

IN THE NEWS

Israel kills Islamic Jihad leader

Israel killed four Palestinian terrorists in a Gaza Strip airstrike.

Three bystanders also were killed in Thursday's attack on a car carrying an Islamic Jihad rocket crew in the Jabalya neighborhood of Gaza City.

Islamic Jihad carried out Wednesday's suicide bombing in Hadera.

Jewish groups make top 400 charities list

The United Jewish Communities was the top Jewish group on the Chronicle of Philanthropy's list of the top 400 charities in America.

The UJC, the umbrella group for North American Jewish federations, fell from 25th last year to 42nd on this year's list.

More than 25 Jewish groups made the list.

The top five Jewish groups include the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee at 60, the Jewish Communal Fund at 82, the UJA-Federation of New York at 83 and the Jewish Federation/Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago at 133.

Israel questions Iran's seat at U.N.

Israel formally said Iran does not merit membership in the United Nations.

"No member state that calls for violence, death and destruction, as the president of Iran did yesterday, deserves a seat in this civilized body," Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Dan Gillerman, said in a letter Thursday to the president of the Security Council.

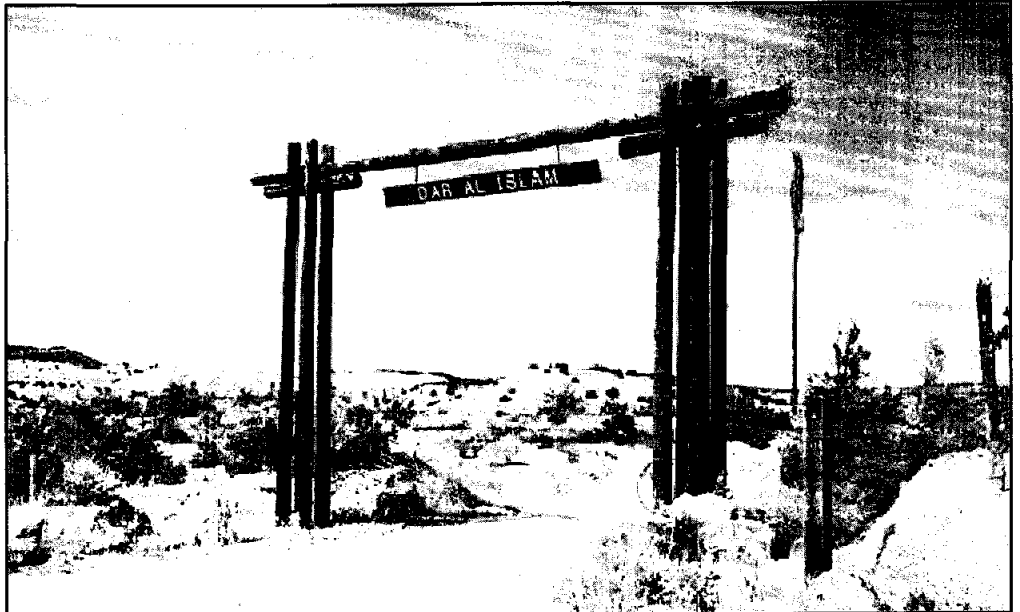
Addressing a Tehran conference Wednesday titled "The World Without Zionism," President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, citing former Iranian leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, said that "Israel must be wiped off the map of the world."

Gillerman said he would submit an identical letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

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WORLD REPORT

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The gates of Dar al Islam, an Islamic enclave in Abiquiu, N.M., which stands at the center of a network of groups and individuals involved in teaching Islam in the public schools.

What your kids are learning about Israel, America and Islam

JTA STAFF REPORT

NEW YORK (JTA) — With the school year back in full swing, do you know what your children are learning?

In thousands of public school districts across the United States, without ever knowing it, taxpayers pay to disseminate pro-Islamic materials that are anti-American, anti-Israel and anti-Jewish.

Often bypassing school boards and nudging aside approved curricula, teaching programs funded by Saudi Arabia make their way into elementary and secondary school classrooms.

These teachings enter school systems

with the help of a federal program, Title VI of the Higher Education Act, that is now up for renewal.

Expert analyses of these materials have found them to be full of inaccuracies, bias and proselytizing. They also have found that many of the major history and social studies textbooks used in schools across the country are highly critical of democratic institutions and forgiving of repressive ones.

These materials praise and sometimes promote Islam, but criticize Judaism and Christianity and are filled with false assertions.

Most taxpayers don't know they're pay-

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**TAINTED
TEACHINGS
PART 1**

■ U.S. taxpayers fund teachings that are anti-American, anti-Israel, and anti-Jewish

Continued from page 1

ing — at the federal, state and local levels — for the public schools to advance these materials.

Much has been written about the anti-Israel, anti-American bias found at many university Middle East studies departments, some of which receive Saudi funding. Critics have also probed the export of Saudi teachings to American mosques and Islamic schools.

