



Holocaust Education in NJ

Overview

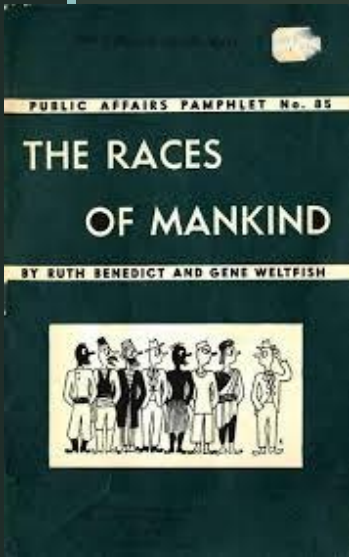
- The Facts:
- Early 1970s, no evidence of teaching Holocaust in US public schools
- 1973-1978, ambitious public school teachers in New York, Mass, Ohio, and New Jersey were teaching the event
- 1983- NJ first to publish a state-sponsored Holocaust curriculum, *The Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience*
- 1994- NJ is the first state to mandate Holocaust and Genocide education



Four Questions

- Why did it take so long?
- Why the mid 1970s?
- Why New Jersey?
- How does the NJ approach compare/contrast with other states?

Why did it take so long?



- “We are unfortunately familiar with the tragic racial intolerance of Germany and now of Italy. Are we entirely free from that racial intolerance, so that we can pride ourselves upon having achieved a complete democracy? Our treatment of the Negroes, anti-Semitism, the growing (at least I fear it is growing) serious opposition to aliens immigrant within our gates is, I think, a sufficient answer to that question.” John Dewey-1938
- “An intercultural program which does not face our Negro problem fairly would be about on par with a German program which omitted Nazi treatment of the Jews.” Ruth Benedict -1941

Why did it take so long?

- *Diary of Anne Frank*, published in 1952, play performed 700X across the US
- Historian, Deborah Lipstadt, argued that DOAF “essentially de-Judaized the story by removing many of Anne’s own references to her Jewish identity.”
- “My classes, faced with problems of desegregation in the South, have caught my enthusiasm for the diary. As seen through Anne’s eyes, the evils of discrimination have made a terrific impact on these young people’s minds.” Mary Lane, teacher in the South, 1954
- To this day, *Diary of Anne Frank*, Elie Wiesel *Night*, *Schindler’s List* are the three most assigned texts on the Holocaust



Why did it take so long?

- Consensus liberalism (1940-1960)
- "1. It is believed that there are distinct races of mankind, which differ from one another physically, intellectually, and morally; but it is also believed that race is only skin deep and that all men are brothers.
2. It is believed that of all races the Negro is lowest on the evolutionary scale and least capable of a high order of civilized living; but it is also believed that all human beings should have equal rights and opportunities, and that the Negroes have been treated more unfairly than any other minority.
3. It is believed that Jews control most industry and money in the United States; but it is also believed that most Jews tend to be radical and communistic in their political philosophy."

Discussion Questions from textbook *Teaching High School Social Studies* (1955)

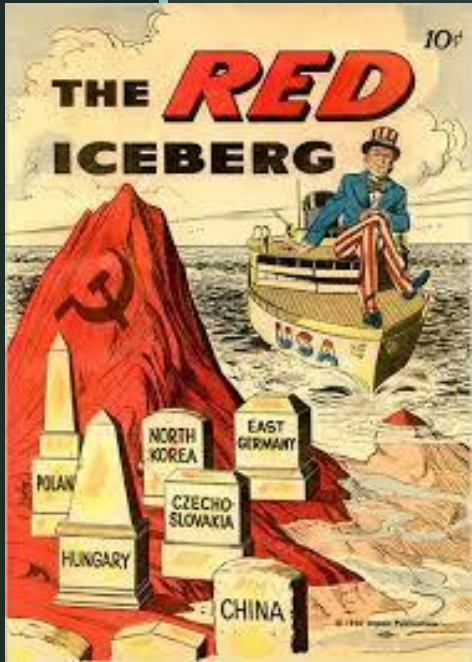
Why did it take so long?

