملة كفلها الإسلام قبل أربعة عشر قرناً ... كفل حقوق الزوجة .. بل حقوق المرأة عموماً ... فالإسلام هو السبّاق إلى ذلك فقد صان المرأة وقدّرها حقّ قدرها .وعلى هذا فمن كرم أخلاق المسلم التي تبرهن على إيمانه . ورجولته رعايته وحنوه وعطفه على زوجته . وكفالتها مادياً ومعنوياً... ومعاملتها بمنتهى الخلق والصبر والودّ .. وعلى المرأة الصالحة تترتب الشروط والخصال نفسها .. فعليها الحرص على تحصين زوجها وكسبه وإسعاده بخدمة بيتها واحترامه وطاعته في المعروف ومعاضدته في كلّ ما هوخير وحفظ ماله وعرضه . وأن تسعى لتخفيف أعباء الحياة عنه.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 12, 2021, p. 145.**

Fourteen centuries ago, Islam guaranteed for the wife extensive material and immaterial rights [...]
For righteous women, the same conditions and qualities apply...the woman must endeavor to empower her husband and gain his goodwill, make him happy while she is serving him at home, respect and obey him with appropriate courtesy, support him in all which is good, protect his property and 'ird, and ease for him the burdens of life.

Polygamy (*ta'addud al-zawjat*) is another behavior which is encouraged in the Grade

[215] *Arabic Language*, Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 133.
[216] *Arabic Language*, Grade 11, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 90.
[217] Peter C. Dodd, "Family honor and forces of change," International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 4, No. 1 (January 1973), p. 40.
[218] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 65.

12 textbook. The textbook explains that it is forbidden for a Muslim to marry more than four women.[219] While discussing polygamy, the textbook asserts that a husband should be careful regarding equality among his wives. The textbook justifies polygamy by proving that it is a sensible idea, as opposed to claims by "the enemies of Islam," "as far as material matters are concerned but not love."


حكمة التعدد:

يثير خصوم الإسلام مسألة تعدد الزوجات ويحسبونها منقصة في الإسلام، والواقع إباحة تعدد الزوجات في الشريعة الإسلامية يُعدُّ من محاسنها لا من مثالبها.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 12, 2021, p. 68.**

The wisdom of polygamy:
The opponents of Islam raise the issue of polygamy and consider it as a defect in Islam. In reality, the permissibility of polygamy according to the shari'a is regarded among its virtues, not its faults.

According to the textbook, the advantages of polygamy are as follows: it is not a must, but if a man desires it he is free to have it; if the woman is sterile or sick, it is better for her that her husband marries another woman rather than divorce her; the husband may take an orphan girl; due to war, many men have died, and there are more women than men; and lastly, polygamy allows for increasing the number of offspring *(ikthar al-nasl)*.[220]

With regards to familial relations, there is a clear hierarchy between the two genders: there is no equality between husband and wife, but rather the man has greater responsibility in this arrangement, otherwise there will be "anarchy." Accordingly, the woman should obey her husband, "not him in person," but by following the rules and principles of the marriage agreement.[221] The idea of the wife's obedience to her husband is repeated again and again, as is the idea that she should protect his *'ird* and he should take care of her.[222]

This conservative stance on gender relations is highlighted in the instruction that, during the period of engagement, it is forbidden for the couple to be alone as young people once were; this is important for bringing up "*an honorable family in an honorable society*."


لهذا يجب ان يكون لقاؤهما مع محرم لئلا تحدث نفس أحدهما بشيء تأباه الشريعة والخلق الكريم وهذا من حرص الإسلام على إنشاء أسرة نظيفة في مجتمع شريف. اما ما يتطلع إليه بعض أوساط المراهقين من اختلاط الخطيب بخطيبته وانفرادهما في النزهات والرحلات قبل عقد الزواج فهو أمر غير جائز وتأباه المروءة والفضيلة فقد قال رسول الله(ص):

(لايخلون رجل بإمرأة إلا كان ثالثهما الشيطان) .

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 12, 2021, p. 37.**

Therefore, their private meeting must be with a mahram [a male family member escorting a female in her meetings before marriage], so that one of them will not commit anything which the shari'a and honorable disposition prohibits. And that [reflects] Islam's endeavor to establish a clean family in an honorable society. But what some of the teenager groups aspire to, namely that the betrothed join together and spend time alone on outings and trips before the marriage becomes official, is a forbidden prospect prohibited by the concepts of valor [muruwwa] and moral excellence [fadila]. And the Messenger of God (S) said: "When an [unmarried] man intimates with an [unmarried] woman, a third [party] appears – the Devil."

[219] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 12, 2021, pp. 36-37.
[220] Ibid., pp. 66-68.
[221] Ibid., pp. 38-39.
[222] Ibid., pp. 65, 143-145.

The textbook also warns against gender imitation, i.e. men and women who behave in a manner deemed inappropriate to their gender, saying that God and the Prophet had cursed both men and women for this. It is asserted that infidel Orientalists who hate Islam call for equality between the genders, and to this end, they will destroy what has remained of Muslim societies. In fact, God has cursed those women who look like men, and men who look (*mutashabbih*) like women. This example may be interpreted as relating to homosexuality.[223]


الدرس الرابع:
أولاً: لعن الله المتشبهات بالرجال والمتشبهين بالنساء

فأنت ترى المرأة في صفحات الإعلام كما ترى الرجل بشكل الدمى وبصورة مقززة بعيدة من القيم الإسلامية والعربية والإنسانية. فارتفعت تلك الأصوات الحاقدة على الإسلام العزيز من بعض المستشرقين الكفرة والإلحاديين وأذنابهم منادين بالمساواة ثم الغاء ماخص به الله كل مخلوق والهدف هو القضاء على البقية الباقية في المجتمعات الإسلامية. والّا فهل تخنث الرجال سمة حضارية ؟! وما الذي يتبقى من كرامة الرجل وهيبته وأنت تراه قد ارتدى قلادة او سواراً.

***The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 10, 2021, p. 49.**

Lesson 4: Firstly, God has cursed the women who take the likings of men and the men who take the likings of women. [...]
And you see women on the pages of the media, as well as men, in the form of dolls and in a disgusting manner remote from Islamic, Arab, and human values. And such hostile voices against the honorable Islam by some infidel and atheist orientalists and their followers, calling for equality but canceling what God designated for all created beings. And [their] goal is to eradicate the last remnants [of God's designation] in Islamic societies. And if not so, is the effeminacy of men a mark of culture? and what remains of a man's dignity and prestige when you see him wearing a necklace or a bracelet.

The Grade 12 textbook grade encourages young men to develop their manhood *(rujula),* because societies need them in times of crises. Those who become effeminate should be cursed and thrown out of their home. Such harmful male behavior results in the destruction of the home, the ruin of society, and the weakening of the nation as a whole.[224]


الأمة. ولهذا لعن الرسول (ص) المتشبهين من الرجال بالنساء والمتشبهات من النساء بالرجال . ولعن النبيّ (ص) المخنثين من الرجال والمترجّلات من النساء وقال:
((أخرجوهم من بيوتكم)) .

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, Grade 12, 2021, p. 97.

... and thus the Messenger [Muhammad] cursed the men who take the likings of women and the women who take the likings of men. And the Prophet [Muhammad] cursed the effeminate men and the women assuming masculine manners, and said: "Expel them from your homes."

It should be noted that these ideas echo those of Sami Shawkat, the Director-General of Education and founder of the Futuwwa, the youth movement in Iraq which was active in the 1930s and early 1940s. In his essays, Shawkat called on youth to develop their manhood, and be ready to sacrifice their lives for the nation. He also opined that women can reach perfection only by marrying, begetting children, and breast-feeding them.[225]

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[223] Billson, C., & Billson, C. (2023, July 4*). Iraq bill calling for homosexuality ban submitted to parliament.* PinkNews | Latest Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans News | LGBTQ+ News. https://www.thepinknews.com/2023/07/04/iraq-homosexuality-bill-ban/

[224] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 100.

[225] Hazim Saghiyya, "«رومنطيقيّو المشرق العربيّ»، الحلقة (2): الطريق إلى الزعامة الراديكاليّة... «صناعة الموت» ودورها التأسيسي" (Romanticists of the Arab Mashreq, Part 2: The Road to Radical Leadership... The 'Industry of Death' and its Formative Role)," Al-Sharq al-Awsat, 14 June 2021. https://rb.gy/loyq0k

The Daunting Task of Democratization

Following the occupation of Iraq, the US and its allies set up an ambitious program for establishing a strong, democratic political system and a flourishing economy on the debris of Iraq's Ba'thist dictatorship. Instilling democratic values in the younger generation through textbooks was to be the main vehicle for such endeavors. However, the implementation of the program tells a different story. As one observer put it:

> "The declared intent of democratic education can only make sense in relation to the conditions for democratic governance in Iraq more broadly. The Abu Graib prison situation [torture of prisoners by American soldiers], attempts to control the outcome of elections in ways favorable to U.S. interests, and the essential theft of Iraqi national wealth for the enrichment of multinational oil companies and for the strategic aims of the U.S., seem at odds with an honest effort at democracy promotion."[226]

The textbooks, too, sometimes reflect a different reality. An issue of concern echoed in the Grade 9 sociology textbook is a lack of transparency and weak democratic apparatuses. It is asserted that the challenge of the state today is rebuilding relations with society on correct foundations (*usus sahiha*), which will strengthen the democratic system.[227] The challenge is "building a modern, democratic, united, pluralistic society which will provide opportunities to everybody," however it is stated that the unstable political circumstances which existed in the past were a stumbling block for the project of democratization. At the same time, while lauding the importance of public opinion within democracies, the textbook stresses the need for regulation and censorship.



٣ـ الرقابة على الصحافة

الصحافة سلاح ذو حدين، فهي يمكن أن تنقل الخبر الصحيح والمعلومة المفيدة ويمكن في الوقت نفسه أن تكون أداة تخريب وإساءة .فكم من صحيفة نشرت صورا فاضحة أو ، مسيئة لبعض الرموز الدينية والسياسية. وكم من صحيفة نشرت أخبارا أو وثائق مزورة، بهدف الإساءة إلى دين أو معتقد أو جماعة. وفي الوقت نفسه فان وسائل الإعلام ومنها الصحافة، يمكن أن تكون أداة توجيـــه ورقابة. ومن اجل تعزيز الدور الايجابي للرقابة المباشرة، أو غير المباشرة على الصحف وأصدار قوانين وقرارات، تؤمن للصحافة قدرا مناسباً من الحرية، يقابله قدراً من الضبط والتوجيه. وهي قد تستخدم إجراءات عقابية معينة مثل منع الصحيفة من الصدور، أو مصادرة أعدادها بعد صدورها أو تقديم محرريها للمحاكمة.

