



**Sisterhood and Antisemitism:
How Some Feminist Ideas about
Identity, Power, Feelings, and
Belonging Were Used to Justify
October 7th**

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

**9am PT / 10am MT / 11am CT /
12pm ET**

**Presented by:
Kara Jesella, Ph.D.**



STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM SERIES

Feminist Antisemitism

An Intellectual History

Kara Jesella



London Centre
for the Study of
Contemporary
Antisemitism



Feds investigating antisemitism allegations at American Psychological Association

The investigation stems from several complaints by Jewish and Israeli psychologists alleging that the association has promoted or failed to discipline anti-Israel activism.

By Andrew Lapin/JTA
June 17, 2026
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Antisemitism in professional clinical psychology training

Miri Bar-Halpern ¹, Dean McKay ²

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 42385554 DOI: [10.1016/j.copsyc.2026.102347](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2026.102347) [🔗](#)

Abstract

Political ideology has increasingly entered clinical psychology training through the incorporation of decolonial and activist-oriented frameworks. While attention to social inequities is essential to culturally competent care, integrating politicized models into applied clinical training raises concerns about scientific neutrality, professional pluralism, and the emergence of identity-based bias. This article examines how decolonial psychology and related activist frameworks have contributed to the development of antisemitic dynamics within professional clinical psychology training. We argue that these dynamics emerge not only from specific political narratives but from a broader shift toward ideologically driven models of care that prioritize moral frameworks over empirical reasoning. This shift has contributed to fractures within the profession and introduces potential public health risks by influencing clinical judgment, professional relationships, and standards of care. These challenges are described, and a programmatic approach to addressing them is provided.

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Issues to consider during talk:

- How and why feminist identities have changed.
- How and why feminists have created new identities in reaction to other identities and how they have tried to undermine or even destroy these other identities.
- What happens when members of minority groups try to create a feeling of belonging among themselves because they have not experienced belonging and/or do not identify with mainstream women or mainstream Judaism, but who can also be cavalier—at best—about how they treat those considered mainstream?
- What is violence? Is it actual, physical violence? Or is it identity categories themselves?

Kara Jesella
February 25, 1994
Introduction to Women's Studies
Karen Robertson and Shirley Idelson

"Travel, Identity, and Resistance"

Physical journeys affect psychological journeys. Traveling, by definition, is a movement from one place to another. When one travels, she moves through a space articulated by gender, race, and class¹, and these classifications affect the traveler's identity. According to Bell Hooks, "The hegemony of one experience of travel can make it impossible to articulate another experience and be heard" (Hooks 344). While the experience of travel affects the sense of identity of every individual traveler, travel has particular implications for members of minorities and oppressed groups.

det

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FOREWORD:

TONI CADE BAMBARA

NICE JEWISH GIRLS

A Lesbian Anthology



EVELYN
TORTON
BECK ■
EDITOR

A PERSEPHONE
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That is all that is it!



Accounts of Sexual Violence by Hamas Are Aired Amid Criticism of U.N.

A presentation at the U.N., organized in part by Sheryl Sandberg, accused the body of ignoring the rape and mutilation of women in the Oct. 7 assault on Israel, and heard gruesome details from witnesses.

By Katherine Rosman and Lisa Lerer,
December 4, 2023

Photo by Dave Sanders for *The New York Times*

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The Feminine Mystique Betty Friedan

“If you’ve never read it, read it now.”

—Arianna Huffington, *O, The Oprah Magazine*

Introduction by Gail Collins
Afterword by Anna Quindlen



Betty Friedan, shown in 1970, is credited with starting second-wave feminism with her book. J.P. Laffont

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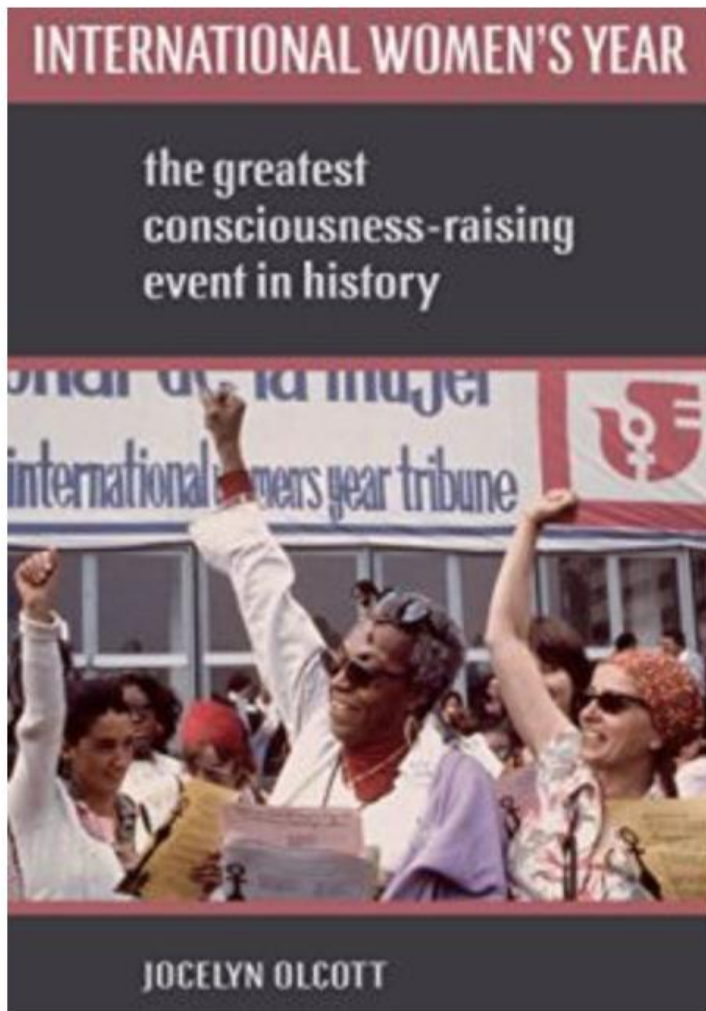
By Toni Morrison
Aug. 22, 1971

