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Black Lives Matter: My identity crisis over history lessons



By Dominic Francis

(from BBC News: „<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-53268490>“, 3 July 2020, adapted)

Task 1: Read the text. Find out who the author is and why he is writing the article.

<p>1 Nearly a month after a petition was launched to get black history taught to pupils across Wales, Dominic Francis finds out more about why this issue matters.</p> <p>The question I ask myself every day is who am I?</p> <p>5 I was born and brought up in Wales. I speak Welsh and I went to a Welsh-language school. I sat through classes about British history and culture and yet the thing I never saw was people like me, a person of black and white descent, being reflected in any of our lessons. My mum is a white woman with Welsh heritage and my dad is a black man with Jamaican heritage.</p> <p>10 And yet everything I learned in our history lessons was about white Britain. It was like black Britain didn't count. Certainly not enough to be taught about anyway. And now aged 22, I am struggling with why? Why wasn't I given the opportunity to learn about my black heritage and my black culture and my black history Why was it left for me to learn these things as an adult? Why wasn't black Britain considered relevant enough</p> <p>15 to teach to me and my classmates when I was at primary and secondary school? Am I not as British as the people I sat in class with? Why is only half of my culture being taught? I would ask myself this every time I sat down in our history lessons.</p> <p>And it seems I am not alone. Just last month, following the killing of George Floyd by a white police officer in America, a petition, which has attracted 35,000 signatures, was started asking that school pupils in Wales be taught about black history.</p> <p>20 Throughout my time in school, teaching black history, culture and heritage was neglected and it has had an effect on me and my identity. But it also had an effect on my fellow pupils who had also not been taught about black history and culture. They would touch my hair or label me with ignorant terms but was this really their fault if</p> <p>25 they were uneducated about my heritage?</p>	<p>petition–die Unterschriften- sammlung, die Petition</p> <p>heritage– das Erbe</p> <p>to label sb.– jemanden abstempeln</p>
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30	Hadassah Radway used to teach at a school in Newport and has seen that ignoring black history and culture in school has had effects on the identity and expectations of black people. "The lack of seeing more black people in positions of authority as politicians, scientists, teachers, bankers is systemic," she said.	to conjure up sth- etw. heraufbeschwören
35	"And, in my opinion, the powerful have an interest in keeping the narrative that they have conjured up over the decades - the black person is unambitious, anti-authority, not hard working, unable to achieve. Teaching accurate history won't only be beneficial for black and minority ethnic children, it will be beneficial for white children. That is the only way we will be able to eradicate racism, and racist practices and procedures in our government, health service, police, the educational system and housing," she added.	to eradicate= to eliminate
40	In 1999, following the racially motivated killing of Stephen Lawrence in London, recommendations were made that the national curriculum should be amended to prevent racism and value cultural diversity. Now, five years after I left school and as Wales prepares to launch its new curriculum for its schools, I wanted to find out whether learning black history was now going to feature in lessons taught to the next generation of pupils.	Senedd -name of the Welsh parliament
45	On Wednesday, Wales' Education Minister Kirsty Williams spoke about the issue to Members of the Senedd during a debate with education spokeswoman Sian Gwenllian. "The new curriculum must ensure that the next generation of children and young people in Wales learn about the history of BAME people in order to prevent racism and to promote cultural diversity," said Ms Gwenllian.	curriculum- der Lehrplan BAME -Black, Asian and minority ethnic
50	During the debate, there were representations from a number of politicians, including Member of the Senedd Neil McEvoy who said: "Black, brown, people of colour are part of Welsh history. We are Welsh history. We help make it. I identify as Welsh and happen to have brown skin, and what I want to see is a fully inclusive history of Wales, where we automatically learn about every community that makes up our country."	
55	Gwenllian went on to say the work under way on this issue would focus on more than just the subject of history. "I want that to be a truly cross-curricular endeavour, including positive role models and learning through our wider cultural environment, including BAME contributions in Wales to literature, media, sport, the economy." She added that there was an under representation of BAME communities in the education workforce: "I want our children to see their communities reflected in those that stand at the front of their classes."	
65	But is this enough? And are we really doing enough to help shape, form and educate our children about their whole history and culture? When I approached the Welsh Government over this issue, they provided me with this statement: "In the new curriculum, learners will explore the local, national and global contexts to all aspects of learning, and to make connections and develop understanding within a diverse society. We want to ensure that education in Wales takes full account of Welsh, and wider, BAME history, identity and culture - and we will establish a working group to oversee the development of learning resources, and identify gaps in current resources or training."	to take full account of sth. - to consider sth. fully

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Even though what I hear is pretty promising I can't help but still be sceptical of what's to come. I just hope that this really is the time our education system starts to acknowledge what should've been acknowledged a long time ago.

to acknowledge sth.—etwas anerkennen

Task 2: Read the statements and decide who made them (with different wording). Name the line/s in which you found the statement.



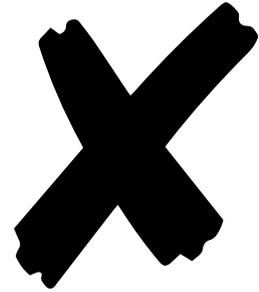
(a) Dominic Francis
(author of the article)



(b) Hadassah Radway
(former teacher and activist)



(c) Sian Gwenllian
(Member of the Senedd)



(d) Not in the text

Statement:	Person	Line/s
1 White students are not interested in learning about the history of minorities in Wales.		
2 Black people are underrepresented in powerful positions.		
3 Authorities are interested in promoting stereotypes against black people that have been held up for a long time.		
4 Teaching only white history in school is harmful for black as well as white students.		
5 The perspectives of black people and other minorities need to be included in all school subjects.		
6 White people can't be blamed for acting racist if they don't learn about black history in school.		
7 All over the world, schools are changing their curricula to include BAME history and culture.		
8 There is a need for teachers with a diversity of ethnic backgrounds.		

Task 3: Write a comment talking about your experience at your school. Have you ever felt like minorities are not talked about enough in your curriculum?