



## Racial Indoctrination and Parental Backlash

**P**rogressives appear intent on dividing Americans along racial lines, creating a culture of tribalism.

Typical in this regard was President Biden's speech in Tulsa, Oklahoma on June 1, commemorating the deadly racial riots in that city a hundred years ago following an alleged sexual assault of a young white woman by a black man. A 35-block district of black homes and businesses went up in flames. While the number of deaths of blacks and whites is disputed, nobody denies the horrific nature of the riots.

Biden used the occasion to fan the flames of present-day racial grievance instead of tamping them down. First, he made the implausible announcement that "terrorism from white supremacy is the most lethal threat to the homeland today." He went on to assert that the misnamed "deadly attack" on January 6 in the nation's capital, and state efforts to regulate voting, "are echoes of the same problem" [white supremacy].<sup>1</sup>

Referring to the emergence of the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s, he declared, "The flames from those burning crosses torched every region of the country. . . . And that hate became embedded systematically and systemically in our laws and our culture. We do ourselves no favors by pretending none of this ever happened or that it doesn't impact us today, because it does still impact us today."<sup>2</sup>

To suggest that hateful KKK ideas remain impactful in the U.S. today is demagogic. Former Vice President Mike Pence hit the nail on the head when he observed in a speech in New Hampshire, "One of the most disturbing developments of the past few months has been the Biden administration's wholehearted embrace of the radical left's all-encompassing assault on American culture and values."<sup>3</sup>

Biden and his party clearly want to view contemporary America through the lens of race. Biden's speech manifested the ethos of a cultural revolution that is being promoted by the Black Lives Matter organization, woke corporations, professors, educators and state officials.

The Biden team is currently pushing a so-called anti-racist agenda in schools. One avenue runs through the \$200 billion in federal Covid-19 relief funds for reopening K-12 schools

over the past year. A handbook from Biden's Department of Education is encouraging school districts to spend some of these funds to have "intentional conversations related to race," linking to a race-obsessed Abolitionist Teaching Network document that exhorts educators to:

- "remove all punitive or disciplinary practices that spirit-murder black, brown and indigenous children"
- require "a commitment to learning from students, families and educators who disrupt Whiteness and other forms of oppression"
- Offer "free, antiracist therapy for White educators and support staff," and "free, radical self/collective care and therapy for educators and support staff of color."<sup>4</sup>

Biden's new head of the Department of Education overseeing these efforts is Miguel Cardona, who as Connecticut education commissioner oversaw the creation of America's first state-mandated ethnic studies course.<sup>5</sup>

### The Virus of Critical Race Theory

**P**rogressives understand that indoctrinating the young is essential to their cultural revolution. They found a ready tool to push this agenda in schools through "critical race theory," a claim that America's institutions, Constitution and laws and are inherently racist. The theory maintains that white people have erected social, economic and legal barriers to protect their social, economic and political privilege. This alleged systemic racism explains why free markets, the criminal justice system, the Constitution, the Electoral College and the U.S. educational system are instruments to maintain white privilege and keep "people of color" oppressed.

Critical race theory has become an instrument to attack American foundational principles. It emerged from critical theory derived from the Frankfurt school of Marxism that was introduced in intellectual circles in the 1950s; then was introduced to law schools in the 1970s as critical legal theory; and was further developed in literary criticism in the 1990s. Critical race theory once was found only in college

and university classrooms.<sup>6</sup> Now it is infiltrating K-12 education. In both public and private schools across the country, students are being taught about the evils of “whiteness” and about America’s wickedness.<sup>7</sup>

The Philadelphia school system was an early adopter. It released its “Antiracism Declaration” in 2019 calling for teachers to be active in addressing racism. This Declaration postulated, “Race is the social construction that set and built the infrastructure for the United States we know today.” It continued, “Racism is the root of all other forms of injustice and provides the nourishment needed for other systems of oppression to thrive. As such, in order to destroy the tree, we cannot simply pick at the leaves or chop at the trunk. We must destroy the root.”<sup>8</sup>

In the last year this destructive agenda has spread like wildfire. In Buffalo, the city government’s Office of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Initiatives announced last July a new curriculum for fifth grade students.<sup>9</sup> At one point, the website parroted Black Lives Matter language in a lesson plan, stating, “We are committed to disrupting the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement by supporting each other as extended families and ‘villages’ that collectively care for one another, and especially ‘our’ children to the degree that mothers, parents, and children are comfortable.”<sup>10</sup> It turned out that parents were not “comfortable” calling for the destruction of the nuclear family, and the Orwellian Office of Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Initiatives took down that language.