Black women thought of white women as “willful children, pretty children, mean children, ugly children, but never as real adults.”
— Toni Morrison



Feelings matter in feminism

Redstockings meet for a "consciousness-raising session. "Women aren't in a position to make demands now," one says. "We have to build a movement first," - Photo and text from *Life*, 12/12/69 (c) 1969 by Time, Inc (Photo: Mary Ellen Mark)



“At a time when developing nations were struggling en masse against those wealthier nations that they believed exploited them, many of the militant, Marxist Third World participants thought that their First World counterparts were too bourgeois, too controlling, and too separatist from men. It was a critique they shared with [radical] American Black feminists...For these participants, and for the media, these unappealing—and stereotypically Jewy—qualities were embodied in one of the event’s most high-profile attendees: Betty Friedan...In this struggle between competing versions of feminism—which was also a competition between feminists and between nations—Israel became a flashpoint.”

— Kara Jesella, *Feminist Antisemitism*

Sisterhood + Feelings

These ideas will influence the development of identity politics, and an identity-based feminism, in the 1970s and 1980s.



“Identity politics”

“Interlocking oppressions”

The Combahee River Collective in 1974. Left to right bottom: Demita Frazier and Helen Stewart. Left to right top: Margo Okazawa-Rey, Barbara Smith, Beverly Smith, Chirlane McCray, and Mercedes Tompkins.
(Margo Okazawa-Rey)

ed by ROSEANN P. BELL, BETTYE J. PARKER,
and BEVERLY GUY-SHEFTALL

STURDY BLACK BRIDGES

—Visions of—
Black Women in Literature



“Today one of the most serious assaults to African familyhood is being forged by the white feminist movement; the theory for which is emerging from a predominantly Jewish elite group...”

—Iva E. Carruthers,

“War on African Familyhood,”

1979

Shaping the World of My Art

Paule Marshall

Paule Marshall's most recent novel, *Praisesong for the Widow*, will appear in 1982. Her prize-winning first novel, *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, originally published in 1959, has just been reissued, with an afterword by Mary Helen Washington, by The Feminist Press. This essay is adapted from "Shaping the World of My Art," which appeared in *New Letters* 40, no. 1 (Autumn 1973): 97-112, and is reprinted by permission. The transcription of the women's talk is from p. 70 of *The Feminist Press* edition of *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (available from The Feminist Press, Box 334, Old Westbury, NY 11568, for \$6.95, plus handling).

To talk about early influences it will be necessary to take a giant step back to that stage in life when, without being conscious of it, I began the never-ending apprenticeship which is writing. It began in all places the ground-floor kitchen of a brownstone house in Brooklyn. Let me try to recreate the setting for you. Picture if you will a large old-fashioned kitchen with a second-hand refrigerator, the kind they used to have back then in the thirties with the motor on top, a coal stove that in its blackness, girth, and the heat it threw off during the winter overwhelmed the gas range next to it, a sink whose pipes never ceased their rusty cough, and a large table covered in flowered oilcloth set like an altar in the middle of the room.

It was at this table that the faithful, my mother and her women friends, would gather almost every afternoon upon returning from their

"You deserve to dead," Silla cried, her face working and her eyes boring into Iris, who remained unmoved and unimpressed. Silla leaned across the table to her, whispering, "Iris, you know what it is to work hard and still never make a head-way? That's Bimshire. One crop. People having to work for next skin to nothing. The white people treating we like slaves still and we taking it. The rum shop and the church join together to keep we pacify and in ignorance. That's Barbados. It's a terrible thing to know that you gon be poor all yuh life, no matter how hard you work. You does stop trying after a time. People does see you so and call you lazy. But it ain laziness. It just that you does give up. You does kind of die inside. . . ."

"It's the God truth," Florrie whispered. "I ain saying that we don catch *H* in this country what with the discrimination and thing and how hard we does have to scrub the Jew floor to make a penny, but my Christ, at least you can make a head-way. Look how Roosevelt come and give relief and jobs. Who was one the first Bajan brought a house? You, Iris. When they pass this law to hire colored in defense plants who was the first up in the people face applying? Your husband, Iris. Even I gon apply for one those jobs. So c'dear, give credit where it due, nuh," she pleaded softly, then as Iris still ignored her, she lashed out, "You's an ungrateful whelp."

"Dear-heart," Iris laughed, "I ain able for you to kill me with words!"

Florrie had listened rapt, respectful to Silla, and now she said solemnly, "Talk yuh talk, Silla! Be-Jees, in this white-man world you got to take yuh mouth and make a gun."

jobs as domestics. Their work day had begun practically at dawn with the long train ride out to the white sections of Brooklyn. There, the ones who weren't lucky enough to have a steady job would stand on the street corners waiting for the white, mainly Jewish, housewives to come along and hire them for a half day's work cleaning their houses. The auction block was still very real for them.

Later, armed with the few dollars they had earned, my mother and her friends would make the long trip back to our part of town and there, in the sanctuary of our kitchen, talk endlessly, passionately. I didn't realize it then but those long afternoon rap sessions were highly functional. They were the means which helped them exercise the day's humiliations and restore them to themselves. A way to overcome.

The people they worked for were usually the first thing to come under the whiplash of their tongues. For hours at a stretch they would subject their employers to an acute and merciless analysis. And they were shrewd students of psychology. They knew those predominantly Jewish housewives for whom they worked far better than the latter would ever know them. I never saw any of these women they spoke of—and had no wish to; it was bad enough that I had to wear their children's cast-off clothes my mother brought home—yet my mother



Paule Marshall. Photo by Lynda Koolish.

