

From: Fred Baumann

Date: Monday, Jul 27, 2020, 6:48 PM

To: Cliff Rudnick, Superintendent, [emails redacted]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Lies you have been told

California Board of Education Members:

You have received a letter from a group calling itself, deceptively, "California Scholars for Academic Freedom." They are lobbying you to put into effect the new "ethnic studies" curriculum that is heavily biased in an anti-Israel and anti-Jewish direction. To persuade you, they have told you much that is false.

For instance, the letter says "The Nakba, or catastrophe, that resulted from Zionist paramilitary forces planned and executed expulsion of over 750,000 Palestinians in 1948, which explains how most Palestinians became refugees, is absent from the current textbooks." There's a good reason why textbooks don't say that, which is that it isn't even vaguely true. The "Nakba," or catastrophe, is what Arabs call the day in May 1948 on which the state of Israel, obeying a United Nations vote, declared its independence, while the Arab states, refusing to accept the UN decision, launched 7 of their armies against the new country. However, preceding that day, a civil war between Arabs and Jews had been going on, under increasingly ineffective British supervision, for at least a year. When the Arab armies attacked, however, they called on the Arab inhabitants to move out of the way of the conquering armies. They could come back later and join in the looting. Many of the Arabs who fled in 1948 did so at the behest of Arab leaders. In some cases, as in the city of Haifa, the Jewish authorities begged them to stay. True, there were cases where Arabs were driven out in the middle of a war which, it must be remembered, they had started. The real tragedy, the real "Nakba" for the Arabs who fled, was that the Arab states refused to resettle them. (Israel absorbed an even larger number of Jews who were driven out of Muslim countries at the same time.). Instead, the Arab states kept the refugees trapped, as they and their descendants have been now for more than 70 years, in camps where they could be used, as they are being used now, as a political football to smear Israel.

To describe the events of 1948 as your correspondents do amounts precisely to the kind of ethnic slander that no school should be engaged in promoting. But it's not your correspondents' only falsification. Thus, the letter accuses the Executive Director of AMCHA of calling Students for Justice in Palestine a "terrorist organization." If you link to the text that they claim supports this (another piece of venomous propaganda), you will find that it says "She makes openly racist and defamatory claims that MSA and SJP are connected to terrorist organizations like Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood." That's not quite the same thing, is it? "Connected to" isn't "is." And, as it happens, that charge, the charge that was actually made, is factually correct. It is easy enough to document that SJP was created as a front for Hamas, the terrorist organization that tyrannizes over the Arabs of Gaza, and that it operates through the mediating of American Muslims for Palestine, another Hamas front. Your correspondents support this double falsehood--both about what the director of AMCHA said, and what the facts are--with a lot of insult and name-calling.

"Ye shall know them by their fruits" is sensible advice. When those who are trying to smuggle bigotry into your state's curriculum are compelled to rely on falsehoods even to make a plausible case, you should know that, as they are not to be trusted to be truthful, neither is their curriculum likely to pass the smell test. It doesn't. And I believe you know that.

Sincerely,
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