

HOWARD ZINN AND THE STRUGGLE FOR REAL HISTORY IN THE UNITED STATES

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Criticisms of Howard Zinn's work on U.S. History are examined in the context of increasing emphasis on the idea of "American exceptionalism" in contemporary political and cultural discourse, and particularly the insertion of American exceptionalism into revised social studies standards for the state of Texas. Analysis focusing on the difference between Howard Zinn's approach to U.S. History and the approach taken by his critic, Lynne Cheney, reveals that there is a fundamental difference in how change is viewed by Cheney, as the achievement of a single unified American people striving together to improve life for everyone, versus Zinn's history, in which changes have resulted from struggles among people with conflicting interests, values, and beliefs. The idea of U.S. history as the history of "one nation, indivisible" is found to be a core tenet of this present version of American exceptionalism, and it is observed how this view has been incorporated into the Texas social studies standards, not only in the provision that explicitly requires teaching of American exceptionalism, but also in provisions that were amended to no longer recognize progressive changes as resulting from the struggles of specific groups of people. The paper concludes with the observation that the choice for educators is not only a choice between truthful or untruthful history, but more fundamentally between conflicting purposes for social education in the schools.

"American Exceptionalism" in Politics and School Curriculum

When Sarah Palin says that "our exceptional country" is "a light to the rest of the world" (Palin 2011), she is proclaiming belief in an idea of "American exceptionalism" that is heard with increasing frequency in recent years, in the ongoing culture wars, in political campaign seasons, and even sometimes in controversies over public school curriculum. Although the idea of American exceptionalism is often

represented as a matter of longstanding popular belief, it is only in recent decades that its current use in public discourse has emerged and mushroomed exponentially—with a marked spike in media frequency dating specifically from the week of the Republican National Convention in September of 2008, where Senator Sam Brownback used it in endorsing John McCain for President:

Are we going to keep America a shining city on a hill full of hope and optimism? [Leads the crowd in chanting:] YES WE WILL. Now ladies and gentlemen, I believe in American exceptionalism. That this is a special land and that to whom much is given much is required. We are blessed to be a blessing (Brownback 2008).¹

In December 2010, the historian of education Jonathan Zimmermann had already noted this language being ramped up in anticipation of the 2012 election cycle:

Is America ‘exceptional’?That’s becoming the battle cry of the Republican Party in its bid to unseat President Barack Obama in 2012. Sarah Palin, Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, Mike Huckabee and other GOP presidential hopefuls have all declared Obama insufficiently attuned to American exceptionalism. America is exceptional, they say, except our own president doesn’t appreciate it (Zimmerman 2010).

Writing for *The Nation*, Greg Grandin cites examples of Sarah Palin, Glenn Beck, Newt Gingrich, and John Boehner touting American exceptionalism in attacking President Obama, and the Democrats more generally, and notes that if you do a Google search on American exceptionalism, you “will be led to the musings of all the leading Republicans—Mitt Romney, Mitch McConnell, Gingrich, Liz Cheney, Dinesh D’Souza and, of course, Palin—who, using America as their mirror, preen their own awesomeness” (Grandin 2011).

The idea of American exceptionalism was officially inserted into public school curriculum when written into the Texas Social Studies standards in 2010. Kate Alexander reports this explanation by State Board of Education member Donald McLeroy, whose amendment inserted the American exceptionalism standard into the official Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) document:

'The United States is an exceptional nation. Most Americans would not regard that as a controversial statement. And there is good reason for that: It is true,' McLeroy wrote to justify adding a section on American exceptionalism. The section in the high school U.S. government standards will explore why American values are unique and touch on Alexis de Tocqueville's five values crucial to America's success as a democratic republic (Alexander 2010).

At the annual conservative National Education Policy Conference in 2011, McLeroy argued:

What kind of mind marginalizes, trivializes, and ignores these great ideas that have made America exceptional? It is the leftist mind. It is a mind ... that has not been taught real science and real history (McLeroy 2011).

Compared with other proposed changes (removing figures such as Thurgood Marshall and Cesar Chavez, and inserting conservative icons such as Phyllis Schlafly and Rush Limbaugh into the history standards, for example), the new requirement to teach American exceptionalism seems to have drawn less criticism, perhaps being viewed as, at worst, a possibly obnoxious but more generally meaningless and inconsequential ideological gesture.² This may accord with McLeroy's contention that most Americans would not regard it as a controversial matter, at least to the extent that it might be viewed as a vague requirement to promote a patriotic attitude, without the kind of specific required content that could make it a more contentious matter.

If, however, one takes seriously McLeroy's contention that "the leftist mind" of those who do not embrace American exceptionalism is a mind "that has not been taught...real history," it becomes clear to see that for him this is not a matter of teaching the same history, but with a different attitude. Instead, it is an issue of teaching "real history" as opposed to a different (not real) history. We are left, now, with this question: Is the choice for history in school curriculum (and in the broader curriculum of our nation's public discourse) essentially a choice of attitude and (perhaps) commitment, or is it really, in some way, a choice between two different histories? Criticism of the work of Howard Zinn as a source for history curriculum may provide a crucial clue for answering this question.

Sometimes critics of Zinn's work phrase their criticism in terms of subjective attitude or even mood. For example, in an interview by Walter Isaacson for the BookTV series *After Words* in March 2010, when asked for some examples of what he felt was "wrong in the way we taught American History," former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett offered this characterization of Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (2003):

Howard Zinn, who [was] a colleague of mine at Boston University, [has] an enormously successful book, but, the *People's History of the American Republic [sic]* is a politically tendentious book. You would be pretty depressed about America if that was the only book you read (Bennett and Isaacson 2010).

Bennett is not making any kind of comment or claim here that could be contested factually. What Bennett refers to as Zinn's "tendentiousness" is not something Zinn himself would deny, but something Zinn defends and justifies as a matter of acknowledging the stance he takes in doing history, recognizing that a "neutral" history—one with no standpoint whatsoever—is not really possible (Zinn 2002). And Bennett's claim that Zinn's work would leave you "pretty depressed about America" is simply Bennett's subjective opinion.