A special yearlong investigation by JTA reveals for the first time how Saudi influence is penetrating the classrooms of young children in America.

The investigation uncovers the complex path by which biased textbooks and supplementary teaching materials creep into U.S. public schools. It reveals who creates these materials and how some of America's most prestigious universities — with the use of federal funds — become involved in disseminating them.

Saudi influence enters the classrooms in three different ways. The first is through teacher-training seminars that provide teachers with graduate or continuing-education credits.

The second is through the dissemination of supplementary teaching materials designed and distributed with Saudi support. Such materials flood the educational system and are available online.

The third is through school textbooks paid for by taxpayers, some of them vetted by activists with Saudi ties, who advise and

influence major textbook companies about the books' Islamic, Arab, Palestinian, Israeli and Middle Eastern content.

Ironically, what gives credibility to the dissemination of these distorted materials is Title VI of the Higher Education Act, a federal program enacted in 1958 in part to train international experts to meet the nation's security needs.

Under Title VI, select universities get federal funding and prestigious designation as national resource centers for the study of places and languages the government deems vital for meeting global challenges.

Eighteen of these centers are for the study of the Middle East; each receives an average of about \$500,000 per year. The taxpayer-supported grants are worth at least 10 times that amount in their ability to garner university support and attract outside funding, proponents of Title VI say.

As part of its federal mandate, each center assigns an outreach coordinator to extend its expertise to the community and to school-age children in kindergarten through 12th grade. Outreach usually includes workshops, guest speakers, books, pamphlets and whole syllabuses and curricula broken down into teaching modules, with instruction booklets for teachers, and sometimes visual aids such as films.

While some school district officials are completely unaware of the material reaching their teachers and classrooms, others welcome it: Believing they're importing the wisdom of places like Harvard or Georgetown, they actually are inviting into their schools whole curricula and syllabuses developed with the support of Riyadh.

The "Arab World Studies Notebook" is one such example. Billed by its creators as an important tool to correct misperceptions about Islam and the Arab world, the manual for secondary schools has been blasted by critics for distorting history and propagating bias.

First published in 1990 as the "Arab World Notebook," the manual was updated to its current form in 1998. The newer publication was created as the joint project of two organizations — both of which receive Saudi funding.

Some of the references are subtle, critics say, making them all the more harmful. For example, the manual:

- Denigrates the Jews' historical connection to Jerusalem. One passage, describing the Old City, says: "the Jerusalem that most people envisage when they think of the ancient city, is Arab. Surrounding it are ubiquitous high-rises built for Israeli settlers to strengthen Israeli control over the holy city."

- Suggests that Jews have undue influence on U.S. foreign policy. Referring to Harry Truman's support of the 1947 United Nations resolution to partition Palestine, separating it into Jewish and Arab states, it says: "Truman's decision to push the U.N. decision to partition Palestine ended in the creation of Israel. The questions of Jewish lobbying and its impact on Truman's decision with regard to American recognition — and indeed, the whole question of defining American interests and concerns — is well worth exploring."

- Suggests that the Koran "synthesizes and perfects earlier revelations," meaning those ascribed to Christians and Jews.

- Leaves out any facts and figures about the State of Israel in its country-by-country section, but refers instead only to Palestine.

One of the groups involved in the publication is the Berkeley, Calif.-based Arab World and Islamic Resources, or AWAIR, (www.awaironline.org) founded in 1990 with funding from organizations that include Saudi Aramco, a Saudi government-owned oil company.

The editor of the notebook is Audrey Shabbas, AWAIR's founder. Saudi Aramco World, the publication of Saudi Aramco, features pieces praising Shabbas and her teacher-training materials.

The second organization involved in the manual is the Middle East Policy Council of Washington, which helps print and disseminate the 500-page manual of essays, lesson plans and primary sources.

The council lists the manual as the primary resource material for its teacher-training program. It employs Shabbas to conduct its training and seminars. According to the group's Web site (www.mepc.org), more than 16,000 educators have attended its workshops in 175 cities in 43 states. The manual itself claims to have reached 25 million students.

The council, which is headed by Charles Freeman Jr., a former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, gets direct funding from Saudi Arabia.

In an interview, the council's acting director, Jon Roth, declined to specify how

Saudi influence enters the classrooms in several ways.

JTA WORLD REPORT

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much money his group gets from Riyadh, but made clear that he is seeking much more.

In September, Roth visited Saudi Arabia to meet with Prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdulaziz al Saud, a member of the royal family who owns Kingdom Holding Company, one of the world's wealthiest companies.

"We have been trying to cultivate the relationship with the prince for a long time, because he has lots of money," Roth said after his trip.

"Our hope and expectation is millions" from the Saudi prince, who initiated the meeting after hearing about the teaching program, Roth said. He said his group operates on an annual budget of \$750,000.

