

To: S.W.P., Political Committee
From: Froben Lozada
Re: Jewish History in Ethnic Studies

One paragraph should suffice to provide summary of Ethnic Studies at Merritt College. Afro-American and Chicano Studies were originally instituted as autonomous entities. The decision to put these under the umbrella of Ethnic Studies came from the administration. Asian-American Studies has since been integrated into this structure. No Native-American courses or instructors as yet(to date).

Presently, a demand has appeared to get a course in Jewish History to meet or satisfy the requirements of Ethnic Studies. That is, recognition of such a course as part of the curriculum within E.S. At this point, I should mention fact that every student is required to take an Ethnic Studies course at Merritt College (Board policy). No one in the Ethnic Studies Dept. as presently constituted wants Jewish History within our dept., meaning in effect, that the decision within Ethnic Studies is unanimous to oppose the introduction of this course into E.S. The administration is presently opposed to this course within E.S. They agree with us, but, may yield under pressure. United Nations decision vis-a-vis Zionism will help open up dialogue Zionists will later regret. I believe that this issue is going to get bigger and bigger. Students have not yet been made aware of debate going on within committees among faculty. I have been named to serve in two relevant committees -the Committee on Ethnic Studies and the Curriculum Committee. The first is stacked in our favor while I am unsure of the second. The Instructional Council has voted against our (Ethnic Studies) recommendation to not take in Jewish History. This Instructional Council is a more embracing and a "higher body" than either E.S. Committee or Curriculum Committee - for what this information is worth-.

So far, I have needed little or no help in trying to ward off this reactionary thrust from the Jewish sector. I have spoken to the local organizer Jeff Powers and, briefly, to Clifton DeBerry. I have both their consent to pass this on to you and seek further aid (political) which will help buttress my arguments. In line with this, I have a series of questions which I hope you all will consider in detail, all of which will be instrumental and aid me in my presentations.

Addendum: The administration, in every level, has not attempted to define "Ethnic Studies" but knows better when to leave well enough alone.

- 1) Should we in E.S. insist that the Board of Trustees define Ethnic Studies for us, since it was they who structured us as such?
- 2) I have recommended that we go back to the old structure of Chicano Studies, Afro-American Studies DEpt. and Asian-American Studies Dept., how insistent should I be with respect to this?
- 3) I have suggested informally that those who want a Jewish History course should address their remarks to the History Dept. and not to us. Is it politically correct for me as Chicano Studies head to suggest and sanction this course in the History Dept.? Is it correct politically, as an S.W.P.er to make such suggestion? I have also suggested that they should perhaps try the school of Theology, though none exists.
- 4) What is a Jew? Is he a Jew by choice or not? If not, it then seems to me that this negation should help in their exclusion from E.S.,no?
- 5) I am basing my main criteria on who should be in Ethnic Studies on the the definition of national oppression as foisted upon by a dominant nation, the Jew as in the case of the U.S. in this case belongs to this dominant nation and, in fact, as a family has a higher per capita than any other group, religious or otherwise. National oppression based on color. Oppression and color as the main ingredients determining

who the participants in Ethnic Studies should be? Anything else?

- 6) This discussions within the committees have already spilled over into the issue of Zionism as a form of racism. I have stressed that I do not equate Jewry with Zionism, that I vehemently condemn anti-Semitism as a form of racism as well as condemn Zionism for identical reasons. What else should I read that might not be readily available at Granma Books, etc.? Any old document that I might not have heard off, etc?
- 7) I feel that, eventually, I, more than anyone else in Ethnic Studies, will be under attack from these cranks (conscious) because of my course Racism in America and because these questions are once in a while raised there. Should we start mobilizing the students at this point? I'm optimistic that, for their own reasons, the administration will approve the course but not in Ethnic Studies and this is why I raise this question now?
- 8) The foremost advocate of this Jewish History course refuses to push for it within the History Dept. and insists it be in Ethnic Studies. She, an English teacher here, has also already given us an indication of how far she intends to carry this fight and why: "There is a need to counteract what is being propounded in Ethnic Studies," she stated last. While this is indicative of her ignorance as to what Ethnic Studies should be and the reasons for its birth, it also tells me that she is going hell bent on her goal. I have told all that they will regret the Pandora's box they will be opening up and that, in any event, welcome the opportunity it has given me or us to take on head-on the philosophy of Ethnic Studies. How do you like that?

Well, that is pretty much it in capsule form. Let me know how much we should stress this skirmish and, in anticipation, appreciate all the help I can get on my arguments.

Comradely,


Proben Lozada