Bennett's characterization seems broadly consistent with these comments by Lynne Cheney, wife of then Vice-President Dick Cheney, who had been Bennett's successor as chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities:

I spend a lot of time worrying about what we teach in our schools, and I discovered that the book most often used to teach future teachers is Howard Zinn's *History of the American People [sic]*...which presents a very dire and dark picture of America. His thesis is basically that we've made no progress in this country, AT ALL, EVER [her *very pronounced* emphasis] — that there's no progress — [that] my idea of expanding freedom is simply not correct. ... I really wrote this book because I think the truth is otherwise (Cheney and Weinstein 2005).⁴

Despite the apparent similarities between these assessments of Zinn's work, there is something about Cheney's comments that is distinctly problematic. Unlike Bennett's comment that "you would be pretty depressed," Cheney is making a factual assertion that Zinn's thesis "is basically that we've made no progress in this country." When we look at what Zinn actually does say about progress in the first chapter of his book, however, which is a chapter that is explicitly devoted to explaining his views on how the idea of progress is used in the telling (and the teaching) of American history, he cannot be characterized as denying the achievement of real progress in our nation's history.

What Zinn Actually Does Say about Progress in *A People's History*

Chapter by chapter, Zinn's book tells stories of hard-won progress in the hard-fought struggles of working people, women, racial and other minorities, and the diverse constituents that make up the people whose history he is striving to tell. Moreover, his own personal history documents a life of striving for social progress through a variety of committed struggles. His investment in these struggles testifies to his belief that progress is achievable, since these struggles would hardly have seemed worth the effort for someone who believes that, in this country, fighting for social progress is a hopeless cause, that there has been "no progress" in our country's history, and that "we've made no progress in this country, at all, ever" (Zinn 2002; Zinn, Ellis and Mueller 2004).

The title of Zinn's first chapter is "Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress" (Zinn 2003, 1-22). Those who would avoid actually reading Zinn as an historian, by treating him instead as merely an ideologue who can be counted on always to be singing the same song about oppression, the oppressed, and their oppressors (and thus relieving readers of the need to read what he is actually doing, in any of his particular writings), may be prone to see this as a chapter that is all about the severe, cruel, and disastrous mistreatment of Indians by Columbus and Europeans.

Not much attention to his writing, however, is required to see that the Columbian encounter with the Indians is not the topic of this chapter, but only the lead example that Zinn is using to make the chapter's larger argument. This lead example occupies only about one-third

of the chapter. In this first chapter of the book, Zinn's main purpose is to explain how his U.S. History text is different from many other histories, and why. He states his main point bluntly, and then tells us that he's done so: "That, being as blunt as I can, is my approach to the history of the United States. The reader may as well know that before going on" (Zinn 2003, 11).

Even critics who have had a "problem" with Zinn's writing which they recognize as more than just his "irreverence toward Columbus," and who see the problem rather as his "whole approach to American history," have tended to reduce his approach to one of insisting on "a reversal of perspective, a reshuffling of heroes and villains" (Zinn 2002, 2). Rather, Zinn wrote quite directly and explicitly, "My point is not that we must, in telling history, accuse, judge, condemn Columbus *in absentia*. It is too late for that; it would be a useless scholarly exercise in morality" (Zinn 2003, 9).

So Zinn's "whole approach," which his chapter is written to explain, is not just a matter of reversing perspectives so that former heroes are now vilified. Zinn does not leave the reader in the dark, but gives this blunt statement of the approach that this chapter is written to explain. Zinn's account is profoundly oriented to the promise of future progress, foreshadowed by past victories (which have been achieved "occasionally," and not with every effort):

If history is to be creative, to anticipate a possible future without denying the past, it should, I believe, emphasize new possibilities by disclosing those hidden episodes of the past when, even if in brief flashes, people showed their ability to resist, to join together, occasionally to win. I am supposing, or perhaps only hoping, that our future may be found in the past's fugitive moments of compassion rather than in its solid centuries of warfare. (Zinn 2003, 11)

Zinn argues that the prospects for such future progress are diminished by how history has been written, taught, and learned. In this chapter, Zinn calls attention to how readers of history have become accustomed to a use of the idea of progress that spares them from thinking honestly about what has happened, and what might have happened otherwise. Zinn's point is not to "uselessly" condemn Columbus or other traditional heroes. What he demonstrates and explains, rather, aims at providing a continuously useful critical interrogation of past

conduct that can inform our consciousness of present and future possibilities. For this purpose, Zinn calls attention to the way historians have acknowledged the atrocities perpetrated by Columbus and his men, while quickly dismissing them as examples of the sort of thing that we can learn to rationalize and to accept. Although perhaps they are regrettable, such things are nonetheless understandable, and we learn to accept them as the sort of thing that will inevitably happen in the necessary course of human progress, for the overall improvement of human life, in general

the easy acceptance of atrocities as a deplorable but necessary price to pay for progress (Hiroshima and Vietnam, to save Western civilization; Kronstadt and Hungary, to save socialism; nuclear proliferation, to save us all)—that is still with us. One reason these atrocities are still with us is that we have learned...to give them exactly the same proportion of attention that teachers and writers often give them in the most respectable of classrooms and textbooks. This learned sense of moral proportion, coming from the apparent objectivity of the scholar, is accepted more easily than when it comes from politicians at press conferences. It is therefore more deadly. (Zinn 2003, 9)

Zinn reviews an array of crucial questions that we have learned how not to ask, in the shadow of “progress” as a cover for what has happened, instead of what might have happened otherwise. In the case of Columbus, for example, as with Cortes, Pizarro, and the Puritans, “Was all this bloodshed and deceit” really “a necessity for the human race to progress from savagery to civilization? Was [Samuel Eliot] Morison right in burying the story of genocide inside a more important story of human progress?” Zinn concedes that “perhaps a persuasive argument can be made—as it was made by Stalin when he killed peasants for industrial progress in the Soviet Union, as it was made by Churchill explaining the bombings of Dresden and Hamburg, and Truman explaining Hiroshima.” Zinn persists in asking, “How can the judgment be made if the benefits and losses cannot be balanced because the losses are either unmentioned or mentioned quickly?” (Zinn 2003, 17).

Students of history learn to regard such things as being the acceptable costs of progress; but if these costs are deemed acceptable to those

who have benefitted from that progress, are they likewise

acceptable to the poor of Asia, Africa, Latin America, or to the prisoners in Soviet labor camps, or the blacks in urban ghettos, or the Indians on reservations—to the victims of that progress which benefits a privileged minority in the world?... to the miners and railroaders of America, the factory hands, the men and women who died by the hundreds of thousands from accidents or sickness, where they worked or where they lived—casualties of progress? (Zinn 2003, 17)

Can one even assume, without question, that the conquering country (as a whole) benefitted, albeit at the expense of conquered peoples? “What did the people of Spain,” for example, “get out of all that death and brutality visited on the Indians of the Americas?” (Zinn 2003, 17). Beyond even that, “how certain are we that what was destroyed was inferior? Who were these people who came out on the beach and swam to bring presents to Columbus and his crew, who watched Cortes and Pizarro ride through their countryside, who peered out of the forests at the first white settlers of Virginia and Massachusetts?” (Zinn 2003, 18). Zinn follows this last question by reviewing the work of researchers who show us that Columbus and his successors were not coming into an empty wilderness, but into a world

where the culture was complex, where human relations were more egalitarian than in Europe, and where the relations among men, women, children, and nature were more beautifully worked out than perhaps any place in the world. (Zinn 2003, 21)

Zinn concludes this chapter with the observation that, even “allowing for the imperfection of myths” that might somewhat romanticize the attractiveness of Native American cultures and ways of life, “it is enough to make us question, for that time and ours, the excuse of progress in the annihilation of races, and the telling of history from the standpoint of the conquerors and leaders of Western civilization” (Zinn 2003, 22).

