

*Multiculturalism  
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By Robert Holland and Don Soifer  
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*W*hen school boards spend thousands of tax dollars to send teachers to education conferences around the country, they have a reasonable expectation that the attendees will bring back knowledge and skills that will be put to constructive use in the classroom. That is not necessarily what the boards are receiving in return when they send teachers to conferences on multiculturalism and so-called social-justice teaching. At many of these gatherings, teachers are being urged to go back home and work for an anti-free-market, redistributionist social agenda rather than teaching children the academic fundamentals.

Board members, administrators and parents should know what they are funding when they send teachers and supervisors to conferences such as those sponsored by the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), which will hold its 2008 gathering November 12-16 in New Orleans. NAME's leaders, who also hold regional conferences around the country, have made clear in their statements that their version of multiculturalism is all about power politics and transforming American society. NAME President Paul Gorski has criticized public schools for “too much celebrating diversity and not enough combating racism.” Hundreds of NAME workshops seek to indoctrinate teachers in the view that the U.S. is an oppressive nation, and that “white privilege,” “Christian privilege,” and other alleged evils are responsible.

NAME is only one part of academe working to indoctrinate K-12 teachers. A network of academics and organizations including former Weather Underground terrorist William Ayers, Howard Zinn, and Milwaukee-based Rethinking Schools are leading advocates for extremist “social justice teaching” in the nation's public schools. This paper includes numerous examples from recent publications, conferences and statements to call attention to some of these deceptive and troubling practices.

Details follow.

## INTRODUCTION

When local school boards send teachers to professional conferences, they no doubt expect the teachers will gain new knowledge and skills to take back to their classrooms to help their students learn. In many cases, there is hopefully a positive return for their investment of time and resources. But boards would be wise to look much more carefully at the advocacy being urged upon their teachers at certain conferences, notably those that purport to promote “multiculturalism” and so-called “teaching for social justice.”

Certainly, there are different and sometimes competing philosophies of teaching. Some schools of thought emphasize the teacher transmitting basic information and knowledge to children. Others stress the value of student discovery. Of course, these approaches are not necessarily in conflict; excellent teachers blend methods. But whatever techniques come into play, few parents send their children to school believing teaching should be about ideological indoctrination.

Good teachers encourage students to think for themselves. The object is to make them independent learners and thinkers, not to do the thinking for them. Mind control is not what education is all about.

**Their teachers are being asked to come back and spread left-wing political dogma in their teaching.**

At certain conferences to which perhaps unsuspecting school boards send their teachers, however, indoctrination is the name of the game. A leading example is the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), which has conducted national and regional workshops for thousands of teachers annually since 1991. Those doing much of the indoctrinating are typically left-wing university professors, who often are connected with the schools of education (teacher-training institutions). Their subjects, unwitting or not, are K-12 teachers.

Schools and universities often shell out significant sums to send teachers and professors to such conferences. The University of Minnesota/Crookston in 2007 offered Diversity and Professional Multicultural small grants, federally funded, to faculty and staff members seeking to “further your own learning in the areas of diversity, multiculturalism, and social justice.” The grants’ administrators stated they “pay particular attention to. . . race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, and sexual orientation within the context of the United

States.” That list perhaps explains the scope of diversity but it does not define “social justice,” a term that professional educators often invoke but rarely, if ever, explain.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes school officials discover after the fact that sending teachers to distant conferences can be an expensive proposition. An audit found that the Dallas Independent School District in May 2007 sent 166 teachers to an international literacy conference in Toronto at an expense of \$265,000. Federal grants paid the freight, which just means that payers of federal taxes picked up the tab. Some teachers shared \$400-a-night hotel rooms; a few enjoyed Nova Scotia lobster on the public tab.<sup>2</sup>

## NAME AND SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVISM

The theme of NAME’s 2008 national conference, scheduled for November 12-16 in New Orleans, Louisiana will be “Beyond Celebrating Diversity: ReACTivating the Equity and Social Justice Roots of Multicultural Education.” (The letters “act” in Reactivating are in upper-case in an apparent attempt to stress the need for action.) The title accents what has been a standard NAME message for years: that the essence of multiculturalism is not celebrating ethnic holidays or heroes, but advocating for “social justice” via the public schools.<sup>3</sup>

