

A feminist open letter justifies Hamas rape



by Phyllis Chesler

I was waiting for an [open letter](#) like this to appear. It is addressed to the “Israeli and the U.S. Governments and Others Weaponizing the Issue of Rape.”

There is just too much support for Israel for the framers and the signatories of this letter to bear. There were too many fact-based condemnations of Hamas’s sadistic barbarism on Oct. 7. The left-wing and lesbian feminists could stand it no longer. They finally had to speak out against what they call the “weaponization” of rape by those who dare to oppose Hamas. They do so, the signatories claim, in order to justify Israel’s “war against the people of Gaza.”

Not “Israel’s war against Hamas” or “against Qatar and Iran”—but “against the people of Gaza.” Even when Hamas is using those people as human shields for propaganda purposes. Using them to further inflame a world that has already been indoctrinated in Jew-hatred by leftists in the West and Islamists around the world.

The open letter is late to the party. There are already more than enough people who have been calling for a “ceasefire” before Israel can ensure that Hamas never again commits an Oct. 7, which it has repeatedly threatened to do.

A “ceasefire”? The fact that Hamas broke a ceasefire on Oct. 7 does not matter to those who signed this letter. Neither does the fact that Hamas itself has “weaponized” the entire Gaza Strip.

The outright lies and reversals of reality in this letter are all ways of linguistically denying or minimizing the pornographically sadistic sexual violence that Hamas committed against Israeli civilians: Women, girls, boys and men. Hamas continues to inflict sexual violence on their Israeli hostages. (The letter strategically refers only to “hostages,” not “Israeli hostages.”)

The letter is not particularly interested in Oct. 7 because it happened to Israelis. Maybe the signatories don’t actually care about rape. After all, it happens to women and girls everywhere. Or perhaps the signatories have decided that there is not enough evidence of Hamas’s mass rape even though Hamas terrorists themselves filmed and photographed it and livestreamed the results to their own and the victims’ families.

Telling lies and engaging in hyperbolic incitement is a tried-and-true method of attacking the “zionist” state (the

letter always presents the word “Zionism” in lower-case letters). This is a way to “weaponize” the signatories’ contempt for the sovereign Jewish homeland and its people. To them, Zionism is not a noble idea. It is not even worthy of being capitalized, although they do capitalize “Palestine”: A state that has never existed; a concept that is no more than 100 years old; a potential state that Arabs have continuously rejected because their goal is the genocidal extermination of Jewish Israel, not the creation of yet another Muslim state.

Without evidence, the letter accuses Israel of committing a “genocide.” Jewish people have been accused of this since time immemorial. The signatories think that even mentioning the Holocaust is a way of “weaponizing” and concealing an alleged Israeli “genocide” in Gaza. To them, Israel’s protection of gay rights, including those of Arabs from Gaza, Judea and Samaria, has been “weaponized” as “pinkwashing.”

The letter lies relentlessly about Israelis and the IDF raping women in Gaza. This has not happened. But saying so justifies what Hamas has done and is still doing to the Israeli hostages.

Not a word is spoken about the fact that Hamas has terrorized and indoctrinated Gaza civilians. That it has stored rockets and guns beneath Gaza hospitals, mosques and schools—including U.N. schools.

The letter casts a wide net. It accuses the “Israeli government,” not individual feminists like myself or Sheryl Sandberg, of using the “accusations of sexual assault as a tool of war—and as an (often lethal) weapon of racism and colonialism.” It appears that the undeniable and irrefutable proof of Hamas’s mass rape does not exist.

As for “racism and colonialism,” the 1,200 Israelis (not

“zionists”) and others who Hamas tortured and murdered, and the over 200 Israeli (not “zionist”) and other civilians taken hostage were Druze, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, secular, atheists and leftists. Their nationalities, ethnicities and—if we must—skin colors ranged from black to brown to olive to yellow to white. The IDF is comprised of Israelis of all colors. Many of them or their ancestors were forced to flee North Africa, central Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and the Muslim Middle East.

In other words, it is only Hamas that seeks to commit racially motivated genocide.

The signatories to this open letter refer to themselves as “feminists” who oppose rape. They also accuse Israel of conducting a “campaign to discredit feminists—especially feminists of color.” This accusation is quite simply insane.

The signatories also call for a “permanent ceasefire in Gaza; the release of hostages”—there is no mention of who is holding them—and the simultaneous release of “political prisoners”—that is, terrorists with blood on their hands—and “the termination of U.S. military aid to Israel and an end to Israeli apartheid.” The takeaway is clear: Rescue Hamas, rescue terrorists, slaughter Israel. There is nothing else.

This is not a feminist letter. It is trite, infuriating and mendacious. It is a standard Marxist-Leninist statement. It is not the work of feminists with track records as serious theorists, activists, researchers or clinicians in the area of sexual violence; nor of legal experts in the use of rape as a weapon of war. The majority of signatories are fairly unknown. Perhaps I alone am not familiar with their work. Happily, not all of them are Jews.

In the end, the letter is nothing but a series of blood

libels. I was saddened when I read the names of the “famous” signatories. They are the usual suspects, many of whom I know: Angela Y. Davis, Blanche Wiesen Cook, Charlotte Bunch, Joan Nestle, Lila Abu-Lughod, Lisa Duggan, Margaret Randall, Rosalind Petchesky, Sarah Schulman, Zillah Eisenstein and a host of Jewish Voice for Peace members.

May God open their Marxist eyes in our lifetimes.

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