***Sociology*, Grade 10, 2021, p. 86.**

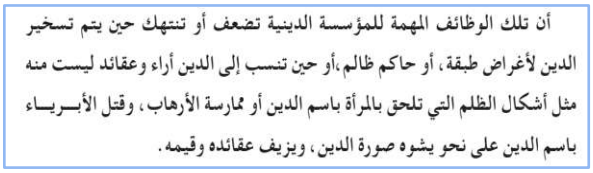
3. Supervision Over Journalism
Journalism is a double-edged sword, which may deliver accurate reports and useful information, but at the same time may be a tool of destruction and offense [...] At the same time, the media, including the press, can be an instrument of orientation and censorship. For the sake of strengthening the positive role of direct or indirect censorship over newspapers and the publication of laws and decisions, journalism will be guaranteed a certain degree of freedom as against a certain degree of control and manipulation. [Censorship] may take specific punitive measures, such as preventing a newspaper from being printed, confiscating its issues after their publication, or placing its editors on trial.

When the issue of information (*al-'i'lam*) is discussed, it is emphasized that this is

[226] Kenneth Saltman, "Creative Associates International: Corporate Education and 'Democracy Promotion' in Iraq," *Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies,* January 2006.
[227] *Sociology,* Grade 10, 2021, pp. 99, 101-103.

both a weapon and a powerful tool, and that even in Islam, information was used both positively and negatively. In particular, the textbook warns of the danger of new medias such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and calls for using them in a moral way.[228]

Some of the textbooks, especially that of sociology, do not hesitate to criticize Iraqi society and call for profound change. When discussing the role of religion in society, students learn that it may be weaponized by certain classes or wicked rulers who distort religion and its values, spread terror, kill innocent people, and oppress women. The textbook, which was written in 2008, undoubtedly reflects the rise of the militant Sunni network Al-Qa'ida in Iraq, and the civil war between Sunnis and Shi'is which reached its zenith during those years.[229]



أن تلك الوظائف المهمة للمؤسسة الدينية تضعف أو تنتهك حين يتم تسخير الدين لأغراض طبقة، أو حاكم ظالم،أو حين تنسب إلى الدين أراء وعقائد ليست منه مثل أشكال الظلم التي تلحق بالمرأة باسم الدين أو ممارسة الأرهاب، وقتل الأبـريـاء باسم الدين على نحو يشوه صورة الدين، ويزيف عقائده وقيمه.

***Sociology,* Grade 10, 2021, p. 44.**

Such important roles of the religious establishment are minimized or violated when religion is subjected to the purposes of a specific class, or a wrongdoing ruler, or when extraneous views and beliefs are ascribed to it. This includes the forms of wrongdoing that are applied to women in the name of religion, or committing acts of terror, and killing innocents in the name of religion thereby defacing religion and distorting its beliefs and values.

At the same time, the textbook expresses harsh criticism of the different governments which have failed to provide social services to the citizens, including equal opportunities in the cities; neglect of the countryside, which caused ongoing emigration to the cities; and a lack of housing, medical centers, transportation, and schools.[230]

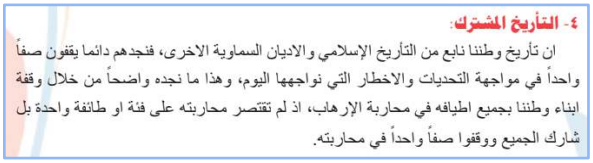
On an economic level, the Grade 12 textbook criticizes the fact that Iraq does not have a developed industry due to a lack of strategy caused by political circumstances. Even its oil resources, which have the potential to grow such an industry, was neglected. The textbook mentions various areas of neglect which had a negative impact on the production of electricity.[231]

When analyzing the demographic situation in Iraq, the textbook on sociology warns that Iraq's increasing population places a great burden on society, the state, the family, and especially in the realm of education.[232]

With regards to minorities, the textbooks present an overall idyllic picture of coexistence and peaceful relations. As mentioned above, a fourth-grade textbook teaches pupils about the coexistence between all ethnic, sectarian and religious groups in Iraq.[233]

[228] *Arabic Language*, Grade 10, Vol. 2, 2021, pp. 28-30.
[229] For the emergence of Al-Qa'ida, see Helfont, pp. 227-232.
[230] *Sociology*, Grade 10, 2021, p. 59.
[231] *Human Geography*, Grade 12, 2021, pp. 98-100.
[232] *Sociology*, Grade 10, 2021 p. 97. The book states that the number of Iraqis is 32 million, while in fact at the time of the writing it was little over 29 million. "Iraq Population 1950-2023," Macrotrends. https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/IRQ/iraq/population
[233] *Social Studies*, Grade 4, 2021, p. 56.

Another textbook praises the heterogeneity of Iraqi society, since this has "strengthened the spirit of brotherhood between all the ethnicities (*qawmiyyat*)," who stood united. Indeed, the textbook highlights the problem of terrorism in general, and the fact that all groups and communities cooperated in combating this phenomenon.

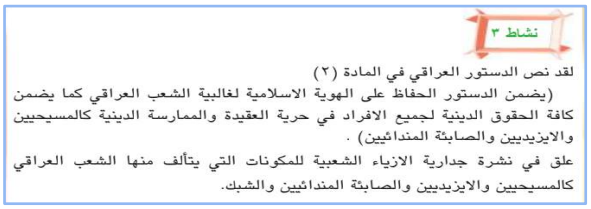

٤- التأريخ المشترك:
ان تأريخ وطننا نابع من التأريخ الإسلامي والاديان السماوية الاخرى، فنجدهم دائما يقفون صفاً واحداً في مواجهة التحديات والاخطار التي نواجهها اليوم، وهذا ما نجده واضحاً من خلال وقفة ابناء وطننا بجميع اطيافه في محاربة الإرهاب، اذ لم تقتصر محاربته على فئة او طائفة واحدة بل شارك الجميع ووقفوا صفاً واحداً في محاربته.

***Social Studies*, Grade 6, 2021, p. 103.**

1.Shared History:
The history of our nation stems from Islamic history and the other revealed religions. Thus, we find them always standing united in confronting the challenges and the dangers that are facing us today. We see this clearly in all our people's standing to combat terrorism, as combating it is not limited to one group or faction. Rather, all participate in standing together to fight it.

Similarly, the sociology textbook emphasizes the importance of all the social groups (*mukawwanat*) in Iraq – Muslims and Christians, Arabs, Kurds Turkmens, Sabeans, Shabak and Yazidis – and the fact that the constitution contains important articles about them.[234]

A Grade 5 sociology textbook also emphasizes the need to protect human rights in Iraq, and to ensure freedom of worship for all religions. An exercise instructs the pupils to read Article 2 of the Iraqi Constitution, which guarantees religious rights for its various confessional groups, and to create a poster which features the traditional dress of various religious groups.[235]


نشاط ٣
لقد نص الدستور العراقي في المادة (٢)
(يضمن الدستور الحفاظ على الهوية الاسلامية لغالبية الشعب العراقي كما يضمن كافة الحقوق الدينية لجميع الافراد في حرية العقيدة والممارسة الدينية كالمسيحيين والايزيديين والصابئة المندائيين) .
علق في نشرة جدارية الازياء الشعبية للمكونات التي يتألف منها الشعب العراقي كالمسيحيين والايزيديين والصابئة المندائيين والشبك.

***Social Studies,* Grade 5, 2019, p. 51.**

Activity 3:
Article 2 of the Iraqi Constitution states: "the Constitution guarantees protecting the Islamic identity of the majority of the Iraqi people, as it secures all the religious rights of all individuals in freedom of worship and religious practice, such as Christians, Yazidis, Sabeans and Mandeans." Attach a poster with traditional clothes of the entities that compose the Iraqi people, such as Christians, Yazidis, Sabeans, Mandeans and Shabak.

Lessons on the 2005 constitution also incorporate the acknowledgement of the previous Saddam regime's policies of persecution against minorities. A Grade 10 social studies textbook teaches about the constitution of 2005, explaining that it guarantees "justice for all members of Iraqi society," and that it serves to correct the wrongs perpetrated by the previous regime. Examples mentioned relate to the regime's treatment of Iraq's minorities, such as the Kurds and Kurdish-speaking Shabak and Fayli peoples, and include the 1988 Halabja Massacre and the 1991 Sha'ban Uprising.

[234] *Sociology,* Grade 10, 2021, p. 103.
[235] A similar assignment is found in the twelfth grade: *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 124.

السياسي. لذا اقر الدستور العراقي الجديد مفاهيم ومبادئ ومؤسسات ارست العدالة بين جميع مكونات المجتمع العراقي بانصاف المظلومين وارجاع الامور إلى نصابها الصحيح ومعالجة ما خلفه النظام السابق من ازمات ومحروميات كتهجيره العراقيين ومنهم الشبك والكرد الفيليين واسقاط الجنسية عنهم ومصادرة ممتلكاتهم المنقولة وغير المنقولة وقمعه للانتفاضة الشعبانية عام ١٩٩١ واستخدامه الاسلحة الكيمياوية لقمع الاكراد في حلبجة وحملات الانفال وتجفيف الاهوار في جنوب العراق واتباعه سياسة التهميش والاقصاء لفئات عانت تحت وطأته الويلات، وكان ذلك جلياً في دعم الدستور لمؤسسات العدالة الانتقالية المتمثلة بالهيئات والوزارات الاتية:

***Social Studies*, Grade 10, 2021, p. 105.**

[...] Therefore the new Iraqi constitution established the concepts, principles and institutions that anchor justice for all members of Iraqi society, [...] fixing the crises and deprivations left by the previous regime, such as the expulsion of Iraqis like the Shabaks, the Kurds and the Faylis, revoking their citizenship and confiscating their property, the suppression of the 1991 Sha'ban Uprising, the use of chemical weapons to oppress the Kurds in Halabja, draining the marshes in southern Iraq, and the policy of marginalizing and excluding groups that suffered from disasters under the previous regime's oppression. [...]

