

Richert Sharon

From: JAMES CARIDES [janica39@verizon.net]
Sent: Sunday, May 16, 2010 12:24 PM
To: Richert Sharon
Subject: World History

Sharon M. Richert
Supervisor
Media and Instructional Materials
101 Old Venice Road
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Dear Ms. Richert:

When I visited the media offices last week to borrow a copy of the world history book that has become the subject of some recent controversy, you indicated that a staff meeting on this subject was to take place this Monday and I was invited to email any comments to your attention prior to that meeting. I have had the opportunity to scan several areas of the book and my comments are as follows:

1) In general, the text is a sleekly produced (and extremely weighty, literally speaking!) general world history survey. It suffers from the usual defects of being over-simplified and superficial and written in the usual style that tends to bore students. My own life-long interests in history developed after high school and in spite of, not because of, the dull high school presentations. Sadly, today's texts seem no better than those decades ago except they cost more, weigh more and have lots of glossies.

2) With specific reference to the controversy over the content, in particular the treatments of Islam vis a vis those of Judaism and Christianity, I find that the writers went out of their way to avoid "offending" anybody's religious sensitivities. In the brief mentions of shari'a, for example, no account is given of the wide-spread condemnation by non-Muslims of the clearly and undeniably oppressive aspects of shari'a as it relates to Muslim women. Instead, it seems to suggest that shari'a was actually something that benefited and protected women (Pg. 274) rather than the severely restrictive code that we now know it is, as practiced in many Muslim nations and families.

3) The brief history of Muhammad is also white-washed. No mention is made of his leadership and and/or participation and/or complicity in warlike activities including robbery, deliberate deceit, murder, rape and rapine (Pg. 265). Any candid reference to this personal profile of Muhammad would no doubt inflame Muslims, but clever writers can always find some general weasel-wording to at least pique the curiosity of the more alert students and, more importantly, avoid unnecessary and dishonest hagiography.

4) Although there were periods of relative peace and tranquility within the Islamic empire, and localized flowering of cultural, scientific and mathematical advancement during the height of Islam's advancement, the overall effect of Muslim expansion was vast destruction of "infidel" life and the virtual enslavement of those who did not convert. Muslim tolerance of "infidels" and their religious practice came at a high price (the jizra) and lifelong subservience to Muslim supremacy. As an American of Greek descent, I am sadly well-versed in the history of Muslim oppression over the Greeks for many centuries. To this day, Turkey has oppressive policies towards the few remaining Greeks who have not yet been "ethnically cleansed" out of Turkey and treats the resident millennia- long Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople (Istanbul) as a third class alien entity that has been the target of murders, bombings and arson. Not a hint of these intolerances appears in the principal chapter on Islam.

5) Most glaringly inappropriate is the suggestion in the "Writing Activity" to "Write a letter to Muhammad, describing his legacy and that of Islam today (Pg. 268)". I don't doubt that any student's "letter" with an honest assessment of the legacy of Muhammad and Islam as terrifyingly evident in today's headlines would be so politically incorrect as to be censored if not in fact punished. Moreover, a writing assignment that suggested a letter to Jesus or Moses would no doubt have never made it past the first book editing session.

Since references to Christianity and its seminal influence in shaping Western civilization, and indeed global civilization, are necessarily integrated into many places in the text, the limited number of pages (Pg 168-172) that specifically relate to *the Rise* of Christianity are, to me, a non-issue, as with the superficial coverage of the founding of Judaism. Moreover, one would expect that the majority of high school students in Sarasota would already come to public education with at least a general knowledge of Judeo-Christianity just from being born and raised in America, but have only a limited knowledge of any other religions. More troubling is the abysmally unbalanced and tendentious treatment of the founding of modern day Israel and the description of it's history and conflicts since then, but that is a subject for another day. I am surprised that Sarasota's vibrant and involved Jewish community has seemingly not raised that issue (For the record, I am not Jewish).

The shortcomings of this text, as with any text at any level, can be overcome to some extent by judiciously selected supplementary material, oral or written, in class or in home assignments. Not having any children in the school system and not being privy to the classroom decisions, I can only hope that some consideration is given to the need to correct the more egregious omissions and commissions. It is also my opinion that there is not likely any other substitute text that is available in today's textbook market that would be any better, if indeed not worse.

One more note. Although I have not been involved in this controversy apart from this input, I am enraged at the abuse, insults and slanderous accusations made against the handful of people who have brought these questions to the attention of the public. I have had occasion to hear and read their comments and they are certainly not the words of "racists" and "ignorant" people. On the contrary, they have been articulating their arguments peacefully and with restraint, backed up by direct quotations and written evidence regarding their concerns. One may disagree with their interpretations, but it is a disgrace that they are being regarded as some cranky minority who should be denigrated for their "intolerance". It would be nice if the school officials would please speak up in defense of these people's right to challenge public school materials without their being subjected to verbal abuse..