Consensus liberalism of the Cold War

Persecution Nazi of the Jews was barely addressed by American teachers prior to the 1960s. When it was addressed, the topic was usually introduced in the context of universalized discussion of race prejudice against African-Americans

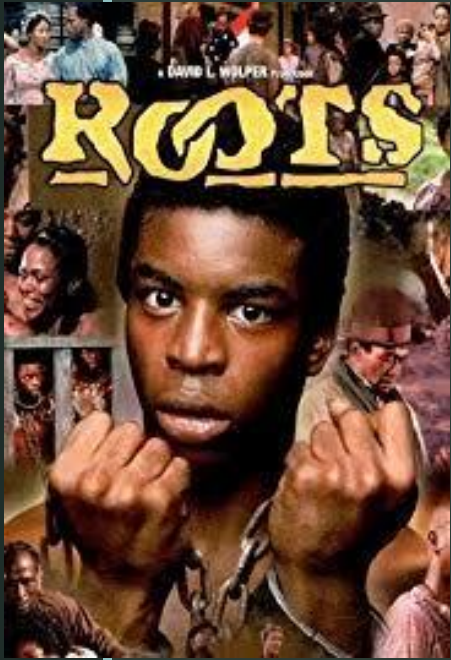
Emphasized consensus, conformity, and reinforcement of the greatness of American democracy.

Race prejudice was considered attitude, not legal, institutional, and social





Why the mid 1970s?

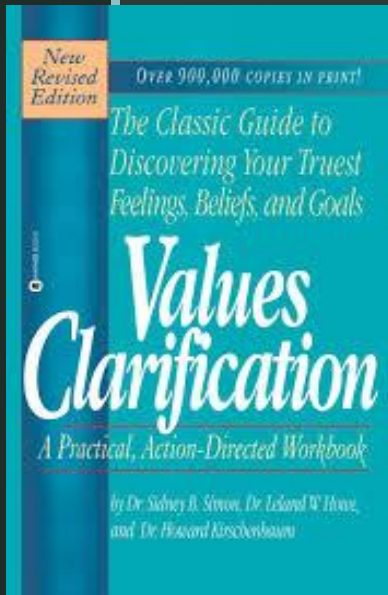


- “Survivors did their best to shield their children from a subject they considered too depressing....Suddenly the situation has changed. The theme of the Holocaust was no longer taboo. It is now discussed freely.” He argued that all children “be exposed to yesterday’s grief and memories, which, unbeknownst to them, are part and parcel of their daily experience.” Elie Wiesel, *New York Times*, “Telling the War”, 1972

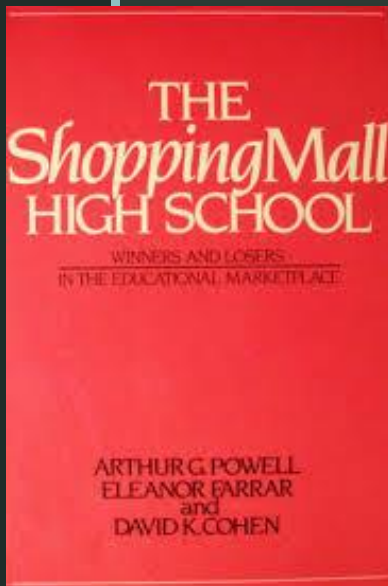


- Ethnic Particularism, multiculturalism
Roots (1977)/ *Holocaust* (1978) miniseries, NCSS creates materials
- “What the show did for Holocaust education was unbelievable...it created an instantaneous awareness of the event”—Richard Flaim, Vineland, NJ
- Genocide in the News: Jean-Paul Sartre, *On Genocide* (1969); Black Panthers accuse US of Genocide; Indian Muslims accuse Hindus of genocide. Nixon tries to get US Senate to ratify the UN Genocide Convention

Why the mid 1970s?



- Affective Revolution- Class Discussion of Social Issues, Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development, Values Clarification
- Relevance- NCSS curriculum guidelines, should be “directly related to the concerns of students” and “deal with real world issues,” 1972
- Electives- 1922: 175 different courses offered in the US
1973: 2,100 different courses offered in the US



Why the mid 1970s?

