

## The Agenda Promoting Islam and the Islamic View of Middle East History in Schools

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**Andrea Rapp** is temple librarian at the Isaac M. Wise Temple in Cincinnati, Ohio. A Judaica librarian for more than twenty years, she holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in History from Northwestern University and a Master's in Library Science from the University of Minnesota. She is the author of the article "Lies in the Library," which appeared in the Summer 2005 issue of *Reform Judaism*, about bias and misinformation in children's trade books about Israel.

This presentation concerned the success that Islamic advocacy groups have had in determining the content of social studies materials in our nation's schools. The junior high textbooks Across the Centuries, World Cultures, History Alive!, and Islam: A Simulation were cited, as well as teacher training workshops offered by AWAIR (Arab World and Islamic Resources) and the Massachusetts Department of Education. There was discussion of lessons and materials

used in public schools to teach about the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Muslim religion, and Islamic history.

Many examples were provided to illustrate anti-Israel bias, inaccurate information, promotion of Islamic religious dogma as fact, and the whitewashing of Islamic history and of doctrines such as "jihad."

Sources suggested to attendees for further reading and for help in evaluating educational materials are:

- 1) "Islam and the Textbooks," a report of the American Textbook Council available on its website: [www.historytextbooks.org](http://www.historytextbooks.org). Click on "Islam and the Textbooks."
- 2) The Jewish Telegraphic Agency's four-part series available at <http://jta.org/schools.asp>
- 3) "Consumers Guide to High School History Textbooks," by Diane Ravitch, available at [www.edexcellence.net](http://www.edexcellence.net). Click on Publications, then scroll to the 2<sup>nd</sup> screen of listings.
- 4) Reports of the Textbook League: [www.textbookleague.org](http://www.textbookleague.org)
- 5) The American Jewish Committee's "Propaganda, Proselytizing and Public Education: A Critique of the Arab World Studies Notebook," available at [www.ajc.org](http://www.ajc.org). Click on Publications, then Domestic Policy, then scroll down to the above-named study.

Also recommended is Diane Ravitch's book, The Language Police.

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