

**THE  
STEALTH  
CURRICULUM:**

**MANIPULATING AMERICA'S  
HISTORY TEACHERS**

**by Sandra Stotsky**

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# FOREWORD

by Chester E. Finn, Jr.

If American teachers of history were broadly educated and deeply knowledgeable about the subjects for which they're responsible in the classroom, and if they were free to draw their information, textbooks, and other instructional materials from whatever sources they judge best, all within a framework of sound academic standards and results-based accountability—under that dreamy set of circumstances, this report would not be necessary.

The sad reality, however, is that many of our history teachers don't know enough history. To make matters worse, the textbooks on which they typically depend are vast yet surprisingly shabby compendia of dull, dated, and denatured information. (See *A Consumer's Guide to High School History Textbooks*, [www.edexcellence.net/institute](http://www.edexcellence.net/institute), for independent reviews of the most widely used texts and to see some examples of their shortcomings.) Thus, those teachers that seek to use their textbooks as a crutch to help fill the gaps in their own knowledge are not doing right by their students.

This reality has led to the development of an immense cottage industry in our primary-secondary education system, one designed to supply history and social studies teachers with pre-digested “supplemental materials” and “professional development,” ostensibly to help remediate teachers who do not have sufficient historical knowledge or suitable instructional materials.

As with just about everything else that ends up going awry in American education, this enterprise began with the best of intentions. In the aftermath of September 11, for example, how could we reasonably expect teachers who had never studied Islamic history to explain Islam to their pupils, especially if their textbooks were devoid of pertinent information? How could we expect them to handle complicated and emotionally charged subjects like the Holocaust and figure out what lessons to learn from it? To escort youngsters safely through the thicket of political correctness and ethnic politics that now surrounds such formerly benign holidays as Columbus Day and Thanksgiving? We simply assume that they need help.

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In a perfect world, they wouldn't. In our dreams, history teachers possess enough general historical knowledge that they would start with solid scaffolding by which tough and contentious topics

could be scaled. They'd be adept at acquiring whatever additional knowledge they needed to address a new issue, and would have both the freedom and the resources (time, money, internet access, libraries, etc.) to obtain any materials, or take additional history courses that they judged necessary for their own edification or for their classroom use. (This would be true for all teachers, but history is the subject most apt to twist and turn in unexpected ways in the months after a textbook was published, since a teacher finished her own formal training, or even during a single school year.)

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But few U.S. schools and teachers live in so perfect a world. In fact, an alarmingly low 31 percent of middle school history teachers and 41 percent of high school history teachers actually majored in history as undergraduates. Worse, even those few who possess

a major in history may not be teaching in their specialty field. (For example, one who focused on Asia in college may be teaching about America or Europe in high school.) At the elementary level, few teachers are required to take solid courses in U.S. and world history as part of their training.

And so we try to compensate and backfill. Innumerable organizations and agencies, public and private, large and small, commercial and non-profit, are engaged in the creation and delivery of “supplemental” instructional materials and “in-service education” or “professional development” for teachers. School systems and state education agencies do this. So do publishers of books, magazines, and newspapers. Advocacy groups. Universities, research centers, and think-tanks. Itinerant teacher trainers. Cable networks and film producers. It's a long list. It occupies a lot of people and spends a lot of money. (So far as I can tell, nobody has a clue how much, but it's obviously many tens of millions per annum.) Some is subsidized by tax dollars or philanthropy. Some is baldly commercial. Much comes out of school system budgets.

## *Charting a Dark Continent*

This part of K-12 education rarely gets examined or evaluated. We know staggeringly little about how good these materials and workshops are—how accurate they are, whether the information they present is balanced and accurate. We know even less about the efficacy, value, or intellectual integrity of innumerable workshops, institutes, and training programs in which teachers participate. To be sure, funders may demand that their grantees arrange for some sort of evaluation. Purchasers may

ask for evidence. But what they usually get is less than they need: “evidence” of quality and effectiveness generated either by the suppliers themselves or by evaluators trying to assure school administrators that they got their money’s worth. Be not misled. The truth is that this is a vast dark continent within our public (and private) education system.

The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation tries to identify such troublesome gaps in our understanding of K-12 education and make efforts to begin to fill them. This time, however, we deserve no credit for perspicacity. Instead, Sandra Stotsky alerted us to a problem that she had spotted during her tenure as senior associate commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Education from 1999 to 2003, as well as during a long and distinguished career as analyst and participant in the development of academic standards, research into educational effectiveness, and the preparation of teachers. Stotsky had long been collecting examples of supplemental materials and professional development workshops aimed at K-12 history and social studies teachers because so much of what she had observed in these areas was deeply troubling.

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It appeared that the creation and dissemination of these materials, often through professional development institutes and in-service programs, had fallen into the eager hands of interest groups and ideologues yearning to use America’s public-school classrooms to shape the minds of tomorrow’s citizens by manipulating what today’s teachers are introducing into the lessons of today’s children. In many areas, nobody was providing sound alternatives to these programs and materials. In a word, the K-12 history and social studies curriculum was being subtly politicized by adult interests working outside the more closely scrutinized domains of statewide standards, textbooks, pre-service teacher preparation, and state certification.

In the heart of this dark continent, Dr. Stotsky had found what appeared to be an alien civilization—alien to mainstream American values, alien to the carefully developed academic standards that some states and communities are crafting for their schools, and alien to the licensure requirements, tests, and evaluations by which the U.S. is increasingly trying to assure that our schoolteachers are qualified for their solemn responsibilities.

It so happened that Stotsky’s message of alarm dovetailed with our own mounting concern over the slipshod content of the K-12 social studies curriculum, particularly with respect to history; with



our dismay over the messages that many prominent education groups had sent to teachers concerning how to explain the 9/11 terrorist attacks; and with the stir caused by publication of Diane

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Ravitch's brilliant book, *The Language Police*. Ravitch pointed to the many ways that interest-group politics, political correctness, and hypersensitivity to "bias" had turned textbooks—even test questions—into bland (if colorful) and boring (yet encyclopedic) assemblages of information, information that tried to tell everything but ended up telling the story of nothing in particular and coming to no conclusion. Stotsky, by contrast, seemed to have uncovered the reverse phenomenon: instructional materials and professional develop-

ment that, because they fly under the radar, are free to promulgate bias, misinformation, and politically charged conclusions, though never acknowledging their semi-covert agendas.

Would she write about this, we asked. Yes, she would, despite myriad other professional commitments and family responsibilities. We agreed from the outset, however, that this would be an exploratory review, based largely on the examples that had already made their way into her "collection," rather than a comprehensive study. There is, in fact, no way that we can imagine anyone tackling this topic in comprehensive fashion, at least not without a huge investment of time and research assistance. Even then, it would be almost impossible to know what percentage of the totality of supplemental resources was actually included in the review, since new resources are constantly surfacing in reaction to myriad political, social, and historic events. So ill-mapped is this continent that one doesn't even know its full dimensions, much less what roads or rivers will carry one across it.

And so she did. This is one provocative report, grounded in textual analysis and accompanied by as much empirical evidence as its expert author could collect. Passionate, yes, but also deeply informed by Stotsky's profound understanding of curriculum and instruction. Selective, yes, but so is every worthwhile review of anything from restaurants to movies to automobiles.

## *What Exploration Reveals*

Stotsky separated this continent into two parts, one dealing with supplemental materials, the other with professional development workshops, which are the most frequent vehicle for dissemination of these supplemental materials. And she found plenty to lament in both areas.

The semi-covert agenda varies, of course, by topic and group. But most of its specimens share these features: under the guise of heightening teachers' and students' awareness of previously marginalized groups, they manipulate teachers (and, thus, their pupils) to view the history of freedom as the history of oppression and to be more sympathetic to cultures that don't value individual rights than to those that do.

But Stotsky doesn't just wring her hands or throw brickbats. She also distills from this material a wealth of recommendations, which come in two categories. Her preferred course of action is to wipe out much of this "supplemental" stuff and replace it with something very different. Her "fallback" recommendations address ways of mitigating the problems if this enterprise persists.

I respect these proposals and believe they would do much good in the near and middle term as far as compensating for weaknesses in the knowledge base of today's teachers and better shielding them from manipulative mischief and the risk of becoming unwitting pawns of ideologues and interest groups. Over the long haul, however, we must insist that future teachers be vastly better educated in the first place or, as the No Child Left Behind Act puts it, "highly qualified" in the subjects they are responsible for imparting to children. Nowhere is that clearer or more important than in history and social studies.

Better-educated teachers ought not be equated with more time in ed school, though, maybe not even on the university campus (although well-conceived history courses taught by first-rate historians are hard to beat). People can also teach themselves history, pick it up from their reading, the History Channel, even movies. The key is to insist that, however they learn it, tomorrow's teachers must know it—and demonstrate this—before confronting children in the classroom. It may be sufficient to insist that they pass rigorous tests of subject matter knowledge, such as those being prepared by the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence. They can prepare for those examinations however they like, on campus or off.

As with the children themselves, let's stop endlessly forgiving and compensating and remediating teachers. Let's do it right the first time.

Our thanks to Sandra Stotsky for undertaking and executing this study. An eminent authority on English language education, former senior associate commissioner in charge of the Center for Teaching and Learning at the Massachusetts Department of Education and co-director of a "We The People" summer institute, co-sponsored by the Lincoln and Therese Filene Foundation and the



Center for Civic Education, she is now a research scholar in the school of education at Northeastern University. My thanks, as well, to Kathleen Porter, a former history teacher herself and now Fordham's associate director of research; to Emilia Ryan for deftly designing this report; and to my long-time colleague (and Fordham trustee) Diane Ravitch, whose clear thinking and resolute dedication to better history teaching inspire and inform so much of our work.

This is the fifth in a series of reports published by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation and Institute as part of *Back to Basics: Reclaiming Social Studies*, which aims to revitalize the subject with renewed focus on serious content, high standards, effective teaching and sound instructional materials.

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The first two, *Where did Social Studies go Wrong?* and *Terrorists, Despots and Democracy: What Our Children Need to Know*, identified shortcomings in social studies and provided suggestions for teachers. The third, *Effective State Standards for U.S. History: A 2003 Report Card*, evaluated state academic standards for their treatment of U.S. history. The most recent report, *A Consumer's Guide to*

*High School History Textbooks*, by Diane Ravitch, is a review of the most widely used high school U.S. and world history textbooks. (You can find these earlier volumes on our website at [www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net).) Taken together, this series highlights the problems with social studies and provides teachers, textbook authors, education leaders, policymakers, and concerned parents with guidance on how to infuse American classrooms with high-quality history courses and instructional materials.

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The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation is a private foundation that supports research, publications, and action projects in elementary/secondary education reform at the national level and in the Dayton, Ohio area. Further information can be obtained at our web site ([www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net)) or by writing us at 1627 K Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20006. The foundation is neither connected with nor sponsored by Fordham University.

Chester E. Finn, Jr.  
*President*  
Washington, DC  
April 2004

# INTRODUCTION

In the past three decades, scholars and parents have criticized K-12 history textbooks for their inadequate coverage of important topics as well as for being error-laden and poorly written. They came under additional fire with the publication in 2003 of *The Language Police* by Diane Ravitch. Anxious not to distress anyone, Ravitch found, textbook publishers do not allow their books to address potentially “offensive” topics that might generate controversy at the time of state adoption hearings. Nor do they allow their books to point out features of other cultures that might lead students to infer that life in America or the West is superior in some way. Indeed, it is only America that can be shown as having an unending history of social strife, political repression, and political inequalities among racial or ethnic groups. As a result, students learning from these textbooks may get both a bland and biased history education.

As troubling as most current history textbooks are, however, they are less troubling than many of the supplemental resources available to teachers of history at all educational levels.<sup>1</sup> These resources include consultant services, curriculum units, lesson plans, supplementary information, and other materials. They may be provided by education collaboratives, professional organizations, foundations, large and small educational publishers, independent centers, unions, schools of education, university research centers, cultural sites, museums, historical societies, public agencies such as the courts, and freelance consultants.

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History textbooks themselves are relatively few in number, highly visible, and readily if not frequently examined by concerned school board members, state officials, or parents. They are also more easily reviewable by individual scholars like Frances FitzGerald, Paul Gagnon (for the American Federation of Teachers), Gilbert Sewall (for the American Textbook Council), Diane Ravitch, and the various scholars who contribute reviews to William Bennetta’s excellent *Textbook Letter*. Supplemental materials, on the other hand, are far less visible and seldom get reviewed. Occasionally a scholar has reported on the strengths and limitations of materials addressing a specific topic, as did the late Holocaust expert, Lucy Dawidowicz, after examining 25 Holocaust curricula used in the schools.<sup>2</sup> But K-12 supplemental materials usually fly under the radar of historians and other experts with sensitive political antennae.

The source of the problem with many of the supplemental resources used for history or social studies is the ideological mission of the organizations that create them. Their ostensible goal is to

*In the guise of providing teachers with ideas for a more engaging pedagogy and deeper understanding of a historical phenomenon, purveyors of supplemental resources and professional development workshops recruit unwitting teachers as their agents in cultivating hostility toward America as a country, toward Western culture, and toward Americans of*

combat intolerance, expand students' knowledge of other cultures, give them other "points of view" on commonly studied historical phenomena, and/or promote "critical thinking." But their real goal, to judge by an analysis of their materials and the effects they have on teachers, is to influence how children come to understand and think about current social and political issues by bending historical content to those ends. They embed their political agendas in the instructional materials they create so subtly that apolitical

teachers are unlikely to spot them. And they tend to facilitate acceptance of their materials by appealing to teachers' sense of fairness and their presumed obligation to promote "social justice" and withhold negative moral judgments about people or cultures deemed victims of white racism.