The council's board of directors includes executives from companies with huge financial stakes in Saudi Arabia, including Boeing, ExxonMobil Saudi Arabia, the Carlyle Group and the Saudi Binladin Group.

Roth said that funding to the organization "has no strings attached."

■
Sandra Stotsky, a former senior associate commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Education, is one of a growing number of critics of the "Arab World Studies Notebook." It is one of the examples she cites in a study, "The Stealth Curriculum: Manipulating America's History Teachers," in which she examines supplemental teaching materials.

The problem with many of the supplemental materials, which are most often distributed through teacher training workshops, "is the ideological mission of the organizations that create them," she said in her study, published last year by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, a Washington-based think tank on education.

"They embed their political agendas in the instructional materials they create so subtly that apolitical teachers are unlikely to spot them."

In an interview with JTA, Stotsky called the notebook "a piece of propaganda" rather than scholarly work.

The American Jewish Committee issued a scathing report on the manual earlier this year, called "Propaganda, Pros-

elytizing, and Public Education: A Critique of the Arab World Studies Notebook."

The report said that the publication, while "attempting to redress a perceived deficit in sympathetic views of the Arabs and Muslim religion in the American class-

room, veers in the opposite direction — toward historical distortion as well as uncritical praise, whitewashing and practically proselytizing."

The result, the AJCommittee report said, "is a text that appears largely designed to advance the anti-Israel and

propagandistic views of the Notebook's sponsors, the Middle East Policy Council (MEPC) and Arab World and Islamic Resources (AWAIR), to an audience of teachers who may not have the resources and knowledge to assess this text critically."

David Harris, the AJCommittee's executive director, said upon issuing the report in February: "Educating American children about the Middle East and about different religions is vitally important, but the notebook is precisely the wrong way to go about it."

Shabbas, in the introduction to the manual, says that AWAIR's mission is to counter the "rampant negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims held by most Americans."

■
In an interview with JTA, Shabbas said the goal of the notebook is "to establish a basis for understanding the Middle East" by examining the largest of the groups that live there — the Arabs.

Responding to criticism specifically about the effect of Jewish lobbying, she said everything in the manual comes from the Arab and Muslim point of view: "The notebook is what it is. If you go out anywhere in the Arab world, you're likely to hear that view" of the U.N. partition and Jewish influence.

"Most textbooks merely tell people the U.N. voted for partition and the Arabs rejected it," she said, adding that American students need to "delve into why people do what they do; what are their values."

She also noted that the publication directs students to solicit other perspectives from various groups, including the

American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the American Jewish Committee.

Roth of the Middle East Policy Council dismissed the critics of the notebook as "cranks." His council touts the manual as an important resource for educators.

The manual is "of such high standards that the Middle East Policy Council believes it should be in the hands of every educator," the group's Web site says.

In an interview, Roth said Israel is "a big topic" for the council, but added, "The council does not take a position on Israel's existence. The council does not take positions at all."

■
Criticism also has come lately from parents offended by what their children are learning. Parental pressure led to the manual being banned in school districts in Tulsa, Okla., and Anchorage.

The AJCommittee took the unusual step of issuing a public warning "urging school districts across the nation" not to use the manual.

Still, Shabbas and her publication are welcomed by outreach coordinators to some of the nation's key national resource centers, including those at Georgetown, Harvard and Yale, from where, she said in the interview, she had just returned from conducting a teacher-training session.

Some Saudi watchers say Saudi Arabia's goal is to export the most rigid brand of Islam: Wahhabi Islam, which in contrast to other forms of Islam, is intolerant of other religions, according to experts.

It's an agenda "more dangerous than communism" ever was, according to Ali Al-Ahmed, director of the Institute for Gulf Affairs, a Washington-based pro-democracy think tank, because it targets all non-believers, including Christians, Jews and most Muslims.

Such apostates have only three choices, he said: "Convert, be subjugated or die."

The Saudi Embassy in Washington did not respond to several requests for comment.

But Al-Ahmed was adamant. In American public schools, he said, the Saudis are carrying out "a deliberate program to spread their version of Islam everywhere."

"Their job is to give money to certain groups of Islamic organizations, to fund certain people, and those people they fund are people who they believe will further their goal of spreading Wahhabi Islam," he said. ■

(JTA Editor Lisa Hostein in New York and correspondent Sue Fishkoff in California were among the contributors to this report.)

The 'Arab World Studies Notebook' appears designed 'to advance the anti-Israel and propagandistic views of the Notebook's sponsors,' American Jewish Committee report

What the textbooks are teaching

JTA STAFF REPORT

NEW YORK (JTA) — The state of California is on the brink of a major election that involves neither Arnold Schwarzenegger nor Clint Eastwood.

