

MUSLIMS GO CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'

After 19 Muslim extremists bombed America on September 11, the first thing many educators did was to teach students on the glories of Islamic history. This was especially true in California.

Following the air strikes against the United States, the Byron California Union School District instituted a three-week intensive course on Islam that drew criticism from many parts of the country. According to one report, students had to “learn the tenets of Islam...wear a robe, adopt a Muslim name and stage their own jihad.” They also had to “memorize many verses in the Koran” and were taught to pray “in the name of Allah.” The chant “Praise to Allah, Lord of Creation” was also taught and students were asked to dress as Muslims. As one outraged parent said, “We could never teach Christianity like this.”

Perhaps worse than this is the textbook used in the school district. *Across the Centuries* was first published by Houghton Mifflin in 1994 and is still widely used in many of the nation’s middle schools.

In the book, Christianity is unfavorably contrasted with Islam and the treatment of Roman Catholicism is strewn with inaccuracies and tendentious remarks. For example, in a chapter on the English monarchy, students learn—falsely—that Elizabeth I did not make Catholicism illegal. They are also asked to write a speech on what they would say if they were brought up on charges of heresy during the Inquisition.

The intellectual dishonesty is evident in the book’s treatment of Islam, as well, except that a positive spin is put on the religion. For example, students do not learn that jihad is a

holy war justified by the Koran; instead they are taught that jihad means "to do one's best to resist temptation and overcome evil." Similarly, students are subjected to propaganda about the alleged equal rights afforded women under Islam.

The problem, then, is not peculiar to California. But it remains true that for Muslims in the Byron school district, California Dreamin' is much more than a snappy lyric.