**Advocating for  
“social justice” via  
the public schools.**

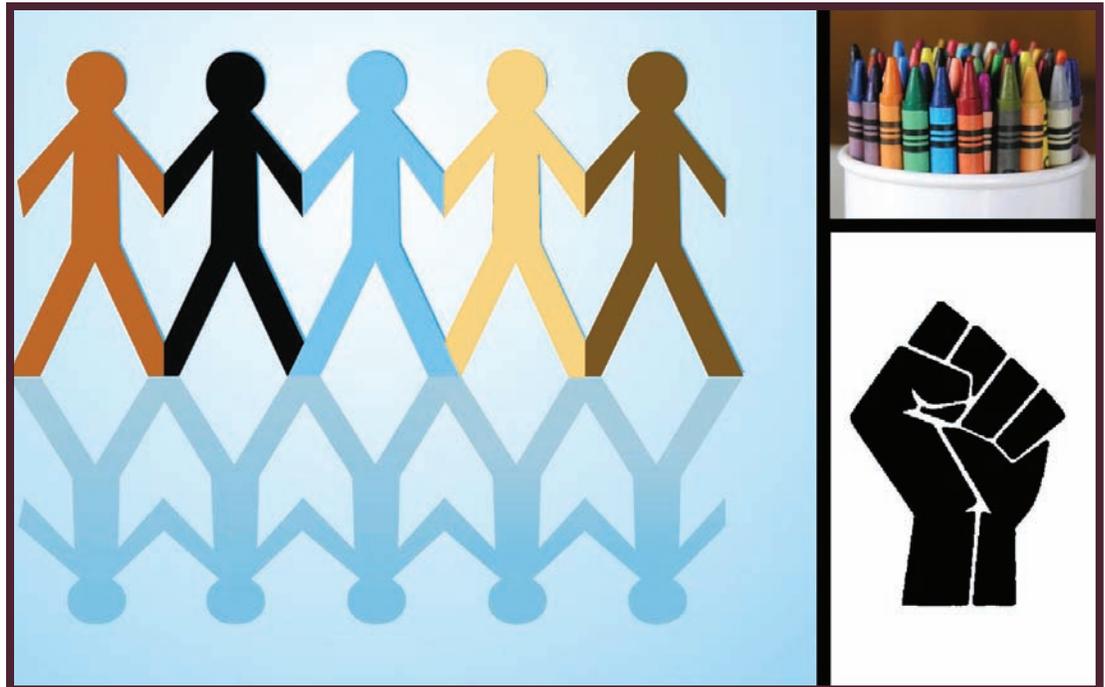
One of NAME’s preconference institutes will be “Our Work as Social Justice Educators: A Workshop for First Timers.” This session promises to introduce first-time attendees to “the concepts of teaching for social justice through highly interactive, engaging activities.” The sponsors promise to “explore concepts of oppression theory, ally building, exclusion, marginality, and privilege as well as some exciting ways to make the world more inclusive and multicultural.”<sup>4</sup>

Teaching for social justice has been the central focus of academic multiculturalists for many years. Brazilian Marxist Paulo Freire, author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, is the leading light of the movement. Freire practiced a form of critical pedagogy with peasant children in the 1950s, seeking to make them equals with their teachers in analyzing the causes of their oppression and devising ways to overthrow it. Today, U.S. multiculturalists seek to institute that way of thinking in U.S. classrooms and teacher training, in pursuit of a societal transformation in this country.

Among proponents in American academe, one of the most prominent is William Ayers, founder of the Weather Underground, a radical organization that planted bombs in the Pentagon and other government facilities in the 1960s. Now an education professor at the University of Illinois in Chicago, Ayers has written books on the imperative of teaching for social justice that remain best-sellers in the nation's teacher-training institutions. Some controversy surfaced in the 2008 presidential campaign with regard to how closely Ayers worked with Senator Barack Obama when both were high-ranking officers in a well-financed school "reform" effort in Chicago a decade ago.