Third-grade students are taught that Islam is the religion of humanity, and that there is no preference for an Arab over a foreigner "except in piety."[236]

Accordingly, students are encouraged to respect all of their neighbors, including the Muslims, Christians and Sabeans, and to protect (*nahfaz*) their rights.[237] Likewise, students should adopt such values of equality, cooperation, accepting the Other, being proud of Iraqi identity, and respecting the rights and freedom of other groups in society.[238] In fairness to the education system, it must be noted that the curriculum includes Christian education lessons for grades 3-6; however, it is assumed that these lessons are for Christian pupils only, and their messages are not likely to reach Muslim students.

The textbooks emphasize the importance of early Christianity to the intellectual legacy of Iraq. In a Grade 10 textbook on the history of Islamic civilization, students are taught about the history of intellectual culture in Iraq and the Islamic world. It is specifically stated that Christian churches and monasteries are part and parcel of the intellectual legacy of the Arab Islamic civilization, much due to the tolerant nature of Islam. Therefore, students learn that Iraqis must preserve and protect these sites, as an indication of the peaceful coexistence between different groups in Iraqi society.


الكنائس والاديرة:

لما كانت المسيحية منتشرة في العراق وبلاد الشام قبل الإسلام ، ولما عُرف عن التسامح الديني عند المسلمين فقد أسهم أهل البلاد المحرّرة والمفتوحة من أهل الديانات الأخرى ولا سيما (المسيحيون) بإغناء الحضارة العربية الإسلامية التي من أبرز سماتها سمة الإنسانية ، لذلك فقد تفاعل أبناء هذه الديانات مع المسلمين في بناء الحضارة الإنسانية من خلال استمرارهم في تعليم أبنائهم لغتهم وديانتهم وتراثهم العلمي، إذ كانت الكنائس والأديرة والمكتبات الملحقة بها والمدارس التابعة لها من أهم مراكز الحضارة ، فضلاً عن إسهام هؤلاء في ترجمة علوم الأولين عن السريانية الى اللغة العربية ، ومن خلال إجادتهم لها وسرعة تقبلهم لها فكانوا من المساهمين في بناء الحضارة وما يزال كثير من الأديرة والكنائس في العراق يمارس هذا الدور ليومنا هذا وان المحافظة عليها وصيانتها جزء من الحفاظ على التراث العلمي والثقافي للعراق وهذا دليل على التعايش السلمي بين المكونات العراقية .

كنيسة

***History of the Arab Islamic Civilization*, Grade 10, 2021, p. 136.**

[236] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 3, 2021, p. 54.
[237] Ibid., p. 55.
[238] *Social Studies*, Grade 5, 2019, p. 4.

Churches and Monasteries
Since Christianity has been well-spread in Iraq and the Levant prior to Islam, and the religious tolerance among Muslims well-known, the believers of other religions, especially Christians from the liberated and open cities, participated in the enrichment of Arab Islamic culture, one of whose most important characteristics is humanity. Therefore, the people of these religions cooperated with the Muslims to build human civilization by teaching their children their language, religion and scholarly legacy, and churches and monasteries [...] and their schools were the centers of civilization [...] preserving them and protecting them is part of the protection of the cultural and scholarly legacy of Iraq, thus indicating the peaceful coexistence between the Iraqi entities.

These positive messages and directives stand in stark contrast with reality on the ground, thus increasing the dissonance which students may feel between theoretical learning and reality. By 2022, the persecution of minorities, particularly the Yazidis and Christians, had reached new levels. The Archbishop of Irbil stated that between 2003 and 2019, the Christian community had dwindled by 83%, from around 1.5 million to just 250,000. Furthermore, he warned that "Christianity in Iraq, one of the oldest Churches, if not the oldest Church in the world, is perilously close to extinction. Those of us who remain must be ready to face martyrdom."[239]

The fate of the Yazidis was not any better, culminating in a genocide whose full scale has not yet been confirmed, but estimates suggest that at least 5,500 people were killed. On just the first day of the genocide, ISIS kidnapped 6,417 Yazidis from Sinjar, selling 3,548 women and girls to individual ISIS members and into a life of sexual slavery and forced labor.[240] With this, the textbooks keep silent regarding the fate of both the Christians and the Yazidis.

The democratization project in Iraq has encountered enormous hurdles due to the sudden shift from a dictatorial system to a liberal one, as the changes were top-down and not vice versa, and because these values were regarded as being imposed by an imperialist force. Most importantly, the loss of power by Sunnis who had held it for centuries led the more radical groups among them to unleash a revanchist war of terror which greatly hampered the project.

[239] Frank Gardner, "Iraq's Christians 'close to extinction'," ***BBC,*** 23 May 2019. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-48333923
[240] Jennifer Venis, "Justice for the Yazidis," ***International Bar Association,*** 27 September 2022. https://www.ibanet.org/Justice-for-the-Yazidis

How to Portray Terrorism

The authors of the textbooks were cautious not to expose young children to terror, violence and other negative phenomena which were so rampant at the time of writing. Still, one can implicitly learn a great deal about these serious problems. For example, the fourth-grade textbook teaches student that Islam is a religion of mercy, and that the Qur'an has forbidden the use of violence and cruelty.


من الحديث النبوي الشريف
الشفقة والرحمـــــة (للحفظ)
قال النبيّ محمدٌ (ص) :
من لا يرحَـمِ النـاسَ لا يرحـمـهُ اللهُ
صدق رسول الله
شرح الحديث
أولادنا وبناتنا الأعزاء.... إنّ ديننا الإسلاميّ الحنيف دينُ رحمةٍ ومحبة، وقد أمرَنا
الله تعالى في كتابه الكريم بالرحمة والإحسان إلى الناس، ونهانا عن الشدَّة والقسوة،

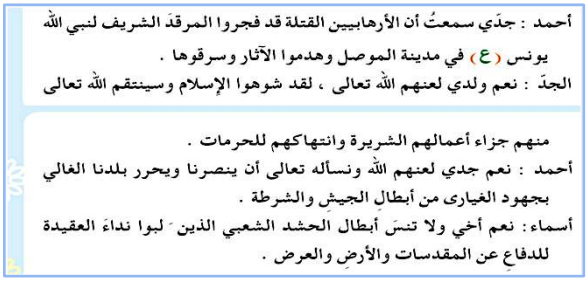
The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 4, 2021, pp. 9-10.**

From the Prophetic Honorable Hadith
Compassion and Mercy (to memorize)
The Prophet Muhammad (S) said: whoever shows no mercy to people will not receive mercy from God [...]
Explanation of the hadith:
Our dear sons and daughters... our Islamic monotheistic religion is one of mercy and love. God has commanded us in his noble book to show people mercy and favor, and prohibited us from violence and cruelty.

One Islamic Education textbook for high school directly accuses terrorist movements such as "ISIS (*Da'ish*) and Al-Qa'ida" of "falsely claiming to be Islamic" and distorting the image of Islam, comparing the morality of their conduct to pagan practices of pre-Islamic Arabia.[241] Another textbook asserts that "the terrorists did not differentiate between the sons of our people" and that Islam calls for "unity".[242]

The textbooks also include general expressions which claim that Iraq became victorious over terror.[243] However, when directly addressing Grade 6 students, a textbook informs them that terrorists destroyed the religious site of Yunus. The example explicitly mentions the Shi'i militias "Al-Hashd al-Sha'bi," which were established in 2014; the narrative praises the role they played, together with the army and the police, in protecting the holy sites, the land, and the 'ird.

[241] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 11, 2021, p. 153.
[242] *Arabic Language*, Grade 10, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 43. For a discussion on Sunni and Shi'i insurgencies in post-Saddam Iraq, see Helfont, pp. 219-233.
[243] *Arabic Language Grammar*, Grade 5, 2021, p. 51.



أحمد : جدّي سمعتُ أن الأرهابيين القتلة قد فجروا المرقدَ الشريف لنبي الله يونس (ع) في مدينة الموصل وهدموا الآثار وسرقوها .

الجدّ : نعم ولدي لعنهم الله تعالى ، لقد شوهوا الإسلام وسينتقم الله تعالى منهم جزاء أعمالهم الشريرة وانتهاكهم للحرمات .

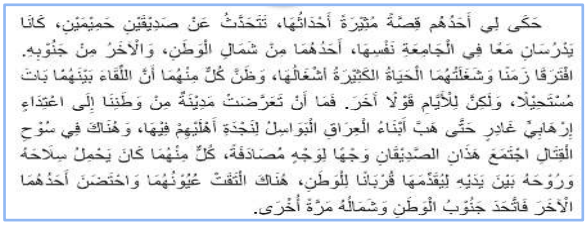
أحمد : نعم جدي لعنهم الله ونسأله تعالى أن ينصرنا ويحرر بلدنا الغالي بجهود الغيارى من أبطالِ الجيش والشرطة .

أسماء: نعم أخي ولا تنسَ أبطال الحشد الشعبي الذين لبوا نداءَ العقيدة للدفاعِ عن المقدسات والأرضِ والعرض .

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, Grade 6, 2021, pp. 53-54.

Ahmad: Grandfather, I heard that the murderous terrorists exploded the honorable tomb of God's prophet Yunus in Mosul, destroyed the remains, and stole them.
Grandfather: Yes my boy, may God curse them. They distorted Islam and God shall take vengeance upon them for their evil deeds and violation of the sacred.
Ahmad: Yes grandfather, may God curse them. We ask Him to aid us and free our dear country by the efforts of earnest heroes of the military and police.
Asma': Yes brother, and don't forget the heroes of Al-Hashd al-Sha'bi, who answered the religious call to defend the holy locations, the land, and dignity.

Grade 9 students are taught about the importance of engaging in dialogue instead of resorting to acts of violence (*'unf*).[244] In stark contrast, in a Grade 9 Arabic textbook, pupils are also told a story with a moral propagating the idea that taking up arms to defend the country is beneficial to social cohesion: the textbook recounts that two students, one from the north (referring to a Kurd) and one from the south, met incidentally in a city which came under attack by terrorists, and the two of them volunteered to support its people by taking up arms.



