

**From:** Niki Stokols  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 6, 2019 5:21 PM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Subject:** California Ethnic Curriculum

As a member of Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, I am deeply disturbed by the model curriculum currently being reviewed by The State of California, which openly promotes hateful boycotts against Israel and omits antisemitism as a form of bigotry. I am alarmed that an educational effort meant to teach students about marginalized communities includes no lessons about Jews as an ethnic minority (approximately 1.4% of the US population) and the frequent target of racism (a target of 58% of all religion-based hate crimes in America). I am appalled by the inclusion in the Glossary of hateful misrepresentations of Israel in the definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, which claims Palestinians are living under apartheid conditions. The definition of apartheid, based on South Africa, "is a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race." Twenty percent of Israelis are non-Jewish, have full rights, and are represented throughout society. There have been Israeli Arabs members of the Knesset, Israel's governing body, ever since the first Knesset elections in 1949 (there are 12 current members). There are Israeli Arab members of the Supreme Court (Salim Joubran and George Kara) and the lower courts. Israeli Arab doctors hold high level positions of leadership in Israeli hospitals; Dr. Shaden Salameh, just one of many Arab Israeli doctors at Hadassah, is head of the emergency room, Dr. Khoury Amal, is the director of the orthopedic trauma unit, and Dr. Ahmed Eid is head of surgery, to name a few. Major Alaa Waheeb serves in the Israeli Defense Force, fought alongside and trains Jewish soldiers. These are but a few examples, but clearly such integration into Israeli society would not be possible in an apartheid state.

'The implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers to enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism.' Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community, mentioning Jews only in passing.

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Glossary	Niki Stokols Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, HWZOA	<p>Glossary – includes a definition of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) Movement against Israel. It claims the purpose of BDS is to “establish freedom for Palestinians living under apartheid conditions.” I am alarmed by the inclusion of hateful misrepresentations of Israel in the definition of the BDS movement. The definition of apartheid, based on South Africa, "is a policy or system of segregation or discrimination on grounds of race." Twenty percent of Israelis are non-Jewish, have full rights, and are represented throughout society. There have been Israeli Arab members of the Knesset, Israel's governing body, ever since the first Knesset elections in 1949 (there are 12 current members). There are Israeli Arab members of the Supreme Court (Salim Joubran and George Kara) and the lower courts. Israeli Arab doctors hold high level positions of leadership in Israeli hospitals; Dr. Shaden Salameh, just one of many Arab Israeli doctors at Hadassah, is head of the emergency room, Dr. Khoury Amal, is the director of the orthopedic trauma unit, and Dr. Ahmed Eid is head of surgery, to name a few. Major Alaa Waheeb serves in the Israeli Defense Force, fought alongside and trains Jewish soldiers. These are but a few examples, but clearly such integration into Israeli society would not be possible in an apartheid state.</p> <p>It then parrots more BDS talking points while offering no critical perspectives about this campaign of hate, which seeks to end Israel's existence.</p>
Sample Lesson Plans		Page 234 – Encourage teachers to highlight BDS and a pro-BDS group called Direct Action for Palestine, but no voices critical of their perspectives.
Sample Lesson Plans		Page 234 – Promotes a false equivalence between Israel's efforts to stop terrorists from entering communities to murder innocent people, and U.S. policies on the border with Mexico.
Sample Lesson Plans		Page 237 – Uses unclear language that implies “Israel-Palestine” as a whole is an Arab country.
Sample Lesson Plans		Page 242 – Frames the Palestinian narrative of the 1948 War as fact, with no alternative perspectives.

Chapter of Model Curriculum	Your Name and Affiliation	Comment (include page and line numbers where applicable)
Sample Lesson Plans		Page 256, 264-269 – Encourages teachers to use a poem featuring harsh criticism of Israel, but no content offering a positive perspective about Israel or criticism of Palestinian leaders.
Introduction		Introduction – States that “The implementation of Ethnic Studies presents an opportunity for teachers to...enable students to develop a deep appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusion, and aids in the eradication of bigotry, hate, and racism.” Despite this stated goal, the curriculum does not feature a single lesson about the Jewish community, mentioning Jews only in passing. With antisemitism rising and ignorance about the Jewish people still a major problem in our society, the exclusion of Jews from this curriculum is deeply disappointing.
General		As a member of Hadassah, I am deeply disturbed by the model curriculum currently being reviewed by The State of California, which openly promotes hateful boycotts against Israel and omits antisemitism as a form of bigotry. I am appalled that an educational effort meant to teach students about marginalized communities includes no lessons about Jews as an ethnic minority (approximately 1.4% of the US population) yet a target of 58% of all religion-based hate crimes in the United States. As a parent and a California resident, I would hope to see the State of California teaching inclusion and tolerance, rather than BDS, which promotes hate and division.

Niki Stokols

Immediate Past Advocacy Chair  
Hadassah Southern California

**HADASSAH**

**The Women’s Zionist Organization of America**

Amelia & Mark Taper Hadassah House