Lynne Cheney believes that there has been progress in America, that things have been changed for the better, and that Zinn does not believe there has been progress. Zinn's book tells the tales of progress won on many fronts over the course of our country's history. So the difference between them cannot be that Zinn denies any progress, while Cheney is insisting that progressive changes have been made.

Cheney is claiming that her difference with Zinn is not a matter of subjective attitude or mood (as in Bennett's characterization), but one of correct history versus history that is simply not correct (as in Don McLeroy's charge concerning "real history"). For the sake of understanding what is at stake in these controversies, I choose to take Lynne Cheney seriously as expressing her conviction that Zinn's history is not just depressing, in some subjective sense, but that it is actually incorrect, historically. We cannot accept her characterization of the difference between them as a difference over whether any progress has been made. Without accepting that characterization, we can still take Cheney seriously as offering a history that is different from Zinn's and can be assessed in terms of factual correctness—not just in terms of subjective mood or attitude.

If there is a difference between Cheney's history and Zinn's, and if it is not a matter of whether or not progress has been made, then what is the real difference between them? This problematic question is the provocation for this stage of our inquiry into Zinn's relevance to the current controversy over history curriculum in the United States. We will be rewarded for this hermeneutical effort to make sense of Cheney's comments rather than to dismiss them, or to explain them away as merely symptomatic of her political commitments?⁵ The key to understanding Cheney's objection to Zinn's history will turn out also to illuminate our understanding of what is at stake in concerns over "American exceptionalism," both in controversies over public school curriculum, and in the broader culture wars.

Zinn warns against invoking progress as justification for oppression and atrocities (or as an excuse for ignoring or dismissing them); but would Cheney disagree with him on this? Although we do not see her raising such concerns, we also see no evidence that this really is the difference that propels her opposition to his work.

The fundamental difference may be seen, rather, in what Cheney says right after her claims regarding Zinn, teacher education, and progress:

You can tell the story warts and all. You know, slavery is in [my] book. The fact that Indian populations were decimated is in this book. The fact that women were excluded for a long time is in this book. It's all here. But, despite all of these backward steps, sideways steps, *errors—grievous errors*—we are the freest country on the face of the earth, and our progress has been towards more and more equality for more and more of us (Cheney and Weinstein 2005).

There is a stark difference here between Cheney's view of American history and that of Howard Zinn—far more profound than differences over whether any progress has occurred. One key lies in the pronouns: *we* have made backward steps and sideways steps, in the course of *our* progress, toward equality for more and more of *us*. This pronominalization forces uses of the passive voice in “the fact that women *were excluded* for a long time.” Were excluded, by whom? By “us”? But then, does this “us” or “we” who excluded women include those very women, or does it not?

The occasion for that interview was the publication of a book that Cheney explained she had written directly as an antidote to Zinn's. In the book's introduction, Cheney writes:

There have been missteps in our history and many a backward step, as this time line makes clear. But it also shows that the overall thrust of our story has been the expansion of human freedom. It took us a bloody war to get rid of slavery, but we did it. It took us too long to ensure voting rights for African Americans and to enfranchise women, but we did those things too (Cheney 2005).

Again, she's talking about “*our* story” and “*our* history,” in which “it took *us* a bloody war” to end slavery, but nonetheless “*we* did it”; it “took *us* too long” to enfranchise blacks and women, but “*we* did those things too.” And again, the matter of historical agency (active vs. passive) is syntactically evaded in the locution “it *took us* a bloody war” (does that mean that “we” had to fight a war—and again, who is this “we,” and who were “we” fighting this war *against*?).

For Cheney, what is important is to tell a story of one people—one nation, indivisible—a people whose story is one of perpetual movement onward, and upward, for the better, despite whatever “missteps” and “backward steps” there might have been along the way. Cheney never makes a case for this approach; it is just presupposed in the syntax of her chronology. It is not a “theme,” insofar as it is never *thematized* for argument or for evaluation. On the other hand, its pervasiveness as the overarching, if *surreptitious* theme of her chronology is emblemized by the artwork chosen for the front cover of her book: N. C. Wyeth’s 1925 oil painting, *America’s Greatest Wealth Is Her Healthy Children*, in which a motley gaggle of young children is seen hiking up a round green mountain, led by a blond boy bearing a larger-than-he-is flag of the United States.

Here we see the fundamental difference between Cheney and Zinn, although Cheney does not raise this explicitly, either in her book or in her criticism of Zinn’s book. Zinn recalls:

I remember stumbling over that big word *indivisible*—with good reason, although I didn’t know the reason, being quite politically backward at the age of six. Only later did I begin to understand that our nation, from the start, has been divided by class, race, and national origin and has been beset by fierce conflicts, yes, class conflicts, throughout its history (Zinn and Macedo 2005, 168).

As Zinn goes on to explain, “The culture labors strenuously to keep class conflict out of the history books, to maintain the idea of a monolithic, noble “us” against a shadowy but unmistakably evil “them” (Zinn and Macedo 2005, 168).

We see here the crux of differences between the stories that Zinn tells in his *People’s History*, and the story Cheney’s telling in her *Time for Freedom: What Happened When*. In Cheney’s version, U.S. history is to be understood as *our* “national story” of continuing progress, which emerges from a chronology of events in which *we* did this, then something happened, and then *we* did something else. This conforms with a view of history for which Zinn refers to Henry Kissinger:

“History is the memory of states,” wrote Henry Kissinger in

his first book, *A World Restored*, in which he proceeded to tell the history of nineteenth-century Europe from the viewpoint of the leaders of Austria and England, ignoring the millions who suffered from those statesmen's policies...for factory workers in England, farmers in France, colored people in Asia and Africa, women and children everywhere except in the upper classes, it was a world of conquest, violence, hunger, exploitation—a world not restored but disintegrated (Zinn 2003, 9-10).

