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Tom Cotton needs an education

written by Stephen Millies

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Mao Zedong with W.E.B. Du Bois

Sen. Tom Cotton wants to stop Chinese college students from studying science in the United States. [The Arkansas statesman told Fox News on April 26](#) that “if Chinese students want to come here and study Shakespeare and the Federalist Papers, that’s what they need to learn from America. They don’t need to learn quantum computing.”

William Shakespeare? Wasn’t he that English feller? It’s doubtful that Tom Cotton knows that Shakespeare was Karl Marx’s favorite playwright and that his works are

regularly performed in the People's Republic of China.

One of the most famous Shakespearean actors was Paul Robeson. The Black liberation activist, who defended both the Soviet Union and socialist China,



gave a magnificent performance as Othello.

It doesn't occur to Tom Cotton that Chinese students attending U.S. universities might want to study African American authors like James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, Langston Hughes, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker or Richard Wright.

Cotton's remarks are on the same level as the Texas governor who vetoed an appropriation by the state legislature during World War I. The \$1,000 was to teach National Guard officers some French.

The governor supposedly declared that if English was good enough for Jesus Christ, it was good enough for the boys of Texas. While the Arkansas senator's words are just as ludicrous, they're also dangerously racist.

Is Cotton proposing to "stand in front of the schoolhouse door," as the segregationist Gov. George Wallace did in 1963, when Wallace tried to stop Black students from entering the University of Alabama?

Tom Cotton is walking in the footsteps of [Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus](#), who tried to prevent the "Little Rock Nine" from attending the city's Central High School in 1957. Does the senator want to stop Chinese students from studying scientific

subjects like Faubus tried to block Black students?

Civil rights laws against discrimination were written to stop what Tom Cotton is proposing. So does the 14th Amendment, which was written in the blood of Black, Indigenous, Latinx and white soldiers in the Union Army.

‘A covenant with death’

What about studying the Federalist Papers? This collection of 85 essays pushed for ratifying the U.S. Constitution. They were written by a trio of white supremacists: James Madison, John Jay and Alexander Hamilton.

Madison owned over 100 enslaved Africans in 1801, [according to the White House Historical Association](#). Jay owned at least 18 Africans at one time or another, [as per the New York Slavery Records index](#). Hamilton [handled sales transactions of enslaved Africans](#) for his in-laws — the wealthy Schuyler family — as well as for the Continental Army.

The U.S. Constitution was written by rich people to protect their property, the largest part of which in 1788 was ownership of Black human beings.

Article 1, section 2, part 3 of the Constitution counted Black people as three-fifths of whites while Indigenous people “not taxed” weren’t counted at all. Section 9, part 1 of the same article prevented Congress from ending the African slave trade for 20 years.

So even if it wanted to, for two decades Congress couldn’t outlaw the genocidal commerce that included throwing African children to the sharks. After 1808, the slave trade continued within the United States.

No wonder the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison called the U.S. Constitution [“a covenant with death and an agreement with hell.”](#)

Democracy for the rich

Chinese students should learn the real history of the United States. More Chinese workers probably know that May Day was given to the world by the workers of Chicago in 1886 than do workers in the United States. That's because U.S. capitalists suppress learning that history.

Key to the United States becoming the world's wealthiest country was the genocide of Indigenous peoples, the theft of their land and the enslavement of millions of Africans.

Cotton picked by enslaved Africans accounted for half of U.S. exports in 1860. Wall Street grew up as the partner of the Southern slave masters.

Instead of the Federalist Papers, the Chinese students and workers should study "Black Reconstruction in America" by W.E.B. Du Bois. This classic describes and defends the most democratic period in U.S. history that followed the Civil War.

Public school systems were started by Reconstruction governments that had both Black and white officials. Du Bois, who was a co-founder of the NAACP and editor of its magazine, "The Crisis," joined the Communist Party when he was 93 years old.

Thousands of Black people were murdered by the Ku Klux Klan during and after Reconstruction's bloody overthrow. Mark Twain designed a flag with skulls and crossbones for what he called the ["United States of Lyncherdom."](#)

Many Latinx, Indigenous and Chinese people were also murdered. Two years after Chinese workers built the first U.S. transcontinental railroad across the Sierra Nevada mountains, 19 Chinese people were lynched in Los Angeles in 1871. The U.S. Army massacred over 300 members of the Lakota Sioux Nation at Wounded Knee in 1890.

Arkansas is a good example of U.S. “democracy.” Usually ranked as the second poorest state, Arkansas is home to the Walton family — owners of Walmart — [whose collective fortune is \\$190 billion](#). Tom Cotton is their stooge in the Senate.

[The Walton family stash](#) is \$57 billion more than the gross domestic product of 3 million people in Arkansas. The Waltons are so rich because 1.5 million Walmart workers in the United States and 700,000 Walmart workers in other countries are so poor.

Working and poor people in Arkansas have tried to fight back. When African Americans in [Elaine, Ark.](#) formed the Progressive Farmers and Household Union in 1919, they were hunted down and massacred. Hundreds of Black people were murdered.

The anti-lynching activist Ida B. Wells wrote about this tragedy in [“The Elaine Massacre.”](#) Tom Cotton should read it.

‘They don’t need to learn’

There’s a long history behind Sen. Cotton saying that Chinese students “don’t need to learn” scientific subjects. Slave masters didn’t think enslaved Africans needed to learn how to read and write.

Slave owners thought it was as dangerous as handing out rifles on the plantation. [A North Carolina law stipulated 39 lashes](#) on the back of any enslaved African who was found teaching another enslaved person to read and write.

The British colonial rulers in Kenya declared in their 1949 Beecher report that “illiterates with the right attitude to manual employment are preferable to products of the schools who are not readily disposed to enter manual employment.” (“How Europe Undeveloped Africa,” by Walter Rodney)

Sen. Cotton is claiming that Chinese students are coming to U.S. universities to steal secrets. What secrets?

The compass? Gunpowder? Paper making? Printing? These famous Chinese inventions were shared with the rest of the world. The People's Republic of China has sent cosmonauts into outer space.

Chinese students don't have to come to the United States to spend [\\$11.4 billion in tuition](#) in 2015. [China had 4.7 million](#) science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) graduates in 2016 while the United States had 568,000. Knowledge is knowable.

Scientific cooperation is needed more than ever to fight the coronavirus. The People's Republic of China gave the U.S. a precious window to fight the virus which the Trump regime and its capitalist medical-industrial-complex squandered.

Sen. Tom Cotton needs to go back to school and [stop using the racist term](#) "China virus."