Obama has denied that Ayers – an unrepentant terrorist who turned to education when he enrolled in Columbia University's Teachers College in 1984 – was ever his philosophical partner. What is chilling is the available documentation of Ayers' ability to work within the education and political establishments to indoctrinate students in his version of "social justice." Consider some of the evidence presented by two well-respected writers – Stanley Kurtz, a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, writing in the Sept. 23, 2008 edition of *The Wall Street Journal*;<sup>5</sup> and Sol Stern, a Manhattan Institute fellow, writing in the Summer 2006 issue of *City Journal*.<sup>6</sup>

- "Mr. Ayers is the founder of the 'small schools' movement . . . in which individual schools built around specific political themes push students to 'confront issues of inequity, war, and violence.' He believes teacher



education programs should serve as 'sites of resistance' to an oppressive system. ... The point, says Mr. Ayers in his *Teaching Toward Freedom*, is to 'teach against oppression,' against America's history of evil and racism, thereby forcing social transformation." (Kurtz)

**"...teach against oppression ... thereby forcing social transformation."**

- "America's historical ideal of public schooling as a means of assimilating all children (and particularly the children of new immigrants) into a common civic and democratic culture is already under assault from the multiculturalists and their race- and gender-centered pedagogy. ... [I]t's not just from his government-funded outpost at the University of Illinois that Ayers is spreading the word about radical social justice teaching. He maintains a busy lecture schedule at other ed schools around the country, and he does teacher training and professional development for the Chicago public schools. All that still leaves him enough time to give nostalgic lectures on college campuses about his Weather Underground experiences." (Stern)
- "In works like *City Kids*, *City Teachers* and *Teaching the Personal and the Political*, Mr. Ayers wrote that teachers should be community organizers dedicated to provoking resistance to American racism and oppression. His preferred alternative? 'I'm a radical, Leftist, small 'c' communist,' Mr. Ayers said. In an interview in Ron Chepesiuk's *Sixties Radicals*, at about the same time Mr. Ayers was forming CAC [the Chicago Anenberg Challenge] ... CAC translated Mr. Ayers' radicalism into practice. Instead of funding schools directly, it required schools to affiliate with 'external partners,' which actually got the money. Proposals from groups focused on math/science achievement were turned down. Instead CAC disbursed money through various far-left community organizers, such as the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (or Acorn)." (Kurtz)
- "The readings that Ayers assigns [to future teachers in his classes] are as intellectually stimulating and diverse as a political commissar's indoctrination session in one of his favorite communist tyrannies. The reading list for his urban education course includes the bible of the critical pedagogy movement, Brazilian Marxist Paulo Friere's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*; two books by Ayers himself; another by bell hooks, a radical black feminist writer and critical race theorist; and a 'Freedom School' curriculum. That's the entire spectrum of debate." (Stern)

Ayers' writings are widely taught in schools of education around the country. His book *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher* is required reading in programs including Arizona State University's Mary Lou Fulton College

of Education, UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, Georgia Southern University, the University of Northern Iowa, and many others.

## RADICAL AGENDAS AT EDUCATOR CONFERENCES

**A**t NAME's annual national conference, and at several regional conferences around the country, numerous public and taxpayer-funded entities are listed in promotional materials as co-sponsors. The organization does not charge a sponsorship fee. In Maryland, however, state department of education regulations require all school districts to incorporate multicultural education into "instruction, curriculum, staff development, instructional resources, and school climate." The Maryland Department of Education is also required to "incorporate multicultural education into its programs, publications and assessments." NAME does frequently partner with these entities as part of their compliance with these regulations, allowing for the establishment of a public funding stream for the organization.

NAME held its November 2007 national conference in Baltimore, Maryland. According to the organization, the conference was co-sponsored by several organizations, including the Maryland Department of Education, the Baltimore City Public Schools and the Carroll County Public Schools.

