

What Happened to the American Psychological Association?



by Jon Mills

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“When the most influential psychological association in the world wants to replace an ethic of care for all individuals with a new woke normativity that is gaslighting the next generation of psychologists, their patients, and the public, it should lose all credibility.”

The American Psychological Association (APA) has become an increasingly prejudiced and anti-Semitic organization that embraces [woke ideology](#) under the rubric of social justice. In its unapologetic call for [decolonizing psychology](#), the APA has

shifted away from its universal emphasis on empathy, compassion, equality, and care for *all* individuals. The APA now embraces a political agenda that values [black, indigenous, and other people of color \(BIPOC\) group identities](#) over people of European ancestry, the latter of whom are demonized as oppressors responsible for [systemic racism](#), white supremacy, and the subjugation of others. In its enthusiastic zeal to [blame white people](#) for all the ills of American society, the APA has become an unethical paragon of identity politics; it simply parrots the propaganda of social justice activism. In doing so, it contradicts its own professed values. In promoting a decolonial scheme, the APA further elides the complexity of objective truth and empirical facts, while rewriting psychology as a discipline.

The history of psychology largely derives from the pioneering work of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis and a marginalized Jew. Now, Jews [are regarded as](#) imperial white supremacists and colonizers of Arabs lands. The decolonial rhetoric the APA [espouses](#) also reinforces anti-Zionism and animus toward Jews. In its failure unequivocally [to support Israel](#) following the October 7th pogrom committed by Hamas, [many](#) psychologists [protested](#) the APA's moral turpitude. [Petitions](#) were formed to [remove](#) Thema Bryant, the then-president of APA, for her refusal to address explicit anti-Semitism in the organization. Bryant's politicalization of psychotherapy as a [decolonial praxis](#) under the guise of [liberation psychology](#) only indoctrinates the next generation of professional psychologists and their patients in a deeply-flawed [critical social justice ideology](#). The imprudent binary logic of pitting identities and racial groups against one another only advances divisiveness and discrimination, while also violating the basic [ethical code](#) of treatment that is designed to ameliorate the suffering of any patient, regardless of his racial background or identity. This double standard is most conspicuous in the APA's public statements, in its tolerance of anti-Semites in leadership roles, and in

its failure to discipline ethical misconduct by certain Divisions under its auspices.

The most egregious incidents of anti-Semitism have been perpetrated by [Lara Sheehi](#), a [disgraced psychology professor](#) once at George Washington University, now in [Qatar](#), who is an [outspoken anti-Semite](#) and [supporter](#) of [Hamas](#), including condoning its recent massacre of Israeli citizens and foreign nationals under the guise of freedom resistance. Sheehi [is the current president](#) of the APA's Division 39: Society for Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychology. After numerous complaints about her flagrant bigotry and clear disdain for Israel, the APA did nothing to remove her from her position. To make matters worse, the majority of the Division 39 Board supports her, as well as the [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions \(BDS\) movement](#), which advocates for the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state. The entire Board of Section IX: Psychoanalysis for Social Responsibility, which is a subdivision of Division 39, even [issued a public statement](#) shortly after the October 7th atrocity in support of "Palestinian liberation," which it [reissued](#) after the APA coached the group to issue a disclaimer. Not only is this anti-Zionist/anti-Semitic statement a racist screed, it is callously insensitive to the Jewish people in the wake of their collective suffering, when more innocent Jews were slaughtered [since the Holocaust](#). Moreover, the statement violates APA's own [resolution against anti-Semitism](#), adopted by its Counsel of Representatives, that prohibits the demonization of Israel. The APA's failure to sanction Section IX is a salient affront to its own standards.

The APA's failure to act condones anti-Semitism and also divides its membership along political, ethnic, racial, and religious lines. The Board of Directors of the APA needs to be held accountable for being complicit in racism. Moreover, the APA is violating its own [Ethical Principles](#) by allowing these anti-Semitic groups and professional public [statements](#) to

vilify, victim-blame, and condemn Israel and Jews who were attacked by extremists in a group [deemed a terrorist organization by](#) the United States Department of State. By failing to ban Section IX and terminate a Hamas sympathizer who is president of Division 39, the APA is, in effect, lending [material support](#) to terror.

When the most influential psychological association in the world wants to replace an ethic of care for all individuals with a new woke normativity that is gaslighting the next generation of psychologists, their patients, and the public, it should lose all credibility. It is time to clean house.

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