In the guise of providing teachers with ideas for a more engaging pedagogy and deeper understanding of a historical phenomenon, frequently one involving instances of prejudice, they recruit unwitting teachers as their agents in cultivating hostility toward America as a country, toward Western culture, and toward Americans of European descent. The poisonous effects of these supplemental resources on teachers' thinking and pedagogical practices can spread throughout the entire school curriculum in the moral and civic vacuum created by neutered textbooks and a host of competing "multiple perspectives."

## ***Why Supplemental Resources and Services Need Attention***

Supplemental resources are used extensively in a huge cottage industry called professional (or staff) development, most of which is designed to fulfill federal, state, or local mandates for the local teaching force in a way that captures all the funds earmarked for this purpose. Moreover, the workshops these mandates spawn seldom come under public scrutiny. Unless planned and organized by a state department of education, they are beyond the capacity of state officials to monitor closely. Even when departments of education request changes in proposals for workshops they are asked to

fund, purveyors of professional development services may still conduct the workshops as they see fit after making the suggested changes on paper.

New technologies have also stimulated a vast amount of entrepreneurial activity in developing instructional materials, most of which is even further removed from external appraisal. Indeed, history and social studies teachers now have at their fingertips access to a limitless supply of unfiltered information on the Internet, including online lesson plans and lessons allegedly geared to state or local standards. While some of this information claims to have been vetted by experts, rarely have professional historians been part of the vetting process. The upshot: teachers are largely left to judge for themselves the quality and historical accuracy of the materials they select to use in their classrooms.

Large numbers of history and social studies teachers, especially in the elementary and middle schools, rely heavily on supplemental resources. They do so for several reasons. First, history teachers tend to have taken fewer courses in the subject they teach as part of their preparation for teaching than teachers of other subjects. Further, they need supplemental materials for addressing new topics of interest (such as Islam). Finally, they need materials reflecting the anthropological or socio-cultural approaches insisted upon by multicultural educators for addressing new or old topics. These new approaches to the study of history and geography expose students to the “perspectives” of “marginalized” groups, especially the native inhabitants of what became the United States. Indeed, such approaches are designed as a way to give voice to “excluded” groups.

Parental complaints are again mounting about some supplemental materials and lessons. In the 1970s and 1980s, many parents worried that the “peace” curricula introduced into their children’s elementary schools, ostensibly to teach about the horrors of nuclear “holocausts,” served chiefly to frighten them. More recently, alert parents and other citizens have become concerned about the information teachers are giving their students, and activities they are asking students to participate in, as part of an effort to increase youngsters’ knowledge of

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Islam. Most of these materials have been prepared and/or funded by Islamic sources here and abroad, and are distributed or sold directly to schools or individual teachers, thereby bypassing public scrutiny. For example, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Saudi government sent thousands of U.S. schools a package containing a Public Broadcasting System tape, *Islam: Empire of Faith*, and Karen Armstrong’s *Islam: A Short History* (the revised and updated edition published in 2002). This book attributes the failure of the Muslim world to modernize to Western “colonization”

rather than to self-imposed intellectual isolation from the revolutionary political, religious, social, economic, and scientific ideas arising in Europe from the 1500s on.

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Many supplemental curricular resources for history and social studies teachers are touted as addressing civic education, moral education, or character education. Because civic education is a major goal of the study of U.S. history in the schools and is by definition a matter of public policy, the public should be informed about the extent to which these curricula are ideological rather than academic. The

public also must know whether educators are using materials that undermine the value that the polity places on our political principles, public institutions, and American citizenship itself.

## *The Purpose of this Report*

The purpose of this report is twofold: 1) To point out the features of a number of manipulative supplemental resources for history and social studies teachers; and 2) to show how similarly manipulative professional development workshops propagate the distorted content and recommended teaching practices of such materials to teachers and their classrooms, thereby influencing what both teachers and students learn. Although this report can appraise only a limited number of materials and workshops, what is here is alarming enough to underline the need for more systematic examination of supplemental history and social science materials and for rethinking professional development in history and social science as it is now conceived.

In the first part of this report, I describe the features of several sets of devious materials now being used by history teachers throughout the country to supplement their textbooks. Although the barely disguised purpose of all these materials is to shape teachers' and students' attitudes on specific political or social issues, they go about this in various ways. They may omit important details about the topic—those that are positive for this country or the West, say, or negative about non-Western cultures. They may provide false information. They may focus attention on details of chiefly anthropological interest, thereby omitting culture-specific details of historical significance. They may dwell excessively on negative details about America or the West. They may inflate the significance of a minor historical event. They may make false historical analogies. Or they may suggest and try to legitimate unethical pedagogical practices. Some do more than one of these things.

Although the materials described in the first part of this report may be obtained by teachers on their own initiative (or may simply arrive in teachers' mailboxes or via e-mail), they tend to find their way into teachers' hands via publicly funded (or sometimes privately subsidized) professional development workshops, the crucial mechanism for their propagation. In the second part of this report, I show the influence of the resources provided by several tendentious professional development institutes (including some described in the first part) on the content and thrust of the projects proposed by participating teachers for classroom use in Massachusetts schools. It is generally difficult to show the direct effects on teachers, much less on their pupils, of materials designed to reshape or exploit an understanding of the past for attitudinal purposes. But multi-page outlines of teachers' proposed lessons and learning activities, typically prepared at the conclusion of a professional development workshop, are a reasonably good indication of what participants take away from the workshop. A number of such outlines became available to me in my former capacity (until September 2003) as senior associate commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Education. Although Massachusetts has strong academic standards for history and social science from preschool through grade 12, these may well be undermined by workshops with goals other than increasing students' academic achievement and developing future voters capable of independent thinking about their country and world. There is no reason to believe that Massachusetts is the only state where such workshops are taking place today.

The services and resources described in this report were chosen because they have been in schools or available to teachers for a number of

years, they illustrate how providers may manipulate teachers' and students' thinking, and they suggest the range of sources that produce them. They deal with four sensitive areas in the contemporary social studies curriculum. To what extent they "represent" all that is available in these areas is unknowable. Supplemental materials spring up from innumerable sources like mushrooms after a rain, sometimes in response to changes in state and federal funding flows and the availability of private grants, sometimes in the aftermath of particular events. To what extent they are actually used is also unknowable; inflated numbers can be expected from any provider. However, most of the materials described in this report, or their providers, are known to history and social studies teachers across the country.

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# PART I.

## SUPPLEMENTAL CURRICULA

### *Civics Gone Awry*

Various non-profit groups supply schools with curricula and materials that respond to widespread concerns about young people's ignorance of our political principles and processes and the responsibilities of citizenship. The increasing number of children from immigrant families, dysfunctional families, and highly mobile families has accelerated the development of programs that ostensibly address character education, moral education, and civic education. Some do accomplish their stated purposes in a responsible fashion. For example, the programs offered by the Center for Civic Education in California are well known, generally respected, and widely used. They provide high-quality academic materials and speakers on the history and philosophy leading to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and promote no activism on specific social issues.<sup>3</sup> Regrettably, this is not the case with many others.

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### *Facing History and Ourselves*

Possibly the most malevolent of the organizations professing to address citizenship education is Facing History and Ourselves (FHAO), which provides materials and services to over 16,000 teachers, ostensibly to help them address racism, anti-Semitism, and violence.<sup>4</sup> Facing History and Ourselves is by far the most popular source of K-12 training and materials on the Holocaust. According to its Web site, it reaches over 1.5 million adolescents through its teacher network, and over 4,500 schools through regional offices in six major cities in the U.S. In addition, it now has an office in Europe. Facing History and Ourselves describes itself as an “interdisciplinary approach to citizenship education” and can be taught over a long or a short period of time and at any grade level, although it is usually taught in grade 8 or 9.

The central problem with this organization's activities stems not from its efforts to provide students with scrupulously accurate information about the Holocaust but from its goal of teaching contemporary civic lessons for American students. To do so, it makes false analogies to a catastrophic historical event, thus trivializing the catastrophe and setting up a moral equivalence between Nazis and white Americans. The purpose of FHAO's first major resource book, titled *Holocaust and Human Behavior* and published in 1982, was to encourage students to practice "moral decision-making" by speaking up about the dangers of a nuclear "holocaust" and to see the Moral Majority as a danger to freedom of speech.<sup>5</sup> Once those dangers seemed to have receded from the political radar screen, study of the Holocaust was linked to a domestic issue with more staying power. The purpose of the 1994 resource book, bearing the same title as the 1982 manual but with a new conceptual framework, is to make sure that students see the task of confronting white racism in America as the chief reason for studying the Holocaust.<sup>6</sup> It makes explicit and frequent comparisons not only between twentieth-century America and twentieth-century Germany but also between nineteenth-century America and nineteenth-century Germany. In essence, it uses the Holocaust to portray America's blacks as Europe's Jews, thereby reducing genocide to an act of bigotry and equating white Americans to Nazis.

The purpose of the supplementary resource book FHAO published in 2002, titled *Race and Membership in American History: The Eugenics Movement* (RMAH), is even more poisonous.<sup>7</sup> FHAO wants teachers and students to infer a causal connection between the American eugenics movement and the Holocaust; that is, to infer that Americans and American science, however indirectly, were responsible for Nazi Germany's extermination policies and the Holocaust. RMAH makes it clear that few American scientists subscribed to the eugenics movement by World War II. Nevertheless, the chapters on "The Nazi Connection" so cleverly connect Hitler's use of the ideas of German scientists on racial "eugenics" to an acknowledgment of the leadership of American scientists, educators, and policy makers in the eugenics movement that Americans appear almost directly responsible for the Final Solution.<sup>8</sup> The net effect is the discrediting of American society.

Despite the many citations and excerpts intended to prop up the book's implicit thesis, FHAO fails to note even one biologist as a reviewer or to give a biologist's assessment of the influence of the eugenics movement on American or German science. While the history of the eugenics movement should be better known to the general public, one must ask why an organization devoted to a study of the Holocaust should expend its energy compiling information on the history and influence of the eugenics movement in America as if *it*, rather than the centuries of negative cultural stereotypes and religious and economic hatred of Jews in Christian Europe, were instrumental in the development and execution of Hitler's Final Solution. But aside from a few pages in its 1982 and 1994 resource books, FHAO has studiously ignored the history of anti-Semitism since its inception, a criticism made by Lucy Dawidowicz in her 1990 essay. Facing History and

Ourselves has just begun to introduce this book at workshops and to develop an on-line course based on the book. Social studies teachers are likely to accept FHAO's implicit thesis about who was responsible for the Holocaust because its resource books are likely to be their only source of information on the topic. Science teachers are most unlikely to address the eugenics movement in their classes because evolutionary biologists view its influence on the history of American biology as miniscule.<sup>9</sup>

It is not difficult to understand why teachers find study of the Holocaust useful for addressing bigotry in this country. It provides them with the most horrendous image possible of a prejudiced person—a Nazi—an image that can be connected through the concept of intolerance to the image of a white racist in America. And what could better symbolize the deadly nature of intolerance unchecked and make a more powerful impression on young minds than images of death camps, gas chambers, and crematoria? Teachers who believe what they have been told repeatedly by their own instructors and the mainstream media—that bigotry and intolerance are the most serious problems we face in this country—are unlikely to have any doubts about the educational value of this curriculum despite the lack of any longitudinal research evidence that it reduces bigotry or produces more tolerant or informed citizens.

*It is difficult for outsiders to find out what takes place in Facing History workshops. Only teachers from the schools that have arranged (and paid) for the workshop can attend, and the website that enables these teachers to exchange ideas about classroom practices and resources is password-protected.*

It is difficult for outsiders to find out what takes place in Facing History workshops. Only teachers from the schools that have arranged (and paid) for the workshop can attend, and the website that enables these teachers to exchange ideas about classroom practices and resources is password-protected. However, some evidence literally landed on my desk one day. In her application to a summer institute on civic education that I directed in the mid-1990s at Harvard, a grade 8 teacher who had taken a number of FHAO workshops explained how she had restructured her teaching of *To Kill A Mockingbird* to “help prepare students for the Facing History unit in social studies.” She was now asking her students to look for “parallels between Nazi Germany and the U.S., looking at U.S. slavery and subsequent racism as our holocaust.” In equating slavery to the Holocaust, FHAO seems to have obliterated the categorical and moral distinction between bigotry and genocide in teachers’ thinking. In implying that the American eugenics movement, however indirectly, was responsible for the Final Solution, FHAO now seeks to reduce the moral status of the United States to that of Nazi Germany and, hence, to delegitimize it.

## Islam and Islamic History

The traditional history curriculum has been faulted for concentrating almost solely on the history of the Western world—ancient Greece and Rome, and European, British, and U.S. history. To help American students become more familiar with other cultures, civilizations, and regions, and thus less “ethnocentric,” history teachers, who tend to have been trained chiefly in Western or U.S. history and whose textbooks often have a similar focus, have had to draw upon additional resources. This is especially the case for addressing Islam, the Islamic world, and the Middle East. I describe here three egregious sets of curricular materials. All three falsify history in their attempt to indoctrinate both teachers and students.