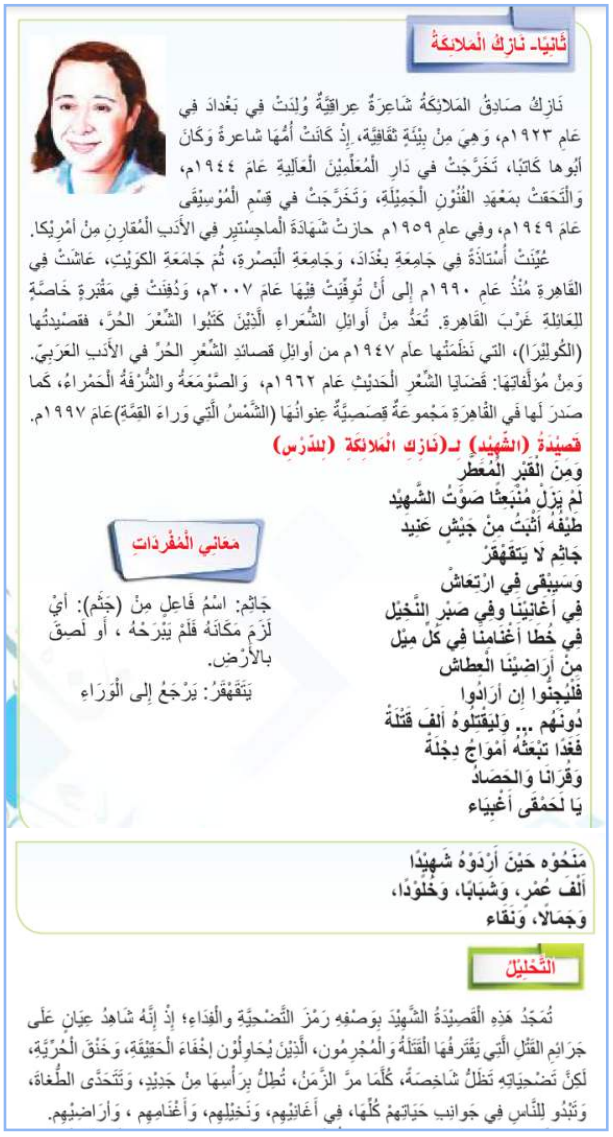
حَكَى لِي أَحَدُهُم قِصَّةً مُثِيرَةً أَخَذَاتُهَا، تَتَحَدَّثُ عَنْ صَدِيقَيْنِ حَمِيمَيْنِ، كَانَا يَدْرُسَانِ مَعًا فِي الْجَامِعَةِ نَفْسِهَا، أَحَدُهُمَا مِنْ شَمَالِ الْوَطَنِ، وَالْآخَرُ مِنْ جَنُوبِهِ. افْتَرَقَا زَمَنًا وَشَغَلَتْهُمَا الْحَيَاةُ الْكَثِيرَةُ اشْغَالُهَا، وَظَنَّ كُلٌّ مِنْهُمَا أَنَّ اللِّقَاءَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَاتَ مُسْتَحِيلًا، وَلَكِنَّ لِلْأَيَّامِ قَوْلًا آخَرَ. فَمَا أَنْ تَعَرَّضَتْ مَدِينَةٌ مِنْ وَطَنِنَا إِلَى اعْتِدَاءٍ إِرْهَابِيٍّ غَادِرٍ حَتَّى هَبَّ أَبْنَاءُ الْعِرَاقِ الْبَوَاسِلُ لِنَجْدَةِ أَهْلِيهِمْ فِيهَا، وَهُنَاكَ فِي سُوحِ الْقِتَالِ اجْتَمَعَ هَذَانِ الصَّدِيقَانِ وَجْهًا لِوَجْهٍ مُصَادَفَةً، كُلٌّ مِنْهُمَا كَانَ يَحْمِلُ سِلَاحَهُ وَرُوحَهُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ لِيُقَدِّمَهَا قُرْبَانًا لِلْوَطَنِ، هُنَاكَ الْتَقَتْ عُيُونُهُمَا وَاحْتَضَنَ أَحَدُهُمَا الْآخَرَ فَاتَّحَدَ جَنُوبُ الْوَطَنِ وَشَمَالُهُ مَرَّةً أُخْرَى.

Arabic Language, Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2021, pp. 59.

One of them told me an interesting story about two close friends who studied together in the same university, one from the north of the country, the other from the south. They split for a while, being occupied by life's many concerns, and each thought that meeting again would be impossible. But time had other things in store. It was when one of our country's cities was subject to a treacherous terrorist attack that the brave sons of Iraq sprung to rescue its citizens, and there on the battlefield the two friends accidentally met face to face, each carrying in his hands his weapon and spirit in sacrifice of the country. There their eyes met, they embraced each other, and thus the south was reunited once again with the north.

Ninth-grade students learn about the merits of martyrdom. In the section of the textbook dedicated to martyrdom, the female Iraqi poet Nazik Al-Mala'ika is introduced as the writer of a song titled "The Martyr," which praises his image as a symbol of self-sacrifice. She is the only female Arab writer mentioned throughout the textbook.

[244] *Social Studies*, Grade 9, 2020, p. 139.



ثانيًا- نازك الملائكة

نَازِكُ صَادِقُ المَلائِكَةُ شَاعِرَةٌ عِرَاقِيَّةٌ وُلِدَتْ فِي بَغْدَادَ فِي عَامِ ١٩٢٣م، وَهِيَ مِنْ بِيئَةٍ ثَقَافِيَّةٍ، إِذْ كَانَتْ أُمُّهَا شَاعِرَةً وَكَانَ أَبُوهَا كَاتِبًا، تَخَرَّجَتْ فِي دَارِ الْمُعَلِّمِيْنَ الْعَالِيَةِ عَامَ ١٩٤٤م، وَالْتَحَقَتْ بِمَعْهَدِ الفُنُونِ الْجَمِيلَةِ، وَتَخَرَّجَتْ فِي قِسْمِ الْمُوسِيقَى عَامَ ١٩٤٩م، وَفِي عَامِ ١٩٥٩م حَازَتْ شَهَادَةَ الْمَاجِسْتِيرِ فِي الأَدَبِ الْمُقَارِنِ مِنْ أَمْرِيكَا.

عُيِّنَتْ أُسْتَاذَةً فِي جَامِعَةِ بَغْدَادَ، وَجَامِعَةِ الْبَصْرَةِ، ثُمَّ جَامِعَةِ الكُوَيْتِ، عَاشَتْ فِي القَاهِرَةِ مُنْذُ عَامِ ١٩٩٠م إِلَى أَنْ تُوُفِّيَتْ فِيهَا عَامَ ٢٠٠٧م، وَدُفِنَتْ فِي مَقْبَرَةٍ خَاصَّةٍ لِلعَائِلَةِ غَرْبَ القَاهِرَةِ. تُعَدُّ مِنْ أَوَائِلِ الشُّعَرَاءِ الَّذِيْنَ كَتَبُوا الشِّعْرَ الحُرَّ، فَقَصِيْدَتُهَا (الكُولِيْرَا)، التِي نَظَمَتْهَا عَامَ ١٩٤٧م من أوائِلِ قَصَائِدِ الشِّعْرِ الحُرِّ فِي الأَدَبِ العَرَبِيِّ. وَمِنْ مُؤَلَّفَاتِهَا: قَضَايَا الشِّعْرِ الْحَدِيْثِ عَامَ ١٩٦٢م، وَالصَّوْمَعَةُ والشُّرْفَةُ الْحَمْرَاءُ، كَمَا صَدَرَ لَهَا فِي القَاهِرَةِ مَجْمُوعَةٌ قِصَصِيَّةٌ عِنوانُهَا (الشَّمْسُ الَّتِي وَرَاءَ القِمَّةِ) عَامَ ١٩٩٧م.

قَصِيْدَةُ (الشَّهِيْدِ) لِـ(نَازِكِ الْمَلائِكَةِ (لِلدَّرْسِ)

وَمِنَ الْقَبْرِ الْمُعَطَّرِ
لَمْ يَزَلْ مُنْبَعِثًا صَوْتُ الشَّهِيْدِ
طَيْفُهُ أَثْبَتُ مِنْ جَيْشٍ عَنِيدٍ
جَاثِمٍ لَا يَتَقَهْقَرْ
وَسَيَبْقَى فِي ارْتِعَاشٍ
فِي أَغَانِيْنَا وَفِي صَبْرِ النَّخِيْلِ
فِي خُطَا أَغْنَامِنَا فِي كُلِّ مِيْلِ
مِنْ أَرَاضِيْنَا الْعِطَاشِ
فَلْيَجِنُّوا إِنْ أَرَادُوا
دُونَهُم ... وَلْيَقْتُلُوهُ أَلْفَ قَتْلَةْ
فَغَدًا تَبْعَثُهُ أَمْوَاجُ دِجْلَةْ
وَقُرَانَا وَالْحَصَادُ
يَا لَحُمْقَى أَغْبِيَاء

مَنَحُوْه حِيْنَ أَرْدَوْهُ شَهِيْدًا
أَلْفَ عُمْرٍ، وَشَبَابًا، وَخُلُوْدًا،
وَجَمَالًا، وَنَقَاء

معَانِي الْمُفْرَدَاتِ

جَاثِم: اسْمُ فَاعِلٍ مِنْ (جَثَمَ): أَيْ لَزِمَ مَكَانَهُ فَلَمْ يَبْرَحْهُ ، أَو لَصِقَ بِالأَرْضِ.