Whatever be the case for Europe, Cheney resolutely tells a story predicated on the real existence of "America," whose history—the memory of our common state—is *our* story, the story of *our* progress through the things *we* have done, and through how *we* have responded to things that have been done to *us*.

Zinn explains that his viewpoint is different:

We must not accept the memory of states as our own. Nations are not communities and never have been. The history of any country, presented as the history of a family, conceals fierce conflicts of interest (sometimes exploding, most often repressed) between conquerors and conquered, masters and slaves, capitalists and workers, dominators and dominated in race and sex (Zinn 2003, 10).

Zinn challenges the very "pretense...that there really is such a thing as 'the United States,' subject to occasional conflicts and quarrels, but fundamentally a community of people with common interests." Such national commonality is presupposed ideologically in the approach to history in which "the quiet acceptance of conquest and murder in the name of progress...is only one aspect," and in which also, accordingly, "the past is told from the point of view of governments, conquerors, diplomats, leaders. It is as if they, like Columbus, deserve universal acceptance, as if they...represent the nation as a whole" (Zinn 2003, 9).

By using the Columbian encounter as his lead example, Zinn perhaps risks his approach being misunderstood, again, as merely one of insisting on "a reversal of perspective" between the "two sides" of any episode in history. But real history is not so simple. Even in his treatment of Columbus, Zinn shows more than just two sides (not only

among the Europeans on his expedition, but among the people back in Spain, as well). Insisting that "selection and emphasis in history" inevitably involves taking of sides, he quickly notes a number of examples of the viewpoints that he chooses to highlight in the treatment of historical conflicts in his book. For his treatment of the Civil War, he would highlight neither a general "Northern" nor a "Southern" point of view, nor that of pro- or anti-slavery interests, but the viewpoint of the New York Irish. For the U.S. conquest of the Philippines, he would highlight not the viewpoint of the U.S. government or of the Filipinos, but of the black soldiers on Luzon. And so forth. The point, pedagogically, would not be to elevate the interests of those black soldiers above the interests of the Filipinos, but to help readers learn to approach history with an awareness of the multiplicity of interests and viewpoints involved in any situation, rather than reducing everything to no more than one or two "sides," with none but a single common interest and viewpoint on "our side" of the story (Zinn 2003, 10).

Implications of this approach to history at the classroom level can be seen in Bill Bigelow's article "One Country! One Language! One Flag!" (1996). From Bigelow's critique of the *Oregon Trail* CD-Rom simulation, we can see that this is not just a matter of political ideology, but one of historical consciousness and competence. It is also not just a matter of inclusion or exclusion of information about different groups in history. Bigelow has much good to say about the *Oregon Trail* simulation, including the authors' efforts to include a diversity of characters and information about the variety of people involved in that history. However, the actual experiences and decisions that players are confronted with along the trail are those faced by the white adult men; so that, Bigelow concludes, players are learning to think of history from just that one vantage point—it is not giving them an opportunity to develop a more multi-perspectival consciousness of the Oregon Trail, or of history in general (Bigelow 2001).

The point for Bigelow, as for Zinn, is not to argue that no progress has been made. The point, rather, is to argue for history and history education that enables people to be conscious of the diverse perspectives of people who are differently affected, and who can or could have played different roles in determining the course of history, including people who have struggled with each other in the pursuit of conflicting interests or purposes. Cheney says she wrote her book as an opposing alternative to Zinn's. We see now that there is a real oppositional difference between the stories that they tell, but it is not a difference over

whether progress has or has not occurred. The difference, rather, is the difference between telling U.S. history as the story of one unified and indivisible people striving continuously for the achievement of common purposes, versus telling the nation's history as one in which changes (progressive or otherwise) have come about through struggles in which some Americans have fought with others over matters of conflicting interests and purposes.

Cheney is not alone in pushing for American history as the story of "one nation, indivisible." We have already seen some signs of this on the stage of national political and cultural discourse on the idea of American exceptionalism. This is not merely a vague and perhaps inconsequential rhetorical phenomenon, however, in reviewing, as one example of the impact on curriculum, how the state standards for teaching American history in Texas were revised in 2010.

One Nation...*Indivisible*" and the Texas Social Studies Standards Debacle

In 2009 and 2010, the Texas State Board of Education received a high level of attention in the national media for its revision of the state's standards for social studies education, as it had a year earlier with the state's science standards. Not only news reporters and columnists, but also a wide range of other cultural commentators weighed in on the developments, including, for example, film critic Roger Ebert, who asked readers on his blog:

How do you feel about Ralph Nader being taken out [of] history books and Newt Gingrich being added? The Confederacy seen in more positive terms? Or that the Texas board's review panel doubts that such 'minority figures' as Cesar Chavez, Justice Thurgood Marshall and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. need to be included (Ebert 2010).

Much of the coverage focused on conflict over the inclusion or exclusion of figures representing diverse groups in Texas and the United States, with headlines such as "Texas activists: Chavez, Marshall must be taught" (Castro 2009). The conflict was typically represented as one in which the conservative majority on the State Board of Education (SBOE), and the "experts" they recruited to lend support for

their positions, were attempting to exclude or minimize the representation of minorities, while their adversaries on the left sought to increase the presence of minorities (Whitson 2009).

Some on the right were in fact pushing against inclusion of diversity, but there was something else going on that apparently escaped notice by those who pushed back against the conservatives' agenda by advocating more inclusion, as if that were the only issue. Some were puzzled and surprised, therefore, when David Barton, perhaps the leading "expert" enlisted by the conservatives, appeared before the SBOE in September 2009 with a presentation featuring dozens of figures from diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, beginning in colonial times, and argued that as many of these minorities as possible should be included in the Texas standards.⁶ While some opponents of the conservatives' agenda seemed puzzled by what they saw as a reversal, or at least a backing off from Barton's earlier position, the blog of the Texas Freedom Network (TFN) offered this interpretation:

So what happened? After TFN exposed those absurd comments this summer, newspapers, elected officials, educators, civil rights groups and parents were vocal and loud in opposing efforts to censor instruction about Chavez and Marshall. Barton and Peter Marshall obviously felt the heat and backed down. In fact, Barton today ended up offering an extensive list of minorities he thought should be included in the standards (even though he has argued in the past that 'multicultural' standards too often crowd out instruction on important American heroes and historical figures from the past (Dan 2009).⁷

Such interpretations failed to recognize that a new game was now afoot, one that we are now prepared to recognize, following our examination of the real difference between Cheney and Zinn. By listening more carefully to Barton's presentation to the Board and his colloquy with Board members, we can see that, far from "backing down," Barton was advocating an approach that he has been consistently pursuing over many years, and which we can now understand in the light of Cheney's opposition to Zinn's history.