### *The Arab World Studies Notebook*

*The Arab World Studies Notebook* is published jointly by the Middle East Policy Council and AWAIR (Arab World And Islamic Resources and School Services). The Middle East Policy Council (formerly the Arab American Affairs Council) sponsors workshops about the Arab world and Islam for teachers, while AWAIR runs the workshops and distributes printed materials and videos. The *Notebook* is described as containing secondary level curriculum materials. The workshops are provided free to schools all over the country, and the *Notebooks* cost much less money per teacher (\$15) when schools arrange for the workshops than when teachers buy copies on their own (over \$50). The *Notebook* has been used in schools for many years and is in every bibliography on Islam that I’ve seen

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for educators. It is specifically touted for staff development by a faculty member at Teachers College, Columbia University in a 1999 ERIC Digest article on “the resources available to provide Arab Americans with a supportive school environment and all students with an accurate and unbiased education on the Middle East.”<sup>10</sup> (It was also a major resource for a professional development insti-

tute described in the second part of this report.) I first came across the *Notebook* in 1990 when parents and other citizens belonging to an organization we called Citizens for Quality Education were engaged in a high profile battle with social studies administrators and teachers at Brookline (MA) High School over the content of a course called “World in Crisis” and their attempt to eliminate Advanced Placement European History.<sup>11</sup> The *Notebook* was one of the pieces of propaganda we found in half a dozen courses at the high school. Published in Berkeley, California, and edited by

Audrey Shabbas, who is still its editor, as well as director of AWAIR, the 1989 version (about 300 pages long) stated among other non-facts that Yasir Arafat was president of a newly declared State of Palestine, that the United Nations General Assembly had voted to recognize this state in 1988, and that the Canaanites were the ancestors of many present-day Palestinians.<sup>12</sup> I will paraphrase or quote briefly from William Bennetta’s preliminary report and correspondence on the content of the current version of the *Notebook*. This report may be read in its entirety at <http://www.textbook-league.org/spwich.htm>.

Bennetta concluded that the principal purpose of the 1998 *Notebook* (now 513 pages long) is to induce teachers to embrace Islamic religious beliefs, support political views favored by MEPC and AWAIR, and disseminate those religious beliefs and political views in their classrooms. Its attempt at indoctrination goes beyond presenting religious myths as matters of fact, and it also includes some bizarre history. For example, one article, ascribed to Abdallah Hakim Quick and Audrey Shabbas, is titled “Early Muslim Exploration Worldwide: Evidence of Muslims in the New World Before Columbus.” The article claims that Muslims from Europe were the first to sail across the Atlantic and land in the New World, starting in 889. Not to be outdone by any of the early European explorers, the article also claims that West African Muslims had not only spread throughout South and Central America but had also reached Canada, intermarrying with the Iroquois and Algonquin nations so that, much later, early English explorers were to meet “Iroquois and Algonquin chiefs with names like Abdul-Rahim and Abdallah Ibn Malik.”

*The idea that English explorers met native Indian chiefs with Muslim names in the middle of the Northeast woodlands sounds almost like something a Hollywood film writer dreamed up for a spoof.*

The idea that English explorers met native Indian chiefs with Muslim names in the middle of the Northeast woodlands sounds almost like something a Hollywood film writer dreamed up for a spoof. What is most astonishing about this “historical information” is that it seems not to have been recognized as fake history by all the satisfied teachers that MEPC claims have participated in its workshops over the years. At least no complaints have reached local newspapers or state departments of education, so far as it can be determined. The current version of the *Notebook* continues the practice that CQE noted in 1990—no evidence or documentation to support key historical “facts” that serve to advance their political views or religious beliefs. One can only wonder if this has ever been questioned by the teachers who use its materials, or if they feel they must agree to any claim made by Muslims as an “alternative perspective” or risk being labeled insensitive, Eurocentric, or racist.

Interestingly, this particular bit of fake history may soon be cleaned up at the request of the Algonquin Nation itself. In 2003, the Algonquin Nation Secretariat, in Quebec, became aware of the



academic travesty being committed in its name (i.e., English explorers meeting Algonquin chiefs with Muslim names) and issued an alert on November 28, 2003, “to state that there is no credible evidence to support these theories, in the archival record, academic study, or in oral history” and that “we are extremely concerned that such nonsense would be circulated as curriculum intended for use in schools.”<sup>13</sup> The Secretariat calls upon the sponsors of the *Arab World Studies Notebook* to render an “explanation and an apology” for “material that is so patently untrue and academically indefensible.”

### *The Modern Middle East*

The Modern Middle East is a supplemental curriculum that has been approved by the California State Department of Education for purchase with state funds. An analysis by the Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) in the San Francisco Bay Area can be found at [www.jcrc.org/israel/tci.htm](http://www.jcrc.org/israel/tci.htm). This material is published in Rancho Cordova, California, by Teachers’ Curriculum Institute (TCI), an organization whose self-description is drenched in constructivist jargon. TCI publishes history and social studies curricula (History Alive for grades 5-12; and Social Studies Alive for K-2) that use an approach to learning consisting of “a series of instructional practices that allows students with multiple intelligences to ‘experience’ history.” According to its pub-

lisher, the goal of this curriculum is to “engage students in the history of the Middle East through a process of self-discovery and interactive pedagogy.”

The JCRC deemed this curriculum, used in some local high schools in the Bay Area and also in Chicago, to contain so many inaccuracies on the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as unethical teaching methods, that it cannot

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be fixed and should not be used. For example, it erroneously asserts that the Arabs of Israel/Palestine are indigenous to that area and trace their roots back to the Philistines (unlike the *Notebook*, which claims the Canaanites as their ancestors).<sup>14</sup> One learning activity, designed to prepare students for the lessons on the Arab-Israeli conflict, divides students into two groups, one called Jeds and the other Pads, representing Jews and Palestinians in the early twentieth century. The teacher is told to arrange the furniture in the classroom so that the Pads are crowded in a small space into which the Jeds demand to enter. Assuming the role of “the Great Power,” the teacher is told to favor the Jeds’ arguments and ignore the Pads’ seemingly reasonable opposition to the Jeds’ entry. The obvious purpose of the activity is to elicit students’ feelings about the unfair treatment accorded to the Pads and pre-

dispose them to be sympathetic to one side and negative to the other before they have learned anything about the actual conflict in the Middle East.

In response to a parent complaint about this material, the Santa Rosa school district convened a committee of district teachers to review it. According to a JCRC staffer, the committee expressed “significant concerns” about the materials but decided that the curriculum could be used if it were “balanced with other materials.”<sup>15</sup> Although I suspect that the teachers were reluctant to make a negative judgment about information in curricular materials supposedly reviewed by scholars, especially on a controversial topic, their rationale warrants comment. It suggests that it doesn’t matter if facts are mingled with non-facts (and an unscrupulous pedagogy to boot) so long as the mixture fairly reflects a contribution from all relevant parties. A “moral” imperative to give all relevant parties an equal voice in providing information for the study of a political conflict, even if some (or most) of the voices contribute their favorite falsehood, may turn out to be the chief legacy of the constructivist and multicultural movements in schools of education.

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### *ISLAM: A Simulation of Islamic History and Culture, 610-1100*

*ISLAM: A Simulation of Islamic History and Culture, 610-1100*, was published in 1991 by Interaction Publishers of Carlsbad, California (see [www.textbookleague.org/114islam.htm](http://www.textbookleague.org/114islam.htm) for William Bennetta’s review). This is promoted as a curriculum manual for history teachers in grades 6-12 and consists of enough material for a three-week program of instruction in which students “simulate becoming Muslims” and “learn about the history and culture of Islam.” However, like the *Notebook*, it falsifies history with ludicrous claims and anachronisms. As Bennetta notes, students are to pretend to be living during the time of Muhammad (i.e., early in the seventh century), are to form teams representing “early Islamic cities” such as Jerusalem and Cordova, and are to engage in a camel caravan-race from Cordova to Mecca. It is not clear why students start from Cordova, Bennetta points out, since the Muslim invasion of Spain didn’t take place until the eighth century, nor how the camels will cross the Straits of Gibraltar. But these are minor problems in what Bennetta documents as a web of outright lies and other devices for deceiving students. The manual acknowledges

that two Muslim agencies were involved in the development of this program—the Islamic Education and Information Center in San Jose, California, and the Council on Islamic Education in Los Angeles. In Bennetta’s judgment, *ISLAM: A Simulation* is nothing but a religious publication designed to use unsuspecting classroom teachers as agents for propagating Islam.

## *African American History*

The teachers’ manuals described here were sent free to thousands of educators throughout the country. One accompanied a series of programs provided by the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) that met academic standards, the other accompanied a commercial film that fictionalized a real historical event. It is not known to what extent teachers have used these manuals or the video or film they were intended to accompany. We do know, though, that teachers have been increasingly encouraged by their professional organizations to use videos of television programs or films in their classes to compensate for the inability of many high school students to read their history textbooks or primary documents with adequate comprehension. But, again, teachers are largely on their own in appraising the quality of the information given in a video or film or in an accompanying manual.

### *Africans in America: America’s Journey Through Slavery*

In October 1998, PBS offered a series of four 90-minute programs titled *Africans in America: America’s Journey Through Slavery*, produced by WGBH in Boston. It was accompanied by a “companion” book that corresponds to the four programs. Sheldon Stern, formerly the historian at the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston, notes in a review published in *The Textbook Letter*, September-October 1998, (<http://www.textbookleague.org/94afro.htm>) that “the series is well done, the companion book follows the series closely,

The Teacher’s Guide says that the Africans arriving in the English colonies in America were “abducted from their homelands,” omitting mention of indigenous African slavery, the indigenous African slave trade, and the roles played by African royal families and African slave-traders.

and both are worthy resources for anyone who wants to learn or to teach about the real historical record on slavery.” However, the *Teacher’s Guide* that was published in conjunction with the series and mailed to many teachers in the schools is, in Stern’s judgment, “the worst example of educational disinformation and historical deception that I have seen in several

years.” For example, the *Teacher’s Guide* says that the Africans arriving in the English colonies in America were “abducted from their homelands,” omitting mention of indigenous African slavery, the

indigenous African slave trade, and the roles played by African royal families and African slave-traders. *The Teacher's Guide* also ignores the global context for slavery, omitting mention of the fact that most slaves shipped to the Western Hemisphere went to colonies in South America and the Caribbean, and that Islamic countries in the Old World imported more African slaves than did all the New World countries and colonies combined. It even goes so far as to suggest that the teacher conduct an exercise based on an imaginary eighteenth-century debate over the proposition that "American slavery is an oxymoron," with students role-playing prominent Founders and others as debaters. Stern was told by a staff member at WGBH that the *Teacher's Guide* was produced by a group of five Massachusetts educators described as "multiple-perspective educational activists." These activists, it seems, wrote the "lessons" in the *Guide* before the television series was finished.

### *A Kit to Promote Amistad*

A kit produced in 1997 by Lifetime Learning Systems (Stamford, Connecticut) and sent free to twenty thousand educators across the country promoted the film *Amistad* as historically accurate. Yet *Amistad* actually fictionalizes the events that began in the Caribbean in 1839, when some fifty African slaves seized the Spanish schooner *Amistad*, and that ended in 1841 when the Supreme Court, paying heed to the arguments of John Quincy Adams, decided that the slaves (who had been intercepted by a Navy ship and held in the U.S.) were now freemen.

Instead of telling teachers and students that the film was historical fiction, the kit-writers portrayed the film as a scholarly account of historical fact. Lifelong Learning Systems hoped that teachers would create lessons on *Amistad* and require their

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students to see it (at special group rates). The promotion effort was exposed by film critic Michael Medved in the December 8, 1997, issue of *USA Today*, who noted among other things that the main character never existed and that it wasn't possible for John Quincy Adams to have received judicial advice from the leader of the Africans to win the case.<sup>16</sup> In this example, classroom teachers were being manipulated to teach bogus history in order to sell a commercial product.



## PART II. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development workshops are the mechanism par excellence for legitimating the content, thrust, and providers of manipulative supplemental resources, and for spreading their influence. The three workshops described below were all funded by the Massachusetts Department of Education—but not because it knowingly funds tendentious workshops for teachers. The Department has consistently and clearly stated that the purpose of all the workshops it funds is to “support implementation of the curriculum frameworks and efforts to raise the achievement of students.” It carefully reviews the proposals it receives, tries to strengthen their content where needed, monitors the workshops to the extent possible, and requires providers to assess and report what teachers have learned from a self-designed pre- and post-test.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the structure of its summer institutes is considered a model by the U.S. Department of Education. Nevertheless, the Department could not control what actually took place at these history institutes and what the teachers learned—nor, I believe, could any department of education.