At the conference, the program included these workshops for teachers sent there by school districts from all states:

- "Teaching for Social Justice in Elementary Schools"
- "The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Dismantling White Privilege and Supporting Anti-Racist Education in our Classrooms and Schools"
- "Integrating Social Justice Curriculum in a Preservice Teacher Training Program Through Planned Class Activities"
- "Undoing Whiteness in the Classroom: Critical Educational Approaches for Social Justice Activism"
- "Talking About Religious Oppression and Christian Privilege"
- "Preparing White Middle-Class Preservice Teachers (and Others) to Become Proactive Change Agents Who Teach for Social Justice"

- “Creating Change Agents Who Teach for Social Justice: Working With Predominantly White Middle-Class Preservice Teachers”

The national conference had much in common with regional conferences, including the 2007 New England Conference on Multicultural Education, held in Connecticut. According to conference organizers, co-sponsors included the Connecticut State Department of Education. Other taxpayer-funded co-sponsors included the University of Connecticut’s Near School of Education, Eastern Connecticut State University, and Central Connecticut State University.

The agenda of workshops for the 2007 New England Conference included the following:

- “More Than Men in White Sheets: Helping White Students Understand Systemic Racism”
- “Unpacking Religious Oppression and Christian Privilege”
- “Why Aren’t All the White Kids Learning About Privilege and Power?”
- “What’s Left Behind: An Arts-Based Workshop Exploring What’s Gained and Lost When Crossing the Border Into America”

**The NAME panelists regarded commitment to one’s nation much more tenuous than fidelity to group.**

In 2006, NAME convened in Phoenix, Arizona, and took dead aim at the very concepts of citizenship and citizenship education. At a session on “Educating Citizens for Diversity and Social Justice in Contested Lands Around the World,” Dr. James A. Banks, a University of Washington professor who is widely regarded as a founding father of multiculturalism, put forward as a counter to citizenship the concept of “cosmopolitanism,” which he defined as “allegiance to the worldwide community of human beings,” and “community to humanity, not a nation.”<sup>7</sup>

A discussion by an international panel cast light on how professional multiculturalists view the United States as little more than a contested land from which they hope to diminish if not purge European-based culture through a mixture of open-borders immigration, encouragement of minority resistance to assimilation, and guilt-inducing indoctrination of the children of the old, “oppressive” American culture, and their teachers.

The session overview provided to teachers sent to the conference from school systems in all 50 states made the following assertion about citizenship in the so-called contested lands:

“Conceptions of citizenship and citizenship education are being challenged by a number of historical, political, social, and cultural developments that have occurred around the world since World War II. Institutionalized notions of citizenship in nations around the world – which fosters assimilation and the eradication of the community cultures and languages of students – have been vigorously contested since ethnic revitalization movements arose in the 1960s and 1970s.

“Worldwide immigration, the challenges to nation states that have been wrought by globalization, and the tenacity of nationalism and national borders have stimulated debate, controversy, and rethinking about citizenship and citizenship education.”

Banks concluded that multiculturalists “can be cosmopolitan and keep our commitment to our ethnic group.” However, the NAME panelists regarded commitment to one’s nation much more tenuous than fidelity to group.

While indoctrinating teachers preservice and inservice is a high priority for multiculturalists, so, too, is attitudinal adjustment for children beginning at very young ages. Participants at one NAME workshop in Phoenix were told how Project Children LEAD (Learning Early to Appreciate Diversity) trains early childhood educators to begin instilling the “correct” sociopolitical attitudes in children as young as age 2. Lesson plans for instruction of 2- and 3-year-olds (available on the group’s website, [www.childrenlead.org](http://www.childrenlead.org)) talk about, among other things, helping tots “be able to better solve problems encountered in exploration and play” and “learning to express their emotions and begin to show empathy for the feelings and needs” of others.



The desire to launch “social justice” instruction at such a tender age may help explain the enthusiasm for universal, government-run pre-kindergarten among some advocates.

# EXAMPLES FROM MULTICULTURAL TEACHING GUIDES AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS FOR

**“To teach consciously for justice and ethical action is teaching that arouses students, engages them in a quest to identify obstacles to their full humanity and the life chances of others, to their freedom, and then to drive and to move against those obstacles. And so the fundamental message of the teacher for ethical action is: You can change the world.”**

- William Ayers, *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher*.