يَتَقَهْقَرُ: يَرْجِعُ إِلَى الْوَرَاءِ

التَّحْلِيْلُ

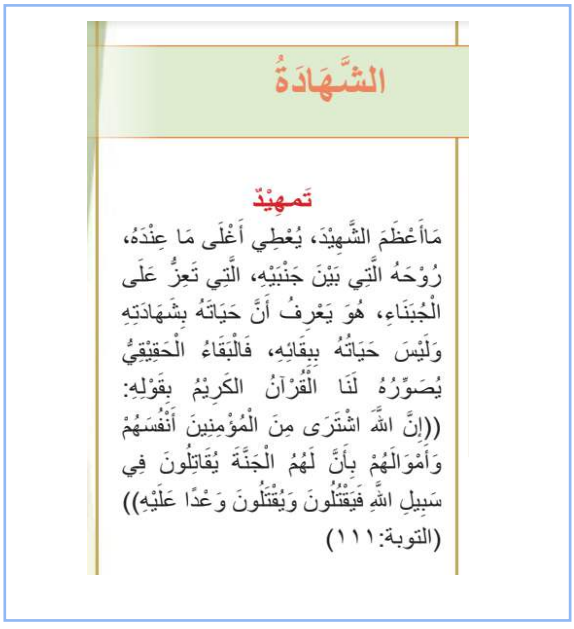
تُمَجِّدُ هَذِهِ الْقَصِيْدَةُ الشَّهِيْدَ بِوَصْفِهِ رَمْزَ التَّضْحِيَّةِ والْفِدَاءِ؛ إِذْ إِنَّهُ شَاهِدُ عِيَانٍ عَلَى جَرَائِمِ الْقَتْلِ الَّتِي يَقْتَرِفُهَا الْقَتَلَةُ وَالْمُجْرِمُون، الَّذِيْنَ يُحَاوِلُوْن إِخْفَاءَ الْحَقِيْقَةِ، وَخَنْقَ الْحُرِّيَّةِ، لَكِنَّ تَضْحِيَاتِهِ تَظَلُّ شَاخِصَةً، كُلَّمَا مَرَّ الزَّمَنُ، تُطِلُّ بِرَأْسِهَا مِنْ جَدِيْدٍ، وَتَتَحَدَّى الطُّغَاةَ، وَتَبْدُو لِلنَّاسِ فِي جَوَانِبِ حَيَاتِهِمْ كُلِّهَا، فِي أَغَانِيْهِم، وَنَخِيْلِهِم، وَأَغْنَامِهِم ، وَأَرَاضِيْهِم.

Arabic Language, Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2021, pp. 109-110.

The Poem "The Martyr" by Nazik Al-Mala'ika (study):
And from the perfumed grave
The voice of the martyr still resonates
His specter is more potent than a relentless army
Standing firm, not retreating
It will remain in tremor
In our songs and the endurance of palm trees
In every mile our sheep tread
From our thirsty lands
Let them bury him if they wish
Underneath them... they may kill him a thousand times
For tomorrow the waves of the Tigris shall send him
Together with our villages and harvest
O ignorant fools
They have granted him [as gifts] when they made him a martyr
A thousands lives, youth, and eternity,
And beauty and purity

Analysis:
This poem exalts the martyr for being a symbol of sacrifice and devotion. Because he is an eyewitness to the crimes of murder committed by the murderers and criminals, who try to hide the truth and suffocate freedom. But his sacrifice remains apparent, no matter how long passes; it will lift its head and call upon the tyrants; it reveals itself to people in all aspects of life, in their songs, palm trees, sheep, and land.

An entire section of a Grade 10 Arabic Language textbook is dedicated to martyrdom. In the introduction, the martyr is praised for sacrificing his life, unlike the "cowards" who "treasure the souls." A verse is quoted from the Qur'an encouraging the believers to die and kill for Allah, and to be rewarded in heaven. This is followed by a story about a mother whose only son willfully sacrificed himself for the homeland. The story begins with the saying, "the most beautiful of mothers is the one who waited for her son and he returned, but as a martyr."



الشَّهَادَةُ

تَمهِيْدٌ

مَاأَعْظَمَ الشَّهِيْدَ، يُعْطِي أَغْلَى مَا عِنْدَهُ، رُوْحَهُ الَّتِي بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْهِ، الَّتِي تَعِزُّ عَلَى الْجُبَنَاءِ، هُوَ يَعْرِفُ أَنَّ حَيَاتَهُ بِشَهَادَتِهِ وَلَيْسَ حَيَاتُهُ بِبِقَائِهِ، فَالْبَقَاءُ الْحَقِيْقِيُّ يُصَوِّرُهُ لَنَا الْقُرْآنُ الكَرِيْمُ بِقَوْلِهِ: ((إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ وَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ)) (التوبة:١١١)

Martyrdom:
Introduction:
How great is the martyr [shahid]; he grants the most precious of his possessions, his soul, which is priceless to the cowards. He knows that his life is in his martyrdom, and not in his survival, for the true survival is described by the noble Qur'an as: "Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] so that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise" (9:111)



الْجُوْدُ بِالنَّفْسِ ... قِصَّة قَصِيْرَة (بتصرف)

أَجْمَلُ الأُمَّهاتِ الَّتِي انْتَظَرَتِ ابْنَهَا..

أَجْمَلُ الأُمَّهاتِ الَّتِي انْتَظَرَتْهُ وَعَادَ.. عَادَ مُسْتَشْهِدًا

فَبَكَتْ دَمْعَتَيْنِ وَوَرْدَةً، وَلَمْ تَتَزَوَ فِي ثِيَابِ الْحِدَادِ..

فُؤَادٌ شَابٌّ يَافِعٌ تَرْتَسِمُ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَمْنِيَاتٌ خَطَّتْهَا أُمُّهُ عَلَيْهِ، وَأُمْنِيَاتٌ أُخْرَى رَسَمَهَا الْوَطَنُ عَلَى جَبْهَتِهِ.. شَابٌّ مِنْ (غَزَّةَ) الْجَرِيحَةِ فِي وَطَنٍ كَبِيْرٍ يُؤْلِفُ جُرْحًا فَاغِرًا مُنْذُ عُقُوْدٍ مِنَ الزَّمَنِ..

دَخَلَ فُؤَادُ الْبَيْتَ وَهُوَ مُطْرِقُ الرَّأْسِ، وَشَارِدُ الذِّهْنِ. قَابَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَقَلْبُهَا خَافِقٌ، وَفَرَائِصُهَا تَرْتَعِدُ.

وَأُمُّ فُؤَادٍ فِي الْعَقْدِ الْخَامِسِ مِنْ عُمْرِهَا، حَارَبَتْهَا ثَابَاتُ اللَّيَالِي بِلَا هَوَادَةٍ وَلَمْ يَبْقَ لَهَا سِوَى فُؤَادٍ، فَهُوَ أَمَلُهَا وَرَجَاؤُهَا، وَلَوْلَا وُجُوْدُهُ بِقُرْبِهَا لَفَضَّلَتِ الْمَوْتَ عَلَى الْحَيَاةِ.

فَأَبُوهَا وَأَخُوهَا سَقَطَا شَهِيْدَيِ الْوَاجِبِ، وَزَوْجُهَا حُرَّ صَرِيْعًا مُنْذُ ثَلَاثِيْنَ سَنَةً بِرِصَاصِ الأَعْدَاءِ، وَهُوَ يُدَافِعُ عَنْ حُرِّيَّةِ شَعْبِهِ، وَاسْتِقْلَالِ بِلَادِهِ، لَقَدْ أَحْرَزَ شَرَفَ الاسْتِشْهَادِ وَتَرَكَ لَهَا فُؤَادًا طِفْلًا صَغِيْرًا، فَكَانَ لَهَا نِعْمَ الْعَزَاءُ، وَرَبَّتْهُ وَعَلَّمَتْهُ ثُمَّ شَبَّ وَكَبُرَ، وَأَصْبَحَ مِلْءَ السَّمْعِ وَالْبَصَرِ، وَكَانَتْ مَلَامِحُ وَالِدِهِ وَصِفَاتُهُ.

وَعِنْدَمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا قَرَأَتْ فِي وَجْهِهِ مَا يَجُوْلُ فِي خَاطِرِهِ. إِنَّهُ يُخْفِي أَشْيَاءَ خَطِيْرَةً.

أَرَادَتْ أَنْ تَعْرِفَهَا لِتُخَفِّفَ عَنْهُ، وَسَأَلَتْهُ مَا بِهِ، فَوَقَفَ أَمَامَهَا وَجْهًا لِوَجْهٍ وَقَالَ لَهَا: أُمَّاهُ إِنَّ الْبِلَادَ فِي خَطَرٍ وَالْعَدُوُّ يُحَشِّدُ جُيُوْشَهُ عَلَى حُدُوْدِنَا، وَأَنَا كَمَا تَعْلَمِيْنَ أَكْمَلْتُ تَدْرِيْبِي الْعَسْكَرِيَّ، وَبِإِمْكَانِي أَنْ أَكُوْنَ جُنْدِيًّا فِي بِلَادِي لِأَقُوْمَ بِوَاجِبِي، وَلَا يَتَيَسَّرُ ذَلِكَ لِي إِلَّا بِمُوَافَقَتِكِ، وَلَا بُدَّ أَنْ أَحْصُلَ عَلَيْهَا.. فَمَا تَقُوْلِيْنَ؟

Arabic Language, Grade 10, Vol. 2, 2021, pp. 43-45.

Granting one's life generously – a short story
[...]
The most beautiful woman is the one awaiting her son
The most beautiful woman is the one awaiting him and he returned... returned as a martyr.

Grade 12 students are addressed directly, and called upon to espouse *jihad* in order to combat terrorism. It is therefore emphasized that while Islam calls for peace, such peace should be strong, but not expose the country to danger and destruction:

"For this reason, God legalized (*sharra'a*) *jihad*, in order to protect people, and defend their country and their religion."[245] The textbook also comments on the merits of *jihad*, and warns against "the enemies of religion" who had exploited the concept of *jihad* in a negative manner.

٦ـ ولما كان الجزاء على مقدار التضحية وكان المجاهدُ أكثر الناس تضحيةً كان أعظمهم ثواباً وأحسنهم جزاءً . ومن مظاهر هذا الجزاء أنّ كلّ مجاهد يُجرح في سبيل الله ودفاعاً عن كرامة أمته ووطنه وحقوقه وبردّ شرّ من يريد السوء ببلده من المعتدين ،يجيء يوم القيامة على الحالة التي أصيب بها في أثناء جهاده ويكون لدمه رائحة المسك . فيكون في يوم القيامة في موقف الشرف والكبرياء والتكرم.

لقد استغل أعداء الدين كلمة الجهاد إذ شوهوا صورته فراحوا يُكفرون هذا وذاك ويقاتلون المسلمين ممن شهدوا أن لا إله إلا الله . تارة بمفخخات يزرعونها لقتل الابرياء وتارة بسطو وأخرى تهجير بدعوى الجهاد . فهؤلاء براء من الاسلام والاسلام منهم براء ووجب محاربتهم والوقوف ضدهم لحماية الوطن والمواطنين وصدّ بغيهم وعدوانهم.

أهم مايرشد إليه الحديث :

١ـ الجهاد واجب مقدس ومن أجلّ الأعمال . وباب من أبواب الجنة .