For some background on Barton's project, we can begin with this introduction on the "Meet Your Professors" page for [Glenn] Beck University, under the banner description, "Learn History as it Really Happened":

David Barton is the founder and president of WallBuilders, a national pro-family organization that presents America's forgotten history and heroes, with an emphasis on our moral, religious, and constitutional heritage.

David is the author of numerous best-selling books, with the subjects being drawn largely from his massive library-museum of tens of thousands of original writings, documents, and artifacts from early America.

His exhaustive research has rendered him an expert in historical and constitutional issues. He serves as a consultant to state and federal legislators, has participated in several cases at the Supreme Court, has been involved in the development of social studies standards for numerous states, and has helped produce some popular history textbooks now used in schools across the nation.⁸

A biographical note on the "Books by David Barton" page at amazon.com contains some of the same language, plus the statement that "David is author of numerous best-selling works and a national award-winning historian who brings a fresh perspective to history."⁹ But Barton is not actually an historian by training, or by the methods that he uses—even by his own characterization of his standards and methodology (Fea 2011, esp. pp. 57-75; see also People For the American Way, 2011). Yet in a video to promote enrollment in "Beck U," Glenn Beck tells his followers, "you'll learn more in his classes than I think you've ever learned about American history. It is almost overwhelming what you'll learn from David Barton."¹⁰

Indeed, the history that Barton teaches in his classes for Beck U is exactly the "real history" that Don McLeroy referred to as what is missing from the education of "the leftist mind" that "marginalizes, trivializes, and ignores these great ideas that have made America exceptional" (McLeroy 2011). The Board appointed Barton as an expert and then amended the state standards to require the teaching of American exceptionalism, so that Texas students will be educated in the kind of "real history" that Barton advocates, and which McLeroy and other Board members have learned from him.

For an understanding of this real history, we can follow Barton's statement to the Board and the ensuing colloquy on September 17, 2009. Barton's segment of the meeting took about forty-five minutes, with a thirteen-minute slide show presentation followed by colloquy

between the Board members (meeting as the Committee of the Full Board) and Barton. He began his presentation by saying:

I think that one of the very important things is that we make the presentation to the kids at all [grade] levels of the unity that is there—the variety that’s there within the unity—it’s the E Pluribus Unum thing—[out] of many, one; and I think we need to show the many as early as possible (Barton and SBOE 2009, at 1:10).¹¹

Barton proceeded to present a thirteen-minute slide show in which he named and projected images of dozens of African-Americans, Jewish-Americans, women, and Hispanics (beginning with Bernardo de Gálvez, whom he did not identify as the Spanish Royal Governor of Louisiana, rather than a Hispanic-American), starting with the Revolutionary era, and running through the 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries, whom Barton held up as praiseworthy candidates for inclusion in the Texas curriculum.

Barton reiterated, “I think it’s a very healthy presentation to make to kids early on to show the many that were fighting for a common goal, that goal of freedom and independence and liberty. So...the way that we present variety within unity, the heroes we choose, I think that is very significant” (5:30), and he concluded his presentation by repeating, “I think the presentation of ‘Out of Many, Comes One’ needs to be done a lot earlier, and a lot more thoroughly” (12:45).

Barton concluded his part of the meeting with the restatement, “So that’s my intent, that’s my desire, to increase those numbers, because, again, I think that since Woodrow Wilson American history has been way too white, quite frankly” (38:27). Earlier, he had offered this “commentary” on the role of Woodrow Wilson:

I’ll go back to 18-- really, Woodrow Wilson, the history books he did is turning American history in a different direction, because prior to Woodrow Wilson, and what he did at the White House, and bless his heart, he showed the first Ku Klux Klan film at the White House, used it as recruiting, his history was very Klan-centered, very white-centered history, and from that point in time the presentation of American history became much more white. And I think if we back up even to history the way we taught it in 1900, we get so much more color in it, and that’s a sound way to teach history (23: 40).¹²

At one point, Barton offered this explanation for how his earlier reports to the Board might have given some public commentators the impression that he favored removing some figures such as Cesar Chavez from the history curriculum:

Now I have to admit I made some assumptions in the first review of the TEKS I assumed that the people who write the textbooks are going to keep certain figures in there as they have for the last 30 years; I just assumed Cesar Chavez is going to be there, et cetera.... But then that's probably a bad assumption on my part, to assume the textbook publishers are actually going to include him (36:30).

He illustrated his primary concern for inclusion with the story of the Alamo as an example:

I go back to my original point, in presentation: the more variety we present, early on, the better it is. And I think that that's that unity... I love the example of the Alamo, with all the Hispanics fighting inside the Alamo, but they're all under the banner of 1824. That flag is.... The common goal is "we want tyranny gone; we want a constitution back." And so you've got all races and groups inside the Alamo fighting for a common goal. And I think that that E Pluribus Unum is a consistent theme throughout American history (21:55).

Again, as with Lynne Cheney, we see this insistence on the priority of U.S. history as the story of one nation, indivisible—of E Pluribus Unum. This concern carries through, as well, for the inclusion of black figures from the beginning of our nation's history:

When I look at the chain of Civil Rights or Black History across the 13 years of TEKS, we got a link here, and a little link here, we've got slavery introduced in 1619 and we've got Dr. King and we got the '64 Civil Rights Amendment, '65 Voting Rights Amendment; but there's so much that is not continuous that needs to be a fairly regular presentation (9:20).

We see here how "Civil Rights" history gets blended into "Black History," so that the achievements of those struggling for civil rights,

specifically, get mixed into the celebration of notable achievements by black Americans in general. This point is drawn explicitly by Board member Cynthia Dunbar:

Statutorily something that we're supposed to be promoting is patriotism, or the support and defense of one's country. And I readily admit that, as you stated, that we have warts in our history. What I'm concerned about, and what is dangerous, when we have an inference, by example, that the bulk of significant minority figures came post-1960; when as you have so eloquently pointed out we have just a wealth of significant historical figures. So with the goal of promoting patriotism, which the statute says that we must, do you not think it would be helpful...to include the significant figures early on so that they don't believe that the bulk of the founding fathers were slaveholders, and they don't believe that we had this ideology. But it's not...it's historically accurate that for the goal of patriotism those figures early on may be more important to make sure they get included if we have a—not that we're trying to exclude anyone—but for the sake of nationalism we want accurate history taught to these students so that they don't believe there were no important figures prior to 1960 (40:55).

