

From: darin strauss
Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2021 12:02 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

To whom it may concern

I have to say that I am disturbed, as an educator and as a parent, by what I have read about your Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum.

Why, on a list of 154 influential people of color, is there nothing on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., John Lewis, or Thurgood Marshall? Why instead does it celebrate such violent revolutionaries as Pol Pot, the communist leader of the Khmer Rouge, who oversaw the murder of millions of civilians -- a quarter of the population -- and whose murderous policy intended to wipe out "intellectuals" from Cambodian society?

Why are non-violent Black leaders -- such as King -- referred to as "passive" and "docile?"

Why, according to the Jewish Journal, are Jews are the only group in the curriculum for whom the term "privilege" is used? Why does the ESMC echo Nazi propaganda in seeing Jews as impostors? Why point out that American Jews often change their names -- "this practice of name-changing continues to the present day" -- as if "passing" hasn't been a part of every ethnic minority's response to bigotry?

Why are European Jews -- of all people -- held up as models of privilege? (European Jews, in living memory, were the victims of the most successful attempt at genocide in history. More than 60% of them did not survive this attempt, and among the survivors almost all had their property and livelihoods taken from them -- as they were unallowed to go to school or to own a home or a business.)

A curriculum that purports to tell the story of bigotry around the world and doesn't mention the Holocaust -- nor any of the bigotry Jews faced anywhere, from the Spanish Inquisition to the Tsarist pogroms to Stalin's "Doctor's Plot" to France's Dreyfus Affair to anti-Semitism in the US? That cannot be an innocent oversight.

It's an outrage -- all of it.

xDS

Darin Strauss
Clinical Professor
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
New York University

Lillian Vernon Writers' House