READERS' SPEAKOUT

"Once More into the Breach": A Postscript

Dear Florence:

In November, the English department of Rhode Island College rejected one motion to add Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and another to add "an acceptable piece of Black-written literature" to the core curriculum of our Western Literature course. Eight people out of twenty-two voted for the motions.

Aside from Emily Dickinson, the core writers remain all white, male Europeans.

I regret adding this postscript to my article, "Once More into the Breach" of *Western Literature Courses* (*Women's Studies Quarterly* 9:4 (Winter 1981)).

Sincerely yours,

Carolyn R. Swift
Department of English
Rhode Island College
Providence, RI 02908

actions and decisions raise questions.

There are questions for Paule Marshall, like—what does she think, now, about the relationship between those two groups of women? Why were the housewives who hired those Black women "mainly Jewish"? Wouldn't Christian women hire them? Did they go deliberately to Jewish neighborhoods?—and so on.

And there are questions for you, the editors: do you see any contradictions here? Any problems? You publish her words with no comment—in the midst of the women's movement's and NWSA's current struggles and battles about racism. Indeed, you do so to advertise your own publication of *Brown Girl, Brownstones*. Did you think about these things that have struck me? Especially those of you who are Jews?

Relations between Blacks and Jews—both consistently and categorically despised by the Christian white majority, both presently further endangered by the current revitalization of the Klan and various Nazi groups—are intense, volatile, complex. I learned this—without intellectual understanding—as a very young girl, hearing my elders say, "Thank God for the colored in this country—treat 'em good. If they weren't here, there'd be camps—with ovens—for us, just like in Poland and Germany."

I am not offering here an analysis of Black/Jewish reciprocal racism. By now, we are almost tired of saying, and nearly sick with the recognition, that the hated, the oppressed, and the denied have been made to hate, oppress, and deny each other.

I am writing because I was shocked and hurt to find uncritical acceptance of Jew-hating in the *Women's Studies Quarterly*, because I remember the words spoken at the Jewish lesbian workshop in Bloomington—"We thought we were safe in the women's community," and because I had to make words out of the anger, shame, and resentment Marshall's words gave me.

Judith Arcana
Chicago, Illinois

COPY DEADLINES

Summer 1982 issue: March 15.
Fall 1982 issue: June 30.
Winter 1982 issue: September 15.
Spring 1983 issue: December 15.

"Uncritical acceptance of Jew-hating"?

To the editors:

First I read Bettina Aptheker's essay (*Women's Studies Quarterly* 9:4 (Winter 1981)), in which she described the nodding and smiling white women who refused to contradict or seriously engage with Hope Landrine, and then I read Paule Marshall's mockery of and contempt for Jewish women. So I have no choice but to write this letter.

For Marshall's mother and her friends to have felt and said what they did about the Jewish housewives they worked for makes perfect sense to me. For Marshall to have learned Jew-hating at the same time she learned "the importance of skillful characterization" was inevitable. For her to have written a novel in 1959 which expressed both is hardly striking either. But for her to have continued in her disdain and disgust for Jews, writing in 1973 and permitting these passages to be reprinted unaltered, with no comment, in 1981, and for you, the editors, to have chosen these particular passages to publish—these

REGISTER EARLY for the NWSA Convention!

Expenses to NWSA will be reduced if 800 people preregister by May 15. Please help NWSA and yourself by getting in your registration form early (see page 38 in this issue).

Details about the Convention Program and about travel packages to Humboldt State University in Arcata, California in this issue (see pages 37-47).



Victorian house in historic Eureka, California, one of the many bright points of interest Convention-goers may want to visit.

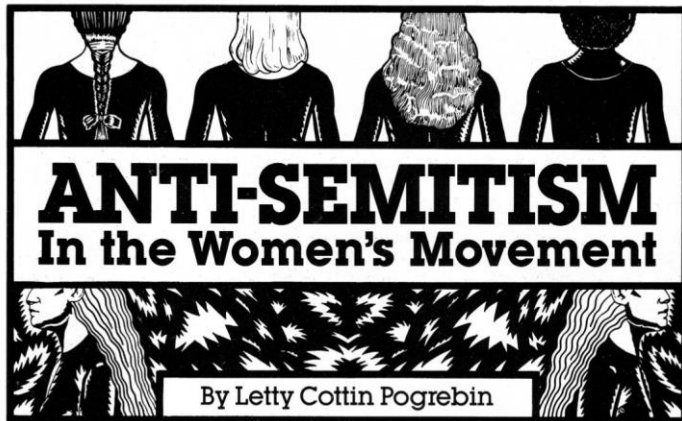
NICE JEWISH GIRLS

A Lesbian Anthology



EVELYN
TORTON
BECK ■
EDITOR

A PERSEPHONE
PRESS BOOK ■



W

hy now? Why write about anti-Semitism and the Women's Movement when we have the Moral Majority and Ronald Reagan to worry about?

Because, very simply, it's there. And because I am a Jew who has been finding problems where I had felt most safe—among feminists.

● On hearing that I planned to write about anti-Semitism, one feminist asked, "Won't Ms. have to give equal time to the PLO?" Incredible. When did anti-Semitism turn into a "balanced issue," with Palestine Liberation Organization interests skewed into a respectable other side? Must we remind people that those who are against anti-Semitism are against Jew-hating? The opposite is not to be pro-PLO. The opposite is to be *for* Jew-hating.

● A white civil rights activist proudly described having organized interracial groups of women in Little Rock, Arkansas. "We went out in teams," she said. "A black woman, a Jewish woman, and a white woman." She never noticed that she had made Jews a race apart.