**“Other [recommended] scenarios includes Israeli soldiers taunting and shooting children in Palestinian refugee camps, with the assistance of U.S. military aid... the 1998 cruise missile attack on Sudan’s main pharmaceutical plant; and sanctions against Iraq that according to U.N. reports killed as many as a half million children.”**

- From “Whose Terrorism?” by Bill Bigelow in *Whose Wars? Teaching About the Iraq War and the War on Terrorism*, scenarios designed to ask, “Who are the ‘terrorists’?”

**“Money that could go to pay for AIDS prevention and therapies for people with AIDS instead is being sent to banks in so-called developed countries.”**

- From suggested student handout, “What is Terrorism? Who Are the Terrorists?” in *Whose Wars?*

**“If educators do not ‘see’ color and the ways in which institutionalized racism privileges some groups and disadvantages others, they will be unable to take action to eliminate racial inequality in schools.”**

- James A. Banks, *Educating Students in a Multicultural Society*, Second Edition.

**“Have students view all or part of the movie *Fahrenheit 9/11*.... Explain to students that in this activity they will see the importance of mathematics as it relates to three controversial issues that were touched on in the movie.”**

- “Math and *Fahrenheit 9/11*,” by Bob Peterson, in *Whose Wars?*

**“‘Who is the INS Arresting?’ Students read a newspaper article about the disproportionate number of Mexicans the INS was arresting, relative to the national-origin percentages of undocumented people. The mathematics included percentages, ratios, and proportions, and students had to pose their own mathematical problems based on the article. Students had to write about their view of the INS policy.”**

- Eric “Rico” Gutstein, “Real-World Projects,” *Rethinking Schools*, Volume 15 No. 3, Spring 2001.

# HER TEACHERS

**“Make a bar graph contrasting the total black voting population in Florida (13 percent) and the percentage of black ballots invalidated (53 percent). Write some observations about this discrepancy.”**

- From suggested student handout, “Whose Vote Counts? The 2000 Presidential Election in Florida,” in *Whose Wars?*

**“... These White teachers ironically exercised their real White privilege – the propertied right to determine racial meaning – to deny their individual participation in the collective, structural racism that perpetuates racialized student failure.”**

- Sabina E. Vaught and Angelina E. Castagno, “‘I Don’t Think I’m a Racist’: Critical Race Theory, teacher attitudes, and structural racism,” *Race Ethnicity and Education*, Volume 11, No. 2, July 2008, 95-113.

**“A recruiter is a salesperson who will give only a positive, one-sided picture of life in the military. Don’t make this important decision when you are depressed, hard up for work, confused or unsure about your future, or pressured by your family.”**

- From suggested student handout, “Ten Points to Consider Before Signing a Military Enlistment Agreement,” in *Whose Wars?*

**“[Ask students] How large a role in English-language predominance in America, if any, was played by: military conquest, occupation or annexation, or exclusion of languages other than English by ‘English-only’ laws or other means.”**

- From “Unit on Language Oppression,” *Tools for Building Justice*, January 2003.

**“White-dominated institutions negatively affect the life expectancy, infant mortality, income, housing, and educational opportunities of people of color.”**

- Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, “Introduction: Theoretical Foundations for Social Justice Education.”

**“In a country brutally divided along racial lines, founded and sustained on a constructed hierarchy of color and calamitous class divisions, language itself is encoded with privilege, oppression, bias, bigotry and power.”**

- William Ayers, *Teaching the Personal and the Political*.

## PROPAGANDA IN THE CLASSROOM

A Milwaukee-based organization/publication called Rethinking Schools, which works in close association with NAME, offered in 2006 a catalogue of “Education Resources for Equity and Social Justice.” Among the materials offered for sale:

- *Reading, Writing, and Rising Up: Teaching About Social Justice and the Power of the Written Word.*
- *Rethinking Mathematics: Teaching Social Justice by the Numbers*, which purports to show how to “weave social justice issues throughout the mathematics curriculum.”
- *Transforming Teacher Unions: Fighting for Better Schools and Social Justice.*<sup>8</sup>