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, Grade 12, 2021, p. 121.

6. Because the requital is commensurable with the sacrifice, and the sacrifice of the jihad warrior [mujahid] is the greatest, he is granted the greatest requital and finest recompense. And a feature of this requital is that every jihad warrior – injured for the sake of God, and in defense of the dignity of his nation, country, and rights, who opposes the evil of assailants attempting to harm his country – will come on the Day of Resurrection appearing with the same injury that he received during his jihad, and his blood will smell of musk. [...] The enemies of religion used the term jihad, defacing it, by declaring that so and so are infidels, and fighting the Muslims who gave the shahada. At times, under the [false] claim of jihad, they plant explosives to kill innocent people, commit robbery, or force expulsion. They are dissociated from Islam and Islam from them, and it is compulsory to fight and stand against them to protect the country and the citizens, and curtail their injustice and aggression.
The most important conclusions of the hadith:
1. Jihad is a sacred duty and of the loftiest [religious] acts, and a gate to Paradise.

Notably, the funding of *jihad* is also commended. In a Grade 9 Islamic education

[245] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 12, 2021, p. 120.

textbook, students are taught about different examples of alms taxes and charity. Among the material types of charity, it is stated that funding *jihad*, and not only engaging in it, is also considered *jihad*.

٤- الإنفاق على الجهاد في سبيل الله :فالجهاد للحفاظ على الأرض والعرض والنفس من واجبات الدين وقد يكون الجهاد بحمل السلاح ضد الغزاة والقتلة أو بالانفاق على الجهاد بتجهيزهم بالسلاح والطعام والشراب ومايحتاجون إليه.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 9, 2021, p. 145.**

4. Spending one's money on jihad for the sake of Allah: jihad for protecting the land, honor and self is one of religion's obligations. Jihad may be by carrying weapons against raiders and killers or by funding jihad by preparing their arms, food, drink, and anything else they may need.

Similarly, when teaching verses from Surat Saba, one of the conclusions drawn from the text is that the manufacture of guns and weapons of war is necessary for the purpose of *jihad* for the sake of Allah.

٩- ضرورة صنع السلاح وآلات الحرب لغرض الجهاد في سبيل الله والتهيؤ لمواجهة الأعداء.

The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education, **Grade 10, 2021, p. 83.**

9 - The necessity to manufacture weapons and war machinery for jihad for the sake of Allah, and preparing to counter enemies.

A Grade 12 Islamic education textbook, written in 2015, reflects the critical war which ISIS unleashed in 2014 on Iraq, targeting the Shi'is in particular, but also Sunni Kurds. Accordingly, the textbook calls for tolerance and coexistence between the different religious schools of thought (*madhahib*) in Islam. In other words, it implicitly warns against the civil war between Sunnis and Shi'is.[246]

It is emphasized that the greatest danger to "our homeland Iraq is the sectarian civil war (*fitna*). The enemies of religion behind which different imperialist and regional forces stand attempted to kill the sons of the nation. First they accuse the Christians of infidelity (*yukaffir*), then those who are not of their sect, and then those who think differently than them even if they belong to the same school of thought (*madhhab*)."[247]

It is interesting to note that the textbooks highlight the role of various actors in society in preventing violence and civil war, placing the main burden on men of religion. Students should call for unity and brotherhood, and at the same time refrain from instilling the spirit of religious fanaticism.[248]

[246] *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 12, 2021, pp. 150-151.
[247] Ibid., p. 151. For a long discussion about the "imperialists'" deeds in Iraq see pp. 150-155.
[248] Ibid., p. 153.

The Invisible Enemies

Generally speaking, post-Saddam textbooks do not discuss Iraq's foreign policy, nor do they mention external enemies by name. Yet, certain hints and implications reveal a glimpse of such relations, and Baghdad's approach to them. While the textbooks of the Ba'thist era place a great emphasis on enemies in order to mobilize the nation, the new textbooks are more nuanced.

Under the Ba'th and the eight-year war with Iran, the latter became the main enemy around which to rally patriotic feelings among the people. One textbook says the following about Iran:

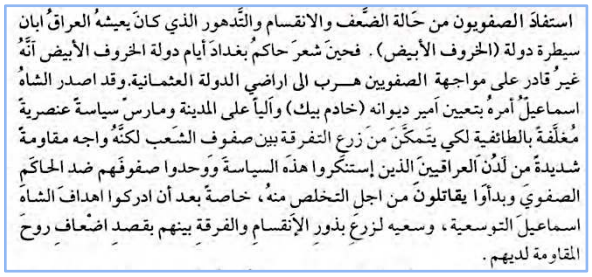
> "The war broke out because the Iranian government denied the Iraqi friendship foreign policy. The revolutionary government of Iraq welcomed the new Iranian government after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. However, Khomeini and his supporters started to show their hostility against Iraq from the first day they took over the regime. Instead of establishing good neighborly relations, as called for by the Iraqi government, the Iranian government attacked the Iraqi revolutionary government and invaded various villages across the Iraqi border. They began to conspire with Khomeini and attempted to destroy Iraq."[249]

By contrast, the new textbooks narrate the history of ancient Iran in a relatively objective manner, alongside that of all the other ancient empires and civilizations. Similarly, there is no mention whatsoever of the Iran–Iraq War nor the Islamic Republic of Iran, in spite of the fact that since 2003 Tehran has increased its influence over Iraq, to such an extent that in 2019 it triggered widespread demonstrations against this involvement.[250] Presumably, the authors of the textbooks did not wish to antagonize Iran because of the ideological and strategic depth with which it provided Shi'i Iraq.[251]

Nevertheless, a critical tone is adopted toward pre-modern Iran in some of the reformed textbooks. One sixth-grade textbook about the history of Mosul mentions the city being "liberated (*harraraha*) by Arab Muslims" from the Persian Sassanid dynasty in the seventh century, implying that Persian rule was foreign and oppressive to the local populace, as opposed to Arab Muslim rule.[252] Remarkably, another text about Persian Safavid rule of Baghdad (early 16th century) describes the dynasty's rule as divisive, racist and sectarian. The textbook teaches that "the Iraqis" responded to this oppressive rule with strong resistance, as they recognized the "expansionist goals" of Shah Isma'il (the founder of the Safavid state) and fought for their freedom. Although the events

[249] Yamao, p. 161.
[250] Yusuf Selman İnanç, "Protests in Iraq turn into anti-Iranian demonstration," *Daily Sabah*, 27 October 2019.
[251] *Human Geography*, Grade 12, 2021, pp. 74, 76, 78, 156.
[252] *Social Studies*, Grade 6, 2021, p. 30.

described may be factual, the narrative generalizes the entire Safavid enterprise – which is considered the harbinger of Twelver Shi'i rule in Iran – as antagonistic to Iraqi identity.



استفادَ الصفويون من حَالة الضَّعف والانقسام والتَّدهور الذي كانَ يعيشهُ العراقُ ابان سيطرة دولة (الخروف الأبيض) . فحينَ شعرَ حاكمُ بغدادَ أيام دولة الخروف الأبيض أنَّهُ غيرُ قادر على مواجهة الصفويين هـرب الى اراضي الدولة العثمانية.وقد اصدر الشاهُ اسماعيلُ أمرهُ بتعيين أمير ديوانه (خادم بيك) والياً على المدينة ومارسَ سياسةً عنصرية مُغلَّفةً بالطائفية لكي يتَمكَّنَ منَ زرعِ التفرقة بين صفوف الشَعب لكنَّهُ واجه مقاومةً شديدةً من لَدُنِ العراقيينَ الذين إستنكَروا هذهَ السياسةَ وَوحدوا صفوفَهم ضد الحاكمِ الصفويِ وبدأوا يقاتلونَ من اجلِ التخلص منهُ، خاصةً بعد أن ادركوا اهدافَ الشاهَ اسماعيلَ التوسعية، وسعيه لزرعِ بذورِ الإنقسامِ والفرقةِ بينهم بقصدِ اضْعافِ روحَ المقاومة لديهم.

Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland, Grade 9, 2019, p. 10.

The Safavids benefited from the fragility, division, and decline Iraq experienced under the rule of the Aq Qoyunlu. When the ruler of Baghdad under the Aq Qoyunlu sensed that he was unable to face the Safavids, he fled to the territory of the Ottoman Empire. Shah Ismail [of the Safavids] then issued an edict appointing Khadem Bey, his chief chancellor, as governor of [Baghdad]. He pursued a racist, sectarianism-wrapped policy to spread division amongst the people. Yet, he met stiff resistance from the Iraqis, who rejected that policy and unified their ranks against the Safavid ruler. They began fighting to get rid of him, especially after realizing Shah Ismail's expansionist goals, and his attempt to spread division among them so as to weaken the spirit of resistance among them.

In the modern context, the textbooks do refer to one contentious issue: the fact that Iran and Turkey built dams on the Tigris and Euphrates, thus causing great harm to Iraq.[253] The tone and content of the complaint in the Grade 12 textbook is evident calling on Iraq's neighbors to sign agreements on water-sharing, which will help solve the acute problem.[254]

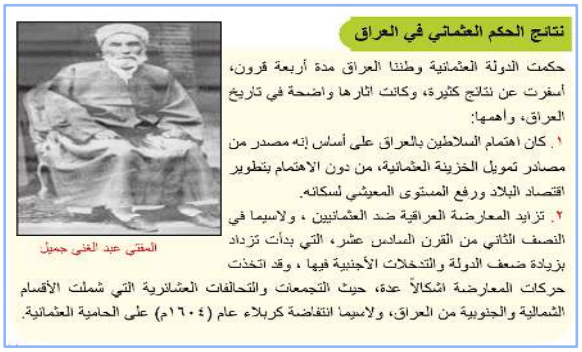
Turkey is another neighbor with which Iraq has had serious issues in contemporary times. However, except for the water dispute, the textbooks do not allude to them, probably out of fear of antagonizing Ankara. Instead, the textbooks refer more openly to the Ottoman period, which in line with most Arab narratives, portrays it in a negative light. Indeed, some textbooks use the term "colonialism" for that era.[255]