In any case, thank you for the opportunity to submit my comments.

James N.. Carides

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THE SCHOOL BOARD OF SARASOTA COUNTY, FLORIDA
MEDIA AND INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

PATRON'S REQUEST FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL

Author ROGER B. BECK Book XXXX Film _____ Other _____
Title WORLD HISTORY - PATTERNS OF INTERACTION
Publisher or Producer (if known) McDougal Littell 2005
Location of Material (i.e., school) RIVER VIEW HIGH & SARASOTA HIGH SCHOOLS
Request initiated by _____ Date 5/4/10
Telephone 941 9224991 Address 5115 MAGNOLIA POND DRIVE
City SARASOTA State FL Zip Code 34233

Complainant represents
(himself herself) HERSELF Name BEGINA ETTEDOUT Organization _____
(identify other group) _____

(If objection is to material other than a book or film, change wording of the following questions so that they apply. Please use back of form if you need more space.)

- * 1. To what in the material do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages or segments) OMITTED FACTS; p 268 Sharia law "MORAL & TOLERANT" p 270 Subject to "restrictions" (TAXES + DEATH IF ANY FORM OF RELIGIOUS INCORRECT INFORMATION AND BIASES. UNFACTUAL INFORMATION & OMISSIONS!
- 2. What do you feel might be result of exposure to this material?
INCORRECT, UNFACTUAL BIASED INFORMATION GIVEN TO STUDENTS
- 3. For what age group would you recommend this material?
ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
- 4. Are there any desirable features about the material?
YES
- 5. Did you read or see the entire book or film? NO What parts: ALL CHRISTIANITY, JUDAISM, ISLAM
- 6. Are you aware of the judgment of this material by recognized critics?
THE INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH + COMMUNITY RESEARCH HAS THIS TEXT ON PROPAGANDA LIST.
- 7. What do you believe is the theme of this material?
WORLD HISTORY

1 of 2

* SEE ATTACHED LIST OF 28 TEXTS WITH THESE ISSUES ON FACTS + DISTORTIONS RESEARCH BY TAN + YBARRA & MISINFORMED PELICAN EDITOR ARTICLE MAY 7th

District leaders must stand fast in the face of ignorance

In protesting the use of a particular textbook in the Sarasota County Public Schools, a group of parents and local activist Rich Swier Sr. obviously have forgotten the lessons they themselves should have learned in U.S. history.

It is all the more critical, then, that our school officials stand fast, so they do not foster the creation of more citizens who are equally ignorant.

Tragically, the actions of these protestors don't just betray ignorance; they go to the point of persecution - the very type of persecution, if they remembered their history lessons, that the earliest settlers came to this land to escape.

NOTHING TO DO WITH "RELIGION" BUT FACTS ON THEM BEING TRUE.

Freedom of religion was so important to the Founding Fathers that it was included in the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights, to wit: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"

If freedom of religion is so important in the United States, shouldn't our children learn as much as they can about all religions, to enable them to be more accepting of other people's faiths? Swier and the parents upset about a textbook that includes lessons on Islam apparently would respond to that with an adamant, "No!"

FACTUAL VS UNFACTUAL

Ever since terrorists who proclaimed themselves Muslims perpetrated upon this country the horrific attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Swier and his ilk would have everyone believe that all Muslims are filled with hatred. Instead, it is Swier and his like-minded followers who appear consumed with hatred. They do not want any Sarasota County student to learn the truth, which was pointed out by a parent during the citizen comments portion of the April 19 school board meeting: The prophet Mohammed, who is to Islam what Jesus is to Christianity, preached peace. Yes, peace.

The narrow-minded people in our nation must have closed their eyes to the tears and their ears to the cries of overwhelming grief of the many, many true followers of Islam on 9/11. Mohammed's real disciples were doubly horrified by the events of that day, because the attacks defied the tenets of their religion and because they feared the rise of hatred against them.

Education is the only way to combat such profound ignorance. It is only through opening the eyes of the "blind" and unstopping the ears of the "deaf" that we can hope for any real chance at peace in this world.

YES

We urge the school board and the local lay representatives and teachers who choose textbooks for this district to stand up for the rights and beliefs upon which this nation was founded. Any school district that does not help its students learn as much as they can about every facet of this world is most assuredly not in the business of education.

Pelican Press Phone Number: (941) 349-4949

THESE TEXTS SHOULD NOT BE USED!

