

#1553 The Nuremberg Trials of J.K. Rowling: Misogyny and Authoritarianism in the Bizarro World

[00:00:00]

Introduction

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Welcome to this episode of the award-winning *Best of the Left* podcast in which we shall take a look at the age-old tactic of weaponizing transphobia for political gain. And also, I listened to a podcast about J.K. Rowling and her views recently that turned out to be very relevant to this topic. So I'm going to break down a few elements of it.

Clips today are from *Genocide Watch*; *The Majority Report*; *The Anti-Trans Hate Machine: A Plot Against Equality*; *Second Thought*; *The Thom Hartmann Program*; and *Jesse Gender*.

But I'm going to start with a few thoughts about this podcast about Rowling. The title of the podcast series is easily the worst part of it. They set out to make a show that tried to explain both sides of the trans rights movement and the so-called gender critical feminists, also known as trans-exclusionary radical feminists, or TERFs -- which they have actually decided is a slur against them, even though it's just sort of descriptive [00:01:00] of their beliefs, it is often said with a lot of hatred and anger, so it can sound like a slur, but you can say the same about a lot of nouns to get used in anger.

Anyway, the title is *The Witch Trials of J.K. Rowling*. Obviously the idea of a witch trial or a witch hunt is the classic metaphor for an unjust accusation. That's why Trump uses it all the time. Part of the show references the religious right's criticism of the Harry Potter books back in the nineties for spreading witchcraft. That's a good use of the unjust accusation metaphor. But it can't help but also refer to her more recent criticism from the trans rights advocates, which honestly doesn't fit with the content of the show, which is far more even handed than the title suggests.

So it's a bad title, but it inspired the title of this episode, "The Nuremberg Trials of J.K. Rowling," because it's equally inflammatory, but in many ways, Nuremberg is actually a more fair [00:02:00] comparison than the witch trials, for multiple reasons. First, it's not a metaphor for injustice and false accusations. And second, it turns out there's a lot more connections between the trans rights debate and fascism than you might've thought.

In the show, J.K. Rowling says frequently that one of her major concerns, not her only concern, but one of our major concerns about the trans rights movement is that she sees them as I'm authoritarian or even fascistic movement -- which I found bizarre and fascinating, so I'm going to explore that idea as well as the exact opposite of that idea, to see which fits better with reality. To that end, we'll be comparing our current politics around trans rights with some of the historical warning signs for genocide. The first stage is *rigid classification*. And then we have a clip describing how classification is central, not only to the conservative perspective on the strict gender binary, but [00:03:00] also the anti-trans feminist perspective.

Genocide, as you may know, is defined as the intentional efforts to completely or partially destroy a group based on its nationality, ethnicity, race, or religion, but it does not include trans people or gender identity more broadly as a category of people who can be targeted for genocide.

But some legal scholars and transgender rights activists have argued this definition should be expanded to include transgender persons. So we are making the comparison with that debate in mind to demonstrate the parallels.

Stage 1 - Classification | The Ten Stages of Genocide by Dr. Gregory Stanton - Genocide Watch - Air Date 9-1-21

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: Genocide develops in 10 stages that are predictable. At each stage of genocide, preventive measures can be used to stop it. The process is not linear, and stages may occur at the same time.

Classification is the first stage. All cultures are categories to distinguish people into us and them by ethnicity, race, religion, or nationality.

We can prevent the harmful effects of classification by developing institutions that transcend ethnic or racial divisions. [00:04:00] We must actively promote

tolerance and understanding and develop classifications that transcend divisions.

Understanding The 'Logic' Of TERFs - The Majority Report w/ Sam Seder - Air Date 2-13-22

KYLA SCHULLER: It was really important to me to show how that the logic of anti-trans feminists, who argue that trans women are not women, is actually part of white feminism. Even though it's less obvious, because we most often think of white feminism in terms of its racism.

But there is a subliminal racism in the position of TERFs.

You know, we often talk about and recognize that anti-trans feminists are what we call biological essentialists, right? They say sex is real. You're born a sex. It's very tidy and clear and it can never change. Right? Biology is destiny, is that kind of logic, which flags in the face of research that shows that anything up to 2% of births are intersex to some degree.

But it's an insistence that biology is extremely tidy and [00:05:00] sex is always straightforward and set in stone. TERFs are biological essentialists.