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### *On Islamic History*

The Department gave priority to Islamic history for summer institutes in 2002 because it was aware that few history teachers knew much about the subject. It funded the proposal for a seven-day institute planned by Betsy Kalber Baglio, Director of Professional and Resource Development at The Education Cooperative (TEC) in Wellesley, Massachusetts, and by Barbara Petzen, the Outreach Coordinator for Harvard University’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies.<sup>18</sup> It did so because of the quality of the academic resources to be used and because the program’s weaknesses seemed correctable. It was also the only proposal received on this topic that the Department judged worthy of being funded. On paper, the proposed institute was closely aligned with the standards in the state’s 2002 History and Social Science Curriculum Framework (see Appendix A for the relevant standards in World History I<sup>19</sup>). Before it took place, the Department made strenuous efforts to help its planners concentrate on Islamic history, not beliefs, and demonstrate a balanced approach to it in the readings required for each session.<sup>20</sup>



But the Department learned that even professional development workshops drawing upon highly prestigious academic resources may result in distorted or scant understanding of history. Consider the content of the proposals for classroom lessons or curricular units written as the culminating assignment for the institute by the grades 6-11 Massachusetts teachers from over twenty schools who attended it. These proposed projects were shared and discussed by participants on its final day, attended as well by the Department monitor. Representative summaries of several appear below, with my comments interspersed or at the end of each one in brackets; the other summaries appear in Appendix B.

1. Two teachers spanning grades 5-8 plan to have their students begin study of Islamic history, culture, and traditions by reading and discussing a poem written by an Oklahoma teacher called “The Angel of the East.” The poem is about an “angel of the Middle East” who seeks “a new world order and peace.” The outline of this imagined angel, like a constellation in the sky, is projected onto a map of the 15 countries in the Middle East, with its heart located in Jerusalem [not Mecca]. Their second lesson consists of group reading of “The Adventures of a Moslem Boy,” a “story” that explains how Moslems practice their religion as the boy makes a hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. The third lesson is on Islamic art, with some dates on a downloaded essay using the Islamic calendar. The fourth lesson is designed to familiarize students with “the language of the Koran” (Arabic letters and numbers, the sounds of the Arabic alphabet, English words that come from Arabic, and math problems using Arabic numbers) and to engage them in beginning writing in Arabic. The fifth lesson provides details on making a hajj, and the culminating activity is the creation of a “religion mobile” comparing world religions, to hang on the class walls. [This proposed unit contains no history objectives, no authentic literature about the Muslim world (such as Washington Irving’s *Tales from the Alhambra*), no systematic coverage of the geography of Muslim-dominant countries across the world, false information, and excessive attention to religious language, practice, and belief.]

2. Called “Salat in the Classroom Mosque,” this middle school project is described this way: “Students will be working in groups of four to create wall decorations and prayer rugs. The students will create large geometric patterns on bulletin board paper. These patterns will include calligraphic writing and the designs will be based on designs found in the *Tentmaker Project*, which provides an excellent concept of Islamic art. While creating the large wall decoration, students will independently be creating and designing a prayer rug on large bulletin board paper. Once the groups have finished, the wall decorations will be placed around the room to create the feeling of a mosque. Each group will then appoint an imam who will then lead the group through the seven rak’ahs of salat.” [This proposed curricular unit contains no history or geography objectives, is little more

than a simulation of religious beliefs, practices, and artifacts, and consumes an inordinate amount of academic time.]

3. This grade 9 project focuses on the life and teachings of Muhammad, the spread of Islam, the influence of the Arabic language on science, medicine, and food, and the “Muslim Renaissance,” with a culminating project on “multicultural Muslim Majlis (religious assemblies) to show “diversity in Islam.” It provides an extensive set of rubrics that are to be used to evaluate how well each group of students prepares its presentation of its selected Muslim culture (wearing appropriate dress, eating appropriate food, playing appropriate music, etc.). [This proposed curricular unit includes some history objectives but from a “celebratory” perspective, and plans an academically inappropriate, time-consuming activity for high school students.]

4. This middle school project has lessons on the geography of the Arabian peninsula, the “revelation of Islam” (on which students are to write a five-paragraph essay), mapping the modern Muslim world, the Golden Age of Islam (which will include a group project on how the varied contributions from the Golden Age of Islam impact our life today), and geometric designs in Islamic art, all culminating in a “museum project celebrating the rise of Islam.” [This proposed curricular unit contains an incoherent set of history and geography objectives, is chiefly celebratory in nature, and places religious revelation on the same plane as geographical and historical knowledge.]

As the summaries here and in Appendix B suggest, most proposed lessons and curricular units were academically weak and contained little history. If the teachers planned to teach any history, it was early Islamic history. Few addressed Islamic history from 1500 on. No matter what history they proposed to teach, not one proposed project would help students understand:

- 9/11 and why so many Muslims hate America;
- Islamic Fundamentalism and terrorism;
- the lack of democracy in the Muslim world;
- the lack of basic legal and political rights for women in most of the Muslim world;
- the lack of a free press in most of the Muslim world;
- the deplorable state of elementary, secondary, and higher education in the Muslim world;<sup>21</sup> and
- the dramatic decline in intellectual creativity and scientific achievement in the Muslim world since 1500.<sup>22</sup>

Was the orientation of this institute simply a reflection of Baglio’s and Petzen’s intentions? Certainly, it is not easy to discern much influence on teachers’ projects from the lectures on Islamic history given by the scholars (most from Harvard, a few from other local universities), as indicated

in the final agenda.<sup>23</sup> Did the teachers generally ignore what the scholars had presented when preparing their projects? Or did the scholars give talks aimed chiefly at religious and cultural “appreciation” of Islam, not academic analysis, because they were addressing public school teachers whom they perceive as incapable of analytical thinking about historical movements, events, and individuals? These questions are unanswerable. What we do know is what the teachers seem to have gotten from this history institute to bring to their own students—a preoccupation with Muslim beliefs and practices, a belief that Muhammad’s life and revelation are historical knowledge, an arsenal of classroom activities with slight if any academic worth, precious little historical knowledge, and some remarkable misinformation—all at public expense.

It is striking that the teachers so readily accepted as facts that the “People of the Book” refers to Muslims as well as Christians and Jews, that the Koran includes the Old Testament, and that Jerusalem was a major Muslim city in the seventh and eighth centuries.<sup>24</sup> One must also wonder about the double standard entailed by comparisons of the major monotheistic religions that draw solely on Islamic and school textbook sources, without the addition of Christian and Judaic sources. Not one teacher planning a unit on comparative theology (as inappropriate a topic as this clearly is for middle and most high school students) included references for works by Christian or Jewish scholars on what *these* scholars see as their own basic religious concepts and practices, or on points of comparison and difference to Islam from their points of view. Nor did the vast bibliography provided by the Teaching Resource Center at the Center on Middle Eastern Studies do so.

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One must also raise an eyebrow about the almost complete absence of interest in the status of women in Islamic societies in the teachers’ proposals, and the total lack of interest in slavery and the Islamic slave trade. This is despite the prominent presence of standards on these topics in the Framework, as well as the intense interest in gender issues and slavery in educational circles today. It is further confirmation that topics with negative implications about other cultures are simply excluded from the curriculum. Not one teacher proposed to engage students in a cross-cultural comparison of women’s roles or in a comparison of the trans-Atlantic slave trade with the trans-African slave trade to the Middle East (unlike comparative theology, two topics which *would* be appropriate for middle and high school students)<sup>25</sup>. Nor did the Center’s bibliography seem to address the second topic. Given the prominence of slavery and slave trading in all civilizations throughout history, and the important economic, military, and domestic functions served by slaves in Islamic societies,

the omission of references on this topic in the bibliography handed out to these Massachusetts history teachers raises questions about the Center’s academic goals.

Most striking of all are the unethical teaching practices these public school teachers are proposing (or are conducting already in their classrooms). If any teacher asked students to write down and memorize the Ten Commandments, listen to the Torah being chanted, study the religious practices of Hasidic Jews, and prepare a public presentation dressed in men’s Sabbath garb or women’s Sabbath dress and wig, People for the American Way, Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and the A.C.L.U. would descend upon them like Furies. One can only imagine the public uproar if middle school students, dressed and shaven as Buddhist monks or as Hari Krishnas, began soliciting donations in the neighborhoods surrounding their school or chanting “ommmmm” for the purpose of gaining the “other’s” perspective. It is also unethical to ask students to group themselves by religious identification for a “learning” activity on “perspectives.”

These teachers may deeply believe that their primary responsibility is to promote tolerance, that Muslims are the objects of bigotry or hatred in this country, and that the best way to teach tolerance of Islam is through study of their religious practices. But

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there seems to be a total disconnect in their thinking between the kind of learning activities they would plan to help students understand the beliefs and practices of other religions and what they seem eager to have students do to understand Islam.

We do not know why the teachers who proposed these learning activities failed to understand how inappropriate they are for public school students. We also do not know why they failed to recognize as nonsense the idea that Muslims discovered and explored the New World in the ninth century, or if they did recognize it as such, why they didn’t say something to their peers. Selections from *The Arab World Studies Notebook* were on the daily list of required readings, and the *Notebook* was on the Center’s bibliography. Surely some of the many teachers who listed it as a reference for their projects and as a source of specific readings and “pre-tests” for their students must have glanced through it. It is understandable why teachers attending an institute organized by Harvard doctoral candidates and taught chiefly by Harvard scholars would be reluctant to question information given in lectures. But they could have cautioned their colleagues about using the *Notebook* if they suspected some of what they saw in it as was nonsense.

One would have expected Baglio and Petzen to have read through the *Notebook* before assigning readings from it. But one can only wonder if the scholars at this Harvard Center, or other scholars

of Islam at other universities have ever bothered to read through it or if they care what K-12 teachers are being told is history.<sup>26</sup> In general, it is difficult to decide whom to be harder on, the people who feed teachers slanted or ridiculous material or both, or the teachers who seem to swallow it without choking.

## *On African American History*

That professional development providers with a social mission are not interested in developing teachers' analytical thinking and promoting students' academic achievement is further suggested by the observations of a Department staffer about a 2002 summer institute on African Americans in United States History.<sup>27</sup> This institute was directed by Anna Roelofs at Primary Source, a non-profit organization that regularly provides workshops and curricular materials for teachers. On the day the staffer monitored the institute, the twenty-five teachers in attendance viewed a documentary on African-American art and a video containing excerpts from talks by Cornell West, Howard Zinn, and Julian Bond, all arguing that teachers have an obligation to promote the legacy of the civil rights movement by fighting for "social justice." This was followed by historian Patricia Sullivan describing the story of American race relations as a continuing saga of oppression and injustice, and the civil rights movement as simply a struggle against a system that employed terrorism to maintain itself. The final session was a video presentation by a producer of documentaries for PBS, urging teachers to teach "activist history"—ways of thinking about the past that cause students to realize they need to transform American society.

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The Department monitor noted the complete absence of any discussion of the relevant state standards. He also noted that the list of sources distributed to the teachers did not include Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech or his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," both required readings in the Framework, but that it did include four books by Philip Foner and one by Herbert Aptheker, both of whom are Marxists.<sup>28</sup> Ironically, if the students of these teachers do not pass the grade 10 MCAS history assessment, which is required for graduation, it is quite likely the Department will be faulted for not providing history teachers with appropriate resources for teaching their students.

## *On the Exploration and Early Settlement of America*

The traditional history curriculum has been criticized for decades for dwelling on political, military, and constitutional history, highlighting only “important men,” and ignoring the daily lives of ordinary people, women, and others who did not loom large in political, military, and constitutional affairs. Anthropological approaches in curriculum materials address this criticism. However, in doing so, they expand the curriculum to include topics with which most teachers have no familiarity—and which usually have little or no relevance to the evolution of democratic institutions and individual freedoms. One example in many elementary and middle school curricula is a comparison of River Valley Civilizations—China, India, Egypt, and Mesopotamia—for studying the ancient world. Such approaches also reduce the time that can be given to politically significant topics (such as the history and legacies of ancient Greece and Rome). And they nullify attention that used to be given to culture-specific phenomena of enormous significance (such as the development of the alphabet or monotheism in the ancient world). Such cross-cultural comparisons also tend to foster (and indeed may be intended to foster) non-judgmental stances towards other (typically non-democratic) cultures. The daily lives and fates of the many Native American tribes have been perhaps the greatest beneficiary of this socio-cultural approach, which now occupies much instructional time. With it, however, comes a strongly negative view of the Europeans who explored and colonized the Americas. Supplemental resources now guide teachers to downplay or ignore altogether what students should be learning about the origins and development of our civic culture.

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An example of this phenomenon came to my attention while visiting the final day of a week-long summer institute for elementary teachers in 2003. About twenty-five K-5 teachers from fourteen towns attended the institute, organized by Betsy Kalber Baglio, director of professional development at The Education Cooperative (and co-director of the institute on Islamic history described above). The stated purpose of the institute was to help elementary teachers use the resources of several historic sites, among them Plimoth Plantation, to prepare lessons and projects keyed to the state’s new history and social science standards for their grades, most of which related to local and state history. As part of the institute, participating teachers spent two days at Plimoth Plantation. On the final day, they described the projects or lessons they had developed for classroom use. I collected all of their materials and listened carefully.



The state's new grade 3 standard says "Identify who the Pilgrims were and explain why they left Europe to seek religious freedom; describe their journey and their early years in the Plymouth Colony." Subheads call for attention to "the purpose of the Mayflower Compact and its principles of self-government," "challenges in settling in America," and "events leading to the first Thanksgiving." Yet not one teacher or outline mentioned the Mayflower Compact, how the Pilgrims governed themselves, their experiences in Holland, what religious freedom meant in 1620, what religious beliefs were at issue, or anything of historical importance in the political, religious, and intellectual life of these and similar English colonists in Massachusetts. (Nor did I see any Plimoth Plantation materials for elementary teachers or students on the political, religious, and intellectual significance or legacy of the Pilgrims and Puritans because, as I later discovered when exploring its website, there aren't any. Their focus is solely on "The First Thanksgiving".<sup>29</sup>) The teachers did not do much better with the grade 5 standards relating to the European explorations in the New World and early colonies in America.