### The Racism of ‘Anti-Racism’

‘Anti-racist’ initiatives in schools are popping up all over the United States. At the private school Shipley in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, parents were asked to “decenter whiteness at home and in [their] family.”<sup>11</sup> Parents were warned that complimenting their children’s blue eyes only reinforces European standards of beauty. In Las Vegas, a public charter school in a yearlong course required seniors to list elements of their identity that would be regarded as privileged. A black mother sued the school over this requirement.

The challenge to white privilege took a disturbing turn when math education came under attack as racist. California education officials proposed a mathematics curriculum framework for K-12 called “A Pathway to Equitable Math Instruction: Dismantling Racism in Mathematics Instruction.” The framework contended that teachers addressing student’s mistakes forthrightly should be seen as another indicator of “white supremacy culture in the mathematics classroom,” which focuses on “getting the right answer” and teaching math in a “linear fashion.” Teachers were instructed to reject the “concept of mathematics being purely objective as unequivocally false.”<sup>12</sup>

To tar teachers demanding correct answers to math problems as white supremacists does a profound disservice to all students. This math educational framework to deny the existence of right or wrong answers has also been proposed in Oregon and Washington.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, the Arizona Department of Education produced an “equity toolkit” based on critical race theory that found implicit racism in three-month-old babies who allegedly preferred to “look more at faces that match the race of their caregivers.”<sup>14</sup> The toolkit instructed parents to begin addressing racism early with their babies. The Arizona Department of Education drew upon the National Association of Independent Schools 2014 report “What Children Need to Know about Race,” which asserted that being white means being “ignorant, color-blind, and racist.” Beverly Daniel Tatum, author of *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria* (1997), similarly contends that “there are only three ways to be white: ignorant, color-blind, and racist.”<sup>15</sup>

### The Disreputable 1619 Project

As part of the new indoctrination program, schools across the country are adopting the so-called 1619 Project, developed by the *New York Times*. This intellectually shallow and ill-informed project teaches that America began not in 1776 but in 1619, the year that African slaves were first brought to colonial Jamestown. The project further instructs students that the U.S. Constitution was adopted to protect slaveholder privilege.

The 1619 Project came out of a series of articles written in 2019 by the journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones, who won a Pulitzer Prize. In partnership with the *Times* and the Pulitzer Center, a curriculum was created based on the 1619 Project, teaching that the Founding Fathers were intent on preserving black slavery, and that the U.S. Constitution and the Electoral College were instruments consciously designed to preserve slavery. The curriculum maintains that social and political structures designed to protect slavery are embodied in today’s laws, policies, political systems and culture. This curriculum has been distributed to at least 3,500 schools.

In a video that is part of the curriculum, Hannah-Jones says after a series of clips showing pilgrims, American Founders and the Statue of Liberty, “The only way you can believe that this country was the most liberatory democratic nation that the world has ever seen is to, of course, erase the indigenous people who were already here...and to ignore the enslaved Africans.”<sup>16</sup> Hannah-Jones and the 1619 Project argue that everything in America is poisoned with the legacy of slavery, including law enforcement, health coverage, maternity leave, minimum wage laws, union membership, highway systems and school performance. (Biden echoes these sentiments in his speeches.)

Hannah-Jones has found ready acceptance in schools. She has stated that already seven school districts have adopted the 1619 Project as mandatory reading for high school students.

Well-regarded academic historians, mostly on the political left, have contested Hannah-Jones's historical interpretations, including Princeton University history professors James McPherson and Sean Wilentz, James Oakes at City College of New York, and Gordon Wood, the leading historian of the early American republic. Their detailed critiques have been generally dismissed or ignored by the *New York Times* and “woke” educators.

For example, these historians utterly discredited the claim that the American Revolution was ignited by the threat to slavery and the slave trade posed by the 1772 *Somerset* decision, in which the British high court ruled that “chattel slavery is not supported by English common law.” Professor Wilentz pointed out that this decision posed no threat to American slavery. The British did not abolish slavery in their West Indies colonies until more than a half century later. Furthermore, during the Revolution slaveholders were assured that they could keep their slaves if they sided with the British.

Another important point is that many of the northern colonies that sided with the Revolution, especially Massachusetts and Vermont, opposed slavery. Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and Rhode Island either legislated against the slave trade or imposed prohibitive duties on it. Measures to abolish the slave trade were vetoed by British officials.

### An Overdue Concession to Truth

After withering criticism by distinguished historians, the *New York Times* belatedly conceded in March 2020 that protecting slavery in the colonies was not one of the main reasons the colonies went to war with Britain.