In its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue published in Spring 2006, the editors argued that “in order to protect and nurture academically rigorous social-justice teaching, educators need to see themselves as activists beyond the classroom – and in alliance with parents and other groups.”<sup>9</sup> In truth, this approach contemplates teachers as politicized activists within the classroom as well, seeking to instill an ideology in children. The same issue contains a spread on so-called “radical math,” which entails using math to make points about such issues as “environmental racism” and the “racial wealth gap.”<sup>10</sup>

Rethinking Schools publishes many materials designed to guide teachers in their classroom approaches. One example is *Whose Wars? Teaching About the Iraq War and the War on Terrorism*, which was published in 2006. A blurb on the back cover by none other than Professor William Ayers asserts that the booklet “is filled with powerful ideas and reflections, units, and lessons that probe deeply into the official and ominous silence all around us. In these perilous times, this book is essential reading for teachers seeking the truth and some higher ground.”

In a chapter entitled “A Pedagogy of Resistance,” Howard Zinn, author of *A People’s History of the United States*, urges teachers to inject their viewpoint into their teaching and reject the mission that the public expects them to



perform. “The first thing teachers have to do,” declared Zinn, “is make a decision for themselves that they will not be obedient in staying within the boundaries that are usually set by the principals, school administrators, and parent-teacher associations. The teacher has to make a decision right from the start that ‘I am not here just to prepare these students to pass tests so they can move ahead and become successful and take their dutiful place in society.’”

Zinn’s books are based on the premise that the United States has been an oppressive society from the start and that it needs to be thoroughly transformed on a redistributionist model. In the interview, Zinn rejects the concept of American exceptionalism and urges teachers to present the U.S. as “just one other nation in the world.”

**Social justice is a redistributionist political agenda.**

“Give students heroes other than the traditional heroes – other than the presidents of the United States who dominate most history instruction,” Zinn urged K-12 teachers. “Give them the story of Cindy Sheehan. Give them the story of the Iraq Veterans Against the War. Give them the story of the environmentalists – the tree-huggers – and the people who are protesting what’s happening to our forests.”

The *Whose Wars?* guide devotes three full chapters to telling teachers how to incorporate use of the so-called documentary, “Fahrenheit 9/11,” by leftist filmmaker Michael Moore in the curriculum. According to the film’s official website, the film is a “searing examination of the Bush administration’s actions in the wake of the tragic events of 9/11.” The release describes, “a nation . . . lulled into accepting a piece of legislation, the USA Patriot Act, that infringes on basic civil rights,” and “illustrates the awful human cost to U.S. soldiers and their families.”

The prominence given such a propagandistic work to the exclusion of more even-handed analyses speaks volumes about the point of view that teachers are being urged to advocate in their classrooms. One chapter advises that since the Moore film “tackles complicated issues and is filled with information many students may be unfamiliar with,” teachers should have their students draw pictures that allow them to express their “feelings.” So rather than teaching children useful knowledge in an objective way, what really counts is to manipulate their attitudes and exploit their feelings.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE AS REDISTRIBUTIONIST POLITICAL AGENDA

So what is the “social justice” for which the multiculturalists wish retrained teachers to advocate? How does it differ from ordinary justice? A review of their materials indicates they never quite define the term; however, clearly it anticipates some sort of state-ordered redistribution of power and economic resources – a “spread the wealth” ethos.

Noting that justice pertains to the rules of individual conduct, Nobel laureate economist F. A. Hayek once pointed out that “no rules of the conduct of individuals can have the effect that the good things of life are distributed in a particular manner.” He added that, “the idea that things ought to be designed in a just manner means, in effect, that we must abandon the market and turn to a planned economy in which somebody decides how much each ought to have, and that means, of course, that we can only have it at the price of the complete abolition of personal liberty.”<sup>11</sup>

In other words, social justice is a redistributionist political agenda any individual or party is free to advocate. But when a teacher does that advocacy in lieu of teaching children literature, math, history, and computer skills, the teacher is engaging in indoctrination, pure and simple.

