

## **Apologists for terrorism should NOT influence CA curricula**

### *Open Letter to School Superintendents*

Dear Superintendent,

We write to encourage you to join Superintendent Tony Thurmond, Governor Gavin Newsom, and President Joe Biden's statements (see below) denouncing the Hamas terrorists who were responsible for the brutal slaughter of more than 1400 people in the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. At least 30 American citizens were murdered, and several more were abducted.

While this terrorist attack was happening, the Coalition for Liberated Ethnic Studies (CLES) was publicly making excuses for terrorism. This is the same group that is actively training teachers and developing curricula already accepted in many K-12 classrooms. California taxpayers should not be funding education and training that is based in hate and we urge you to end any contracts you have with these organizations.

CLES represents 33 organizations that purport to provide Ethnic Studies expertise (Please see the list of CLES affiliated organizations at the end). Just two days after this rampage, CLES promoted a rally entitled "Long Live Palestinian Resistance" (see below). Palestinians and their supporters use the word "resistance" to describe the actions of Hamas and other terror actions against Israelis and Jews. In this case, the "resistance" was a terrorist campaign that intentionally targeted civilians, including murdering hundreds of young people at a dance festival, killing children in front of their parents, kidnapping babies and the elderly, torching and desecrating bodies, shooting, and burning babies, raping women, and the gruesome list goes on.

CLES promotes the elimination of the state of Israel. In recent social media posts, CLES amplified calls for the end of the State of Israel. As shown below, CLES reposted a social media post calling for "Palestine to be free from the River to the Sea." This statement of "liberation" is really a call for the destruction of the world's only Jewish state. If the actions of Hamas on October 7 are any indication, the process of "freeing Palestine" would mean the murder and/or degradation of half of the world's Jewish population.

It is extremely troubling that numerous school districts have hired, or are thinking about hiring, CLES as a partner in providing K12 Ethnic Studies, training teachers, and developing curricula. CLES – the group that gives cover to Hamas's acts of terror and which supports the elimination of Israel – has no place in our children's classrooms. Their actions and the positions they espouse create a hostile atmosphere for students and an unsafe environment in our schools. CLES activities breach the anti-discrimination mandate of California Education Code 220 and Title VI of federal education law; they fly in the face of the values of California and this country.

In addition to CLES' Ethnic Studies curricula, new curricula have developed since the attack purporting to explain the events. Sadly, many of these resources are trying to paint the recent Hamas terrorism as part of the larger "conflict" between Israel and the Palestinians. This obfuscates the issue in two ways: first, it legitimizes terrorism as a means of "resistance", and second, it ignores Hamas' ultimate objective to eliminate Israel and kill Jews – it does not seek to establish a free state of Palestine but rather an Islamic caliphate. Ultimately, these two missteps result in a growing antisemitism across the United States. In response to these new resources, the Coalition for Empowered Education has created its own [list of resources](#) on how to talk about the conflict. This resource gives educators an additional and more balanced tool to explore recent events without promoting terrorism as an acceptable form of response to complex geopolitical tensions.

We urge you to safeguard our schools and ensure school districts refrain from utilizing the curriculum or consulting with the Coalition of Liberated Ethnic Studies and their affiliated personnel. Additionally, we urge you to not rely solely on emerging curricula to explain recent events, but to consider different perspectives when educating our children on the recent tragedy.

Schools should not be vehicles for hate.

Coalition for Empowered Education

Website: <https://empowered-ed.org/>

Contact: [richmond@ilvalues.org](mailto:richmond@ilvalues.org)

## Newsom, Thurmond and Biden Public Statements



**Tony Thurmond**

@TonyThurmond

My heart breaks seeing the violence unfolding in Israel today. These terrorist attacks from Hamas are despicable and horrific. My prayers are with the innocent victims, and I fully stand with Israel in its right to defend itself.

