

A funeral for feminism

Ye Olde woman-specific issues are no longer academically trendy

by Phyllis Chesler



'Western governments do not (yet) execute people for their ideas but an Orwellian-style policing of ideas is taking place among academics and activists, especially on internet list serve groups.' – Phyllis Chesler, *The Death of Feminism* (2005).

In 2005, I published a book titled *The Death of Feminism*. I did so because I'm a feminist and, therefore, strongly opposed the neutralization or disappearance of our most radical feminist ideas; how Women's Studies had morphed into Gender, Sexuality, and LGBTQIA Studies, which no longer focused on violence against biological women but rather, became virtuously obsessed with the victimization of black

transgender 'sex workers'. Increasingly, race and class obliterated gender; biological motherhood was of far less importance than 'surrogate' wombs for hire.

When last I checked, Harvard's 2018-2019 Women's Studies course offerings included: '"Ain't I a Woman?" Gender and Sexuality in the Caribbean and the African Americas'; and 'Beyoncé Feminism, Rihanna Womanism: Popular Music and Black Feminist Theory.' Stanford offered: 'Intersectionality and Social Movements: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Collective Organizing.' Yale offered 'Transnational Approaches to Gender and Sexuality.'

Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir – all missing in action.

Ye Olde woman-specific issues – incest, rape, sexual harassment, woman-beating, the harms of prostitution, pornography, and trafficking, women's reproductive, economic, and political, rights, et cetera – were no longer academically trendy.

(The #MeToo movement was purely media-driven and activist in nature. It had nothing to do with the professoriate which had already disappeared the 1970s feminist scholarship and activism on this subject.)

The left-wing sisterhood at Nation Books was already unhappy with my 2002 book titled [*Woman's Inhumanity to Woman*](#). My male editor had to fight hard for his right to acquire this book. He utterly disappeared right before publication. I've often wondered about his fate and hope he is alive and thriving.

Now, please try to imagine how offended certain sisters were by a book titled *The Death of Feminism*. Even worse: I dared to write about the bullying, shaming, and totalitarian-style intolerance that led to my being purged from a left-feminist Listerv group.

This was not unique: I describe something similar as having happened to Prof Donna Hughes because of her stand against sex slavery and trafficking – and because she, too, was viewed as a conservative since she occasionally published in *National Review*.

My purgeable thought crime (as [previously noted](#)) was publishing feminist (!) articles at conservative sites, which made the Bully-in-Chief feel ‘unsafe’. I was also guilty of defending both the West and Israel, and for criticizing public gang-rape, FGM, Islamic terrorism, forced face-veiling, and honor killing, thereby exposing the crimes of ‘brown’ men to unacceptably white conservative ‘racists’.

I had to be stopped, or at least slowed down.

Manhattan’s really a small town for those who live here and who move in certain circles as I did. I thought I’d heard everything – but no; I discovered that the editor – my editor of *The Death of Feminism*, had been gaslighted by another of her feminist authors, the late Dr Louise J. Kaplan, the author of *Female Perversions* and *Cultures of Fetishism*, a woman whom I’d never met, but whose downtown left-wing group helped her concoct a plan to persuade our mutual editor that I’d been complaining both about her and about her editorial work.

By the time this strange little plot came to light, the editor had canceled my book tour. Shortly thereafter, she apologized for having been so easily hoodwinked. She was soon fired. The book was taken out of print – and there is where it remains.

A second consequence of my having been purged only became known to me last week.

In a footnote – a footnote! – to the chapter titled ‘The New Intolerance’, I had named all those feminists with whom I’d worked for a long time and yet who had functioned as bystanders during the process of my being purged; feminists who did nothing to stop the brutal hectoring and harassment.

Please recall: I was the one who'd been challenged and punished for my views, not the bullies, not the bystanders.

Forgetting all about this – we are talking about 15 years ago – I wrote to one of the feminists whom I'd named in the footnote. I wanted to connect, and I wondered why we'd lost contact. She responded by reminding me that I'd publicly accused her of 'being an anti-Semite' when, in fact, she's contributed enormously to Judaism and she sent me a long list of her contributions.

I insisted that I'd never done such a thing. I asked for proof; she had none. And then it dawned upon me: she and the other bystanders may now feel that *they're* the victims, that I'd accused *them* of being anti-Semites, when in fact, I'd not done so.

I was stunned. This is exactly the response that Jew-haters and Israelophobes manifest when they condemn Israelis as 'Nazis', and compare Israel's attempts to defend itself as proof of Israel's 'ethnic cleansing' of Arab populations. They appropriate Jewish victimhood in order to disguise their own aggression.

And such is life in the feminist fast lane.

First published in the