In 2007, the National Association of Scholars (NAS) discovered in modern social-work education a similarly scandalous penchant for indoctrinating. In the process of strongly condemning this trend in higher education, NAS provided the following thoughtful definition of “social justice” as currently practiced:

**“...too much celebrating diversity and not enough combating the evils of racism.”**

“Use of the term ‘social justice’ today generally equates with the advocacy of more egalitarian access to income through state-sponsored redistribution. The phrase is also frequently used to justify new egalitarian rights for individuals and whole categories of people – i.e., legally enforceable claims of individuals or groups against the state itself.”<sup>12</sup>

As for multicultural education, current NAME president Paul C. Gorski, an assistant professor of “interdisciplinary and integrative studies” at George Mason University’s New Century College in Fairfax, Virginia, has asserted that “the transformation of society” is the ultimate goal.

“In a sense,” he declares at [edchange.org](http://edchange.org) (an online portal that he founded and administers), “multicultural education uses the transformation of self and school as a metaphor and starting place for the transformation of society. Ultimately, social justice and equity in schools can, and should, mean social justice and equity in society. Only then will the purpose of multicultural education be achieved.”<sup>13</sup>

## TARGETING “OPPRESSION”

Gorski doesn’t seem to believe that social justice is achievable within a capitalistic society, which he condemns as “oppressive.” “This is precisely the reason,” he asserts, “that it is not enough to continue working within an ailing, oppressive, and outdated system to make changes, when the problems in education are themselves symptoms of a system that continues to be controlled by the economic elite.”

“One does not need to study education too closely to recognize that schools consistently provide continuing privilege to the privileged and continuing struggle for the struggling with very little hope of upward mobility.”

Conducting a workshop at the 2006 NAME gathering in Phoenix, Gorski derided what he characterized as public schools’ token displays of multiculturalism, along the lines of “Taco Night.” There is, he said, “too much celebrating diversity and not enough combating the evils of racism.” Gorski

made clear the he believes multiculturalism is about power politics. Rather than celebrating ethnic foods and fun, he told the teachers, multicultural education “is a political movement and process that attempts to secure social justice for individuals and communities, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, home language, sexual orientation, disability, religion, socioeconomic status, or any other individual or group identity.” In handouts given the teachers, he added, “Multicultural education insists that comprehensive school reform can be achieved only through a critical analysis of systems of power and privilege.” The ultimate goal, he concluded, “is the elimination of educational inequities,” which include “racism, sexism, heterosexism, and classism.”



NAME workshops relentlessly pound away at so-called white privilege and Christian privilege. The New Orleans annual conference will include a day-long institute entitled, “The Unbearable Whiteness of Being: Dismantling White Privilege and Supporting Anti-Racist Education in Our Classrooms and Schools,” taught by Heather Hackman of St. Cloud State University.

Like dozens of other NAME workshops, this one (which has become a staple of annual conferences) clearly is intended to induce guilt in white teachers as a way to convert them to the “social justice” cause. The program states that it is “designed to help educators to identify and deconstruct their own white privilege and in so doing more deeply commit themselves to anti-racist teaching and critical multicultural education.” By stereotyping all whites as “privileged” (even those living in poverty), this approach practices the very sort of racism it preaches against.

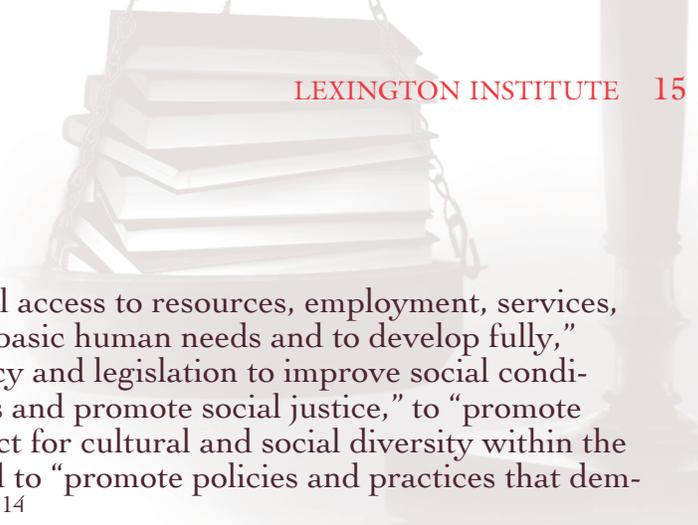
School boards and administrations may think they are sending teachers to NAME in order to learn ways to wholesomely “celebrate diversity” in their schools. However, as indicated above, Gorski and other NAME officials consider the celebratory “Heroes and Holidays” stage only a small step toward the desired curricular transformation. The EdChange Multicultural Pavilion states that, among other failings, the celebrating-diversity approach “trivializes the overall experiences, contributions, struggles, and voices of non-dominant groups, fitting directly into a Eurocentric, male-centric curriculum.” Instead, classes are supposed to be re-gearred to “social action and awareness,” with concentration on such issues as “racism, sexism, and classism.”