● Midge Costanza gave me a view from the inside: "Because I'm known as an

Italian-Catholic, Gentle women feel they can say anti-Semitic things to me, like 'Why should we carry the Jews on our backs,' as if Jews are responsible for the energy problem, or 'That one's a Jew so there's no arguing with her.' But the worst was at the 1980 Democratic Convention when a bunch of women were tossing around names to speak on various platform issues. I was amazed when both Jews and non-Jews discarded certain Jewish names because they thought having a Jew associated with an issue would hurt."

● A month or so before the United Nations Women's Conference in Copenhagen in 1980, I asked a black friend to sign a petition. Five years before, the PLO had monopolized the Mexico City women's conference to drag Israel through the mud and to declare Zionism racism. There were signs that Copenhagen would be exploited for a similar purpose, and some of us felt a petition warning against this time bomb might defuse it.

My friend told me the Copenhagen conference was a hot topic in the black community. Trade-offs were being negotiated; an anti-apartheid resolution might be passed in return for American

blacks' compliance on a Palestinian agenda item.

"Please understand," said my friend. "I can't afford to sign."

I understand that large numbers of Jewish women, far out of proportion to our percentage in the population, have worked for civil rights, welfare rights, Appalachian relief—issues that did not necessarily affect our own lives. What I do not understand is how much we must live through before our non-Jewish sisters can "afford" to make anti-Semitism their concern.

● When American Jewish women returned from that Copenhagen conference stung by anti-Semitic experiences (see box, page 48), some women here at home chose not to believe their stories or called their reactions "Jewish paranoia."

I cannot think of any feminist context in which a woman's testimony—whether about sexism or racism—would be disregarded or labeled "female paranoia." Why the gap when women speak bitterness about anti-Semitism?

Are Jewish women overreacting? Evelyn Torton Beck, professor of Women's Studies at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, thinks not: "At one

**Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race
and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of
Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist
Theory and Antiracist Politics**

Kimberle Crenshaw†

One of the very few Black women's studies books is entitled *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us are Brave*.¹ I have chosen this title as a point of departure in my efforts to develop a Black feminist criticism² because it sets forth a problematic consequence of the tendency to treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis.³ In this talk, I want to examine how this tendency is perpetuated by a single-axis framework that is dominant in antidiscrimination law and that is also reflected in feminist theory and antiracist politics.

I will center Black women in this analysis in order to contrast the multidimensionality of Black women's experience with the single-axis analysis that distorts these experiences. Not only will this juxtaposition reveal how Black women are theoretically erased, it will also illustrate how this framework imports its own theoretical limitations that undermine efforts to broaden feminist and an-

† Acting Professor of Law, University of California, Los Angeles Law School.

¹ Gloria T. Hull, et al, eds (The Feminist Press, 1982).

² For other work setting forth a Black feminist perspective on law, see Judy Scales-Trent, *Black Women and the Constitution: Finding Our Place, Asserting Our Rights* (Voices of Experience: New Responses to Gender Discourse), 24 Harv CR-CL L Rev 9 (1989); Regina Austin, *Sapphire-Bound*, forthcoming in Wisc Women's L J (1989); Angela Harris, *Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory* (unpublished manuscript on file with author); and Paulette M. Caldwell, *A Hair Piece* (unpublished manuscript on file with author).

³ The most common linguistic manifestation of this analytical dilemma is represented in the conventional usage of the term "Blacks and women." Although it may be true that some people mean to include Black women in either "Blacks" or "women," the context in which the term is used actually suggests that often Black women are not considered. See, for example, Elizabeth Spelman, *The Inessential Woman* 114-15 (Beacon Press, 1988) (discussing an article on Blacks and women in the military where "the racial identity of those identified as 'women' does not become explicit until reference is made to Black women, at which point it also becomes clear that the category of women excludes Black women"). It seems that if Black women were explicitly included, the preferred term would be either "Blacks and white women" or "Black men and all women."

Intersectionality =
interlocking oppressions
and
centering
>>>
“hierarchy of oppressions”

The Politics of Jewish Invisibility

Evelyn Torton Beck

Like these, my despised ancestors I have become a keeper of accounts.
—Bashert, Irena Klepfisz

The task of integrating Jewish women's history and culture into the feminist project has been only partially successful in spite of the many different kinds of writings produced by Jewish feminists in the last decade and the variety of papers and workshops on Jewish themes presented at the National Women's Studies Association conferences.¹ Not even the presence of a strong and visible Jewish Women's Caucus, which in 1986 organized a highly successful plenary revealing the strength and diversity of "Feminist Jewish Women's Voices," has assured Jewish themes a recognized place in the feminist classroom or within feminist theorizing.²

For this reason, delighted as I am by the publication of three excellent new resources in Jewish Women's Studies, which will be of enormous help to those who wish to engage in research or teaching about Jewish women, I can no longer simply celebrate the appearance of these books as if I believed their availability would really make a major difference in the emerging discipline of Women's Studies. In truth, I see no reason to believe that these new books will be any more successful than were the books and essays which preceded them and which these texts document and annotate.³ Because Jewish women's lives continue to remain so

Correspondence and requests for reprints should be sent to Evelyn T. Beck, Department of Women's Studies, 1115 The Mill Building, The University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

¹With thanks to L. Lee Knefelkamp for her thoughtful editorial work and unflagging encouragement.

²A tape of this session is available for \$6.95 from the National Women's Studies Association, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. These tapes include the stories of Jewish women who are secular and religious, Ashkenazi and Sephardi, rural and urban, American-born and Holocaust survivors, and those who represent different class backgrounds.