Dunbar's reference to "warts" in the nation's history echoed Barton's comments that "There are definitely warts on the nose of America, there's no question about it, but despite those warts on our nose we'll take America over any other system at any point in time, and we're still reaching for perfection, we're still trying to get there" (17:00). The parallel with Cheney's story of America is striking.

Again and again, through the SBOE meetings and hearings in September and November of 2009, we heard board members and testifiers, one after another, advocating a curriculum in which America's history would be taught "warts and all," recognizing temporary setbacks in "our" progress toward expanding freedom, justice, and equality, but recognizing that "we" always do correct any mistakes, and we always take the right steps forward, eventually. Instead of a history featuring conflicts among groups with conflicting interests and values, the history to be taught is one in which everybody is included from the start, without differentiation or division.

According to this story of America, although it took "us" too long

to put an end to slavery, eventually, we did it. It took “us” too long to enfranchise women, but eventually, we did it. As we keep climbing up the hill of history (as in the Wyeth painting on the cover of Cheney’s book), we do sometimes stumble sideways, or backwards, pulled by the gravity of past errors and unjust traditions; but the only struggle is “our” common struggle against such gravitational or inertial forces. We will not countenance a story of some Americans who have had to fight against other Americans who fought to keep them enslaved, oppressed, or otherwise exploited.

American Exceptionalism and the Revised Texas Social Studies Standards

In the critiques of Zinn by Cheney and by Bennett, and in the comments by Barton and by members of the Texas Board, we have seen two ideas that appear to be distinct: the idea of teaching U.S. History “warts and all,” in a way that is balanced optimistically rather than as too dark or too depressing, and the idea of teaching the nation’s history as a story of unending progress through the strivings of one united people, indivisible. To clarify those relationships and consequences, we can look at how these ideas play out in the changes that the SBOE was making in one section of the High School standards for U. S. History. We see here how the change of language explicitly eliminates attention to the efforts of conflicting groups within the population to bring about positive change. Here is the text, marked up with the deleted and inserted language:¹³

- ~~(26)(24)(21)~~Culture. The student understands how people from various groups, ~~including racial, ethnic, and religious groups, adapt to life in the United States and contribute to our national identity.~~ The student is expected to:
- (A) explain actions taken ~~by people from racial, ethnic, gender, and religious groups~~ to expand economic opportunities and political rights ~~including those for racial, ethnic, and religious minorities as well as women~~, in American society;
 - (B) ~~discuss explain~~ efforts of the Americanization movement to assimilate immigrants ~~and American Indians~~ into American culture;
 - (C) ~~explain~~ analyze how the contributions of people

- of various racial, ethnic, **gender**, and religious groups ~~have helped to shape the national identity~~ **American culture**; and
- (D) identify the political, social, and economic contributions of women, ~~including such as Frances Willard, Jane Addams, Eleanor Roosevelt, Dolores Huerta, Sonia Sotomayor, and Oprah Winfrey~~, to American society. ; and
 - (E) discuss the meaning and historical significance of the mottos “E Pluribus Unum” and “In God We Trust” ; and
 - (F) discuss the importance of congressional Medal of Honor recipients, including individuals of all races and genders such as **Vernon J. Baker, Alvin York, and Roy Benavides**. (Texas State Board of Education 2010, 13)

Before looking more closely at particular details, we can see that a standard that initially was drafted to address contributions by people from a variety of particular groups within our population has been transformed into a standard for teaching “E Pluribus Unum” and “In God We Trust.” But this is not done by removing or excluding diverse figures. To the contrary, more women and minorities are added, including military heroes “of all races and genders.” Neither are immigrants or Indians to be excluded; rather, students are to learn about their assimilation into American culture.

An important substantive change can be seen in the revised syntax of subsection (A). Again, “racial, ethnic, and religious minorities as well as women” have not been excluded. But they have been moved to a different place within the syntax of the standard. As drafted originally, it was people from these groups who *took action* to expand rights and opportunities. Now it is just “people,” in general, who were the *agents* of such action; and the minorities and women are now beneficiaries of those actions, not their agents.

The record shows that this change—changing them from agents to beneficiaries—was not just some kind of unintended accident or unmindful rewording of the standard. Board member Donald McLeroy, leader of the more conservative faction of the conservative majority, argued—not so much as an argument, really, but rather as a point of fact—that:

Everything that's been done, let's take the civil rights movement for example, it was accomplished by majority vote. ... It took the majority to do it *for* the minority. It's not the minorities that got that—the Civil Rights Act; it was the majority that did it. You understand what I'm saying? ... For instance, women's right to vote ... the women didn't vote on it—the men did. The men passed it for the women.¹⁴

Perhaps McLeroy's proudest victory in these proceedings was the passage of his amendment requiring students to understand "the concept of American exceptionalism." Although this seemed to mandate some kind of chauvinistic cheerleading, many were left wondering if it has any more specific substantive meaning. A partial explanation may be found in David Barton's *WallBuilder Report*:

Neither our closest allies nor our fiercest enemies have experienced the stability with which we have been blessed. ... Some describe this remarkable achievement as "American Exceptionalism"—a term coined in 1831 by Alexis de Tocqueville, a famous French visitor to America who penned the classic, *Democracy in America*. As Tocqueville expressed it: The position of the Americans is quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one (WallBuilders 2006, 2).

Barton's *WallBuilder Report* does not provide a source for the Tocqueville quotation which, embarrassingly for Barton and for McLeroy, would show that Tocqueville did not in fact coin the term "American Exceptionalism" (the term "exceptionalism" occurs neither in the English nor in the French original). The term "American exceptionalism" was actually coined by English Marxists in the 1920s, in arguments over whether "the peaceful capitalism of the United States constitutes an exception to the general economic laws governing national historical development, and especially to the Marxist law of the inevitability of violent class warfare."¹⁵

It was Seymour Martin Lipset, a professor of comparative government at Harvard, and then a Democratic Socialist, who invoked Tocqueville to reanimate the Marxist term. Although Tocqueville never used the word "exceptionalism," he did, as Lipset says, "refer to the United States as exceptional—that is, qualitatively different from all

other countries" (Lipset 1996, 19). That statement is referenced in Lipset's book to the pages in Tocqueville where we find the sentence quoted by Barton's *WallBuilder Report*. But if we actually consult the Tocqueville text, we find something far different from an homage to the United States. Tocqueville wrote, as quoted in the *WallBuilder Report*, that "The position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one"; but he continues, directly:

Their strictly Puritanical origin, their exclusively commercial habits, even the country they inhabit, which seems to divert their minds from the pursuit of science, literature, and the arts, the proximity of Europe, which allows them to neglect these pursuits without relapsing into barbarism, a thousand special causes, of which I have only been able to point out the most important, have singularly concurred to fix the mind of the American upon purely practical objects. ... Let us cease, then, to view all democratic nations under the example of the American people, and attempt to survey them at length with their own features (Tocqueville 1948, 36-37).

