

**From:** Ruth Parker

**Sent:** Monday, February 1, 2021 11:44 AM

**To:** [list of other recipients redacted]; Ethnic Studies

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fw: An Adviser to Martin Luther King criticizes CA's Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Martin Luther King is not honored at SFSU. He was a Christian, and it was from his study of the Bible that his support for Israel grew. He was replaced as the leader of the black movement by Malcolm X who was a Black Muslim and a virulent antisemite for most of his life. It is Malcolm X whose mural is on display over the entrance to the student center at SFSU. There is no evidence of any tribute to Martin Luther King anywhere on this campus, and most certainly not in the School of Ethnic Studies. SFSU is the founder of ethnic studies and the only college in the country that has not just a department but a whole separate school.

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** J. Barry Gurdin

**To:** [list of recipients redacted]

**Sent:** Sunday, January 31, 2021, 11:28:09 PM PST

**Subject:** An Adviser to Martin Luther King criticizes CA's Ethnic Studies Curriculum

[Martin Luther King Adviser Writes to Gov. Gavin Newsom, Criticizes Ethnic Studies Curriculum \(newsweek.com\)](#)

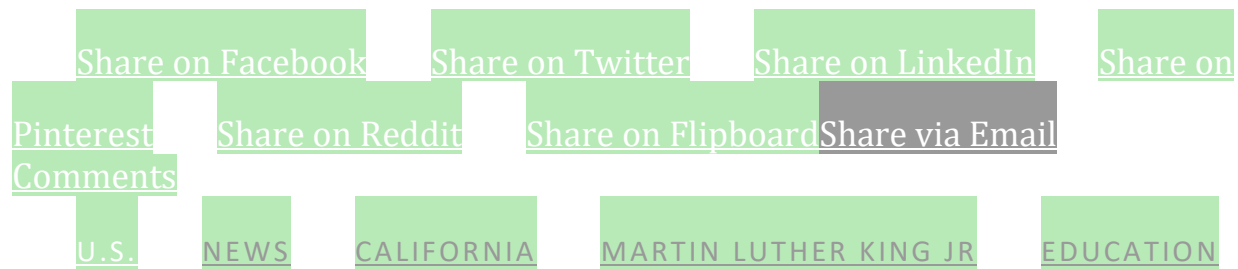
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# Martin Luther King Adviser Writes to Gov. Gavin Newsom, Criticizes Ethnic Studies Curriculum

BY [MATTHEW IMPELLI](#) ON 1/29/21 AT 11:15 AM EST

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An adviser to Martin Luther King wrote a letter to California Governor [Gavin Newsom](#) criticizing the state's Ethnic Studies Curriculum.

Clarence Jones, who served as an adviser and speechwriter for King, addressed the October 14, 2020, letter to Newsom and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond; the president of the state's Board of Education, Linda-Darling Hammond; and members of the Instructional Quality Commission.

"I write this letter to you with great dismay, and great concern for the perversion of history that is being perpetrated by the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum (ESMC). If this model curriculum is approved, it will inflict great harm on millions of students in our state," Jones wrote.

"It is a fact that the Black Freedom Movement of the 1950s and 1960s under Dr. King's leadership transformed our country, overthrowing a century of Jim Crow segregation and white supremacist terror throughout the former Confederate States," Jones continued. "This fact, which I had thought was well known to all educated persons, has been removed from the ESMC. This is morally unacceptable and renders the entire curriculum suspect."

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Jones' letter comes amid disagreements over the state's ethnic studies curriculum, with several of the drafts being criticized and rejected.

According to the Independent Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization, the first draft released in 2019 was seen by many as promoting divisive politics, faced criticism from the *Los Angeles Times* and *Washington Post* and was eventually rejected.

The second draft faced the same fate, after 80 activist groups sent a letter to Newsom asking him to veto the bill, which made an ethnic studies course a requirement for graduation for all high school students in the state.

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"We are deeply concerned that classes taught using this curriculum will become vehicles for highly controversial, one-sided political advocacy and activism that will both subvert the educational mission of our schools and incite bigotry and harm against many students," the groups wrote in the letter.

As both Jones' letter and the Independent Institute noted, King is one of the notable names that were omitted from the list of African Americans in the curriculum.



Kewku Mandela and Clarence Jones speak during the PTOW! Sessions and WORLDZ kickoff party on November 1, 2016, in New York City. ILYA S. SAVENOK/GETTY

"Moreover, it appears that this omission as deliberate," Jones wrote in his letter. "For example 'Evolution of Black Political and Intellectual Thought' is limited to three examples, 'racial accommodationism, Black Nationalism, and revolutionary intercommunalism,' with the implication that the intellectual and moral basis for radical nonviolence advocated by Dr. King, his colleagues at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the heroes of

the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, including John Lewis, Bernard Lafayette and Robert Moses, is unworthy of inclusion in this intellectual history."

Jones continued, "I ask that the ESMC be rejected unless and until changes are made to correct these falsehoods and distortions."

The Alliance for Constructive Ethnic Studies released a statement on the most recent draft of the curriculum. It said, "Despite changes in some specific content and wording, the polarizing Critical Ethnic Studies (CES) framework remains unchanged, continuing to pervert a potentially beneficial curriculum."

The alliance's statement continued, "Although various ethnic groups have been added to the ESMC, the approach of how groups and their leaders are portrayed has not changed throughout the three iterations of the draft. The ESMC is a roadmap for teachers. Regardless of specific wording changes, that roadmap is currently the divisive, politicized CES paradigm."

*Newsweek* reached out to Jones, Newsom and the California Department of Education for comment but did not receive a response in time for publication.