

**From:** John Anderson  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 15, 2020 11:57 AM  
**To:** Ethnic Studies  
**Cc:** Superintendent; [email redacted]  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] ethnic studies

Dear Educators,

My concern is that the new curriculum may conflate criticism of the state of Israel with anti-Semitism.

The purpose of the model Ethnic Studies curriculum is to center the history of people of color who have been marginalized or ignored by the current curriculum. Curriculum about Arab-Americans is not antisemitic. Arabs have been coming to the United States since before it was formed as nation.

Jewish Voice for Peace – Bay Area Chapter has says: Pro-Israel, Zionist organizations are weaponizing the charge of antisemitism to shut down diverse perspectives on how Israel treats Palestinians. Relevant history that includes a discussion of the Nakba, or “catastrophe”, in the module on Arab-Americans, is not anti-Semitic. (The Nakba refers to the forced displacement of approximately 750,000 Palestinians that began before Israel’s establishment in 1948, and that continues to this day.) This is absolutely pertinent to the history of forced immigration by Palestinian-Americans to the United States and worldwide.

Racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism are on the rise today in the United States. Our common enemy is white supremacy and that our safety as communities will come through solidarity with each other and with all communities demonized by white supremacy.

Please note these quotes of response to the problem with conflating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism.

“Palestinian activists have long supported the Black people’s struggle against racism. When I was in jail, solidarity coming from Palestine was a major source of courage for me. In Ferguson, Palestinians were the first to express international solidarity. ... We have a profound responsibility to support Palestinian struggles.”

--Angela Davis, iconic Black American social activist, academic, feminist and philosopher

“Just as we said during apartheid that it was inappropriate for international artists to perform in South Africa in a society founded on discriminatory laws and racial exclusivity, so it would be wrong for Cape Town Opera to perform in Israel.”

--Archbishop Desmond Tutu, South African anti-apartheid and human rights leader

“Boycott Divestment Sanction campaigns around the world present the most promising way to overcome the failure of world governments to stand up to Israel’s intransigence and lawless behavior.”

--Stephane Hessel, the late German-French Holocaust survivor, diplomat, author

Zionism is a political ideology based on supremacy. Outgoing Israeli ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, proclaimed, “I represent not only the people of Israel, I represented [sic] the Jewish people in the U.N.”. He went on, “We [Jews] do have biblical rights to the land. Whether you are Christian, Muslim, or Jew — you read the Bible, you read the stories of the Bible — it’s all there. This is our deed to the land. That’s biblical.”

Israeli human rights organization, Yesh Din, states, “Israel is an Apartheid state.”

The UN’s Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). “While acknowledging the willingness of the State [Israel] party delegation to discuss questions relating to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Committee regrets that the report did not contain any information concerning the population living in these territories.” Israel is actively engaging on issues related to the “Occupied Palestinian Territory,” even if they do so blind to the Palestinians they oppress.

Thank you for receiving my concern.

Rev. Dr. John Anderson  
(pronouns: he/him/his)