Excerpted from: Gary A. Tobin and Dennis R. Ybarra, *The Trouble with Textbooks: Distorting History and Religion* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

For more information: www.JewishResearch.org

Appendix A

Textbooks Reviewed by Publisher Parent Company

Education Media and Publishing Group Limited (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)

1. Arreola, Daniel D., Marci Smith Deal, James F. Peterson, and Rickie Sanders. *World Geography*. California teacher's ed. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 2006.
2. Beck, Roger B., Linda Black, Larry S. Krieger, Phillip C. Naylor, and Dahia Ibo Shabaka. *Modern World History: Patterns of Interaction*. Teacher's ed. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 2005.
3. Beck, Roger B., Linda Black, Larry S. Krieger, Phillip C. Naylor, and Dahia Ibo Shabaka. *Ancient World History: Patterns of Interaction*. Teacher's ed. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 2005.
4. Beck, Roger B., Linda Black, Larry S. Krieger, Phillip C. Naylor, and Dahia Ibo Shabaka. *World History: Patterns of Interaction*. Student ed. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 2003.
5. Bednarz, Sarah W., Ines M. Miyares, Mark C. Schug, and Charles S. White. *World Cultures and Geography: Eastern Hemisphere and Europe*. Teacher's ed. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 2005.
6. Berson, Michael J., ed. *World History*. (Harcourt Horizons). Teacher's ed. Orlando: Harcourt, 2005.

7. Boehm, Richard G., Claudia Hoone, Thomas M. McGowan, Mabel C. McKinney-Browning, Ofelia B. Miramontes, and Priscilla H. Porter. *Ancient Civilizations*. (Harcourt Brace Social Studies). Teacher's ed. Orlando: Harcourt Brace, 2002.
 8. Bulliet, Richard W., Pamela Kyle Crossley, Daniel R. Headrick, Steven W. Hirsch, Lyman L. Johnson, and David Northrup. *The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History*. Advanced placement ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.
 9. Carrington, Laurel, Mattie P. Collins, Kira Iriye, Rudy J. Martinez, and Peter N. Stearns, eds. *World History: The Human Journey*. Student ed. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2003.
 10. Carrington, Laurel, Mattie P. Collins, Kira Iriye, Rudy J. Martinez, and Peter N. Stearns, eds. *World History: The Human Journey, Modern World*. Teacher's ed. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2005.
 11. Hanes, William T. III, ed. *World History: Continuity & Change*. Annotated teacher's ed. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1999.
 12. Harcourt Horizons, ed., *The World*. (Harcourt Horizons). Teacher's ed. Orlando: Harcourt, 2003.
 13. Helgren, David M., Robert J. Sager, and Alison S. Brooks. *People, Places, and Change*. Teacher's ed. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2005.
 14. Sager, Robert J., and David M. Helgren. *World Geography Today*. Teacher's ed. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2005.
- #### McGraw-Hill
15. Bentley, Jerry H. and Herbert F. Ziegler. *Traditions and Encounters: A Global Perspective on the Past*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006.

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- 16. Boehm, Richard G., David G. Armstrong, Francis P. Hunkins, Dennis Reinhartz, and Merry Lobrecht. *The World and Its People*. Teacher's ed. New York, McGraw-Hill/Glencoe, 2005.
- 17. Farah, Mounir A., and Andrea Berens Karls. *World History: The Human Experience*. Student ed. New York: McGraw-Hill/Glencoe, 2001.
- 18. Greenblatt, Miriam and Peter S. Lemmo. *Human Heritage: A World History*. Teacher's ed. New York: McGraw-Hill/Glencoe, 2006.
- 19. Lamm, Robert C. *The Humanities in Western Culture*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1996.
- 20. Spielvogel, Jackson J. *Glencoe World History*. Teacher's ed. New York: McGraw-Hill/Glencoe, 2005.

Pearson Education

- 21. Ahmad, Iftikhar, Herbert Brodsky, Marylee Susani Crofts, and Elisabeth Gaynor Ellis. *World Cultures: A Global Mosaic*. Teacher's ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2004.
- 22. Boyd, Candy D., Geneva Gay, Rita Geiger, James B. Kracht, Valerie O. Pang, C. Frederick Risinger, Sara M. Sanchez. *The World*. (Scott Foresman Social Studies). Teacher's ed. Glenview, IL: Pearson/Scott Foresman, 2005.
- 23. Ellis, Elisabeth G., and Anthony Esler. *World History: Connections to Today*. Student ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001.
- 24. Jacob, Heidi H., and Michal L. LeVasseur. *Medieval Times to Today*. (World Studies). Teacher's ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005.

- 25. Jacob, Heidi H., and Michal L. LeVasseur. *The Ancient World*. (World Studies). Teacher's ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005.
- 26. Stearns, Peter N., Michael Adas, Stuart B. Schwartz, and Marc Jason Gilbert. *World Civilizations: The Global Experience*. 4th ed., Advanced placement ed. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2006.

Thomson

- 27. Adler, Philip J., and Randall L. Pouwels. *World Civilizations*. 4th ed., Instructor's ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson, 2006.
- 28. Upshur, Jiu-Hwa L., Janice J. Terry, James P. Holoka, Richard D. Goff, and George H. Cassar. *World History Since 1500: The Age of Global Integration*. vol. 2. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2002.