

From: Tamara Gurin
Sent: Sunday, September 6, 2020 4:27 PM
To: Ethnic Studies <EthnicStudies@cde.ca.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum

California Department of Education

1430 N St #5901

Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear members of ICQ,

I am deeply alarmed by the omissions in the proposed ethnic studies curriculum. While large numbers of California residents of Middle Eastern descent are Muslim Arabs, even larger numbers are of other ethnic groups and religions.

It must be insulting to the large Assyrian Christian community or to even larger Christian Armenian diaspora in California - by some accounts up to 500,000 people - much of which originated from the Ottoman Empire after the Armenian genocide of 1915 or Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979.

But as a Jewish person, I am in particular stricken by the misrepresentations and distortions in the curriculum, especially by this statement: "Jewish ... Americans gaining racial privilege". Just in case you have not been informed, private American universities maintained quotas for Jewish students' admissions well into 1960ies. In the state of California, specifically, many prestigious private clubs were closed to the Jews until only recently, less than 45 years ago. This is from the Wikipedia:

In 1965, the Jonathan Club was charged with "anti-Negro" and "anti-Jew" bias and a complaint was raised that the membership dues of Mayor Sam Yorty were being paid by city taxpayers to support such discrimination. Yorty told a news conference he knew nothing about such a circumstance.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith said that, in 1962, twelve of the "leading country clubs" and eight of the "most prestigious city clubs" in the Greater Los Angeles area were open only to Christians, but by 1969 those figures had dropped to eleven and five.

This "racial privilege" persisted into the late 1970ies when, through the effort of Anti-defamation League and many activists, private clubs finally started admitting Jewish members.

There are references in the curriculum to the articles that make like this:

Blind to the hundreds of Palestinian women whose bodies have been torn to shreds by Israeli missiles and bullets during the intifada years, she can shed tears only for the torn hymens between Palestinian women's legs.

This either propagates an outrageous notion that a rape by a member of your own ethnic group is not worth a compassion by an outsider or that a Jewish person is not allowed to feel compassion for the Palestinian women only because she is Jewish. Leaving alone the entire article that is fiercely defending the often subservient position of the Palestinian women in the Palestinian society to the consideration by the members of the comission, I

would ask only one question: Doesn't the statement above fit a clear definition of racism and bigotry?

I hope that ESMC takes a second look at this proposed curriculum. In my opinion, it does not support diversity and inclusion, and desire of all the ethnic and religious groups in California to live in peace. As a matter of fact, in the time of great racial tensions, it exacerbates division and tension in California, which would be Donald Trump's dream come true.

Sincerely,

Tamara Gurin