Tocqueville writes this in his chapter titled, "The Example of the Americans Does Not Prove that a Democratic People can have no Aptitude and no Taste for Science, Literature, or Art." What Tocqueville is saying in other words is that, for all his doubts and concerns about egalitarian democracy, as observed in the America example, the non-intellectual tendencies of the Americans may be attributed to the Americans' "exceptional position," and hence need not be feared as an inherent tendency of democracy as such. (Reliance by McLeroy, a dentist, on the "expert scholarship" of Barton, a fundamentalist Christian proselytizer, would seem to provide an ironic instance of the tendencies that Tocqueville wrote about.)

Lipset's reanimation of the term "American exceptionalism" has a more substantial relevance to the discourses we are dealing with. As Lipset explained:

This book has been a long time in the making. In a real sense, my concern with American exceptionalism goes back to the beginning of my writing and academic career. My first book, *Agrarian Socialism* (1950), which was also my doctoral

dissertation at Columbia University, took off from the issue of “why no socialism in the United States?” (Lipset 1996, 14)

As a Democratic Socialist, Lipset spent decades investigating differences between the United States and other countries, including Canada, in their receptiveness to socialism, labor activism, and class politics. Over the ensuing decades, Lipset gradually adopted the viewpoint reflected in his synthesis of themes from Tocqueville, the synthesis reflected in the Texas standard on American Exceptionalism. This was Lipset’s answer to a question about options for America. Texas students will be told this answer, but *not even as* an answer, since they will not be told about the question—or that there ever have been questions about this, or any options for Americans to choose among.

We now see that the American Exceptionalism standard in the “Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies” is not just some gratuitous cheerleading for America, but is woven deep into the fabric of a discourse directing students to “understand”—without questioning—that American history is “our” story of perpetual (if not always steady) progress, achieved by our one nation, indivisible, to the benefit of all. No questions asked.

Zinn to Kids: America Stinks! (Is that really what Zinn, et al., are saying to kids?)

Bigelow observes that in traditional textbook history:

There is a lot of “us,” and “we,” and “our,” as if the texts are trying to dissolve race, class, and gender realities into the melting pot of “the nation.” Indeed, the books have titles like *The Rise of the American Nation*, embracing a curricular manifest destiny where all history led gloriously (or by about page 700, tediously) to Us. Zinn’s writing presents no such illusions (Bigelow 2008, 1-2).

It might seem obvious that we would not want our children’s history curriculum to consist of illusions presented to them in their textbooks. Apparently, this is not obvious to everyone, however. In an article on *WorldNetDaily* with the title, “Celebs to kids: America stinks!,” Drew Zahn quotes Bigelow’s observation about using “us” and “we” and “our” to resolve our true diverse realities into the national melting pot, observing:

But Bigelow rejects the idea of identifying America as one, solid union. [Zahn quotes Bigelow:] "A people's history and pedagogy ought to allow students to recognize that 'we' were not necessarily the ones stealing land, dropping bombs or breaking strikes," he concludes. "'We' were ending slavery, fighting for women's rights, organizing unions, marching against wars, and trying to create a society premised on the Golden Rule."¹⁶

Zahn's critique presents, in the manner of some sort of exposé, an account of the Zinn Education Project¹⁷ and, in particular, The History Channel's premier airing of "The People Speak"¹⁸ which, according to Zahn, "marks the public coming-out party of a movement that has been in place since last year to teach America's schoolchildren a 'social justice' brand of history that rails against war, oppression, capitalism and popular patriotism." Zahn writes that the television special, featuring performances by a series of A-list celebrities, "condemns the nation's past of oppression by the wealthy, powerful and imperialist and instead trumpets the voices of America's labor unions, minorities and protesters of various stripes" (Zahn 2009).

In this program (contrary to the headline "Celebs to kids"), neither Zinn nor the performers speak to the audience on their own behalf, in their own voice. They are not telling kids that "America stinks!" Indeed, if by "America" we mean to include the actual Americans whose own words are being voiced in these performances, then this is a celebration, not a condemnation, of America. Zahn writes that:

The History Channel, furthermore, touts "The People Speak" as a program that "gives voice to those who spoke up for social change throughout U.S. history, forging a nation from the bottom up with their insistence on equality and justice. ... 'The People Speak' illustrates the relevance of these passionate historical moments to our society today and reminds us never to take liberty for granted" (Zahn 2009).

Well, what's wrong with that, one might ask? Zahn invokes Michelle Malkin as a critic of the Zinn project who

blasts "The People Speak" as an effort to promote "Marxist academic Howard Zinn's capitalism-bashing, America-dissing,

grievance-mongering history textbook, 'A People's History of the United States.' ... Zinn's work is a self-proclaimed 'biased account' of American history that rails against white oppressors, the free market and the military" (Zahn 2009).

Zahn's exposé reveals that the Zinn Education Project even states that its goal is

to "introduce students to a more accurate, complex and engaging understanding of United States history than is found in traditional textbooks and curricula. ... Zinn's 'A People's History of the United States' emphasizes the role of working people, women, people of color and organized social movements in shaping history. Students learn that history is made not by a few heroic individuals, but instead by people's choices and actions, thereby also learning that their own choices and actions matter" (Zahn 2009).

And Zahn wraps up his exposé of the Zinn Education Project by driving in this final nail of criticism:

Zinn himself has testified of his hope that the project will continue to spread.

"We're dreamers," writes Zinn. "We want it all. We want a peaceful world. We want an egalitarian world. We don't want war. We don't want capitalism. We want a decent society" (Zahn 2009).

While it might seem that, with critical enemies like this, Zinn has no need for approving friends; scholars and educators must face up to the fact that we are living in a time and place where Zahn's reporting on the Zinn Education Project rings persuasively to some audiences as condemnation. The number to whom Barton and McLeroy sound convincing, and to whom Cheney's view of history sounds learned and reasonable, is anything but insignificant. That circumstance confronts us with a daunting challenge—not just political, but educational.

Under a headline proclaiming that the message kids will hear from the Zinn Education Project is the message that "America Stinks!" Zahn cites, as evidence for that contention, that the Project challenges the telling of American history as the story of an undifferentiated "we." Where Bennett, Cheney, Barton, and others might want to frame the issue as one of telling the nation's story "warts and all," but with a positively patriotic balance, rather than with a dark or depressing bias, we now see how this framing obstructs a clear view of a more substantive anxiety over allowing students (or citizens, in the case of the broader political and cultural discourse) to learn about and understand the complexities of change—and resistance to change—in our diverse, non-monolithic nation.