The candidates are textbooks and other teaching materials that will influence what schoolchildren across the state — and across the United States — will learn for more than a decade.

With a debate under way over evolution and intelligent design in science textbooks, a less-publicized battle is being waged over the content of social studies and history materials — some of which are pro-Islamic, anti-American, anti-Israel and even anti-Semitic.

California is in the final stages of the “adoption process” for history and social studies materials in kindergarten through eighth grade. The process, which takes place every seven years, determines which books make the mark, enabling local school districts to use state funds to purchase them.

With the political, educational and financial stakes so high, publishers, special interest groups and educators take the process as seriously as any political campaign.

Among the contenders is “History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond,” a seventh-grade textbook, with other course

materials, published by the Teachers’ Curriculum Institute.

The course was piloted in Scottsdale, Ariz., earlier this year. But after a series of protests from parents — who objected to what they saw as distortions of Christianity and Judaism, with an overarching positive spin on Islam — the publisher decided to stop the trial.

“There was a lot of objection to the amount of coverage of Islam,” said Liz Russell, the development director of the Teachers’ Curriculum Institute, which is based in Rancho Cordova, Calif.

The book was developed to meet California standards, which require “a lot more on religion in general” than most other states, she said.

California has mandated the study of religion since 1987. Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Hinduism are studied in sixth grade, and Islam is covered in seventh grade.

Meanwhile, the institute has pulled “The Modern Middle East,” a package of supplemental materials deemed so objectionable that a report by the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council said it creates a hostile environment for Jewish students.

The material is still for sale, however, and copies already in circulation likely will sit on classroom shelves for years to come, according to educational experts.

Both “The Modern Middle East” and “History Alive!” have hit the market since the early 1990s, a period that began what one reviewer has termed “the Islamization of the textbooks.”

Analysts say today’s history and social studies textbooks, and supplementary materials, sow positive propaganda about Islam, the Palestinians and the Arab world, while denigrating

— in subtle and not-so-subtle ways — America, Israel, Judaism and democracy.

Distributed in public elementary, middle and high schools, the materials are paid for by U.S. taxpayers.

At least one Jewish parent, Dr. Murray Zucker, found “The Modern Middle East” so troubling that he withdrew his son from the public high school in Santa Rosa, Calif., and sent him to Jewish day school.

His son, David, was 14 when he was

subjected to the materials and a teacher who endorsed every word of them, Zucker said.

Four Jewish students in a ninth-grade class of 30 pupils felt ‘powerless and marginalized and unrepresented.’

Dr. Murray Zucker
California father

TAINTED TEACHINGS PART 2

Among other things, “The Modern Middle East” includes an exercise that has teachers divide the class into “Jeds” and “Pads,” representing Jews and Palestinians. The Pads are grouped inside a central area, meant to represent Palestine, while the Jeds are dispersed around the room.

Students then debate whether the Jeds should immigrate to the “Land of Pad.” Teachers are directed to show favoritism toward the Jeds, guiding the class to see the Jews as both victims and aggressors who succeed in taking over land that belongs to others.

The four Jewish students in a ninth-grade class of 30 pupils felt “powerless and marginalized and unrepresented,” said Zucker, whose son is now a freshman at Brandeis University.

Parents’ complaints in northern California led to a published analysis of the material by a team headed by Jackie Beriman, an educational consultant at the San Francisco JCRC.

The report, issued two years ago, concluded that “historical distortion and factual misrepresentations woven throughout the Case Study of the Arab-Israeli Conflict render it unacceptable for classroom use.”

“As a result of the bias, a potential exists for the creation of a hostile environment in the classroom against Jewish students,” the report says.

The report says the teaching materials are studded with “misinformation, manipulation, omissions of key facts,



The textbook ‘History Alive! The Medieval World and Beyond’ was pulled from a trial release in Arizona after a series of protests by parents concerned about the spin it put on Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

oversimplification of complex issues, historical inaccuracy and lack of context.”

Tax money actually pays for these materials twice — once at the state or local level, where the materials are purchased, and again at the federal level, where some universities with federally funded Title VI national resource centers focusing on the Middle East help produce, promote and endorse such materials.

For example, at Ohio State University's Middle East Studies Center, a Title VI national resource center, “The Modern Middle East” is recommended as one of

many resources for educators.

As a result of parental intervention and the JCRC report, officials of the Teachers' Curriculum Institute met with community members and agreed to rewrite the section in “The Modern Middle East” that dealt with Jews and Palestinians vying for one land.

That never happened, but the institute now says the material is no longer on the market.

“It's quite dated. It was time for it to die,” said the institute's Russell.

However, a sales representative for

the institute said that even though the publication recently was pulled from the group's Web site, it is still available for sale. And experts say teaching material can stay on school shelves for years even after it is no longer being published.

Alarm about the penetration of problematic teaching materials in America's schools is growing.