Albert Post (1973): *The Holocaust: A Case Study of Genocide*, NYC

Rabbi Raymond Zwerin and Audrey Freeman Marcus (1976): *A Study in Values, Gestapo: A Learning Experience about the Holocaust*, Denver, CO

Roselle Chartock (1973/ 1978), *The Holocaust Years: Society on Trial*, Great Barrington, MA

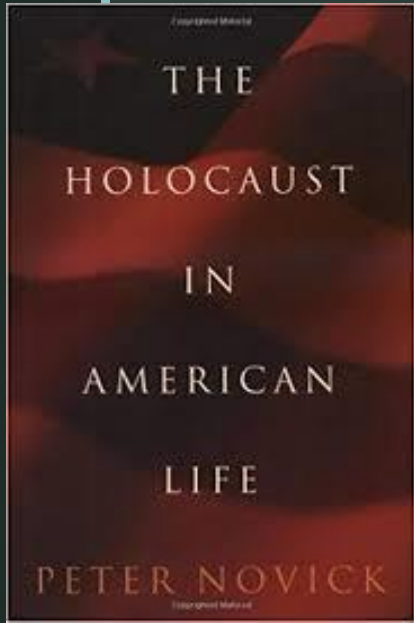
Margot Stern Strom and Bill Parsons (1974/ 1982): *Facing History and Ourselves*, Brookline, MA

Richard Flaim & Edwin Reynolds (1976/1983): *The Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience*, Vineland and Teaneck, NJ

Why the mid 1970s?

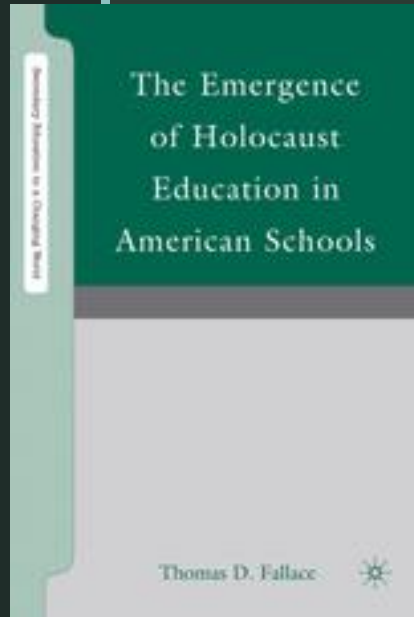


- 1979- US Holocaust Memorial Council, Wiesel as Chair
- “Jewish tragedy with universal implications” Wiesel
- “11 million victim exterminated, 6 million of them Jews”- Carter, 1979
- “So they said 11 million, 6 million of whom are Jews. If this goes on, the next step will be 11, including 6, and in couple of years, they won’t even speak of the 6. They will speak only of the 11 million? See the progression? 6 million plus 5, then 11 including 6, then only 11.” Wiesel
- 1993- *Schindler’s List*/Opening of USHMM



Why New Jersey?

“When a high level of concern with the Holocaust became widespread in American Jewry, it was, given the important role that Jews play in American media and opinion-making elites, not only natural, but virtually inevitable that it would spread throughout the culture at large” -Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (1999)



In 1973, he wanted to revise the curriculum “to make it more relevant and more important for the future of our kids” by “focusing on the moral and ethical issues that emanate from historical events...[kids] were really struggling to find their own way, to know what was right to do...kids had all kinds of questions.”
Richard Flaim, of Vineland High School, NJ

Why New Jersey?

