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Backtalk
Mother Jones
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Dear Editor:

After a long period of time, I renewed my subscription with Mother Jones. As a member of a minority group with a leftist history, there are not many options open. Through the years, I have been sufficiently disappointed with left media to let my subscriptions lapse. One of my main gripes is how leftist media rants and raves about right wing and liberal media – their lack of affirmative action and distortion of the truth – while remaining totally oblivious to what is happening with my particular group – Chicanos and Latinos who make up nearly 40 million U.S. residents and more than qualify as unequal.

An example is found in your September/October 2007 issue. On page 83, you have the “Ken Burns’ Watch List” and you mention his documentary on World War II. Mother Jones does not note – and probably does not care – that there is a controversy between Burns and the Latino community. Although nearly 500,000 Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans served in the armed forces during World War II, Burns totally left them out of his documentary. After protests and conferences with PBS, Burns initially refused to budge. At best he was patronizing. In a prior documentary on Jazz, he refused similar requests to include Latin jazz musicians. A tentative accommodation was reached where Burns would not edit his documentary but add a 23 minute segment where Mexicans and other Latinos would be separate but equal.

Despite the silence of all media – right-center-left and white-- the controversy continues. With the opening of campuses, speakers are taking the message to Latino students. There will be a campaign to picket the showing of the documentary, Latinos and others will be encouraged to withdraw their subscriptions from Public Television and pressure will be put on public officials to take a stand.

Mother Jones has the right to hire anyone it wants – to exclude Latinos from the editorial board—which it does. However, it does not have the right to call itself a leftist journal. Leftist are not supposed to discriminate – and ignorance of issues is a sign of discrimination.

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