## COMPELLED IDEOLOGY

**A**fter studying social work education, the National Association of Scholars reported last year that the accrediting body – the Council on Social Work Education – requires social work programs to prepare students to advocate for “social and economic justice,” “distributive justice,” and “nondiscriminatory social and economic systems,” and to have students grasp something called “the global interconnections of oppression.”

**The heaviest cost comes in precious time lost for learning.**

Social work students also are obliged to abide by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers, which means they must “engage in social and political action that seeks to



ensure that all people have equal access to resources, employment, services, and opportunities to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully,” to “advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions to meet basic human needs and promote social justice,” to “promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally,” and to “promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference.”<sup>14</sup>

The mission statements and course offerings of social work education are replete with much of the politicized content found in K-12 multiculturalism. For example, a University of Michigan course is set up to prepare students to use “political advocacy as a form of mobilization” with special emphasis on “organizing communities of color, women, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender populations, and underrepresented groups in U.S. society.”

NAS called upon U.S. colleges and universities that offer social work education to eliminate such “ideological tests and dogmatic commitments.” Using classrooms for indoctrination is problematic in higher education but even more insidious when practiced on impressionable elementary and secondary students as a result of teachers traveling at taxpayer expense to workshops such as those NAME conducts in the name of multiculturalism.

Teachers and teachers-in-training need to know that when they are urged to be multiculturalists and social-justice warriors in their K-12 classrooms, they are being asked to do a lot more than teach an appreciation of America’s component cultures.

They are being asked to sign on to a political agenda.

School boards and administrators using tax dollars to pay the way for multicultural training also ought to know what they are buying. They may think they are sending their teachers to acquire new knowledge and skills. Instead, their teachers are being asked to come back and spread left-wing political dogma in their teaching.

The cost to send a classroom teacher to one of these five-day indoctrinating sessions is not a minor item. The registration fee for NAME’s New Orleans conference is \$375 per NAME member or \$475 per non-member. Each day-long or half-day institute costs an additional \$60 to \$175. Despite its stated aversion to economic elitism, NAME always schedules its meetings at pricey hotels – in this case, one charging \$159 per night for a single room. And of course, there is the cost of airfare from different cities, ranging from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars.

Not to be forgotten is the cost of a substitute teacher for a week, and the loss of quality learning time for students left behind. Indeed, an opportunity-to-

learn cost is exacted when teachers are sitting in a circle speculating about Christian privilege instead of teaching their pupils U.S. or world history, math, or computer skills. The cost mounts when factoring in the time lost for teachers to be engaged in constructive professional development focusing on their subject-matter mastery and instructional skills. Ultimately, the heaviest cost comes in precious time lost for learning because teachers have been convinced they need to push a leftist agenda.

As Sol Stern suggests, little chance exists that a challenge to “the hegemony of social justice teaching” will ever emerge from within the closed-minded circle of education schools and organizations.<sup>15</sup> However, it is perfectly legitimate for school boards to exercise oversight over what kind of training their district’s teachers are receiving at taxpayer-funded conferences and courses. The budget line item justifies scrutiny as a starting point. In addition, it is reasonable for school boards and administrators to examine the content of what teachers are being urged to carry back into their classrooms.

State legislatures and governors legitimately could get involved as well. Academic freedom gives Bill Ayers and Paul Gorski and other social-justice educators the right to say and write whatever they want about this country and its education system. However, they do not have a right to force their particular brand of social-justice activism on the public schools.



## ENDNOTES

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