But TERFs are also experience essentialists. And what I mean by that is that they say a trans woman can't be a woman also because she didn't have the experience of being a woman growing up. She didn't have the universal experience of menstruation or also the experience of sexual harassment or any of the other elements of being in a female body. The problem is, is there is no such thing as that universal female experience. And this is one of the points that Audre Lorde has made over and over again in her lifetime, like black women have five times the rate of breast cancer, of sexual assault and abuse.

One of the things that Harriet Jacobs illuminates versus Harriet Beecher Stowe, is that, in the 1860s, what is the position of being a woman? If you're Harriet Jacobs, you might be hiding an addict for seven years, if you're an enslaved Black woman being abused by your enslaver. If you're a White woman, you might have a completely different set of [00:06:00] experiences. But TERFs ignore all that and say no, there is just one way to be a woman, and trans women aren't that version, so they can't be women. But that is re-inscribing that universal woman.

And the other piece of it that they also often position men as oppressors, and that women need to be protected from men. It's a very simplified view of power where men oppress and women are oppressed. And that's kind of the end of the story for understanding contemporary politics. And that again, is something that is a lot like White feminism, because if we look back to the Combahee River Collective, the famous intersectional feminist group in the 1970s, they made it really clear back in the mid seventies, often for us as Black women, they said, Black men are more of our allies than White women because we're fighting more concerns than just sex.

And that's the kind of dynamic that TERFs can't see. They only see sex [00:07:00] and they put everything else secondary, and that's what White feminism is.

EMMA VIGELAND - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: Right. And then the point you make about biological essentialism, that is a step away from a White supremacist perspective, where we are these static things and our environment or our skin color, or the gender that we have been assigned at birth, that is natural. And anything unnatural is evil in and of itself. And that is very much in keeping with these themes that you've been discussing today.

KYLA SCHULLER: I think that's absolutely right. And you know what? My specialty as a scholar is in 19th century race science and the beginnings of a belief in biological essentialism about sex. And it actually turns out that when people got really, really attached to sex binary, it was as a result of race science. That literally it was race scientists who said, White people have evolved the sex binary and nobody else has. So you're actually right to draw that connection.

Comments 1

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:08:00] Next up, we have this perspective from Rowling describing what she sees as the left's move towards authoritarianism. As promised, this is key to her thoughts on the trans rights movement. But in this instance, she's not talking about the trans community specifically, but about protest by the left in general, against Milo Yiannopoulos, a far-right provocateur who gave speeches primarily on college campuses about feminism being cancer years ago, before more recently working for Ye around the time he was shouting about loving Hitler.

Chapter 3 - A New Pyre - The Witch Trials of J.K. Rowling - Air Date 2-28-23

J.K. ROWLING: I was starting to think about this a lot. Subcultures that have their own rigid rules, acceptable beliefs, non-acceptable beliefs, everything becoming very reductive. I was also deeply concerned by it, because to me it was a rise of the kind of authoritarianism and lack of empathy that -- it's in all of my books, it's in literally every book [00:09:00] I write. If there's one thing that I stand against more than any other, it is authoritarianism.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: What's important to note here is that when Rowling describes authoritarianism, she makes no distinction between people based on the beliefs that they have when she's judging them. To her, an authoritarian, like Yiannopoulos, who believes in his own set of right-wing acceptable beliefs and non-acceptable beliefs -- which he would probably support being enshrined in law to force everyone to abide by his perspective -- is no different from a left-wing protestor who would oppose him and hold mirror image perspectives on acceptable and non-acceptable beliefs. An example of non-acceptable beliefs, according to the left, would actually be authoritarianism itself.

This failure to distinguish between very different things will become a running pattern. But for now, another state of genocide: *discrimination*. And with that a quick breakdown of what trans life under [00:10:00] Republican governance looks like.

Stage 3 - Discrimination | The Ten Stages of Genocide by Dr. Gregory Stanton - Genocide Watch - Air Date 9-15-21

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: Discrimination is the third stage. A dominant group uses law, custom, and political power to deny the rights of other groups. The powerless group may not be accorded full civil rights, voting rights, or even citizenship. The dominant group is driven by an exclusionary ideology that deprives less powerful groups of their rights. The ideology advocates with monopolization or expansion of power by the dominant group. It legitimizes the victimization of weaker groups. Prevention against discrimination means advocating for full political empowerment and citizenship rights for all groups in a society.