Sandra Alfonsi, head of Hadassah's Curriculum Watch, has focused on the issue for years.

“We believe that we can no longer ig-

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Little-known New Mexico enclave stands at center of Islamic education

JTA STAFF REPORT

NEW YORK (JTA) — Many of the principal players involved in disseminating pro-Islamic, anti-American and anti-Israel materials to the American public school system have links, direct or indirect, to a little-known place called Dar al Islam.

Located in Abiquiu, N.M., Dar al Islam (www.daralislam.org), which means “abode of Islam” in Arabic, is an Islamic enclave registered with the state as a non-profit in 1979.

Situated in the remote mountainous desert of northern New Mexico, near the Ghost Ranch where Georgia O'Keefe lived, the massive complex is accessible only by an unpaved, dirt road.

It was created with direct financing from the late Saudi monarch, King Khaled ibn Aziz, and from five princesses in the Royal House of Saud, according to Saudi Aramco World.

A 1988 article in Saudi Aramco World detailed the saga of the royal family's purchase of 8,500 acres of land and construction of a mosque and other buildings to form Dar al Islam.

According to the enclave's Web site, the original intent was to establish a “Muslim village as a showcase for Islam in America.” When that became too difficult, the vision changed to an educational conference and retreat center.

Those buildings sit on 1,600 of the original acres; the rest was sold and invested to help finance its operation, Dar al Islam officials say.

In addition to the mosque, the enclave has a madrasa, or religious school, summer camp and teacher-training institute. It runs speakers bureaus and programs and maintains a Web site.

Dar al Islam spokesman Abdur Ra'uf Walter Deckerck acknowledges some minor participation in the creation of Dar al Islam by a Saudi princess, but he disputes most of the funding history of Dar al Islam as recounted in the Saudi Aramco World article.

“It was not purchased by the royal family,” he said. Funding then and now “comes from Muslims all over,” he said, but would not elaborate.

Many of the individuals and groups involved in promoting education about Islam and the Arab world in American schools have ties to Dar al Islam.

Some are educators such as Shabbas, whose work is promoted by outreach coordinators at the national resource centers, and some are outreach coordinators themselves.

Shabbas, the lecturer and editor of “The Arab World Studies Notebook,” was director of Dar al Islam's summer teacher-training program in 1994 and 1995, according to Deckerck and Shabbas.

Others with connections to Dar al Islam include:

- Zeina Azzam Seikaly, outreach coordinator at Georgetown

University's Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, a Title VI National Resource Center on the Middle East. For several years she was assistant director of Dar al Islam's teacher-training institute, according to Dar al Islam's Deckerck.

Seikaly promotes many associates of Dar al Islam, printing their writings and inviting them to lecture. Shabbas has been involved in teacher training at Georgetown. Asked about Dar al Islam, Seikaly at first refused to discuss it, then admitted working there, but only for two weeks.

• The Council on Islamic Education. The group until recently was listed as an associate of Dar al Islam, under the heading of secondary schools. Independent textbook review organizations describe the council as one of the most powerful groups in the country influencing the content of textbooks. Critics say that in its effort to promote a positive view of Islam, it distorts history.

The group's director, Shabbir Mansuri, says his organization is a “non-advocacy research organization.”

Criticism that his group exerts undue influence on textbook publishers “comes from people who have no idea what we do,” he said.

“The Constitution allows us all a place at the table, without leaving our heritage at the door,” he told JTA. “I can lobby, I can demand and I can contribute.”

In initial interviews, Dar al Islam officials said the council has multiple roles there, including helping to create and evaluate content for its teachers.

After those interviews, the Dar al Islam site was changed to eliminate any mention of the council.

Asked to explain, Deckerck said it was taken down to “avoid confusion. We know each other but we are independent organizations, we are not connected.”

• Susan Douglass. An associate of Dar al Islam's Teachers Institute, she also is the curriculum specialist for the Council on Islamic Education.

She is a former teacher at the Islamic Saudi Academy of Virginia, a Saudi government-supported school, and she consults on textbooks and curriculum by major publishers. She has written a series of books on Islam for K-6 students at Islamic and public schools.

One of Dar al Islam's Web sites, islamamerica.org, posts articles defending Palestinians and their supporters, while excoriating democracies, including America and Israel.

Deckerck of Dar al Islam said the kind of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia, is “not what we transmit. Dar al Islam communicates much more of a mainstream Islam,” he said. ■

■ California's decision on textbooks will have national implications

Continued from page 5

nore the pattern of Islamist revisionism that leads us from the K-12 textbooks to university courses and demonstrations on the college campuses and to the issue of the infusion of Arab petrol dollars that have funded and continue to fund American education," she said.

In 2003, Gilbert Sewall of the American Textbook Council published "Islam and the Textbooks," an analysis of some widely circulated social studies and history textbooks.