³These are: Sue Levi Elwell, ed., *The Jewish Women's Studies Guide*, 2d ed. (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1987); Aviva Cantor, ed., *The Jewish Woman, 1900-1985: A Bibliography*, 2d ed. (Fresh Meadows, N.Y.: Biblio Press, 1987); Joan Scherer Brewer, *Sex and the Modern Jewish Woman: An Annotated Bibliography* with essays by Lynn Davidman and Evelyn Avery (Fresh Meadows, N.Y.: Biblio Press, 1986). The first edition of Aviva Cantor's *Bibliography* was

Academic articles here, and elsewhere in presentation, were downloaded via JSTOR.



I WAS BORN A BLACK
WOMAN
AND NOW
I AM BECOME A
PALESTINIAN
AGAINST THE
RELENTLESS
LAUGHTER OF EVIL
THERE IS LESS AND
LESS LIVING ROOM
AND WHERE ARE MY
LOVED ONES?

IT IS TIME TO MAKE
OUR WAY HOME.

JUNE JORDAN
MOVING TOWARDS HOME (1982)



jewishvoiceforpeace · Follow



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As we commemorate Black History Month, we acknowledge the profound interconnectedness between the struggles for Black liberation and Palestinian liberation.

In the words of the great poet, June Jordan:

I was born a Black woman
and now

I am become a Palestinian
against the relentless laughter of evil
there is less and less living room
and where are my loved ones?
It is time to make our way home.

As we commemorate Black History Month, we pay tribute to the unwavering spirit of our Black comrades. We express gratitude to the movement leaders who have imparted invaluable lessons on resilience, power, and



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12



February 9

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A JOURNAL FOR JEWISH FEMINISTS AND OUR FRIENDS

BRIDGES

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VOLUME 1 NUMBER 1

SPRING, 1990 / 5750



PERSPECTIVES ON TEN YEARS OF JEWISH FEMINISM

JEB, Alisa Solomon, Faith Rogow

SOME PIECES OF JEWISH LEFT: 1987

Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz

Muriel Rukeyser, Adrienne Rich, Emily Warn,
Willa Schneberg, Fran Adler, Lee Miriam Whitman,
Laura Wetzler, Carole Rose Livingston, Rita Falbel,
Renee Epelbaum, Irena Klepfisz, Joan Nestle

In the 1990s and 2000s, Jewish feminists will develop a new feminist identity.

This new Jewish feminist is:

- Secular (but Jewishly-identified and speaks “as a Jew”)
- Antiracist (in a particular way) and conversant in radical women of color feminist theory
- Israel-critical

This identity will be developed through *Bridges*, whiteness studies, and antiracist activism.



Photo of Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz via
Jewish Women's Archive

“Many of these feminists discussed in their texts how, as Jews, they had grown up feeling like outsiders, or felt like outsiders within the new identity feminism, and wanted to remain a part of feminist subculture. To participate involved being explicit about, and having one’s politics come out of, one’s identity—but this could not be what they saw as a conventional mainstream Jewish identity....‘I am declaring another way to be Jewish,’ said Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz.”

—Kara Jesella,
Feminist Antisemitism

DI MAMES, DOS LOSHN/ THE MOTHERS, THE LANGUAGE: FEMINISM, YIDISHKAYT, AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY

by Irena Klepfisz

I. *Yidishe veltlekhkayt*/Jewish Secularism in the Post-Zionist Era

Unlike other critical years in this century which have been defined by a single day — 1939 by September 1 or 1948 by May 14 or 1967 by June 5* — the year 1993 will be remembered by Jews for a cluster of events which inform each other and which together signal a profound change in Jewish consciousness:

April 19, 1993: Jews commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the symbol of the Holocaust, the murder of 6,000,000 Jews, the virtual destruction of Ashkenazi Yiddish culture in Eastern Europe. A few days later, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum officially opens in Washington D.C.

August 29, 1993: The Israeli Supreme Court overturns the guilty verdict of John Demjanjuk, accused of being the Nazi guard Ivan the Terrible at the Treblinka death camp.

September 13, 1993: Israeli Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat shake hands on the White House lawn in Washington, D.C. and begin direct peace negotiations, the first step towards ending Israel's 26-year occupation and towards establishing a Palestinian state.

September 19, 1993: The Israeli Supreme Court prohibits any further prosecution of Demjanjuk for his activities as a Nazi guard at the Sobibor death camp and allows him to return to the United States. This marks the end of Israel's prosecution of Nazis.

The 50th anniversary is pivotal. Strictly speaking an anniversary is a non-event; the real event took place 50 years ago in 1943 in Warsaw. But the anniversary *did* force Jews to take note of the passage of time: *Fifty years. A half a century.* Did we ever imagine the Holocaust would be that distant, that many years away from us? Did we ever think we would witness those events, those deaths, that bottomless grief and loss transformed into history?

I once ended a poem with the line: "History stops for no one."¹ This past year, I have returned to it again and again, acutely aware that the events of 1993 were the result of the inevitable, unrelenting movement of historical forces. By allowing us to absorb countless new experiences which change us and the context in which we think, feel and act; by wearing us down — history made the forbidden permissible, the impossible possible. So the release of a Nazi death camp guard (which is what Demjanjuk is at the very least) and the Arafat-Rabin agreement — both seemingly inconceivable in our lifetime — became a reality.² We let go: in the case of the Court ruling, the commitment to ongoing revenge for the nightmare of Jewish powerlessness and, in the case of the peace agreement, the delusion — fueled by the memory of that powerlessness — for unchecked Biblical power and a "Greater Israel." The former demands we stop living in the unalterable past, to some a betrayal of the dead; the latter demands we stop living for a grandiose future, to some a betrayal of the unborn. What we're left with is the present and ourselves.