About two-thirds of what these teachers had prepared concentrated on the Wampanoag Indians, more than fulfilling what was needed to address another grade 3 standard: "Identify the Wampanoags and their leaders at the time the Pilgrims arrived, and describe their way of life." All the materials I saw on the Pilgrims followed the socio-cultural approach implied in this standard on the Wampanoags, focusing therefore not on Pilgrim history but on "cultural features": similarities and differences between the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags in clothes, food, houses, the chores children did, and how they learned (based largely on Plimoth Plantation material); what children might put into a chest of their own if they were on the Mayflower; and the differing "viewpoints" of the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags on land ownership and nature. The other materials on the Wampanoags addressed such loaded questions as: who really lived first in Plymouth and for how long; why so few Indians were there when the Pilgrims arrived (unnamed "earlier explorers" had brought diseases that killed most of the people living there); what "feelings" students have in learning what happened to the Indians; what feelings the Wampanoags might have had toward the Pilgrims; and what feelings the Wampanoags today might have about what happened to their ancestors. A few projects concerned what archeologists can learn about a people's culture from their artifacts, while another expected primary-grade children to compare a variety of stories about "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere" to determine what were facts and what were myths about the "Ride." This was probably conceived as an exercise in "critical thinking."

Some teachers clearly saw the emphasis on the Wampanoags as a matter of "fairness." One remarked in her outline that "history wasn't fair," implying that it was a teacher's responsibility to redress history's "judgments." Undoubtedly, many primary teachers saw this exercise in cultural equivalence (with an implication of Indian cultural superiority in ensuring the Pilgrims' survival) as a way to explain Thanksgiving as a national holiday. But no grade 4 or 5 teachers sought to include

information on, or the text of, President Abraham Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation on October 3, 1863, at the height of the Civil War, as the origin of the national holiday.

Appendix C contains the most manipulative set of teacher-created lessons I saw. It has not one academic objective. Instead of "The Wampanoag," the lessons could have been titled "How to Cultivate Hatred of the Pilgrims." The teacher clearly intends to make sure her students end up with no "misconceptions" about the Pilgrims, even grading them for parroting the politically correct response. What is especially chilling about this lesson was that not one teacher in the group saw anything remarkable about it. None raised a question about the flagrantly loaded nature of the quiz questions, at least while I was present.

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In mid-November, 2003, I had an opportunity to discover the effects of such an approach on my own grandson, now in grade 5 in a Massachusetts town. What had he studied so far in his social studies class? Columbus, the Indians, and the European diseases that killed them. He could recall nothing more; no names, places, events, dates—never mind a conceptual understanding of the significance of the explorations. The whole class had recently been asked to write on the topic: "Do you think Christopher Columbus deserves a holiday?" All the papers were displayed, and according to my daughter-in-law, every child had concluded that he does not deserve a holiday. Here are excerpts from three papers:

He shouldn't have a holiday. ... He overworked the slaves. He named everything he touched because he was greedy. The Europeans mistreated the natives. ... He allowed animals to trample everywhere. He also would kidnap some natives. ... That's why he doesn't deserve a holiday for himself. He wasn't really the first to discover America.

*Instead of "The Wampanoag," the lessons could have been titled "How to Cultivate Hatred of the Pilgrims."*

I don't think he does deserve a holiday. Do you think someone deserves a holiday after he abused natives, gave diseases to natives, and he even wasn't first to find America? ... He made them find gold. If they didn't, he would crop their ears and noses. Then he took the land and claimed it for Spain. He gave the Taino so many diseases that the Taino didn't know about. ... Leif Ericsson was the first person to find America.

Christopher Columbus has his own holiday and because of this people think he was a fantastic and courageous person. The truth is he abused the Taino Indians, was selfish and greedy, and wasn't the first to discover America. ... He obviously doesn't deserve a holiday. Leif Ericsson was the heroic explorer. He landed in America 500 years before Columbus.

In a conversation with the teacher, my son learned that the resources she gave the children to read were recommended or provided to her at a professional development workshop organized by Primary Source. (He had found nothing problematic in the class's social studies textbook.) Apparently, *that* workshop had not made clear that Leif Ericsson and possibly others may have "discovered" the New World but not in the sense that Columbus discovered it; after *his* discovery, no one

*Apparently, that workshop had not made clear that Leif Ericsson and possibly others may have "discovered" the New World but not in the sense that Columbus discovered it; after his discovery, no one else had to discover it again.*

else had to discover it again. Teachers had been given a copy of "The Taino Tragedy," a short story by Craig Gingold describing the behavior of Columbus and the Spaniards towards the Taino, and had been encouraged to read *Pedro's Journal* by Pamela Conrad, a piece of fiction for students in grade 3 and above that pretends to

be the diary of the ship's boy on the Santa Maria in 1492. In what ways did Conrad's story contribute to the teachers' (and their students') understanding of this momentous historical event? According to a 1992 review in the *School Library Journal*, "*Pedro's Journal* is a vivid revelation of the details of the voyage as well as the time period. Readers see the boy's discomfort in the explorer's proprietary treatment of the natives and, in particular, his shame that these people are allowed to believe that the Spaniards are deities...."

The Plimoth Plantation staff, using funds from a recent Landmark grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, could very well develop urgently needed materials for elementary teachers that address significant aspects of the colonies established by the Pilgrims and other Puritans in Massachusetts. But these new materials can easily be superseded by other supplemental materials promoted by professional development providers with a political agenda. Inadequately trained teachers who have not been taught what is most important for their students to learn, what real "higher-order" or "critical" thinking is, or what are morally acceptable and unacceptable learning activities, are easy prey for such professional developers. The accidental calamitous effects of European diseases on native Indians in the Western Hemisphere are only one aspect of this historical epoch students should learn, and not the most important. Most teachers are not anti-Western or anti-American in their basic views. But many seem to have bought into the idea (emphasized in education courses) that their pedagogy will be judged effective only if it "engages" students' feelings, especially in politically correct directions, and that it is acceptable to do so by role-playing activities and eliciting opinions of the past

based on today's moral standards.<sup>30</sup> Teachers have also been led to think that making these kinds of judgments is what real historians do. Given all the time that students in these teachers' classes will be spending on such marginalia as the clothing worn by Pilgrim and Wampanoag children or on affect-forming but intellectually empty assignments, it is doubtful that they will be able to address the state's strong academic standards, concepts, and skills in its 2002 History and Social Science Curriculum Framework.

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# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We need to address as soon as possible the serious threat to the American experiment in self-government posed by the growing use of anti-civic and anti-intellectual curriculum materials by academically weak history or social studies teachers who have not been trained to think critically about what they are given to use. I propose two sets of strategies here, one better than the other. Each contains controversial components, and some elements may be a challenge to implement, but each can ameliorate the problems raised by the kinds of manipulative curriculum materials, workshops, and pedagogical activities now influencing teachers and students in public schools. Both start from the presumption—strongly reinforced in the federal No Child Left Behind Act—that states are obligated to make sure that no one is allowed to teach history in public schools who has not proven that they themselves know the kind of history that public schools should be teaching. The first set is the more efficient way to address the many problems posed by the kinds of materials and workshops described in this report. Putting it into practice, however, will require boldness and courage on the part of state and federal policy makers.

## *A. Preferred Strategies*

### *1. Professional development in history and the social sciences as now conceived should be defunded.*

Public funding to schools for professional development in history as it is now conceived and practiced should cease until there is strong evidence that most history teachers learn something useful from a majority of the workshops they attend. There are several cogent reasons for this recommendation.

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First, no public agency has the capacity to review all current history curriculum supplements and monitor their providers' workshops effectively. Even though all states now require local school districts to provide only "high quality" professional development with the funds they receive under the No Child Left Behind Act and even give districts criteria to use, in practice no department of education can ensure the quality of district-based workshops.

Second, large numbers of professional development institutes in history are planned and directed by educators who do not have the academic background to teach them as academic courses and who

engage scholars as walk-in guest lecturers to cover a series of disjointed topics. In Massachusetts, the Department found a few U.S. history and government professors willing to organize a professional development institute for teachers and teach it as a mini-course in one or two weeks. But the number of historians or political scientists willing to do this for large numbers of teachers is small.

Third, given the long life and widespread use of many of the supplemental curricula described in this report (e.g., FHAO or the *Arab World Studies Notebook*), one may infer that there are many K-12 history teachers who seem to accept as academic knowledge or sound pedagogy anything suggested by people described as or associated with experts (e.g., that slavery is equivalent to the Holocaust, or that Muslims propagated their faith in the New World in the 800s). And as the teachers' project proposals at the workshops described in this report also suggest, these teachers don't ask the kinds of questions about the materials they are given that they should be teaching their students to ask (e.g., where is the documentation for this information or these facts, or what are the most important things to understand about this topic?). It is one thing for teachers to accept without question a highly slanted interpretation of a historical phenomenon. It is another for them to accept completely erroneous or ludicrous information that they should find suspect.<sup>31</sup> It is yet another for them to accept suggestions for pedagogically unethical activities without apparent hesitation or doubt.

Fourth, there seems to be no research evidence to date indicating that what history teachers learn at professional development workshops gets translated into intellectually productive questions for use with their own students. Clearly, most of the teachers in the workshops described in this report, judging from their proposed projects, didn't seem to abstract the big ideas that can be useful in advancing their own students' thinking. Instead of challenging their students' minds or academic imaginations, most projects were pitched to a precalculated moralistic conclusion or regurgitation of cultural trivia in the name of celebrating, appreciating, comparing, or denouncing something. The chief victims of this low level of teaching are, of course, students coming from homes in which, for various reasons, children's minds are not challenged to think about ideas.

Fifth, the educational materials put out by many of our cultural institutions (which are apt to be introduced to teachers at professional development workshops) are unlikely to be bogus, but they may well be as bland and as biased as the history textbooks Diane Ravitch reviewed for *The Language Police* if they follow the advice of the omnipresent multicultural consultant, as did Plimoth Plantation.<sup>32</sup> I can't think of any better words than "bland and biased" to describe, for example, the current materials on the Pilgrims that Plimoth Plantation provides elementary teachers across the country through its website. They are a prime example of how the misplaced concern for fairness driving cross-cultural comparisons in the teaching of history to children (the Wampanoags and the Pilgrims are given absolutely equal text space, with a focus on little more than their daily lives) leads to the learning of mostly boring cultural trivia. It is unclear to what extent our cultural institutions have been gradually selling our civic and intellectual heritage for a messy pottage of politically cor-



rect approbation by downplaying what was significant in this country's political and intellectual history and highlighting only topics connected to native Indians or slavery.<sup>33</sup>

*2. Continuing education for history teachers should take place under academic auspices*

History and social studies teachers (many of whom did not major in history and most of whom do not have master's degrees in history) should be given professional development credits only for coursework in the arts and sciences at accredited colleges or universities. Tuition for these courses could be paid from public funds, with the presidents, provosts, deans, and faculties of the colleges and universities in which teachers take these courses (not state departments of education or local schools) serving as the responsible bodies to guarantee their integrity. Most teachers of history need substantive coursework in history, economics, and political science, as suggested by every statistic available on the qualifications of those teaching history in K-12 today. Elementary teachers, in particular, are apt to have extremely limited knowledge of U.S. or world history.

This is clearly not a risk-free recommendation, considering that so many history courses at our colleges and universities have become politicized. But I know of no other venue for history teachers to acquire the academic knowledge that so many now lack and that they are clearly not getting from workshops like those described in this report. To reduce some of the risk and to ensure openness, instructors' credentials, syllabi, assigned readings, writing assignments, and copies of all term papers written by teacher-students seeking tuition payment and professional development credit for each course should be on file at the college or university (or, better yet, put on its web site), available to school boards, superintendents, and parents. At many universities, most of these things are already available to the students themselves. Much more needs to be done to restore the quality of the history courses in higher education needed by schoolteachers. But I see no better or more appropriate solution to most of the problems posed by manipulative (or simply history-impo-  
verished) curriculum materials and professional development workshops in history and social studies than the continuing education of history and social studies teachers through graduate courses in the arts and sciences taught by first-rate historians, political scientists, economists, and geographers.

*History and social studies teachers should be given professional development credits only for coursework in the arts and sciences at accredited colleges or universities.*

If there is not sufficient courage in Washington and the state capitals to enact the first set of strategies, the alternative set spelled out below can address the many problems raised by the kinds of materials and workshops described in this report. They are less satisfactory than the previous recommendations because these entail more bureaucracy and higher costs.