In their quest to expand coverage of Islam and non-Western civilizations — laudable, given 21st-century geopolitics — textbook publishers have distorted history, wrote Sewall, the former education editor of Newsweek.

At the end of September, he reiterated his concerns in a letter to the California Curriculum Commission in advance of its public hearings on teaching materials by 12 publishers for grades K-8.

"It is not accidental that world history texts submitted to California read alike when they present Islam or that coverage of Islam in these books is lyrical and uncritical," Sewall wrote. "Islamic pressure groups have been working energetically for 15 years to scrub the past in instructional materials. Textbooks either gloss over jihad, sharia (Islamic law), Muslim slavery, the status of women and Islamic terrorism — or omit the subject altogether."

Sewall, who has testified in Congress on the issue, has said the shrinking industry has come to be dominated by four main publishing companies — Pearson, Houghton Mifflin, Harcourt and McGraw-Hill — with an estimated 80 percent of the textbook market.

In his recent letter, Sewall said that, starting in the early 1990s, the publishers "allowed Islamic organizations — notably the Council on Islamic Education — to strong-arm them and in effect act as censors."

The council's executive director, Shabir Mansuri, rejects these charges, insisting that his group is a "non-advocacy research organization."

At the same time, he said in an interview with JTA at the hearings in Sacramento last month, "The Constitution allows us all a place at the table, without leaving our heritage at the door. I can lobby, I can demand and I can contribute."

The council's contributions to the process are clear: It is listed as a content

consultant to three of the 12 publishers submitting programs — the term used for textbooks plus other teaching materials — for adoption.

It also submitted a lengthy report to the curriculum commission commenting in detail on all the religions described in the teaching materials.

Mansuri testified at the public hearings, as did representatives of other religions, including Jews, and he appeared well-acquainted with many of the publishers' representatives present.

The Council on Islamic Education was one of many groups that consulted on the "History Alive!" course, even though it is not listed as such, said Russell of the Teachers' Curriculum.

Beyond the council, another scholar who consulted on "History Alive!" is Ayad Al-Qazzaz, a sociology professor at California State University at Sacramento, who was co-editor of the "Arab World Notebook." That's the predecessor of the "Arab World Studies Notebook," a widely used teaching manual that has been banned in at least two school districts because of what critics say is pro-Islamic propaganda and anti-Israel distortions.

Many states have textbook-adoption processes, but those in California and Texas are the most important since those states have huge populations. In fact, some school districts in California buy more books than entire states.

"Texas and California are the states in which publishers introduce new textbooks," Sewall said. "By looking at what's available in California today, we will know what's going to be available in the nation tomorrow."

"History Alive!" and "World History" were among the nine programs that California's curriculum commission recommended to the state board of education after its public hearings last month. The board is slated to make its final selection Nov. 3.

Berman of the San Francisco JCRC said she believes the Council on Islamic Education has been so influential because it has been proactive in getting its views across, especially when it matters most — as a book is being compiled.

"It's perfectly legitimate" for the council to want American students to have a positive view of Islam, she said. "If you look at the textbooks, you see they have been very effective."

The Jewish community, in contrast, "hasn't been at the table. The publishers have not been getting a unified, well-articulated point of view" from the Jews, she said.

Berman and her team recently cre-

ated the Institute for Curriculum Services to serve as a resource center for Jewish subject matter in school curricula.

Their review of some sixth-grade books that California is considering for adoption turned up inaccuracies and troubling depictions of Jews and Judaism.

In their reviews, the institute cites as an example "the depiction of Passover as a celebration of the deaths of the Egyptian firstborn instead of a celebration of the Jews' escape from Egyptian slavery."

Their reviews say "many of the texts contain narrations of the Crucifixion that blame or clearly implicate the Jews, presentations of the parable of the Good Samaritan that identify uncaring passers-by as Jews, and Paul as a persecutor of Christians when he was the Jewish Saul — all of these have been used throughout history as a means of implanting anti-Semitism in young minds."

In a surprise move, the curriculum commission, during its Sept. 29-30 hearings, rejected an Oxford University Press sixth-grade history program that Jewish and Hindu groups had blasted as biased, erroneous and culturally derogatory.

The commission also passed a motion requiring publishers to make changes requested by the Institute for Curriculum Services before their programs can be adopted by the state board.

While buoyed by that decision, Berman said that being involved in the review process is not enough.

"We need to be involved while books are being conceived," she said, just like the Council on Islamic Education. ■

(JTA Editor Lisa Hostein and correspondent Sue Fishkoff in Sacramento were among the contributors to this report.)

The publishers 'allow Islamic organizations to strong-arm them and in effect act as censors.'

Gilbert Sewall

American Textbook Council

OP-ED

After Katrina, it's time to repair the world

By RABBI MICHAEL MELCHIOR

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As Israeli government minister with responsibility for the world Jewish community, I have the privilege of meeting Jews of all types from all over the world. There are huge cultural, historical and theological variations among us, and these lend color and variety to our people.