But we do not begin this new era either as amnesiacs or with a clean slate. History is, after

The Bundist model of a good feminist

"In a 1994 essay in *Bridges*...[Irena] Klepfisz... [wrote]...about the Jewish Labor Bund, the internationalist socialist revolutionary movement founded in 1897 in Eastern Europe. It rejected nationalism, God, and the Zionist idea that Jews could only realize their full Jewishness in Israel. Its opposition to Israel was formulated before World War II, when most of its members perished at the hands of the Nazis, and before the founding of the modern state. Bundists, said Klepfisz, 'saw their obligation as not only countering anti-Semitism (which they believed could be eventually eliminated), but also fighting against all inequities of the times'... Throughout, Klepfisz compared the empathetic, class-conscious Bundists to the Zionists with their 'unbending, often arrogant assumption that they have the only legitimate view of Jewishness.'"

—Kara Jesella, *Feminist Antisemitism*



Photo of Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum via Jewish Women's Archive

**For these feminists:
Diaspora >>> Israel
Yiddish >>> Hebrew**

“Israel ‘is *not* the core of many Jews’ identity,’ said Klepfisz...In fact, the dawning liberal and radical interest in Yiddish, said [Rabbi Sharon] Kleinbaum, ‘may have started as a means by which to identify with Judaism without confronting the complexities of today’s Israel. How much easier it is to be identified with a suffering powerless minority than confront the brutal realities of statehood, power and the politics of dominant culture.’”

—Kara Jesella, *Feminist Antisemitism*

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

by Peggy McIntosh

*"I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness,
not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group"*

DAILY EFFECTS OF WHITE PRIVILEGE

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions that I think in my case attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographic location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can tell, my African American coworkers, friends, and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place and time of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
3. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
4. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
5. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
6. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
7. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
8. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
9. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.
10. I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.
11. I can be casual about whether or not to listen to another person's voice in a group in which s/he is the only member of his/her race.
12. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.
13. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.
14. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.
15. I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
16. I can be pretty sure that my children's teachers and employers will tolerate them if they fit school and workplace norms; my chief worries about them do not concern others' attitudes toward their race.
17. I can talk with my mouth full and not have people put this down to my color.
18. I can swear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.
19. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.
20. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.
21. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

“Peggy McIntosh’s [1989] essay ‘White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack’...explored her now-famous idea that white privilege is ‘an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks...’ McIntosh’s work was meant to dispel ‘the myth of meritocracy.’ This formulation, drawn from whiteness studies and critical race theory, doesn’t concentrate on uplifting the oppressed, but rather on bringing down the advantaged. It is not that some people are better, or have done better, it’s that they have it better—and this is because of racism, which is a zero-sum game...McIntosh legitimized an ahistorical way of thinking about race that, in its reliance on simplistic categories, effaced Judaism completely. In...[her] work, privilege is quantifiable and unchanging—just what so many Jewish feminists, with their personal stories and deeply researched histories, had spent the 1980s trying to counter.”

—Kara Jesella, *Feminist Antisemitism*

From Peggy McIntosh Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

"A NECESSARY BOOK FOR ALL PEOPLE INVESTED IN
SOCIETAL CHANGE." —CLAUDIA RANKINE

WHITE FRAGILITY



WHY IT'S SO HARD

FOR WHITE PEOPLE TO
TALK ABOUT RACISM

ROBIN DIANGELO

FOREWORD BY MICHAEL ERIC DYSON

“Like Jewish feminists before them, many of the scholars who contributed to...[whiteness studies and antiracist activism]... had written explicitly about feeling excluded from the identity-conscious feminist academy. Said Ruth Frankenberg, ‘[T]his may be the most common experience for young white feminists of the 1980s—‘white’ is a concept learned simultaneously with a negative connotation of privilege.’ But these new scholarly concepts and activist models, which constructed women and Jews as racist, and licensed disempowering both, also provided a way *to be* powerful...under the guise of feminist self-criticism and giving away power... In 2018, antiracist author Robin DiAngelo devoted a chapter of her *New York Times* bestselling book...to how women use whiteness to subordinate people of color by crying ‘white women’s tears’ when confronted with their own racism both to distract from their failure and narcissistically bring attention back to themselves. She added that what she was doing was different: ‘[T]hough I am centering the white voice, I am also using my insider status to challenge racism,’ she explained. There was one way that Jewish feminists could subvert feminism’s longtime apathy towards their leadership, and that was by loudly championing people of color—but at the expense of Jews.”

—Kara Jesella, *Feminist Antisemitism*



BETWEEN NYC AND HAIFA: ON BEING JEWISH, FEMINIST AND PEACE ACTIVIST

Sherry Gorelick (NYC) and
Hannah Safran (Haifa)

HANNAH: *Bridges* is a "Jewish feminist journal." I have a problem with this Jewish thing.

SHERRY: Why?

HANNAH: Because in Israel being Jewish is being part of the majority and belonging to something that is today smacking of racism. For example the recent call by Orthodox Rabbis (who are State-salaried) not to rent apartments to Arabs in Zafed and the letter of the Rabbis' wives calling on young Jewish women not to associate with Arabs lest they

will fall in love and get married to them. There is a new initiative now calling on restaurant owners to state publicly there are no Arab employees on the premises. Not to mention State laws forbidding the sale of land to Palestinians who are citizens of Israel, not allowing Arabs to join community settlements or build their homes there, and endless other racist laws and customs.

SHERRY: Your feelings about being Jewish reflect being in the dominant Jewish group in Israel, but in the U.S. being Jewish is being

"I have been working for peace between Palestine and Israel as a Jewish woman since 1982 and it is very important to me personally to be doing this as a Jew. And it is also important for others because they see that there are Jews who are not supporting Israeli policies. It takes away from AIPAC and other Establishment types who pretend to speak in the name of all Jews. It is also important for non-Jews because it gives them permission to criticize Israel without being accused of anti-Semitism."