## *B. Alternative Strategies*

### *1. Systematic research is needed on what history teachers learn from supplemental resources.*

What teachers teach their students reflects what they already know, what is in their textbooks, and what is in other materials they are given directly or by consultants. It is generally assumed that they have learned the basic content of their discipline if they had to pass a state-sponsored subject matter test for licensure (even though the quality and difficulty of current history tests for teachers and the level of their cut scores have yet to be investigated). But I know of no rigorous research on what history teachers learn from the supplemental resources they are exposed to in professional development workshops. Copies of the lessons that history teachers plan as the final assignment in publicly funded “high quality” professional development workshops, in addition to the academic objectives, syllabi, and required reading of these workshops, should be collected and evaluated by educational researchers as one important step in an effort to find out why American students learn so little from their history and government courses.<sup>34</sup> There are plenty of reasons why students may learn little history today, including poor attendance, low reading skills, and new teachers who begin their teaching

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careers with weak academic backgrounds in history. While the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act could include policies that encourage undergraduate history and government departments to prepare prospective teachers with sound and sufficient coursework in the history

topics generally taught in K-12, and while state standards for complying with the “highly qualified teacher” requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act should also insist on evidence of subject-matter mastery, we also need to understand what current history teachers learn from the workshops they take and then try to teach their students before more federal and state funds are committed to this form of professional development. I doubt that a larger proportion of academically strong workshops exist across the country than came to my attention when reviewing professional development proposals submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Education in the past four years or to the U.S. Department of Education for Teaching Traditional American History grants in the past two years.<sup>35</sup>

### *2. History teachers should be able to report problems in supplemental resources.*

Whether teachers enroll voluntarily at a professional development institute, such as those described in this report, or are compelled to attend one, as is often the case for a school-sponsored in-service day, some are naturally reluctant to question lecturers (or peers) directly for fear of being jeered, smeared, or shunned. History or social science teachers should be able to contact a funded site (perhaps a website managed by a reputable professional organization for historians, such as The History Society) with questions about materials they have been given or have purchased (even about

consultants they have been required to listen to (to some extent like a Consumer Hotline, a citizen information service, or a Better Business Bureau). And they should be able to communicate with other teachers and scholars, anonymously if desired, about their concerns and questions. This site might even contain a directory of materials and providers to help channel concerns or queries. This may be one way to heed the advice of the Algonquin Nation Secretariat, which expressed the hope that its public statement would encourage educators “to vigorously reject efforts at implementing curriculum that is not consistent with the historical record.”

*History or social science teachers should be able to contact a funded site with questions about materials they have been given or have purchased, like a Consumer Hotline, a citizen*

*3. Standards should be formulated for evaluating instructional materials for history content.*

Many states already have criteria in place, sometimes mandated by state legislation, for evaluating the social content of instructional materials. What states need instead are criteria or standards for evaluating the history content of instructional materials. If criteria for judging social content can be mandated, then there is no reason why criteria for judging history content can't be mandated instead. Such standards especially need to be constructed for topics that have proven to be sources of controversy, suggesting the range of details that should be pointed out and discussed in the material to assure fairness of coverage. For example, materials about the effects of the explorations by Columbus and other early explorers of the New World should note details ranging from how the image of the world was changed by European mapmakers to the epidemics of smallpox and other diseases among the indigenous people.

*States need criteria or standards for evaluating the history content of instructional materials*

*4. Standards are urgently needed for evaluating the ethical dimensions of a learning activity.*

As much as educators, parents, and other citizens need standards for evaluating instructional materials for history content, they need with even more urgency some standards for evaluating pedagogical activities for their ethical dimensions. These may be as useful for parents and older students (who can better explain the misgivings or alarm they may have developed from classroom simulations) as for teachers and their supervisors. Such standards are probably best formulated at the local level by committees appointed by local school boards that include a wide range of teachers and parents with children in the schools. If formulated at the local level, they will attract the attention of parents, students, other citizens, and the local media, and develop broad public awareness through dis-

cussion of the ethical issues raised by manipulative learning activities. Certainly there should be prolonged discussion of appropriate ways to learn about anyone's religious beliefs and practices, the sources that should be consulted, the academic purposes for doing so, how teachers should present the distinction between religious belief and historical fact, and the appropriate age for such learning. What a majority of parents is willing to accept as guidelines affecting their own children should be the determining factor, especially if dissenting parents are allowed to keep their children from participating in activities they deem offensive or unethical.

# APPENDIX A

## *Standards on Islamic History in World History I in the 2002 Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework*

- WHI.1** On a map of the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Asia, identify where Islam began and trace the course of its expansion to 1500 AD.
- WHI.2** Describe significant aspects of Islamic belief.
- the life and teachings of Muhammad
  - the significance of the Qur'an as the primary source of Islamic belief
  - Islam's historical relationship to Judaism and Christianity
  - the relationship between government and religion in Muslim societies
- WHI.3** Analyze the causes, course, and effects of Islamic expansion through North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula, and Central Asia.
- the strength of the Islamic world's economy and culture
  - the training of Muslim soldiers and the use of advanced military techniques
  - the disorganization and internal divisions of Islam's enemies
  - the resistance and/or assimilation of Christianized peoples in the Mediterranean
- WHI.4** Describe the central political, economic, and religious developments in major periods of Islamic history. (H, E)
- the sources of disagreement between Sunnis and Shi'ites
  - the growing influence of Turkish Islam after 1000
  - the importance of the trade routes connecting the Far East and Europe and the role of the Mongols in increasing trade along these routes, including the silk routes to China
  - the relationship of trade to the growth of Central Asian and Middle Eastern cities
  - the sources and uses of slaves in Islamic societies as well as the extent of the Islamic slave trade across Africa from 700 AD on.
- WHI.5** Analyze the influence and achievements of Islamic civilization during its "Golden Age."
- the preservation and expansion of Greek thought
  - Islamic science, philosophy, and mathematics
  - Islamic architecture
- WHI.9** Describe the religious and political origins of conflicts between Islam and Christianity, including the Muslim wars against Christianity before the European Crusades and the causes, course, and consequences of the European Crusades against Islam in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries.

- WHI.10** Describe the rise of the Ottoman Empire in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, including the capture of Constantinople in 1453.
- WHI.11** Describe the decline of Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula and the subsequent rise of Spanish and Portuguese kingdoms after the Reconquest in 1492.
- WHI.17** Describe the different ways in which Islam and Christianity influenced indigenous African cultures.
- WHI.20** Describe the development and effects of the trans-African slave trade to the Middle East from the eighth century on, and the trans-Atlantic slave trade to the Western Hemisphere from the sixteenth century on.
- WHI.21** Describe important economic, political, and religious developments in Indian history to 1800.
- the origins of Indian civilization in the Indus Valley
  - the evolution and central principles of Hinduism
  - the development of the caste system
  - the influence of Islam and the rise and fall of the Moghul empire
  - artistic and intellectual achievements, including the development of a decimal system

## APPENDIX B

### *Summaries of Classroom Projects Prepared by Massachusetts Teachers at a Professional Development Institute on Islamic History*

[It should be noted that study of Islamic history commences in grade 8 in the 2002 Framework and is not addressed in the standards for grades 6 and 7 (which address modern world geography and ancient and classical civilizations to 500 CE). Thus, grades 6 and 7 teachers at this institute should have focused their projects on Muslim countries around the world today to address the state's standards for these grades. ]

**1.** This grade 9 project addresses the points of contact and conflict during the Middle Ages between Western Europe and the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic World, noting that traditional histories “ignore or subjugate the history of these other two civilizations.” Among their learning activities, students are to “read the newspaper for a week or watch a newscast and look for stereotypical portraits of Muslims and Arabs as barbaric, violent, etc., and discuss the lasting impact of such stereotypes and how they might contribute to our current understanding of and relations with Muslims in general and Arab Muslims in particular”; “design a book cover to try to explain the overall storyline of what they have learned”; “read contradictory secondary sources about the nature of the Crusades and the Crusaders, or after discussing the primary sources, ...debate or write an essay about which interpretation seems the most accurate”; and be broken up “into different religious groups” and write letters or diary entries to reflect their perspectives.”

**2.** This grade 6 project focuses on “the Prophet Muhammad’s life events, the development of Islam in seventh century Arabia, the Five Pillars of Faith, trade in the East, the life and accomplishments of Ibn Battuta, and mosque architecture and vocabulary.” Although, the teacher explains, the study of Islam doesn’t occur in the new Massachusetts framework until grade 8, she will ensure that her school includes it in grade 6 with ancient and classical civilizations because “Jerusalem is a holy city to Jews, Muslims, and Christians.” Her students are to compare major world religions and “develop respect for religious diversity,” identify countries once part of “Islam’s great expansion,” and identify examples of Islam’s “stunning record” of learning, art, and architecture. She notes that “promoting knowledge of and respect for members of our global community, especially in the aftermath of September 11th,, is the most vital reason for Islamic study by the sixth graders of our school.” “Of particular emphasis in science classes will be Islamic accomplishments in medicine, astronomy, engineering, and zoology.” By understanding the journey taken by Ibn Battuta, her sixth graders are to learn how to relate ancient, post-classical, and modern geography, in part by arranging an overlay of modern-day countries on the map of his journey.” In addition, students are to be reminded that “Islam encompasses the Arabian peninsula, and in years to come, extended so broadly to other parts of the world that it included an empire larger than that of Rome, which was in its size the equal of the United States,” a point to be “reinforced in the lessons.” Among their learning activities, students are to make a “dimensional model of a mosque” after learning its specific architectural features, write out a description of the Five Pillars of Faith for a quiz, explain when and where Muhammad received his first revelation from God, and indicate what they think are “some of the most important teachings in God’s revelation to Muhammad.”



**3.** This grade 8 project addresses the contributions of the Islamic Empire to the West in a yearlong school curriculum focusing on an examination of “prejudice and tolerance” in European and American history. The curriculum has a special focus on the “Jewish experience,” from the European Middle Ages to WWII, paralleled by a study of the African American experience up to the Civil Rights Movement. The teacher’s overarching objective is for students to “develop a new and positive perspective on Islam through an appreciation of the Islamic Empire.” Her students are to learn about “Muhammad, the Qur’an and Muslim beliefs, ...the contributions made by the Islamic Empire to the West, and how the cosmopolitan communities of Al-Andalus compare with their European counterparts. In particular, students will compare the treatment of Jews under both Christian and Muslim rule.” She believes that “at a time in our own history when American views on Islam are becoming increasingly distorted, it is more important than ever to give children an opportunity to view different societies with multiple lenses. Particularly in America, students need to appreciate the origins of our myriad cultures and the commonality of our religions. Like the great empires of Egypt, Greece, Rome and England, so we must admire the formative role, impact, and influence of the Islamic Empire, as none of these histories exist [sic] in isolation.” Among their learning activities, the students read from the *Notebook*, listen to the teacher read a picture book on the “glorious age” of Baghdad (*The House of Wisdom*), read such adolescent fiction as *Bedouins’ Gazelle* and *Seven Daughters and Seven Sons*, and review maps of the Medieval Islamic Empire showing such “major cities” as Medina, Mecca, Baghdad, Fez, and Jerusalem. For a class project, students are to choose an identity from what they have read, develop an “identity chart” listing precise details of that person’s life, and attend a school fair in exact costume of someone living in medieval Islamic Spain.

**4.** This grade 6 project expects students to acquire, among other things, an “appreciation that selected attributes and historical developments affected and continue to affect the growth of Islam” and that “Islam is a religion which is enjoying a fast growth in present times and is practiced throughout the world.” Students also will learn how to make big maps of the world using “six key historical periods in Middle Eastern development.” One map will be used to help sixth graders learn and discuss: “Why have so many groups wanted to control the Middle East?”, “How might the history of repeated invasions influence the history of people in this area?”, and “What factors might have unified the people of this area?” The teacher proposes to address “the concepts of economics in the state standards in relation to former trade routes and the development of the Empire.” She notes somewhat apologetically that the “concepts of political science” [in the standards] and the “problems of the Middle East” have not been included in her unit.

**5.** The goal of this project is to provide materials for high school teachers teaching World History I and II. Part of the unit involves having students identify where Islam began and its early spread: “Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Alexandria, Cairo, Damascus, et al.” They are also to take a pre-test on “Three Holy Books” from the *Notebook* and then, after the pre-test, learn that all of the passages are from the Koran. They may then write a “journal entry of a day in the life of a young Muslim in Arabia then or Massachusetts today.” Among his pointers for teachers: “Islam was born after Judaism and Christianity, so Muslims believe that Islam is the purest version of monotheism; they kind of see Judaism and Christianity as good tries but not quite right.” “Arabic is an important

language for Muslims since Muhammad received the word of Allah in Arabic...” “Muslims are also connected to the other Peoples of the Book through the value that they place on religious duties, mercy, and justice.” “Muslims do not force people to believe in Islam.” A “point to drive home is that monks and priests actually became distracted from their studies by poems of the Muslim world.” The teacher makes it clear that students must learn the Five Pillars in detail. For a lesson on “perspective” addressing World War I in grade 11, he recommends using the closing scenes from the movie *Gallipoli* to have students discuss or write an essay after imagining that the movie had been made by a Turkish studio rather than an Australian one, suggesting as a worthwhile thesis that a version made in Turkey “would likely portray the Australians and British as the Turks were portrayed in the actual movie: cold-hearted murderers.”