So this is not fundamentally a matter of mood or attitude, or striking the right balance between optimism and pessimism, or pride and shame, as some would have it. This is also, as Cheney and McLeroy have insisted, a conflict between "real" or "correct" history, and history that is not real, and not correct. On that score, the history in which formerly enslaved and disenfranchised Americans were not agents of their own progress but were, rather, beneficiaries of the benevolence of those in power, is not the history that is correct or real.

If the issue is not just one of mood or attitude, it also is not just one of real or correct history. For Zinn, learning a history of past possibilities—both realized and unrealized through actions taken and not taken by those acting in conflicted situations in the past—is necessary for the freedom of imagination, and then freedom of action, that will be needed by students of past history who must be prepared for effective participation in our future history. It is through this that better futures can be chosen and be realized effectively. As we have seen, the Zinn Education Project has been criticized in its pursuit of the self-professed goal of having "Students learn that history is made not by a few heroic individuals, but instead by people's choices and actions, thereby also learning that their own choices and actions matter" (Zahn 2009). Since this goal has long been seen as central to the purposes of Social Studies, we must heed what we can learn from Zinn about how this goal is threatened by the dangerous agenda now being promoted in the name of American exceptionalism.

1. Statistical documentation of these trends is presented graphically, with a link to video of the Brownback speech, at <http://curricublog.wordpress.com/2011/06/27/ijse/>; shortlink: <http://wp.me/s1V0H-ijse>.

2. Scant attention to the American exceptionalism provision, in comparison with questions of including or removing various historical figures, can be seen in the articles linked from: <http://organizations.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=64632>, compiled by the Center for History Teaching & Learning at The University of Texas at El Paso.

3. For the remarks by Bill Bennett and Lynne Cheney quoted in this section, audio clips and links to the video files are posted at: http://wp.me/s1V0H-ijse/#Bennett_Cheney.

4. Cheney offers nothing to support her assertion that Zinn's text is "the book most often used to teach future teachers." At the teacher preparation institutions in which I have worked, future teachers take history courses offered by the History Department, along with history majors and other undergraduates who are not preparing to be teachers. The critical reception of Zinn's book by historians (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_People%27s_History_of_the_United_States#Critical_reception, accessed July 29, 2001) suggests reasons why Zinn's book would not be the most often used by historians in their undergraduate courses. When I have used the first chapter of Zinn's book in my own undergraduate course in the School of Education, I have found no more than one or two students out of fifty who have had any previous acquaintance with Zinn's text, and then only in their high school classes.

5. My choice here is to adopt a hermeneutics of recovery (sometimes called a hermeneutics of charity), by which I seek to discern coherent meaning in Cheney's discourse, rather than a hermeneutics of suspicion, which would seek to explain her discourse as resulting from some extrinsic cause or motivation instead of trying to find meaning that is intrinsic to the discourse itself (cf. Scott-Baumann 2009). Instead of treating Cheney's characterization of Zinn's book as just a straw-man argument driven by ulterior political or ideological agendas, I attempt to show coherent meaning in the contrast between Zinn's story of internally conflicted history and Cheney's narrative of nationally unified collective agency. As Dworkin explains, "understanding another person's conversation requires using devices and presumptions, like the so-called principle of charity, that have the effect in normal circumstances of making of what he says the best performance of communication it can be" (Dworkin 1986, 53). The "best

performance” might be meaningfully coherent differently from how the speaker understands herself: “... interpretation sometimes involves *correction* of agents’ naïve self-understandings ...” (D’Agostino 1992, 482). In this case, I believe I have identified the genuine difference that Cheney senses between her narrative and Zinn’s, even though it’s not the difference that she identifies in terms of whether or not there has been progress in our nation’s history. The point here is not to seek agreement, but to seek understanding of the discourse; and it is my contention that this hermeneutic of recovery illuminates not only our understanding of Cheney, but more importantly, our understanding of the discourse of American exceptionalism, and of the discourse at work in the Texas social studies standards revisions, and potentially the discourse of history teaching and learning in Texas and beyond the borders of that state.

6. An audio file and a link for the video feed are posted at: <http://wp.me/s1V0H-ijse/#Barton>.

7. As the TFN describes itself at: http://www.tfn.org/site/PageServer?pagename=about_mission, “the Texas Freedom Network acts as the state’s watchdog, monitoring far-right issues, organizations, money and leaders.” The TFN monitored and publicized the activity surrounding the TEKS revision process, and testified at public hearings.

8. <http://www.glennbeck.com/becku/professors.php>. Accessed July 29, 2011.

9. <http://www.amazon.com/David-Barton/e/B001JOZJUM/>. Accessed July 29, 2011.

10. <http://youtube/-5nUf-Qtf8Y>. Accessed July 29, 2011.

11. The times (such as 1:10 = 1 minute, 10 seconds) indicated here and in the following in-text references are for the audio recording of the Barton segment posted at: <http://wp.me/s1V0H-ijse/#Barton>, where a link for the video feed is also posted.

12. I have not been able to find anything to support this claim about history teaching before the time of the Woodrow Wilson administration.

13. This provision of the TEKS draft standard is posted and linked at: <http://curricublog.wordpress.com/2011/06/27/ijse/>; shortlink: http://wp.me/s1V0H-ijse/#2010_TEKS. This and previous drafts and review reports are available at Texas Education Agency, “Social Studies TEKS,” (June 25, 2010), <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=3643>. The final standard, now in effect, is “Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies; Subchapter C. High School,” <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/rules/tac/chapter113/ch113c.pdf>. For the black and white printing of this chapter, I have used boldface for significant additions that were originally blue or green.

14. State Board of Education member Donald McLeroy, in the September 17, 2009 meeting of the Committee of the Full Board. Video available at: <http://youtu.be/Y9vJ5XTFBFU>. Accessed July 29, 2011.

15. "Exceptionalism," Oxford English Dictionary, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/242836>. Accessed 29 July 2011.

16. Zahn, Drew. 2009. "Celebs to Kids: America Stinks!" WorldNetDaily, December 14. <http://www.wnd.com/index.php?pageId=119046>, accessed July 29, 2011, quoting from Bigelow (2008), "A People's History, a People's Pedagogy," 6.

17. "Zinn Education Project," <http://zinnedproject.org/>. Accessed July 29, 2011.

18. Matt Damon et al. 2009. "The People Speak" The History Channel. Based on Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove, *Voices of a People's History of the United States*, 2nd edition. New York: Seven Stories Press.

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