But the differences also create problems. The deep rifts that occurred in Israel over the issue of disengagement from the Palestinians and the battles among different groups demonstrated once again the profound divisions among us. The Jewish people stand in danger of splitting into different factions with different narratives.

Amid the diversity, what can unite us?

Like so many of you, I was shocked and bewildered when I witnessed the terrible scenes of hurricanes hitting America's Gulf Coast, the devastation they caused and the victims' suffering.

In the midst of this tragedy, it has been wonderful to see how many Jewish communities have stretched out their arms to help those who have lost everything.

But I was saddened by the words of some leading rabbis who took it upon themselves to offer explanations for what had happened. Without any basis in logic or religion, they argued that Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita were the result of America's support for the Gaza Strip withdrawal and a lack of Torah study in America.

That's why I'm so delighted to announce that in partnership with the Koldor organization, leading rabbis, youth movements, student organizations, community centers and synagogues, my office is launching the Jewish Social Action Month in Cheshvan, which begins this year on Nov. 3.

Throughout the month, Jews from across the globe will perform acts of loving kindness to their neighbors, both Jewish and gentile. The concept of social action can be interpreted broadly, and there are endless possibilities for action. ■

(Rabbi Michael Melchior is a deputy minister in the Israeli government.)

Blast rocks Hadera market

By DINA KRAFT

HADERA, Israel (JTA) — Surrounded by scattered apples and onions, the blue-and-white checkered blanket covered most of the body lying on the pavement. But it was not quite long enough to cover the body's feet.

The body belonged to one of the five victims murdered by a suicide bomber's explosives in the Hadera market on Wednesday — among them an Israeli Arab who taught Hebrew in nearby schools and a retired factory worker who was watching his friend's vegetable shop.

The bomber detonated himself on a street lined with towering eucalyptus trees in front of one of Hadera's oldest and most popular falafel stands, Falafel Barzilai. After the bombing, the awning over the stand was left burned to shreds, and parsley and green onions spilled out from upturned plastic crates.

"I saw an ear, a head, an hand and the body of an old woman in a dress, her face covered in blood," said Idan Akiva, 23, who raced to the scene from his home just two blocks away.

The bomber was identified as Hassan Abu Zayd, 20. He was reportedly freed from an Israeli prison recently as part of a prisoner release because he had not killed any Israelis.

Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it came in retaliation for Israel's killing of one of the group's leaders, Luay Saadi, on Sunday in the West Bank.

Near the scene of the bombing, locals gathered to get a closer look. Some were yeshiva students, others were parents with young children. Among them was Yigal Cohen, 43, whose father's vegetable stand stood next door to the falafel stand. His father had left shortly before the bombing to attend the memorial service for his own father at a nearby cemetery. The father's friend, Ya'akov Rahmani, 68, had agreed to watch the stand. He was killed in the blast.

Cohen stood behind the police tape and looked at the destruction, his eyes wide and unbelieving.

"I usually come to the market and see friends and family and people I have always known. I sometimes come to help my father out and now I see all this," he said, his voice trailing off. "I grew up here, everyone knows each other."

Mimi Shosha, a 56-year-old secretary, surveyed the smoldering market, shattered glass covering its sidewalks.

"We are scared to go out in a situation like this, but despite everything we continue on," she said.

As she spoke, forensic workers in white jumpsuits picked through spilled vegetables and debris, collecting evidence. Swarms of police and border police blocked off the area. Slowly the bodies were placed in plastic white bags and quietly hoisted onto ambulances.

The five dead included Jamil Ka'adan, 48, of the Arab town of Baka Al-Gharbiye. The father of five taught Hebrew. He was at the market Wednesday after deciding to go to the bank before heading home.

Sabiha Nisim, 66, from Moshav Ahitov, retired recently and was in the market to get a falafel when the bomb went off, killing her. Her husband, Aharon, reportedly hugged her body and would not leave the market until he was taken away by emergency workers. Nisim was the mother of six children and had eight grandchildren.

One of the dead in Hadera, a city with a large population of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, was Mikhail Koifman, 68, who immigrated to Israel in 1993 from Uzbekistan. He is survived by his wife, two children and grandchildren.

Pirhia Mahlouf, 53, a bank employee was also killed in the bombing. She had been in the market to shop for a meal for her two daughters who were about to begin college. ■

An Israeli Arab
and a retiree factory
worker are among
five killed by
a Palestinian
suicide bomber.

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Islamists sentenced in Germany

Four Islamic militants who planned to bomb Jewish institutions in Germany were sentenced to jail.

A German court sentenced three members of the Al Tawhid group to jail terms of between six and eight years.

A fourth man from Algeria was sentenced to five years for aiding the others.

