

A Shameful Ad Signed by Jews in the New York Times

By Phyllis Chesler

It's all happening just as I knew it would—but all the shiny, happy, people did not want to see it. They still don't. As someone said about the Holocaust: It started slowly and then it happened all at once.

First, little things happened—well, they were not so little but they were little enough so that most people did not really notice them. Not all the medical forms demanded that you identify yourself as male, female, bisexual, non-binary, gay, queer, or transgender—until they all did, seemingly at once. Not every public, hospital, or school bathroom was renamed for any and all humans—until they all were.

Not every Jewish or pro-Israel student was harassed, demonized, forced to flee the campus mobs—until far too many were.

Jewish or pro-Israel psychotherapists and psychoanalysts were not all blackballed if they were suspected of having pro-Israel positions, only some were—until it became clear that there actual blacklists were being circulated and more and more fine analysts found their names on them.

Not every pro-Israel or pro-science (and thus anti-transgender) academic lost coveted lecture dates, promotions, tenure, publishing contracts, invitations to appear at prestigious journals—until they all did.

As for the feminists? Still-existing feminist bookstores and Women's Studies Programs stopped welcoming a feminist's work slowly, and then across the board, if the feminist in question was not solidly on board with intersectional feminism; i.e.

was not pro-transgender and anti-Israel—and if his or her main areas of study were not about racism, Western colonialism, Western imperialism, and all things queer, all things Palestine.

As for myself—I was purged from a feminist listserv group long ago, perhaps in 2004, and was forced to exit another professional psychology group over the subject of Israel/Palestine. To stay or to go from dangerous places has always been a Jewish dilemma—well, as they say, it may start with the Jews but it never ends with us. Dissidents, apostates, infidels—all, all have had to flee for their lives from where they were born or grew up or have lived all their lives.

Those who critiqued Islam/Islamism, terrorism, and Jihad were not only dis-invited and defamed, their lectures were interrupted, mobs moved against them quite menacingly, they increasingly needed police protection or they were escorted out, mid-sentence, for their own protection. It began slowly—I both experienced it and saw it happen to others, at first, one by one—but soon enough this became the norm.

Famed Nobel Laureates signed petitions and ads demonizing only Israel. At first, there were not that many and they did not appear all at once. Now—they do.

For example: Precisely at such a terrible and treacherous time for Israel; just when Israel is being tortured and re-tortured by Hamas's sadistic changing of its mind about returning any more hostages; exactly when Israeli leaders had to decide whether to rescue the three promised hostages at hand, but over and above the lives of their entire people going forward—what do the shiny, happy, still safe Jewish people do—and in the name of their version of what Jewish ethics demand?

Of course. They take a no-risk position, (which they consider

least about those rabbis whom I know. How about the rabbi who sleeps with her congregants? Or the rabbi who once invited a representative of the PLO to her congregation on Yom Kippur? Or the rabbi who once insisted that one should not pray without first doing yoga and deep breathing exercises? Or the rabbis connected with well-known male rabbinical anti-Israel extremists? Alas, haval, these are all women, all feminists; some, well really, many are lesbian feminists.

Perhaps such revelations of what goes on behind the scenes is irrelevant, actually, is irreverent. Well, I'm not calling them out by name.

Some signatories are famous writers, actors, film directors, artists, and rappers. Their names precede those of the rabbis, most—but not all—of whom are fairly unknown. The Fame Game list includes: Judith Butler, Nan Goldin, Tony Kushner, V (formerly Eve Ensler), Sandi Dubowski, Naomi Klein, Peter Beinart, all already well known for their anti-Zionist and Jew-hating “social justice” positions.

Some of the famous are newbies to the never-ending fight at high noon, and despite some of their “Jewish” names—I had no idea they were Jews: Joaquin Phoenix, Debra Winger, Boots Riley, Tavi Gevison/Gevinson, Wally Shawn and his wife Deborah Eisenberg, Jonathan Glazer (“Zone of Interest”), Ilana Glazer, Morgan Spector, Molly Crabapple, Joey (formerly Jill) Soloway, Rain Phoenix, Larry (Seinfeld) Charles.

Do such ads or petitions matter? Perhaps not, perhaps yes. At the very least, these signatories are standing with, actually supporting the NYT's continuous blood libels against Israel. And they are paying the Paper of Record for the right to do so.

We are commanded to pray for all our people on the Day of Atonement. Oh, I do not want to have to pray for these signatories on Yom Kippur. I do not want to take any

responsibility for their shameful display.

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