

From: Jana Zimmer
Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2019 10:43 AM
To: Ethnic Studies
Subject: Ethnic Studies curriculum comments

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I write regarding the curriculum for the ethnic studies bill, to thank and support the Jewish Legislative Caucus for their well reasoned critique of the draft program, and to ask-no, to demand - that the authors of this program revisit its treatment of Jews, and include our children, who attend our public schools as an ethnic minority entitled to the same respect and consideration as other minority groups. As the shootings in Pittsburgh demonstrate and other acts of anti- Semitic violence escalate, it cannot be denied that anti-semitism -a particularly insidious form of racism, is on the rise. The drafters' failure to take this cue and to create a truly inclusive program boggles the mind.

I was in school when ethnic studies programs were established on our college campuses in the late 60's, and early 70's and I fully supported those programs as important and useful. I agitated for those programs because my Jewish tradition and my Holocaust survivor mother both demanded that I pursue justice for others.

Things have apparently changed in our educational system, and not for the better. I have grandchildren who are 4th generation Holocaust survivors who have had a very difficult time as Jews in our California public schools, because the State has done an inexcusably poor job in transmitting the lessons of the Holocaust. Imagine sitting in an eighth grade class as a Jewish kid, and having your classmates joke about the gas chambers, and having the the teacher and the administration do absolutely nothing. Imagine confronting the ignorance of history and the revisionism that has taken hold in this millennial generation.

Now, it appears that the (mis)treatment of Jewish people in the draft curriculum being prepared goes even further: their history, our history, as victims of racism over two thousand years is completely ignored and negated. We are told we are white, and speaking from "white privilege", because many American Jews, if not most, have succeeded reasonably well economically. That assumption in itself plays as an anti-Semitic trope. And it is an insult to our hard working and successful African American and Immigrant communities as well.

And as for being white? Tell that to my sister, my grandparents, my cousins, all of whom were murdered by the nazis because they were not Aryan. Tell that to the nazis (not "neo", but first class super duper real nazis) who are marching, spewing their hate all over the web. Anti-semites do not consider Jews to be white, and neither should the State of California, in this context.

And as for the assumptions made about Palestine (good) and Israel (bad), that situation is about as complicated as they get, with good people "on both sides", truly. Are the authors of the curriculum aware that "Palestinians" and Ashkenazy Jews are virtually indistinguishable, genetically? The forces of 19th century colonialism - white, non -Jewish, European colonialism-carved up the desert they both have occupied continuously for millennia, and both peoples have

been paying the price, ever since. Your curriculum needs to acknowledge these realities, or it will be worthless. So please, no false equivalencies about Zionism and the Boers. Just teach our kids to think.

Thank you for considering these comments.