While discussing the situation in Iraq during the Ottoman period, the Grade 12 Arab history textbook refers to the conquests by Sultan Suleiman I, but bemoans the fact that he and the Ottomans who ruled until the second occupation of the Safavids in 1623 did not do much to be remembered for the country. Furthermore, it criticizes the Ottomans for granting parts of Iraq to the Safavids. The textbook further criticizes the Ottoman governors (***wali***), emphasizing that Iraqis preferred the Mamluks over those appointed by the Ottomans. The textbook explains this discrepancy, teaching that Iraqis felt that the Mamluks were closer to them because they grew up in Iraq, adopted the local culture, and were loyal to Iraq and not to the Ottomans.[256] The textbook paints a very negative picture of the Ottoman period, describing it as corrupt, poorly administered, and as causing much hardship to the society and economy, which led to

[253] ***Social Studies***, Grade 5, 2019, p. 33; ***Social Studies***, Grade 9, 2020, pp. 57–58.
[254] ***Human Geography,*** Grade 12, 2021, pp. 74–78, 156.
[255] See for example Ahmed Megahid, "TV drama challenges historical narrative of Ottoman conquest in the Arab world," ***The Arab Weekly***, 10 November 2019.
[256] ***Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries***, Grade 12, 2018, pp. 5-7.

revolts (*intifada*) against the various governors. Moreover, students learn that the weakness of the Ottomans brought about the involvement of imperialist forces such as the British, French and Germans in its domestic issues.[257] Another grievance is that the education system was neglected by the Ottomans, leading to its stagnation; there were missionary schools, but only rich people could send their children to them.[258]

Another textbook pinpoints the negative impact of Ottoman rule: neglect of Iraq; using the country merely to squeeze money from it; and the intervention of European powers due to the weakness of the Ottomans. All of this triggered opposition against the Ottomans, especially in the second half of the 16th century ,and brought about the rise of local rulers. The textbook also takes pride in the intifada of the opposition mufti Abd al-Ghani Al Jamil of 1832 against the Ottoman governors, as it was successful in "presenting the voices of the sons of the country opposing Ottoman rule."[259]


نتائج الحكم العثماني في العراق

حكمت الدولة العثمانية وطننا العراق مدة أربعة قرون، أسفرت عن نتائج كثيرة، وكانت اثارها واضحة في تاريخ العراق، واهمها:

١. كان اهتمام السلاطين بالعراق على أساس إنه مصدر من مصادر تمويل الخزينة العثمانية، من دون الاهتمام بتطوير اقتصاد البلاد ورفع المستوى المعيشي لسكانه.

٢. تزايد المعارضة العراقية ضد العثمانيين ، ولاسيما في النصف الثاني من القرن السادس عشر، التي بدأت تزداد بزيادة ضعف الدولة والتدخلات الأجنبية فيها ، وقد اتخذت حركات المعارضة اشكالاً عدة، حيث التجمعات والتحالفات العشائرية التي شملت الأقسام الشمالية والجنوبية من العراق، ولاسيما انتفاضة كربلاء عام (١٦٠٤م) على الحامية العثمانية.

المفتي عبد الغني جميل

***Social Studies,* Grade 9, 2020, pp. 87.**

The Effects of Ottoman Rule in Iraq
The Ottoman Empire ruled over our country Iraq for four centuries, bringing about many effects with clear imprints on the history of Iraq. The main [effects] are:
1. The sultans' interest in Iraq was based on the fact that it served as a funding source for the Ottoman treasury. They were not interested in developing the country, and raising the quality of living for its inhabitants.
2. Iraqi opposition against the Ottomans increased, particularly in the second half of the 16th century when the state grew weaker in the face of foreign intervention. The opposition movements took various forms, such as the tribal assemblies and coalitions which included Iraq's northern and southern parts, and also the Karbala' uprising [intifada] of 1603 against the Ottoman garrison.
[Photo caption] The mufti 'Abd al-Ghani Jamil

In short, as Tikriti suggests, "the Ottomans are treated as one of several non-Arab occupying powers succeeding the 1258 Mongol conquest of Baghdad, rather than as the ruling empire governing parts or all of the regions which became Iraq for over four centuries."[260]

Relations with the West, especially the US, are also of interest. It is true that one textbook addresses the modern history of Europe and the US, but the narrative concludes with WWII. Regarding Britain, the textbook on Arab history does discuss at length its role in occupying Iraq, the mandate period, and the various Iraqi revolts against it. However, the textbooks do not mention either the 1991 Gulf War nor the 2003 invasion, in both of which more than 30 Western and Arab countries led by the

[257] *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2018, pp. 17-18.
[258] Ibid., pp. 9-15. The education system was indeed much more developed in the regions of Syria and Lebanon. The textbook failed to mention the "Alliance Israélite" schools for Jews which sometimes accepted non-Jews as well.
[259] *Social Studies*, Grade 9, 2020, pp. 87-88.
[260] Al-Tikriti, p. 352.

US and Britain took part. These wars, which forever altered Iraq's fortunes and which have been crucial for the students' understanding of the situation in which they live and for coping with it, are ignored, probably for the following reasons: the desire to protect students from the negative effects of such a discussion; fear of antagonizing the US and its allies, whose support was still needed for the survival of the state; and most importantly, censorship by foreign administrators. It should be noted that, shortly after the 2003 war, a revision of Iraqi textbooks began, with the necessary removal of sentences or statements that encouraged fighting against the US or Israel.[261] While the revised textbooks did comply with the first requirement, they disregarded the second with regards Jews, Zionism, and Israel (see above).

[261] Commisso, p. 26.

English Teaching: Too Little Too Late

The teaching of English started in pre-Iraqi Ottoman times, in the year 1873. After the British occupation of Iraq following WWI, English-language teaching entered primary, intermediary, and secondary schools.[262] A major problem that surfaced at that time is mentioned by Altae, namely memorization of material merely in order to pass the examinations:

> "The curriculum in Iraq is merely based on a textbook that needs to be taught to learners, and at the end of the year learners are examined on what they have memorized from this textbook. This has been always the case in Iraq, because there was no natural development of the national curriculum that would have led to progress that is based on the real needs of the education sector, and that is concomitant with the international development educational setting."[263]

Altae mentions five key stages in the English curriculum before the final one, which was introduced in 2012. Stage three is most relevant to our discussion, from the 1970s-1980s, the first Ba'thist era, which placed an emphasis on nationalizing the curriculum by establishing the "Foreign Languages Department" where all authors and advisory members were Iraqis, unlike before when they had been mostly foreigners. The new textbooks, which were adopted by 1973, ran from Grade 5 until Grade 12. The curriculum was highly detailed, since it included textbooks for teachers and students, as well as reading works of literature like Oliver Twist and The Merchant of Venice.[264] In the mid-1980s, the Iraqi Ministry of Education began an extensive review of all textbooks, including in the English language, but the results were not satisfactory.

The fall of the Ba'th in 2003 ushered in the fifth stage of English studies, which continued until 2012. But in spite of the new possibilities of technological aids and other modern facilities, this stage too witnessed continued difficulties in the realm of English teaching. This was because the new curriculum was difficult and complicated, and teachers were neither trained on nor consulted about the contents of the textbooks. Their ongoing complaints moved the Education Ministry to introduce new textbooks in 2012, which were written by British and Iraqi experts, and were printed in Lebanon. The English for Iraq textbooks were first introduced in Grade 7, then to higher classes, and only later to Grade 6.

Thus, Iraqi students start learning English only in Grade 6, which makes the study of a foreign language at this late age much more difficult and unpalatable. The topics are also very simplistic, more appropriate for pupils in the first grade rather than the sixth. For example, the textbook begins with teaching about family members, jobs,

[262] Altae.
[263] Ibid.
[264] Ibid., p. 3. It is assumed that the Merchant of Venice was selected because of its Jewish anti-hero, Shylock.

and family routines.[265] Conservative values are highlighted here, too, as most women wear a hijab and a long dress. Another problem is that teaching English appears quite unorganized, and skips classes. For example, the next textbook is the one for Grade 9, after which there are no other textbooks in English.

An analysis of gender representation in this textbook also reveals that "females and males are positioned in a biased way in the selected data. It means that men play the major roles and they are active in the images, but women on the other hand are passive and have a minor role in the examined images."[266] Another problem which is indicated in the analysis of English for Iraq is the weak intercultural dimension:

> "As such, the textbooks under study can be portrayed as interculturally weak, and do not follow the intercultural approach in language teaching where materials are not introduced as segregated, mere fact-stating texts and visuals, but as self-expressing and comparison motivating materials."[267]

Another scholar reached a similar conclusion, stating that for all the importance of learning about the culture of others through learning a foreign language, the textbooks examined pay very little attention to the target language culture of English.[268]

Altae suggests the following actions for mending the situation: "The Iraqi curriculum in general, and the English language curriculum in particular, would need a radical improvement and robust development plan to turn the pages of the past of the continuous errors, address the current challenges, and prepare for the future. There needs to be a national initiative to get all the curriculum stakeholders onboard to enable a clear and effective approach to achieve the future prospects."[269]

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[265] *English for Iraq,* Grade 6, 2018, pp. 6-15.
[266] M. H. Hlail, "A Critical Image Analysis of Gender Positioning in Iraqi EFL Textbook," *JUBH*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (February 2022), pp. 71–77.
[267] Ismail Lilliati, Nor Shahila Mansor and Abu Bakar Razali, "A descriptive analysis of intercultural content of the EFL textbooks used in the intermediate schools in Iraq*," International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development,* November 2019.
[268] Mohsin Ali Shreeb, "An analysis of cultural content of Iraqi EFL textbooks," *Journal University of Kerbala,* Vol. 15, No. 1 (2017).
[269] Altae, p. 4.

Conclusion

When writing about the education systems of the Arab world, Marwan Muasher portrays a very bleak picture of the existing situation, calling for a far-reaching educational reform. In his opinion, the main problem lies in the fact that "current curriculums, based on rote memorization and avoiding critical thinking or consideration of opposing opinions, are failing to nurture free and creative learning of the kind that pushes societies forward." This, he said, goes a long way in explaining the fact that Arab students are falling behind globally in international rankings, despite the considerable resources being pumped into education across the region.[270]

Muasher's observations are all the more relevant to the Iraqi education system, which suffers from the dual problem of very poor resources as well as a problematic curriculum. This curriculum reflects the sociopolitical predicament of Iraq over the last two decades, and at the same time, has an impact on this situation as well. As observed, schools and society are mirror images of one another.