The first three, all from the Middle East, were found guilty of membership in a terrorist organization and of planning attacks on Jewish institutions in Duesseldorf and Berlin on the orders of Jordanian terrorist Abu Mussab Al Zarkawi.

Pope pledges Jewish ties

Pope Benedict XVI vowed to strengthen Catholic-Jewish relations.

Benedict celebrated the 40th anniversary Thursday of the Second Vatican Council's "Nostra Aetate" document, which absolved Jews of collective guilt in the death of Jesus.

"This anniversary gives us abundant reason to express gratitude to almighty God," Benedict told Jewish and Catholic leaders marking the event in Rome.

"In laying the foundations for a renewed relationship between the Jewish people and the church, Nostra Aetate stressed the need to overcome past prejudices, misunderstandings, indifference and the language of contempt and hostility," he said.

Department store heirs win appeal

A German court paved the way for heirs of one of Germany's most successful pre-World War II Jewish families to receive restitution.

The decision by the German High Court this week against the KarstadtQuelle company upholds a decision in favor of the heirs to the Wertheim department store chain.

The money awarded to the heirs came from the sale of property that was part of the family's holdings.

The property was seized by the Nazis in the 1930s and then bought by a private company after the fall of communism in the former East Germany in 1994.

The decision is the first regarding multiple claims over 24 acres in Berlin once held by the Wertheim family.

Proceeds from sale of the property, decided upon this week, will be given to the Claims Conference, which will distribute approximately 80 percent to the heirs and apply the rest to programs for needy Holocaust survivors.

Slovak officials apologize for pogrom

Officials in a Slovak town apologized to Jewish inhabitants for an anti-Jewish pogrom in September 1945.

"We express deep regret at the tragic event which has no equivalent in our modern history in terms of its evil and inhuman character," said a statement by Topolcany municipal officials to representatives of the Federation of Jewish Communities at a commemorative meeting Sunday.

The meeting was attended by more than 50 former Jewish inhabitants of Topolcany, which has a population of approximately 15,000.

Of the 3,000 Jews in the town before the war, 10 percent survived the Holocaust and returned from concentration camps to face the anti-Semitic wrath of their neighbors.

MIDDLE EAST

Sharon orders West Bank sweep

Ariel Sharon ordered Israeli forces to mount a sweep for West Bank terrorists.

"Unfortunately, the Palestinian Authority has not undertaken any serious action to combat terrorism," the Israeli prime minister told reporters Thursday. "Therefore, our action will be broad and will not stop until it puts a halt to the terrorism."

The new order was prompted by Wednesday's Islamic Jihad suicide bombing in Hadera.

NORTH AMERICA

Israelis to be called in AIPAC case

Defendants in the American Israel Public Affairs Committee classified-information case plan to call Israeli diplomats and a senior U.S. diplomat as witnesses.

In motions filed last Friday, lawyers for Steve Rosen and Keith Weissman, two former AIPAC staffers, say that if the case goes to trial, they plan to call as witnesses all the individuals identified in indictments as foreign officials and U.S. government officials.

The Israeli Embassy has also been served notice of the intention.

The indictment speaks of three unnamed foreign officials, all of whom are Israeli, JTA has learned.

It also speaks of two unnamed U.S. government officials and two unnamed defense department officials.

JTA has learned that the two government officials are David Satterfield, now the deputy U.S. ambassador in Baghdad, who was a deputy assistant secretary of state in 2002 when he allegedly relayed classified information to Rosen.

The other U.S. government official is Kenneth Pollack, a staffer on President Clinton's national security council who now is at a think tank. The trial is set to begin Jan. 2.

Jewish leaders pledge Darfur aid

Jewish leaders who visited Sudanese refugee camps in Chad this month pledged to raise American Jews' awareness of the Darfur crisis.

"For 10, 15, 20,000 dollars, you can make a huge difference,"

Ruth Messinger, president of the American Jewish World Service, said Thursday in a conference call.

Messinger and others who participated in the AJWS-organized trip said possible projects targeting the 250,000-350,000 Sudanese refugees living in tent villages in Chad included well-digging, training health workers, building clinics and supplying educational materials.

Participants said they also would rally their communities to urge Congress and the White House to stop the ethnic cleansing in Darfur, which has created up to 2 million refugees so far.

Group appoints Washington director

The umbrella group for Jewish community relation councils hired a new Washington director.

Hadar Susskind comes to the Jewish Council for Public Affairs from the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life, where he served as Washington representative for three years.

"Hadar brings a wealth of experience working both sides of the political aisle on critical, timely and sensitive policy issues," Steve Gutow, JCPA's executive director, said in a statement Thursday.

The JCPA's Washington office lobbies Congress, the White House and international agencies on a range of domestic and foreign issues, with an emphasis in recent years on alleviating poverty.