Also challenged was the 1619 Project's assertion that the Constitution protected slavery through the creation of the Electoral College. Wilentz showed that delegates who opposed the Electoral College came from the slave states, which feared the Electoral College would ultimately benefit northern states, even with the 3/5 compromise that allowed slave states to count slaves as 3/5 of the population.<sup>17</sup>

The revelations of the shoddy scholarship of Hannah-Jones apparently stood in the way of her getting a tenured appointment in journalism this year at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. After a concerned alumnus/donor made inquiries to the university board of trustees, her appointment was made with only a five-year contract.

Unfortunately, the 1619 Project lives on in instructional materials, abetted by Biden appointees. Not only K-12 schools but also Pentagon military training programs are incorporating the 1619 Project and critical race theory, at the behest of Biden's Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

Progressives have overstepped in pushing critical race theory in K-12 education. Around the country, parents have organized to resist indoctrination of their children. In June the Florida Board of Education, with the support of Governor Ron DeSantis, unanimously voted to ban the teaching of critical race theory in the state's public schools. At least five Republican-controlled state legislatures have passed bans on critical race theory or related topics in recent months, and numerous other state legislatures are mulling such bans.

Parent grassroots groups are springing up to fight critical race theory. In Virginia, parents launched a nonprofit membership association called Parents Defending Education. The movement began when parents organized in Loudoun County, Virginia to recall members of the school board. Their petition to recall the school board for proposing a critical race theory curriculum garnered 1,500 signatures on the first day and grew from there.<sup>18</sup>

### Schools Can Be Shamed

Parent protests have been widespread. In Southlake School District in Dallas, parents formed a political action committee to oust the school board members pushing critical race theory.<sup>19</sup> Across Arizona, parents have appeared at school board district meetings protesting critical race theory.<sup>20</sup> In California, parents organized Protect Our Kids and many other organizations.<sup>21</sup> In New York City, parents in what is described as an “underground network” are challenging public and private schools over critical race theory in the classroom.<sup>22</sup>

The heat was turned up in New York City when a math teacher at the private Grace Church School went public with a letter critical of the racial culture in the school. In a secretly taped conversation with the school's headmaster, the latter acknowledged that school programming demonized white children.

An open letter written by a parent, Andrew Gutmann, announced that he was withdrawing his daughter from the highly selective New York private school Brearley. His letter went viral. It read in part, “I cannot tolerate a school that not only judges my daughter by the color of her skin, but encourages and instructs her to prejudice others by theirs. By viewing every element of education, every aspect of history, and every facet of society through the lens of skin color and race, we are desecrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and utterly violating the movement for which such civil rights leaders believed, fought, and died.”<sup>23</sup> Parents at another exclusive New York private school, Dalton, have also organized.

Andrew Gutmann expressed a common belief among American parents: Our nation is exceptional in having a truly culturally, religiously and ethnically diverse population bound by the rule of law. All Americans understand the legacy of

slavery and racism. Our nation has sought to overcome this legacy through legislation and protest. Great advances have been made. What parents do not want is a tribal society. They want their children to judge and be judged without reference to race. Today's left embraces a tribalism in which whites are denounced as privileged and "people of color" are seen as oppressed.

Radical progressives offer nothing more than group conflict based on the color of one's skin. Americans of all races are rejecting this vision. This is especially true of parents. They understand that American history is richer than just a story of slavery and racial conflict. The story of America features great progress in furthering civil rights for minorities. Tribalism and grievance-mongering lead to a divided, dysfunctional and unstable society. Americans want continuing progress and know it won't come if the so-called "progressives" get their way.

- 1 David Zukerman, "Biden's Big Lies in Tulsa," *American Thinker*, June 1, 2021.
- 2 <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/06/02/remarks-by-president-biden-commemorating-the-100th-anniversary-of-the-tulsa-race-massacre/>.
- 3 <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/pence-targeting-critical-race-theory-declares-america-is-not-a-racist-nation>.
- 4 Max Eden, "Team Biden Wants White Teachers to Undergo Anti-Racist 'Therapy,'" *New York Post*, May 26, 2021.
- 5 Max Eden, "Biden's Would-Be Education Secretary Pioneered Classroom Race Theory," *New York Post*, February 3, 2021.
- 6 An excellent discussion of the intellectual development of critical studies is found in Helen Pluckrose and James Lindsay, *Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Every-*

*thing about Race, Gender and Identity* (2020), and Stephen R. Soukup, *The Dictatorship of Woke Capital* (2021), especially Chapters 2 and 3.