The problems of rote memorization and lack of encouragement for students to engage in critical thinking are exacerbated by other, no less serious issues. One of these is mixed messaging, which may cause students to be conflicted and experience cognitive dissonance. The two examples discussed above are the role of women in society and the issue of democracy, both of which teach students opposing ideas in different examples.

Another problem specific to the Iraqi curriculum is its Shi'ization, and the little consideration for Sunni students, who may feel marginalized by a lack of representation of their identity in the textbooks. Indeed, one can say that the cult of Saddam Hussein in the old books was exchanged with that of Imam 'Ali. This is a case of the chicken and the egg: the political system has marginalized the Sunnis and this, in turn, has impacted the curriculum as well. In spite of the lip service for equality and tolerance, such a curriculum is unlikely to bridge the gap between Sunnis and Shi'is.

The erasure of big portions of Iraq's modern history because they appear controversial, might lead not only to a distorted image of this period but also raise doubts in the minds of the students regarding the seriousness of the education staff and the very system itself. The same is true regarding the narrative itself which tends to depict only the bright side of history, leaving the more problematic periods untold. A similar distortion of reality will certainly occur with the total erasure of the state of Israel as if it did not exist altogether, and the exclusion of Iraq's Jewish heritage, compounded by the blatantly antisemitic tone taken by some of the textbooks.

[270] Marwan Muasher, "Approach Arab educational reform creatively," *Diwan,* 18 November 2022.

The search for identity, which haunts the Iraqi state itself raises difficulties in nurturing Iraqi identity among the students as well. The polarization which exists in the society between Iraqi and Pan Arab loyalties, between religiosity and secularism, between democratic values and autocratic ones, between Arabs and Kurds, and between Sunna and Shi'a might cause more confusion among the students than help crystallize a unique Iraqi identity.

Methodology

IMPACT-se applies methodological standards which are based on UNESCO and UN declarations, and international recommendations and documents on education for peace and tolerance (see notes). Our methodology is designed to consider every detail within the textbooks; it does not paraphrase, rely on interpretations, or attempt to illustrate preconceived notions.

The following is an updated, condensed version of the IMPACT-se UNESCO-derived standards for peace and tolerance in school education:

1 **RESPECT**

The curriculum should promote tolerance, understanding and respect toward the "Other," his or her culture, achievements, values and way of life.[271]

2 **INDIVIDUAL OTHER**

The curriculum should foster personal attachment toward the "Other" as an individual, his or her desire to be familiar, loved and appreciated.[272]

3 **NO HATE**

The curriculum should be free of wording, imagery and ideologies likely to create prejudices, misconceptions, stereotypes, misunderstandings, mistrust, racial hatred, religious bigotry and national hatred, as well as any other form of hatred or contempt for other groups or peoples.[273]

4 **NO INCITEMENT**

The curriculum should be free of language, content, and imagery that disseminate ideas or theories which justify or promote acts and expressions of violence, incitement to violence, hostility, harm and hatred toward other national, ethnic, racial or religious groups.

[271] As defined in the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance Proclaimed and signed by Member States of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Articles 1, 4.2. See also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding Between Peoples (1965), Principles I, III. Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. Based also on UN Security Council Resolution 2686 on "Tolerance and International Peace and Security" (unanimously adopted June 14, 2023), which urges Member States to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence through education, consider inter-religious and intercultural dialogue as means of achieving it, and publicly condemn violence, hate speech and extremism to prevent the spread of intolerant ideology and incitement to hatred and discrimination based on race, sex, ethnicity or religion or belief (including Islamophobia, antisemitism or Christianophobia). See specifically Article 6: reaffirming States' obligation to respect, promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms of all individuals.

[272] The goal of education for peace is the development of universally recognized values in an individual, regardless of different socio-cultural contexts. See *Ibid.*, Article 6. See also, on exchanges between youth, the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principles IV, V.

[273] Ibid., and based on Articles III.6, IV.7 and VII.39; and on the Integrated Framework for Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-eighth session, Paris, November 1995, Article 18.2.

5 PEACEMAKING

The curriculum should develop capabilities for non-violent conflict resolution and promote peace.[275]

6 UNBIASED INFORMATION

Educational materials (textbooks, workbooks, teachers' guides, maps, illustrations, aids) should be up-to-date, accurate, complete, balanced and unprejudiced, and use equal standards to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between different peoples.[276]

7 GENDER IDENTITY AND REPRESENTATION

The curriculum should foster equality, mutual respect, and should aim for equal representation between individuals regardless of their gender identity. It should also refrain from language, content, and imagery that depicts limiting and/or exclusionary gender roles.[277]

8 SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The curriculum should be free of language, content, and imagery that promulgates violence or discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.[278]

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[274] As defined in Article 4 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2106 (XX) on December 21, 1965. See also Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 2200A (XXI) on December 16, 1966.

[275] Based on the Integrated Framework for Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-eighth session, Paris, November 1995, Article 9; and on the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Article 5.

[276] Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Article V.14.

[277] The preamble to the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, notes the Convention on the Elimination of Any Form of Discrimination against Women and emphasizes respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction as to gender.

[278] Based on Resolutions 32/2 (adopted June 30, 2016) and 17/19 (adopted July 14, 2011) of the UN Human Rights Council, and numerous UN General Assembly resolutions expressing concern and condemnation of laws and practices around the world which target individuals based on their gender identity and/or sexual orientation for discrimination, violence, and even extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions—all of which contradict the most basic principles of the UN and have no place in education.

9

SOUND PROSPERITY AND CO-OPERATION

The curriculum should educate for sound and sustainable economic conduct and preservation of the environment for future generations. It should encourage regional and local cooperation to that effect.[279]

[279] Based on UNESCO recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms, adopted by the General Conference at its eighteenth session, Paris, November 19, 1974, Articles III.6, and IV.7. On the imperative for developing "systematic and rational tolerance teaching methods that will address the cultural, social, economic, political and religious sources of intolerance," see the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance proclaimed and signed by member states of UNESCO on November 16, 1995, Article 4.2. On education for international cooperation, see also the UN Declaration on the Promotion among Youth of the Ideals of Peace, Mutual Respect and Understanding between Peoples (1965), Principle II.

List of Textbooks

The following Iraqi curriculum textbooks were analyzed for the research in this study. Not all studied textbooks were quoted in the examples. The titles both here and referenced in the text have been translated into English to aid the reader. Digital versions are available on request.

Grade 1

1. *My Reading,* Grade 1, 2019
2. *Sciences*, Grade 1, 2021
3. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 1, 2021

Grade 2

4. *My Reading*, Grade 2, 2021
5. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 2, 2021

Grade 3

6. *My Reading,* Grade 3, 2021
7. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 3, 2021

Grade 4

8. *Arabic Language Grammar,* Grade 4, 2021
9. *Arabic Reading*, Grade 4, 2021
10. *Social Studies,* Grade 4, 2021
11. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 4, 2021

Grade 5

12. *Arabic Language Grammar,* Grade 5, 2021
13. *Arabic Reading,* Grade 5, 2021
14. *Social Studies*, Grade 5, 2019
15. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 5, 2021

Grade 6

16. *Arabic Language Grammar,* Grade 6, 2021
17. *Arabic Reading*, Grade 6, 2021
18. *English for Iraq,* Grade 6, 2018
19. *Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland,* Grade 6, 2015
20. *Social Studies*, Grade 6, 2021
21. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education*, Grade 6, 2021

Grade 7

22. *Arabic Language,* Grade 7, Vol. 1, 2021
23. *Arabic Language,* Grade 7, Vol. 2, 2021
24. *Biology 1 (English),* Grade 7, 2021
25. *History of Ancient Civilizations,* Grade 7, 2015
26. *History of Ancient Civilizations,* Grade 7, 2016
27. *Social Studies,* Grade 7, 2021
28. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 7, 2021

Grade 8

29. *Arabic Language,* Grade 8, Vol. 1, 2021
30. *Arabic Language,* Grade 8, Vol. 2, 2021
31. *Arab Islamic History*, Grade 8, 2015
32. *Arab Islamic History,* Grade 8, 2017
33. *Social Studies*, Grade 8, 2021
34. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 8, 2021

Grade 9

35. *Arabic Language,* Grade 9, Vol. 1, 2021
36. *Arabic Language,* Grade 9, Vol. 2, 2021
37. *Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland,* Grade 9, 2015
38. *Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland,* Grade 9, *2018*
39. *Modern and Contemporary History of the Arab Motherland,* Grade 9, 2019
40. *Social Studies,* Grade 9, 2020
41. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 9, 2021

Grade 10

42. *Arabic Language,* Grade 10, Vol. 1, 2021
43. *Arabic Language,* Grade 10, Vol. 2, 2021
44. *Biology,* Grade 10, 2021
45. *Foundations and Techniques of Geography,* Grade 10, 2021
46. *History of the Arab Islamic Civilization,* Grade 10, 2021
47. *New Kurdish Reading,* Grade 10, 2021
48. *Sociology,* Grade 10, 2021
49. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 10, 2021

Grade 11

50. *Arabic Language,* Grade 11, Vol. 1, 2021
51. *Arabic Language,* Grade 11, Vol. 2, 2021
52. *Biology,* Grade 11, 2021
53. *Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America,* Grade 11, 2015
54. *Modern and Contemporary History of Europe and America,* Grade 11, 2021
55. *Physical Geography,* Grade 11, 2021
56. *Principles of Economics*, Grade 11, 2021
57. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 11, 2021

Grade 12

58. *Arabic Language,* Grade 12, Vol. 1, 2022
59. *Arabic Language,* Grade 12, Vol. 2, 2022
60. *Arabic Language Grammar (Humanities Track),* Grade 12, 2021
61. *Arabic Language Grammar (Sciences Track),* Grade 12, 2021
62. *Biology,* Grade 12, 2021
63. *Economics (Humanities Track),* Grade 12, 2021
64. *Economics (Sciences Track),* Grade 12, 2021
65. *Human Geography,* Grade 12, 2021
66. *Literary Criticism,* Grade 12, 2021
67. *Literature and Texts (Humanities Track),* Grade 12, 2021
68. *Literature and Texts (Sciences Track),* Grade 12, 2021
69. *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries*, Grade 12, 2018
70. *Modern and Contemporary History of Arab Countries,* Grade 12, 2021
71. *The Noble Qur'an and Islamic Education,* Grade 12, 2021