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Iran, Russia, Gulf... How authoritarian states exploit textbooks

For 20 years, the Impact-SE organization has been translating and deciphering textbooks and books from dozens of countries in order to identify the issues contained in textbooks. With an often stifling result.

JEAN CHÉVRIER

In this an.d.ma photo taken on March 9, 2022, an Iranian student reads a textbook in a classroom in a school in the city of Ardabil, in the northwest of Iran. (Photo: AFP via Getty Images)

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Report

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Since Tehran, these images have gone around the world: young girls who, within their own school, tear up their textbooks and throw them in the air, then. Their gesture, with incredible courage, is addressed to the Islamic Republic and its Guards, Ayatollah Khamenei and the Supreme Leader who have covered all the educational books of Iranian schools. The textbooks, particularly in the Middle East, textbooks directly bear the image of the supreme leader and the image of their leader, unlike Western democracies. "Jean-Luc Mélenchon, chief director of the Institute for the Monitoring of Rural and Cultural Textbooks and Books (Impact-SE). These books give a very precise idea of the ideology (...) [and] that the State wants to pass on to its youth."

Based in Jerusalem, the Impact-SE organization has been monitoring and studying all textbooks from about twenty countries for 20 years, in the Middle East and Africa. A way to observe the evolution of societies and their ability to "open or denounce the radicalization of certain societies", Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who has been interviewed by Express, specifies. What we see in education books corresponds more or less to the society that will happen in a few years. If you want to know what kind of society we are heading in their way of thinking, school books are essential reading.

The Express has scrutinized these educational programs that use a lot about the political dimension of their country and their diplomatic orientations.

• Iran a teaching of hatred questioned by the population

Since 2006, Impact-SE has regularly published reports on the Iranian education system. the analysis of the Iranian revolution, this latest study, published last year, concludes that Iran's system, like the Islamic Republic, ranging from primary school to high school, "teaches hatred". The conclusion is unequivocal: "The Iranian school program teaches hatred and hatred is more important than anything else. It is the welfare path of Jihad".

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"The school curriculum has always been radical in Iran, it has always been that it has been seen a major evolution in recent years. The revolution of 1979 was a fundamental turning of the revolution to a practical teaching of the revolution, hatred of Israel and hatred of children that "death to Israel" is not only a slogan, but a real teaching of hatred. Large sections of the school books are dedicated to the hatred of the Islamic Republic, including scientists who are dedicated to the hatred of Israel added in recent years by external operations. The only women celebrated are those who died for their country.

Through history, geography or economics, Iranian textbooks insist on the need for Iranian hegemony in the Middle East. The Islamic Revolution of 1979 is turned into a model for all countries," the study says. Anti-government protests are presented as illegitimate and Iran describes as the defender of the oppressed peoples worldwide without distinction of religion, language or ethnicity. The Islamic Republic of Iran, Iranian is the only one "revolutionary" advocated by the mullahs, for which peoples should rise up against their leaders.

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