**6.** The aims of this five-lesson unit for grades 10 and 11 are: (1) “to identify and compare countries with Muslim majorities and large Muslim populations” (with a follow-up assignment to find the population and percentage of Muslims in a European, North American or South American nation of their choice); (2) “to show the importance of Arabic language to Islam and contributions to languages such as English and expose students to recognizing Arabic words and writing and reading Arabic script” (with a follow-up assignment to construct English sentences using words borrowed from Arabic and copy one or two words in Arabic script in a calligraphic style); (3) “to introduce students to music both in the Islamic tradition and contemporary culture” (with a follow-up assignment to locate songs with comparable styles or messages); (4) “to raise awareness of contributions of Muslim women and differentiate fact from opinion and stereotypes of how Islamic women are treated” (with a follow-up assignment in which students explain how the way they dress does and does not reflect their identity); and (5) “to introduce the Soviet-Afghan war through filmed accounts of Soviet soldiers and Afghan mujahadeen” (with a follow-up assignment to write an imagined first person account of either a Soviet or Afghan soldier in the war and their thoughts and feelings as they are fighting it).

**7.** This project for grades 9/10 on the history of Islamic civilization culminates with the study of the “Palestinian” conflict. [All negative topics in the list of standards addressing Islam, such as slavery and the internal divisions in Islam, are crossed out on his outline, possibly in response to feedback.] Students are to learn a long list of Arabic terms for people and concepts. To celebrate World History Day, they are to focus on the life of Muhammad [as if the facts were known] and Muslims in the U.S. and their influence in the world.

**8.** The purpose of this middle school project is to finish off a world religion unit the teacher has created. Students are to compare and contrast Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, design an Islamic style tessellation, list and explain the Five Pillars, describe the importance of Mohammad, and create a packet illustrating the contributions of the Islamic world. Among their learning activities, they will listen to several recitations of the Koran.

**9.** Grade unidentified: The project is on the Crusades and provides a guide to the video “Pilgrims in Arms, Part 1.”

**10.** This project for grades 7 and 8 is a unit on Islam for the library media center in the teacher’s school. The “essential knowledge” students need is that “Islam is a world religion with a diversity of

practice, Islam has similarities to Judaism and Christianity, and the history of the spread of Islam is characterized by tolerance for other cultures and contributions to civilization, as well as by conquest.” Among the activities for the unit, the teacher is to play the Recitation of the Opening Prayer of the Koran in Arabic from the IslamiCity.com website. TCI’s curriculum materials are to be used for information on the Middle East. The final lesson consists of a discussion of an article in the *Boston Globe* on a speech given by the Bosnian grand mufti on Muslim tolerance of other cultures and religions. The culminating assignment is a museum project that must focus on the “beliefs of Islam and the spread of Islam.”

**11.** This grade 9 project focuses on the rise and fall of the Byzantine and Islamic Empires and the contributions they made to society. Among the questions students are to discuss are: Why these two empires? What makes an empire great? What role does religion play in society? What caused these empires to fall and were the declines inevitable? What contributions did each empire make to society? What might have been the result had the Byzantine Empire been more tolerant of other religions?” Students are to learn that religious intolerance within the Byzantine Empire caused many to find Islam more accepting. They will also discuss the Battle of Tours and “recognize the significance this defeat was to the Islamic Empire.” Students will also learn that renowned Muslim chemists and physicians, such as al-Razi and Ibn Sina, made “incredible discoveries in medicine” and founded the study of optics.

**12.** This middle school project addresses the “origins of Islam, some of Islam’s major contributions, and the diversity of Islam today.” It also seeks to challenge prejudice and fear among non-Muslims towards Muslims who live in our communities and around the world. The first objective for the unit is to “identify and dispel stereotypes of Muslims and Islam.” The unit is to dovetail with the Facing History and Ourselves curriculum, which has already been incorporated into the middle school curriculum.

**13.** This grade 9 project purports to address all the standards in World History I on Islam but fails to address the one mentioning the slave trade. To “break down stereotypes,” the teacher will use material from the *Notebook* and the pre-test on the “Three Holy Books.” Students are to spend one seventy-five-minute period seeing *A Beginner’s Guide to Islam*, a video that covers the Five Pillars in detail and teaches that “the People of the Book” refers, in the teacher’s words, to the “three religions that share the same prophets and stories from the Old Testament.”

**14.** The “purpose” of this grade 9/10 unit is to continue the study of world religions. The teacher’s “goal” is to develop students’ understanding of Islam and to deepen their understanding of the events of 9/11 and its aftermath. She plans to use the pre-test on Islam and address stereotypes for the first lesson. The next two lessons will address the founding of Islam and the Five Pillars, accompanied by her lecture on the pluralism of Islam. The fourth lesson is on who is a Muslim, with a discussion of “why and why not.” On the fifth day, students are to discuss “pluralism and diversity among Muslims, the role of women, and stereotypes on Islam in America.” Then, they are to write in their journals if their study of Islam, its beliefs, and its followers has changed how they judge the events of 9/11 and how it has changed them. [This assignment seems to be based on her assumption that what they have studied in the five lessons on Islam is sufficient to help them understand 9/11.]

**15.** The goal of this grade 9 project is to identify the basic origins and foundations of Islam and its founder Muhammad, and to understand his revelation [as if it is known whether he claimed to have a revelation] and the opposition to his message. For World History Day, students' projects are to include the life of Muhammad, his revelation, the opposition to it, and the beginning of the Islamic era, or address the general history of Islam in America and the contributions of Islam to the world.

**16.** This project for grades 6 and 7 concentrates on who is a Muslim and how Muslims practice their religion. Students are to learn that the Koran includes stories from the Old and New Testament [it doesn't] and that Jews, Christians, and Muslims are all "People of the Book."

**17.** This grade 6 project addresses the "contributions of the Islamic Empire" for a grade 6 science unit. Using materials from the *Notebook* and the TCI curriculum among other resources, students are to learn about the Muslim lunar calendar and how to make one, comparing it to other calendars (Jewish and Gregorian). It does not address the state's science standards.

**18.** This high school project is a five-day unit focusing on the Middle East, key beliefs in Islam, and Islam's differences from and similarities to Christianity and Judaism. It uses the *Notebook* and an English translation of the Koran among other resources. Its culminating project is the creation of a two- or three-dimensional imaginary hajj to Mecca from a country neighboring Saudi Arabia. Students are also to engage in small groups in an exercise on the Five Pillars and prepare in detail a comparison of religious practices with Christianity and Judaism.

# APPENDIX C

Outline of a Lesson on the Wampanoag Prepared by a teacher at a Professional Development Institute for Massachusetts Elementary Teachers

## Lesson 3: The Wampanoag (from a Thanksgiving Unit)

**Objective:** The students will develop an understanding of the Wampanoag perspective on the events of 1620. The students will also understand that the Wampanoag lived in Massachusetts before the arrival of the Pilgrims and have continued to live in the area until the present day.

**Materials:** Chart Paper; Markers: *Tapenums' Day: A Wampanoag Indian Boy in Pilgrim Times* by Kate Waters; *Clambake: A Wampanoag Tradition* by Russel M. Peters; Map of Wampanoag territory

### Procedure:

#### 1.) Anticipatory Set

During recess, invite students from an upper grade to join you on the playground. Instruct both groups to keep to themselves. After recess, record the students' feelings to the following questions on the chart paper. Discuss with the students how it felt to share their playground. Ask the students if the larger, more powerful students asked permission to use the playground equipment. How did that make them feel? Did the older students play games by the same rules? Would they want to share the playground with older children every day? Why or why not? What would they do if the older students came every day?

#### 2.) Activity

Show the map found on page 37 of *Tapenum's Day: A Wampanoag Indian Boy in Pilgrim Times* by Kate Waters (enlarge if possible). Explain that the Wampanoag lives [sic] in the area for thousands of years before the Pilgrims came to Plymouth. They called Plymouth "Patuxet" and a large group, or village of their people lived there until the earlier explorers from Europe brought diseases that killed the people living there. That is why the Pilgrims found such good land without anyone living on it. The people in that village had already cleared the land and grew food there for hundreds of years.

Have the students think about the way they felt at recess (review chart). Ask them if the Wampanoag might have had similar feelings when the Pilgrims arrived. Have the students explain their reasoning.

3.) Explain that the Wampanoag believed that no one owned the land and they thought it would be easier to let the Pilgrims live in Patuxet rather than fight with them.

4.) Ask the children to agree or disagree with the following statements (using thumbs up and thumbs down):

- The Pilgrims were the first people to live in Plymouth.
- The Pilgrims killed the people living in Patuxet with diseases they brought with them from England.

- The Wampanoag didn't want the Pilgrims to live in Patuxet (Plymouth), but they let them live there anyway.
- The Wampanoag are still living in parts of their old territory today.

5.) Discuss the students' responses and clear up any misconceptions.

6.) *Closure*

Ask the students to describe what it might like to be a part of the Wampanoag nation today.

7.) Ask volunteers to describe a clambake. Read *Clambake: A Wampanoag Tradition* by Russel M. Peters and discuss the differences and similarities to the students' experiences.

8.) Record the students' responses on chart paper.

**Assessment:** Teacher observations based on student participation and student responses.

# ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> My invited testimony at a U.S. Senate hearing on September 24, 2003, on the quality of history books and the battle over the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework calls attention to this problem. For the final version of my testimony, see [http://health.senate.gov/testimony/083\\_tes.html](http://health.senate.gov/testimony/083_tes.html). A transcript of the entire hearing is available on-line through the Government Printing Office.

<sup>2</sup> “How They Teach the Holocaust,” *Commentary*, December 1990.

<sup>3</sup> I have directed or co-directed a We The People Summer Institute, funded by the Lincoln and Therese Filene Foundation and the Center for Civic Education, for the past six summers.

<sup>4</sup> Facing History and Ourselves Annual Report 2001-2002.

<sup>5</sup> Margot Stern Strom and William S. Parsons, *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Watertown, MA: Intentional Educations, 1982.

<sup>6</sup> *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc., 1994.

<sup>7</sup> For details on the contents of these three resource books, see my essay “Moral Equivalence in Education: The Use of the Holocaust In Discrediting American Society” to appear in *Understanding Anti-Americanism: Origins, Symptoms, and Consequences*, Paul Hollander, Editor (Chicago: Ivan Dee, Spring 2004).

<sup>8</sup> That the American eugenics movement was responsible for Nazi racial policies and the Holocaust is the explicit thesis of Edwin Black’s book, *War Against the Weak: Eugenics and America’s Campaign to Create a Master Race* (Four Walls Eight Windows, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> For example, eugenics is mentioned in one short paragraph in *Evolution and the Diversity of Life* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976, paperback reprint 1997, p. 318), a seven hundred twenty-two-page collection of essays by Ernst Mayr on the history of important ideas and movements in evolutionary science.

<sup>10</sup> Wendy Schwartz, “Arab American Students in Public Schools.” *ERIC Digest*, ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, Number 1342, March 1999, EDO-UD-99-2.

<sup>11</sup> See Richard Bernstein’s *Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America’s Future* (NY: Alfred A Knopf, 1994), Chapter 8, “The Battle of Brookline and Other Struggles over Young Minds,” pp. 235-291, for an account of this battle, which included the fight over the Social Studies Department’s attempt to eliminate the Advanced Placement European History course. See also “The Parent Movement to Restore Quality History Teaching in the Brookline Public Schools: Context, Origins, and Accomplishments,” by Sandra Stotsky, Ronni Gordon Stillman, and James Dudley. Paper presented at the Conference on Improving the Teaching of History and Civic Education, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C., October 9, 1991, ED 346 002.

<sup>12</sup> According to the British Government’s Report of the Anglo-American Committee of Enquiry, Part VI, April 10, 1946, representatives of the Palestinian Arabs claimed, in testimony, a connection to Palestine of over one thousand years, dating back no further than the conquest by Muhammad’s followers in the seventh century. Large numbers of contemporary Palestinian Arabs are descendants of Arabs who migrated to Palestine in modern times.

<sup>13</sup> The Algonquin Nation Secretariat is a tribal council located in northwestern Quebec, Canada, serving member communities of Barriere Lake, Timiskaming, and Wolf Lake. For further information, contact the Algonquin Nation Secretariat at 819.723.2019, or visit its website at <http://www.algonquinnation.ca>. For websites that provide a copy of the chapter in question in the *Notebook*, as well as links to related information, see Middle East Policy Council re: the *Arab World Studies Notebook*:



[http://www.mepc.org/public\\_asp/workshops/awsn.asp](http://www.mepc.org/public_asp/workshops/awsn.asp); Arab World And Islamic Resources workshop: <http://www.awaironline.org/workshop.htm>; a profile of Ms. Audrey Shabbas: [http://www.mepc.org/public\\_asp/workshops/shabbas.asp](http://www.mepc.org/public_asp/workshops/shabbas.asp); and a website promoting variations on the same bogus theories: <http://www.cyberistan.org/islamic/mamerica.html>.

<sup>14</sup> According to scholarly consensus, the Philistines disappeared from the historical record many centuries B.C.E. and no group can validly trace its origins to them.

<sup>15</sup> Personal communication from Jackie Berman by e-mail, December 17, 2003.

<sup>16</sup> See, also, the write-up by William Bennetta (<http://www.textbookleague.org/85amis.htm>), who notes that Lifetime Learning has produced “educational” kits promoting the films *Schindler’s List*, *Glory*, and *Dances with Wolves*.

<sup>17</sup> Because each institute funded by the Department is unique in its specific configuration of objectives and the personnel it draws upon, the Department cannot design generic pre- and post-tests for large-scale use across a range of institutes. Most institute-designed pre- and post-tests are relatively short, with questions usually requiring short answers, to allay teacher anxiety and to make them easy to correct.