**Office of the Governor of California**

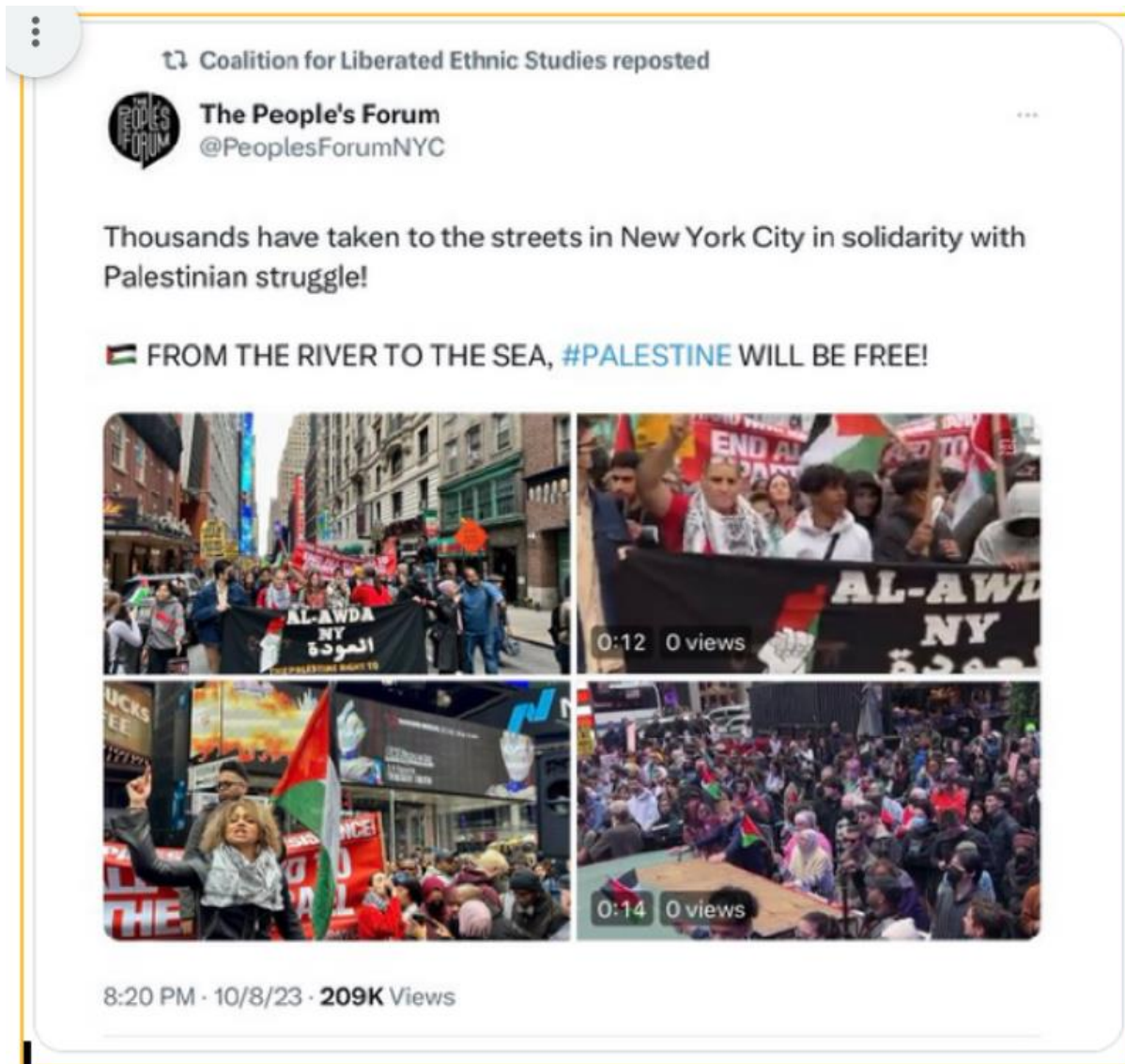
@CAGovernor

The State of Israel experienced a horrific attack by Hamas terrorists that left hundreds dead, over a thousand wounded and dozens of civilians and soldiers taken hostage. CA unequivocally condemns the attacks and will light the State Capitol on Monday night in support of Israel.

President Biden said from the White House that he told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the United States “stands with the people of Israel in the face of these terrorist assaults. Israel has the right to defend itself and its people, full stop. There’s never a justification for terrorist attacks and my administration’s support for Israeli’s security is rock solid and unwavering.”

