



Written by [Annalisa Pesek](#) on May 21, 2021

The Sleight of Hand of “Just Communities”

“Give me just one generation of youth, and I’ll transform the whole world.” — Vladimir Lenin

SANTA BARBARA, Calif. — More and more parents nationwide, such as Santa Barbara resident James Fenkner, are courageously speaking out against the implementation of critical race theory (CRT) and other anti-racist curricula being pushed in the classroom.

Having lived in the former Soviet Union, Fenkner recognized the signs of Marxist beliefs and values taking hold in his daughter’s classroom in 2017. Up until this point, the father of four had been extremely trusting of U.S. schools. Then he was introduced to the curriculum of [Just Communities Central Coast](#), a longtime contractor of the Santa Barbara Unified School District (SBUSD).



Tero Vesalainen/iStock/Getty Images Plus

Fenkner claims that Just Communities’ programs are designed around a “radicalized Marxist agenda that is spreading like wildfire.” Having witnessed firsthand the destructive forces of communism in Russia, he knew he had to do something to stop it.

With Jim Jones cult survivor Sheridan Rosenberg, Fenkner founded [Fair Education Santa Barbara](#), a 501(c)(3) advocating for children, students, and teachers in California public schools and universities.

In a September 2019 lawsuit filed in Santa Barbara Superior Court, Fair Education sued Just Communities, along with SBUSD, and then-school superintendent Cary Matsouka.

The lawsuit alleged the \$1.6 million curriculum administered by the social justice nonprofit, which offered voluntary classes to students, promoted “implicit bias training which impermissibly discriminates against persons on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion and other factors in violation of the United States and California Constitutions and various Federal and State Statutes.”

For two years, Fair Education filed numerous [declarations](#) in California district court citing troubling and covert experiences of students attending Just Communities programs.

In one [declaration](#), a concerned parent of a junior high schooler enrolled in the “Talking in Class” program wrote in an email to Fair Education that her son “came home [after class] crying very upset saying that he hated being white. That white people were awful!”

“I can understand why some Latino kids don’t like us.... Mom, for just a moment I truly felt like killing myself today,” exclaimed the student.



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The two-year-long legal battle, which brought to light many abuses within the Just Communities organization, amassed hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees for both nonprofits and the school district. The case partially ended with Fair Education dropping its final discrimination claim against Just Communities but appealing the federal court ruling by Judge Thomas Anderle that stated the district did not violate public bidding laws. Fair Education plans to appeal that technicality in an outside court.

Fenkner noted that Ronald Reagan-appointed Judge Anderle drastically shifted his perspective from the initial review of the case to the final decision, following the George Floyd incident and the Black Lives Matter protests that burned cities across America.

Yet some gains were made. Fenkner said the CEO of Just Communities was removed from his post owing to the allegations brought forward by Fair Education. So even if people in the small Santa Barbara community didn't agree with Fair Education's views of both CRT and the Just Communities' curriculum, exposing what was happening inside the nonprofit, including its cozy relationship with the school district and a number of other nonprofits, was one big benefit of the long fight.

"Ending Racism by Seeing It Everywhere"

Tragically, few Americans truly understand the odious philosophy of CRT and how it works. If they knew, they would be outraged.

"Antiracism," an underlying tenet of CRT, at first glance suggests the very noble idea of challenging any form of racism. Yet as an ideology, "antiracism" is one of the latest weapons in the Left's armory and a powerful tool used to indoctrinate children with progressive dogma, without parental consent.

Put simply, CRT embodies the very Orwellian idea of "ending racism by seeing it everywhere," as James Lindsay and Helen Pluckrose write in their book [Cynical Theories: How Activist Scholarship Made Everything About Race, Gender, and Identity — And Why This Harms Everyone](#).

Touted as an academic discipline, CRT stems from the idea of critical theory, started by the Frankfurt School of German communists who fled Nazi Germany to America in the 1930s. These Marxist scholars established themselves at top U.S. universities and criticized everything about capitalism, with the goal of breaking down capitalist society, the nuclear family, and Christianity. They emphasized Western society's weaknesses to bring it into disrepute and to spark a "people's" revolution. The ultimate goal: to overthrow a capitalist government and replace it with a socialist one.

Now a pervasive orthodoxy in U.S. institutions, CRT teaches that racism is about power and that only whites, or people who carry favor with whites, can be racist, because whites hold all the power and privilege. Thus, to destroy racism, one must destroy the white capitalist power structure.

Far From Over

According to the [Santa Barbara Independent](#), SBUSD superintendent Hilda Maldonado said "The district's commitment to equity is a top priority and addressing issues of discrimination and stereotyping is a challenge in education and in the many sectors of our society." Added Maldonado, "Implicit bias programs are successfully used by many corporations, organizations and other educational institutions, and I am pleased that the allegations that our programs are discriminatory have been dropped."

Reportedly, the district has not renewed its contract with Just Communities since March 2020, allegedly owing to COVID closures.

"What has to happen now, from the legal standpoint, to stop this radicalized agenda," said Fenkner, "is



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that we need to adjudicate this, but it's not going to happen in the Santa Barbara Superior Court, and since the appeals process reduces the chances of success, we are looking at how the schools are run and we are setting up our own learning pods."

He continued, "To teach a child is quite easy; you need a high-quality teacher and you need to pay the teacher well. We give out scholarships for students to attend these learning pods, and the kids in these programs are doing fantastic."

While the best solution is to take the children out of government schools altogether, Fenkner explained that CRT is everywhere, and if parents really want children to have a good education, they have to get involved and change the structure of the system itself.

"When we were standing up, nothing was going on until we got involved. On a national level, people are waking up across the country," he said.

As Christopher Rufo, a filmmaker and leading voice in the resistance of CRT in schools, stated, "When they see what is happening, Americans are naturally outraged.... Critical race theory promotes three ideas — race essentialism, collective guilt, and neo-segregation — which violate the basic principles of liberty and justice.... We must have courage — the fundamental virtue required in our time.... Truth and justice are on our side. If we can muster the courage, we will win."



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