- 7 <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/some-examples-of-critical-race-theory-in-schools>.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 <https://www.buffaloschools.org/domain/9000>.
- 10 <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/some-examples-of-critical-race-theory-in-schools>.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Williamson M. Evers, "California Leftists Try to Cancel Math Class," *Wall Street Journal*, May 18, 2021.
- 13 See also *Mindszenty Report*, March 2021, p. 4.
- 14 Vivek Saxena, "AZ Dept. of Ed. 'Equity Toolkit' Tells White Parents to Address Racism with Children as Young as 3 mos.," *BizPacReview*, March 3, 2021.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Krystina Skurk, [https://www.realclearpublicaffairs.com/articles/2020/07/16/critical\\_race\\_theory\\_in\\_k12\\_education\\_498969.html](https://www.realclearpublicaffairs.com/articles/2020/07/16/critical_race_theory_in_k12_education_498969.html).
- 17 Rich Lowry, "The Flagrant Distortions and Subtle Lies of the '1619 Project,'" *National Review*, October 7, 2019; James Anderson, "University Professors Send Letter Requesting Corrections to 1619 Project," *Daily Princetonian*, February 6, 2020; Jon Fea, "Historian James Oakes on 1619 Project," *Current*, December 1, 2019, hotair.com, January 1, 2020; Shelby Talcott, "'Exposing the Falsehoods': Historian Lays Out Key Details He Says Taint NYT 1619 Project," *Daily Caller*, January 22, 2020; and Michael Barone, "Scholars Are Eviscerating the New York Times' 1619 Project," *New York Post*, January 24, 2020. For more details on the Electoral College argument, see *Mindszenty Report*, October 2019.
- 18 "Parents in America's Wealthiest County Launch Campaign Ad to Recall Virginia School Board for 'Infecting' Children with Critical Race Theory," *Daily Mail*, May 29, 2021.
- 19 "In Brief, A Model for Fighting CRT in America's Schools," *patriotpost.us*, May 6, 2021.
- 20 Brandon Morse, "Exposed Emails Show School Principal Scheming to Silence 'Wacko' Parents After They Reject CRT Curriculum," *RedState*, May 27, 2021.
- 21 Larry Sand, "Critical Race Theory or Crazy Radical Tantrums," *RealClearPolitics*, May 29, 2021.
- 22 Dana Kennedy, "Inside the Growing Underground Network of Parents Fighting 'Anti-Racism' in New York Schools," *New York Post*, April 24, 2021.
- 23 <https://legalinsurrection.com/2021/04/parent-at-exclusive-nyc-brearley-school-demands-an-end-to-the-destructive-and-anti-intellectual-claptrap-known-as-antiracism/>.

## Gratitude and a Suggestion

We are so grateful to our loyal readers for your long support of the *Mindszenty Report*, now in its 63rd year of publication. You are what keeps us going. Please consider spreading the word by giving gift subscriptions to younger family members, pastors and friends, and ordering reprints or making copies to distribute at your church or club. Our web site version of the *Mindszenty Report* may be shared on social media. The following recent letter (abridged for publication) is representative of our readers' appreciation:

"Mindszenty Folks: I've been reading your Mindszenty Report for many years. The insights into politics, and particularly into communism, are so good. I especially appreciate the accuracy of the facts cited in the Report which support your insights. Thanks to all of you for your efforts." –Greg C., Newark, CA, April 2021

## Mindszenty Report Reprints

1 copy	\$1.00	20 copies	\$12.00
10 copies	\$6.00	50 copies	\$20.00
		100 copies	\$30.00

**THE SPIRITUAL PATH OF BLESSED KARL.** Two special guests describe the faithful life and cause for canonization of the last emperor of Austria and king of Hungary, whom Venerable Joseph Mindszenty considered a saint. Ask for 6/21

**THE NORMALIZATION OF BIG LIES IN POLITICS.** Shameless lies by politicians and their media enablers are a worsening problem, as indicated by a few recent examples. Ask for 5/21

The Mindszenty Report is published monthly by

Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation

7800 Bonhomme Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63105

Phone 314-727-6279 Fax 314-727-5897

Subscription rate: \$25 per year

Outside the U.S.A. \$35

The Mindszenty Report is not copyrighted, and subscribers are invited to have it printed in their local newspapers.

Contributions to the Cardinal Mindszenty Foundation are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

web site: [www.mindszenty.org](http://www.mindszenty.org)  
orders.inquiries@mindszenty.org