—Sherry Gorelick, "Between NYC and Haifa," 2011

CHOOSING TO ASK THE HARD QUESTIONS

Thoughts on approaching the
Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Rebecca Subar

IT'S COMPLICATED

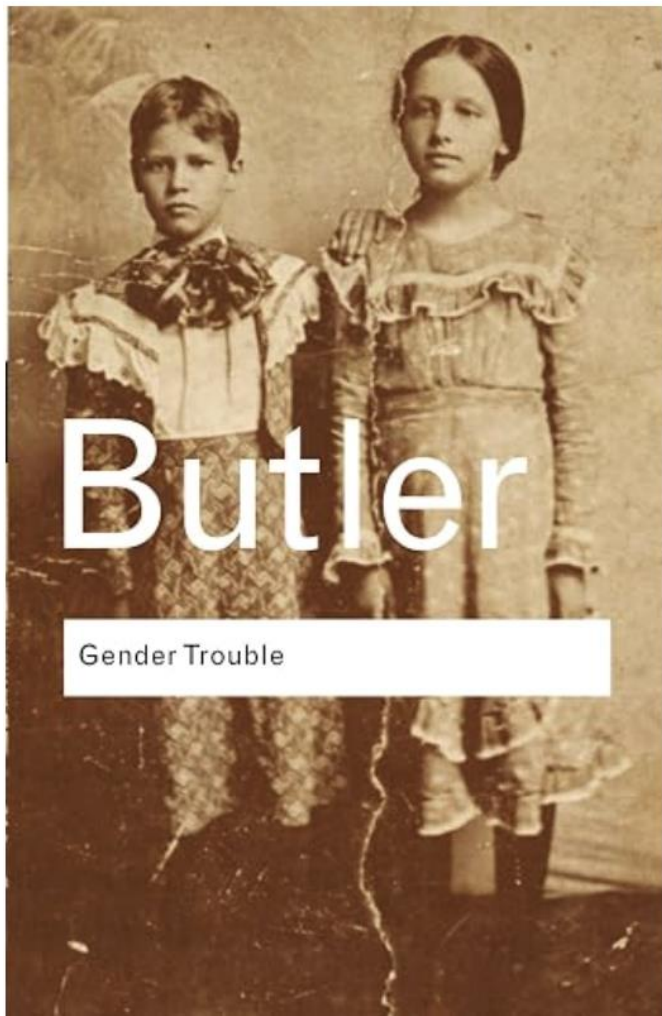
It is 1982; a group of Israelis from Peace Now rides a bus from Kibbutz Gezer to protest the groundbreaking of the new yeshiva¹ in

Neve Dekalim. Neve Dekalim is still only sand near the Mediterranean Sea, but it is meant to become the commercial center of Jewish settlement in the southern Gaza Strip. The cornerstone of the new Yeshivat Yamit has been

ABSTRACT: The author relates her own movement from Orthodox Zionist to secular humanist, finding in it a lesson regarding the need to engage in a variety of strategies for meaningful peace work on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She draws a distinction between «engagement» (usually dialogue or negotiation) and «resistance» (active protest not requiring the consent of the other party). The author argues that both strategies are useful, but that American Jewish activists need to consciously move from one to the other based on strategic necessity and ethical rightness, rather than allowing fears and biases to predispose us to certain forms of action.

“[P]rotesting ‘as a Jew’ could bring feminist Jews who had so often expressed alienation—from women of color feminists, from other intellectuals, from Jewish institutions, from the heterosexual world, from other leftists—into the community they had been longing for. Rebecca Subar, a queer Jewish activist, wrote in a 2007 *Bridges* article about how ‘the institutions that were meant to hold me...disappointed me.’ But now Subar had their ‘beloved posse of Mideast activists.’ They say, of their new friends and their new activism, ‘As for me, I am afraid of conflict; I don’t want to lose my connection to others. Having given up my communities of origin, I need now to belong. I also love conflict, where the truth lies bare in front of us; I love the intensity and intimacy of the dispute, and the raw human connection that makes me feel alive.’”

—Kara Jesella, *Feminist Antisemitism*



Butler

Gender Trouble

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Vol. 25 No. 16 · 21 August 2003

No, it's not anti-semitic Judith Butler



4220 words

Profoundly anti-Israel views are increasingly finding support in progressive intellectual communities. Serious and thoughtful people are advocating and taking actions that are anti-semitic in their effect if not their intent.

Lawrence Summers, 17 September 2002



Judith Butler

Judith Butler is a Distinguished Professor in the Graduate School at the University of California,

**THE
NEW
LESBIAN
STUDIES**
*Into the
Twenty-First
Century*

Edited by Bonnie Zimmerman and Toni A. H. McNaron

Foreword by Margaret Cruikshank

“Born of identity-based movements and theories, queer theory also opposed and wanted to destroy identity categories. ‘In their quest to undermine the notion of a static, unified identity or self, queer theorists question the very existence of categories, identities, and labels, including that of ‘lesbian’...lesbians once again find ourselves in danger of becoming invisible,’ wrote Bonnie Zimmerman and Toni A.H. McNaron in *The New Lesbian Studies*...Zimmerman added, ‘I am also under no illusion that the various subject positions represented by ‘lesbian feminist,’ ‘gay and lesbian’...or ‘queer’ are congruent. Indeed, I would argue, they are often inconsistent, contradictory, and downright hostile.’”