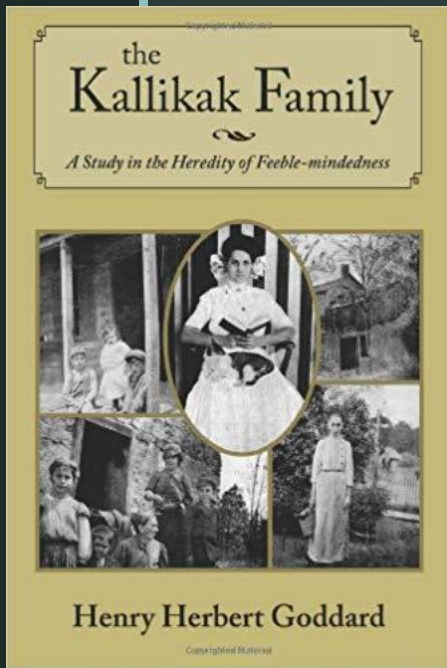


- “The Conscience of Man” offered in fall 1976 in Vineland, was a full semester class, looked at Chartock’s unit curriculum
- Flaim recalled how Vineland was “almost like a laboratory for social studies education...a good place to do interesting things with kids to prepare them for a multiethnic society and world.”
- Harry Furman explained “kids are curious about human nature; they want to talk to each other about these things. Our class gives them a chance to do that.”
- Flaim recalled “a young Hispanic boy stood up and said that the reason the course was valuable to him was that it made him look at a Jewish classmate in a totally new way...he didn’t know anything about Jews...now ‘I know that I have to look at everyone as an individual.’”



Why New Jersey?

- 1976 *New York Times* article, “Student at Teaneck Agonize over Holocaust”
- One student commented: “If things got bad enough in this country, the people would rather see six million persons killed than have their own family killed.”
- Another student: “Look at Watergate. We allowed it to happen and now we have already forgotten it.”
- “It was the entire society. People didn’t care. That’s what allowed it to happen. You have to make moral judgements.”



H.H. Goddard and the Training School for Feeble-Minded Girls and Boys, Vineland NJ

- The *Kallikak Family: A Study in the History of Feeble-Mindedness* (1912)
- “Feeble-Mindedness is hereditary and transmitted as sure as any other character.”
- “The idiot is not our greatest problem. He is indeed loathsome...nevertheless, he lives his life and is done. He does not continue the race with a line of children like himself...it is the *moron* type that makes for us our greatest problem.”
- Groundwork for eugenics, sterilization, immigration restriction, inspires Nazis

MARTIN KALLIKAK



How does NJ compare?

- *Holocaust* miniseries, NJ approached Flaim and Reynolds to collaborate on state curriculum. Started in summer 1978, six statewide meetings, published in 1983.
- Holocaust Uniqueness: Governor Thomas Kean, wrote the introduction. Defined the Holocaust as something that “engulfed not only Jews, but all of those unfortunate enough to live under the cloud of Nazi domination.”
- The Holocaust was not unprecedented (“wholesale destruction of the Armenians by the Turks”), it was the first time “the best resources of the state had been legally dedicated to mass murder.”
- “moral as well as cognitive development...The Kohlberg Scale of Moral Reasoning...as a means of comprehending the capacity of individuals for blind participation in actions which result in suffering.”

How does NJ compare?

- Mandate vs suggested vs appointing a commission
- Holocaust, Genocide, Human Rights (Armenian genocide, Irish Potato Famine, slavery, My Lai massacre in Viet Nam, nuclear arms race)
- Mandated Holocaust: Illinois, New Jersey, Florida
- Mandated Human Rights Education: California, New York, Massachusetts
- Suggested (with Commission and Curriculum): Connecticut, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Washington, Virginia
- Resources: Georgia, Tennessee, Rhode Island, West Virginia

How Does NJ Compare?

- The vast majority of NJ teachers, “through no fault of their own, currently lack the basic skills necessary to implement state mandates with professional integrity” and “should not be teaching it.” The ill-conceived rush” to educate” has led to “a recent, alarming proliferation of poorly conceived and executed textbooks, teaching aids, and lesson plans flooding our schools.”
—Karen Shawn, Englewood, NJ
- Holocaust curriculum in NJ was “so watered down that the point is entirely lost”- Rabbi Stephen Wylen

How does NJ compare?

- “Does he know that state mandates lessons in career education, affirmative action, drug education, Holocaust studies, foreign languages. Teachers are expected to teach all of the above, plus deliver a comprehensive curriculum, while children are walking in and out of the room to go to speech, basic skills, physical education, resource rooms, programs for the gifted and talented, instrumental music, and computer education... There is something wrong with criticizing the schools that are trying to deliver a curriculum, meet the state mandates, prepare for standardized testing, and develop a love of learning and an inquiring mind in our youngsters.”—New Jersey teacher in response to editorial criticizing ignorance of students about the Holocaust (1998)
- [LTGB history, financial literacy, sex education, HIB]