<sup>18</sup> At the time, Betsy Kalber Baglio was a doctoral candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and Barbara Petzen was a doctoral student completing her dissertation in history and Middle Eastern studies at Harvard. Lena Granberg, Executive Director of the United Nations Association of Greater Boston, participated as a prospective partner in the writing of the initial proposal sent to the Department in the winter of 2002.

<sup>19</sup> The entire 2002 Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework can be viewed at, and downloaded from, <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>.

<sup>20</sup> It took several months of e-mail communications back and forth before the institute organizers agreed to put a recent work by Bernard Lewis on the required reading list. Lewis is one of the most knowledgeable scholars of Islamic history in the world. Nevertheless, the Department staffer who attended the final day of the institute reported that when Lewis’s name happened to come up, his work was dismissed as “biased” and irrelevant.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example: “Rote Schooling in Saudi Arabia Leaves Students Ill-Suited to Work,” by Howard Schneider, in *The Washington Post*, June 12, 1999; and “A Grim Arab Survey of Rights and Education,” by the Associated Press, in *The New York Times*, October 21, 2003.

<sup>22</sup> The abject condition of science and other academic endeavors in Arab societies was described last year in a report written by Arab intellectuals. See “Study Warns of Stagnation in Arab Societies,” by Barbara Crossette, in *The New York Times*, July 2, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> According to the final agenda, scholars spoke on the Crusades, classical Islamic civilization, Islamic Spain, the Silk Road, the Mongols, Islamic art and architecture, the rise of the Ottomans, Suleyman the Magnificent, social and cultural institutions of the Ottomans, the Ottomans and Europe, European imperialism and modern nation-states, gender and Islam, and “Islamism: Modernists to Terrorists.”

<sup>24</sup> In the entry for *Dhimmi* (*Alh al-Dhimma*) on p. 207 in Avraham Sela, editor, *Political Encyclopedia of the Middle East* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Publishing House, 1999), it says that *ahl al-kitab* (people of the book) is a “term commonly used for the Jews but also included other religious communities which recognized the scriptures.” This group was “allowed to remain under the rule of Islam and continue practicing its religion providing that its believers recognized the superiority of Islam, paid the poll tax (*Jizia*), and confirmed other restrictions.”

Bat Ye’or, author of *Islam and Dhimmitude: Where Civilizations Collide* (Fairleigh Dickinson U.P.: Madison and Teaneck, 2002), writes on p. 24: “This forms the historical and cultural heritage of the “People of the Book.” Jews and Christians, since the sources mention them by name, usually together. Hence, dhimmitude concerns a joint Jewish and Christian civilization.” In a speech she gave on 31 August 1995 at a Symposium

on the Balkan War in Chicago, she said, referring to the people of the Middle East at the time of the Muslim conquest, "The indigenous native peoples were Jews and Christians (Orthodox, Catholics, or from other Eastern Christian Churches). They are all referred to by Muslim jurists as the 'Peoples of the Book'-- the Book being the Bible--and they were subjected to the same condition according to Islamic law. ( [www.dhimmitude.org/archive/LectureE1.html](http://www.dhimmitude.org/archive/LectureE1.html) <<http://www.dhimmitude.org/archive/LectureE1.html>> )

<sup>25</sup> See Sheldon Stern's comments on this matter in *Effective State Standards for U.S. History: A 2003 Report Card*, released by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Washington, D.C., in September 2003, pp. 14-18.

<sup>26</sup> The proposal for the institute had probably not been reviewed by any official source at the Center itself since The Education Cooperative was the fiscal agent for the grant and the teachers were receiving academic credit for it from Framingham State College. But it had been co-directed by the Outreach Coordinator at the Center using a bibliography produced by its Teaching Resource Center. Thus, the University bears some responsibility for materials using its name.

<sup>27</sup> The observations of the Department staff member were written up and filed with the Department on July 24, 2002.

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, "Labor Historians' Infatuation with Marxism" by Anders Lewis, June 17, 2003, FrontPage Magazine.com at <http://www.frontpagemag.com/?Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID8358> and *In Denial: Historians, Communism, and Espionage* by Harvey Klehr and John Haynes (Encounter Books, 2003).

<sup>29</sup> The website for Plimoth Plantation's Teacher Guide for elementary teachers is [www.plimoth.org/olc](http://www.plimoth.org/olc).

<sup>30</sup> See Sheldon Stern's comments on presentism in the study of Columbus in *Effective State Standards for U.S. History: A 2003 Report Card*, released by the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, Washington, D.C., in September 2003, pp. 7-8.

<sup>31</sup> This is hardly the first time this has happened; nor is Islamic history the only topic on which teachers are given ludicrous information. In exploring the offerings of professional development presenters in Brookline during their battle over the social studies curriculum in the early 1990s, CQE members came across a workshop by Peggy McIntosh at the Wellesley Center for Research on Women, on planning a multicultural curriculum in elementary school. In her one and one half hour workshop available on videotape, for which she was paid \$1000, she told about 100 Brookline elementary teachers that white males engage in vertical thinking, while females and non-white minorities engage in lateral thinking, illustrating this with a sketch of psychic waves emanating from a drawing of a head. No teacher questioned her about the neurological references or evidence for her assertions. Another consultant brought in by the assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum was Edwin J. Nichols, described as director of an applied behavioral science firm, who was paid \$2,454 for a one hour lecture to all Brookline high school teachers on the important cultural differences among Euro-Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans, broken down into three categories: axiology, epistemology, and logic. Not one teacher openly raised a question about "Nichols' Model of the Philosophical Aspects of Cultural Difference" and his assertions about these four racial groups. For further details, see Chapter 8, "The Battle of Brookline and Other Struggles over Young Minds," in Richard Bernstein's *Dictatorship of Virtue* and "The Mother of All Curriculums" by Robert Costrell in the June 1991 issue of *Educational Excellence Network: News and Views*, p. 38.

<sup>32</sup> In a telephone conversation on December 23, 2003, Kim Van Wormer, Director of Education at Plimoth Plantation, described the materials that Plimoth Plantation now provides on the Pilgrims, the Wampanoags, and the "First Thanksgiving" as using an anthropological approach suggested by its multicultural consultants.

<sup>33</sup> Three Massachusetts teachers who had been awarded fellowships to attend weeklong summer institutes at George Washington's estate in Mt. Vernon were invited to talk about what they had learned at a statewide history conference on September 26, 2003, to launch the new Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework. The description that the Department received from them indicated that they would talk about three topics: the calligraphy in the Declaration of Independence, Washington's views on slavery, and Washington's views on becoming economically independent of England. I asked them by e-mail

communication to present something on Washington's achievements as a military commander, statesman, and President and relate it to our state history standards. I was not able to attend their session, so I did not find out what they presented.

<sup>34</sup> One of the criteria used by the Massachusetts Department of Education for judging "high quality" professional development is a visible product of some kind, from professional development activities of at least ten hours in duration on one topic. (In other words, attending a one-day conference doesn't count.) School-sponsored one-half day or whole day in-service workshops have been common but cannot address any historical topic with adequate depth and breadth and should not be funded.

<sup>35</sup> In 2002, my review group rated only two of eleven proposals as fundable, and in 2003, my review group rated only one of ten as fundable, based chiefly on the quality of the content proposed for the participating teachers' professional development.

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Is your child reading from a mediocre history textbook? Based on reviews of a dozen of the most widely used high school U.S. and world history texts, published in the recently released *Consumer's Guide to High School History Textbooks*, the chances are good that s/he is. In this review, eminent education historian Diane Ravitch finds that the 12 textbooks reviewed are dull, graphics-laden tomes that do not do a good job of teaching history.

## *Effective State Standards for U.S. History: A 2003 Report Card (September 2003)*

This groundbreaking and comprehensive state-by-state analysis of K-12 education standards in U.S. history was prepared by Sheldon Stern, historian at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in Boston for more than 20 years. It evaluates U.S. history standards in 48 states and the District of Columbia on comprehensive historical content, sequential development, and balance.

## *Where Did Social Studies Go Wrong? (August 2003)*

This report from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation consists of penetrating critiques by renegade social studies educators who fault the regnant teaching methods and curricular ideas of their field and suggest how it can be reformed. While nearly everyone recognizes that American students don't know much about history and civics, these analysts probe the causes of this ignorance-and lay primary responsibility at the feet of the social studies "establishment" to which they belong.

## *Terrorists, Despots, and Democracy: What Our Children Need to Know (August 2003)*

This report from the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation includes the voices of 29 political leaders, education practitioners, and cultural analysts who discuss what schools should teach about U.S. history, American ideals, and American civic life in the wake of 9/11, the war on terror, and the liberation of Iraq.

## *Charter School Authorizing: Are States Making the Grade? (June, 2003)*

This report from the Thomas B. Fordham Institute is the first significant study of the organizations that authorize charter schools. The report examines 23 states and the District of Columbia to determine how supportive they are of charter schools, how good a job their

authorizers are doing, and how policy makers could strengthen their states' charter programs. Fifteen states earned grades of "B-" or better for their authorizers' work, but just four received similar marks for the policy environment in which charter schools and authorizers function. Massachusetts and Texas led the pack while California, Pennsylvania, and New Mexico brought up the rear.

*Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto* (May 2003)

This report, published jointly by the Fordham Institute and The Broad Foundation, contends that American public education faces a "crisis in leadership" that cannot be alleviated from traditional sources of school principals and superintendents. Its signers do not believe this crisis can be fixed by conventional strategies for preparing, certifying and employing education leaders. Instead, they urge that first-rate leaders be sought outside the education field, earn salaries on par with their peers in other professions, and gain new authority over school staffing, operations and budgets.

*The Best of Both Worlds: Blending History and Geography in the K-12 Curriculum*  
(February 2003)

Geography plays a crucial role in shaping history, and the study of history provides an important context for students learning geography, but K-12 teachers rarely take advantage of the complementary nature of these two subjects by teaching both in one integrated curriculum. This new report shows how the study of U.S. history can be enriched by blending geography into the curriculum. The centerpiece of the report is an innovative curriculum framework for studying the American past, a course in which each historical period is supplemented and enriched by the introduction of relevant geography.

*Can Failing Schools be Fixed?* (January 2003)

Will the sanctions for failing schools laid out in No Child Left Behind succeed in turning those schools around? In this new report, author Ronald C. Brady draws on the results of previous state and district efforts to overhaul failing schools to provide a glimpse at what may be expected from NCLB-style interventions. He finds that no intervention strategy has a success rate greater than 50 percent. Given that many interventions are unlikely to yield improved schools, he urges policymakers to consider additional options for children trapped in failing educational institutions.

*The Approval Barrier to Suburban Charter Schools* (September 2002)

Why haven't charter schools taken hold in suburban areas in most states? In this report, Pushpam Jain takes a close look at three states with high proportions of charter schools in the suburbs to see how they managed to introduce charter schools, and then compares them to one state with only a few charter schools to see what is blocking the spread of charters there. His conclusion: if a state sets up a system for authorizing charter schools where the only authorizing body doesn't want charter schools, there won't be many charter schools! (Available at [www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net) only)

*No Child Left Behind: What Will It Take?* (February 2002)

Just one month after President Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act into law, a provocative set of expert papers commissioned by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation explores the legislation's key features: its testing and accountability provisions. The papers identify the questions left unresolved by Congress and the many hurdles facing the U.S. Education Department and states, districts, and schools as they try to make this ambitious law a reality. The papers also offer suggestions for clearing those hurdles. (Available at [www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net) only)

*Making it Count: A Guide to High-Impact Education Philanthropy* by Chester E. Finn, Jr. and Kelly Amis (September 2001).

Charitable giving in the U.S. is at an all-time high, as is the public's concern with the state of our K-12 education system. This guide provides practical advice for the philanthropist who is fed up with the status quo and eager to support effective education reform. *Making it Count* reviews the state of U.S. public education, examines different ways that philanthropists are trying to improve it, explains why some strategies work better than others, profiles a number of education philanthropists, and recounts the experiences of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

*Rethinking Special Education for a New Century*, edited by Chester E. Finn, Jr., Andrew J. Rotherham, and Charles R. Hokanson, Jr. (May 2001).

Recommending sweeping changes in federal special education policy, this volume of 14 papers scrutinizes the education now being received by 6 million U.S. children with disabilities. Jointly published with the Progressive Policy Institute, the report will help shape discussion of the next reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). It identifies the problems that now beset this important program, analyzes their causes, and suggests solutions. All who care about the education of children with special needs will want to read it for themselves. *This publication is available for \$10 per copy; visit [www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net) for ordering information.*

*Professionalism and the Public Good: A Brief History of Teacher Certification* by David L. Angus, edited by Jeffrey Mirel (January 2001).

Why does our system of teacher certification emphasize training in pedagogy rather than subject-matter knowledge? This report traces the emergence of state control over teacher certification. The focus is on efforts by the teacher education establishment to gain monopoly control over the licensing of teachers.

*Whole Language Lives On: The Illusion of "Balanced" Reading Instruction* by Louisa Cook Moats (October 2000).

Dr. Moats reveals that what's going on in many classrooms in the name of "balance" or "consensus" is that the worst practices of whole-language reading instruction persist, continuing to inflict boundless harm on young children who need to learn to read. How and why that is happening—and how and why such practices are misguided and harmful—are the subject of this report. (Available at [www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net) only)



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