## Screenshots from the CLES Instagram account with context

**CLES retweeted a statement calling for the destruction of Israel.** ("From the River to the Sea" INCLUDES all land of the State of Israel. What "Free Palestine" means is that Israel as a Jewish state has no right to exist. "Palestine" is the ENTIRE land of Israel. For Hamas, "Free Palestine" means to eradicate Jews and the entity known as Israel and to make it an Arab land, by any means necessary). The picture shares photos from a rally at which Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was condemned for the outspoken anti-Semitism and bigotry.



Coalition for Liberated Ethnic Studies reposted

**The People's Forum**  
@PeoplesForumNYC

Thousands have taken to the streets in New York City in solidarity with Palestinian struggle!

🇲🇵 FROM THE RIVER TO THE SEA, #PALESTINE WILL BE FREE!

0:12 0 views

0:14 0 views

8:20 PM · 10/8/23 · 209K Views

This CLES post is like blaming world trade center employees after 9/11. To clarify, Israel returned control of all Gaza settlements in 2005 (in exchange for peace). The residents of Gaza elected Hamas to govern, and they have been in control since 2007. Sadly, Hamas has used billions in international aid, including funding from the United Nations and Iran, to build bombs and terror tunnels rather than infrastructure to support the health, wealth, and education of their people. This is another example of how those who support Liberated Ethnic Studies are framing the recent attack as an acceptable form of resistance.



A screenshot of a social media post on a dark background. At the top left is a circular profile picture for 'liberated.esc' with a red and white design. To its right is the text 'liberated.esc 3h'. Further right are icons for play, mute, and a three-dot menu. The main content is a large black rectangle with white text. At the bottom left of this rectangle is '3/9' and at the bottom right is the 'JVP' logo, which consists of a white starburst shape followed by the letters 'JVP'. Below the main rectangle, the text '@jewishvoiceforpeace' is visible.

**The Israeli government may have just declared war, but its war on Palestinians started over 75 years ago. Israeli apartheid and occupation — and United States complicity in that oppression — are the source of all this violence. Reality is shaped by when you start the clock.**

3/9 

@jewishvoiceforpeace

CLES posted this on October 8, celebrating a so called "victory" the day after 250 teens were slaughtered at a dance, women were raped, grandmothers and children hauled out of their bed and shot or taken hostage...all innocent Israeli civilian victims. We need to separate the ideology that equates terrorism with resistance and give a broader and more nuanced perspective of the current situation.

liberated.esc 44m

**LONG LIVE  
PALESTINIAN  
RESISTANCE**

RALLY AND MARCH - MONDAY -  
OCTOBER 9TH - 4:00PM  
CAMBRIDGE CITY HALL  
BRING YOUR FLAGS AND VOICES.

**النصر لنا**  
VICTORY IS OURS

@palestinianyouthmovement

## **Coalition for Liberated Ethnic Studies Listed Affiliated Organizations**

5 Elements SF

Abolitionist Teaching Network

Academia Cesar Chavez

American Indian & Native Studies (Texas)

Arab Resource & Organizing Center

BorderLinks

Brokada Filipino Mens Healing Collective

Community Responsive Education (CRE)

Community Voices for Public Education

Education for Liberation Minnesota

Educators for Antiracism, Inc.

El Griot & Areito Project

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities

ÉXITO UC Santa Barbara

Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)

James Logan HS Ethnic Studies Department

Jewish Voice for Peace (National)

Legacy Youth Project

Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium

Mexican American Studies Teachers' Academy

Midwest Center for School Transformation

Minnesota Ethnic Studies Coalition

National Black Lives Matter at School

Pin@y Educational Partnerships (PEP)

Queers Undermining Israeli Terrorism (QUIT!)

San Francisco Peer Resources

Seeding Change

Social Justice Academy of San Leandro High School

Teach Palestine Project of the Middle East Children's Alliance

Teachers 4 Social Justice

Umuwi Ethnic Studies

VietRISE

Xicanx Institute for Teaching & Organizing, XITO