—Kara Jesella, *Feminist Antisemitism*

Queer Antizionism

Judith Butler

Angela Davis

Jasbir Puar

Dean Spade

Sarah Schulman

ISRAEL / PALESTINE and the Queer International



SARAH SCHULMAN

“‘Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?’ Judith Butler had asked in *Undoing Gender* in 2004. One of queer theory’s projects had been to ensure that it was not. Schulman’s ‘queer international’ epitomizes what queer scholars referred to as ‘queer belonging,’ or the kinds of relationships that could be made, sustained, and transmitted outside of procreative sex and the nuclear family. Schulman contrasts the familial cruelty that she says she and so many other queers experienced to the emotional bonds they experience with one another. Where the family has failed...the international community she helps create around the issue of Palestine still has promise. In *Queer International*, Schulman shows how antizionist activism becomes a practice of queer belonging... She says of these activists, ‘We had changed each other for the better... The ‘world,’ the queer international, the global brotherhood and sisterhood of those who love justice—somehow we had all worked together and created a new reality.’ The issue of power is important: Schulman repeatedly refers to ‘solidarity politics,’ and how for her entire activist life she had asked for solidarity, not given it. This new queer and feminist antizionist activism is possible precisely because the queer and feminist communities had made so many gains. But now that there was less to do on their own behalf, there were also fewer ways to cohere as a group. Antizionism was a way of expressing their new privilege and power.”

—Kara Jesella, *Feminist Antisemitism*



“You don’t belong here!”

“You stopped being queer the moment you started supporting Israel, you piece of sh*!”

**Scott Wiener
swiftly escorted
out of — March
in Dolores Park, SF**



'Screams Without Words': How Hamas Weaponized Sexual Violence on Oct. 7

A Times investigation uncovered new details showing a pattern of rape, mutilation and extreme brutality against women in the attacks on Israel.

By Jeffrey Gettleman, Anat Schwartz, and Adam Sella.
Photographs by Avishag Shaar-Yashuv
December 28, 2023



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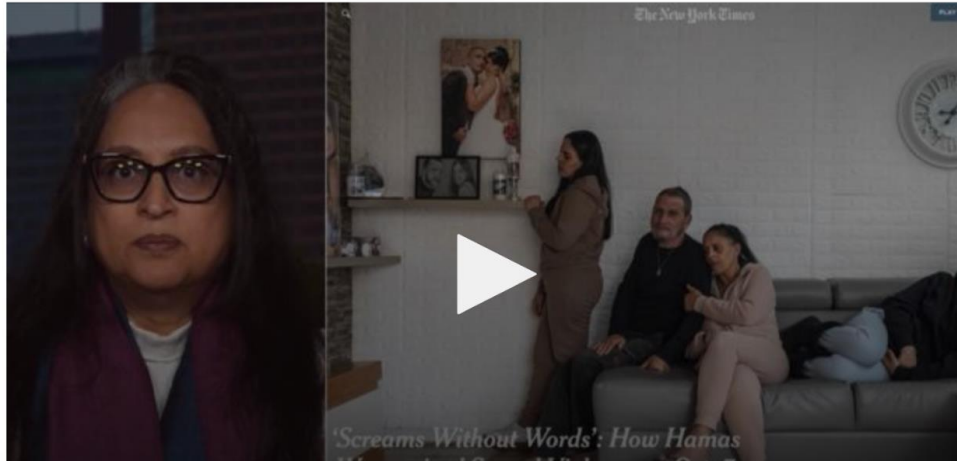
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60+ Journalism Profs Demand Investigation into Controversial NYT Article Alleging Mass Rape on Oct. 7

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“[O]n December 28, 2023, the *New York Times* published... ‘Screams Without Words’: How Hamas Weaponized Sexual Violence on Oct. 7.’ The graphic portrayal of sexual violence against women was based on interviews with more than 150 people, including witnesses, soldiers, medical personnel, and rape counselors, and it relied on video footage, photographs, and GPS data from mobile phones.

Nevertheless, far-leftists, including women and feminists, cast doubt on the entire initial report. In April 2024, over sixty journalism professors wrote a letter to the *Times*, accusing the paper of ignoring persistent questions about the article and using inexperienced reporters...One of the letter’s signatories, Deepa Kumar, a professor of Journalism and Media Studies at Rutgers University, said on a May 8, 2024 episode of the show *Democracy Now!* that ‘Screams Without Words’ was ‘propaganda’

‘[b]ecause it draws from a narrative that has a much longer history in settler-colonial societies, where sexual violence, alleged sexual violence, against particularly white women becomes the basis for genocide. This is true in the United States. Scholars have documented this and researched this quite well, how the alleged rape of white women became the basis from which to slaughter Indigenous people, to slaughter Native Americans. This was used also against African Americans. Frederick Douglass talks about the myth of the Black rapist, where, you know, alleged sexual violence by Black men was used to justify mass lynchings. And, unfortunately, this piece in *The New York Times* is really the latest iteration of this longer narrative that then serves to justify violence.’

Kumar’s statement mixed antizionist feminism’s by-then usual antisemitic strategies, like intersectionality’s racial hierarchies and decades-long refusal to see Jews as minorities; its conspiratorial ethos of ‘it’s all interconnected’; and its reliance on ahistorical analogies, which transforms victimized Jews into white European oppressors or Christian white women and the Palestinian terrorists who sadistically murdered and violated them morph into innocent Native Americans and American Blacks. To this it adds feminist antiracist activism’s insistence that white women are overprivileged and need to be disempowered for the good of society, and settler-colonial theory that rewrites the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and contends that so-called settlers are evil and deserve retaliation.”

—Kara Jesella, *Feminist Antisemitism*



Dr. Cochav Elkayam-Levy, founder and chair of the Civil Commission on October 7th Crimes by Hamas Against Women and Children, and Kara Jesella, author of *Feminist Antisemitism: An Intellectual History* (Routledge 2026) at Contemporary Antisemitism Haifa 2026