Transphobia In A Suit - The Anti-Trans Hate Machine: A Plot Against Equality - Air Date 7-22-21

IMARA JONES - HOST, THE ANTI-TRANS HATE MACHINE: A PLOT AGAINST EQUALITY: One of the very first things that the Trump administration did after taking office was to roll back federal rules protecting trans students from discrimination in schools. Yep. You heard that right. One of the very first things.

BBC CLIP: Just a few hours ago, the Trump administration said it will roll back federal protection for transgender students.

IMARA JONES - HOST, THE ANTI-TRANS HATE MACHINE: A PLOT AGAINST EQUALITY: This [00:11:00] rollback of rights came from Betsy DeVos, the Secretary of Education. Regardless of its callousness, this is the kind of change an administration can do without approval from Congress. Basically, without any checks and balances. But when Betsy DeVos went before the House Education Committee, Representative Suzanne Bonamici of Oregon had some really tough questions for her and her Office of Civil Rights. It's called the OCR.

REP. SUZANNE BONAMICI: When you rolled back that guidance, did you know that the stress of harassment and discrimination can lead to lower attendance and grades as well as depression and anxiety for transgender students? Did you know that?

BETSY DEVOS: Congressmen, OCR is committed to ensuring all students have equal access to education free from discrimination—

REP. SUZANNE BONAMICI: Did you know, when—Sorry, I would really like an answer. Students and families need to know this. Did you know when you rolled back the guidance, that the stress of harassment and discrimination can lead to lower attendance and grades as well as [00:12:00] depression for transgender students? Did you know that when you rolled back the guidance?

BETSY DEVOS: I do know that but I will say again that OCR is committed to ensuring that all students are, have access to their education free from discrimination—

REP. SUZANNE BONAMICI: Let me ask you this as well. When you rolled back the guidance, did you know that a study recently published by the American Academy of Pediatrics revealed alarming levels of attempted suicide among transgender youth? Did you know that as well when you rolled back that guidance?

BETSY DEVOS: I'm aware of that data.

IMARA JONES - HOST, THE ANTI-TRANS HATE MACHINE: A PLOT AGAINST EQUALITY: She was aware, and she did it anyway. But the attacks on trans people during the Trump administration didn't just come from the Education Department. They came from across the government. The Trump administration executed a consistent policy to try to erase trans people and to deny basic human rights. They urged the Supreme Court to legalize employment discrimination against us, they moved to rollback housing protections. The President himself got [00:13:00] trans people banned from the military. The Administration even sought to strip trans-inclusive language out of human rights documents at the United Nations. It was an across the board strategy to purge trans people from any official recognition and to push our community to the fringes.

Comments 2

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Rowling's first tweet in support of the anti-trans feminists dropped in 2020. So just be clear, it was during the context of the Trump era we just heard described that Rawlings began to see the trans rights activists as authoritarian, though there was never any mention of the authoritarians in government at the time. More from her on that.

J.K. ROWLING: I'm watching women being shut down and bullied. Their employers being targeted by a movement that I see as authoritarian, illiberal. I'm hugely concerned about young people, often the kind of young people who found a refuge in my books. So, you know, there's a feeling of empathy there [00:14:00] because I was one of those young people myself, and I'm absolutely can say that I was living in a state of real tension, similar to when I'm planning to leave my ex-husband, because although I am not physically in danger, I feel I am lying by omission. I should speak up. I feel the right thing here is to try and force this conversation.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: And so again, she highlighted what she sees as authoritarianism as her primary reason for wanting

to speak out against the trans rights movement. To Rowling and many like her, her explanation for the actions of trans rights activists who would say threatening things or call for people to be fired from their jobs because of their public statements, is that they are fundamentally authoritarian. The individuals and the group itself. I'd argue that there are multiple alternative explanations for these actions that are worth looking into before throwing around an accusation as serious as authoritarianism and illiberalism because they just might be a better [00:15:00] fit.

The first alternate theory that springs to mind is that the trans community is an embattled and threatened community, which is fighting for their lives and right to exist in civil society. And it just might be that someone in that position may get a little worked up, may use extreme language to make their point, and may react extremely forcefully to oppose anyone not in support of their cause.

To me, that's a better fit of an explanation for the exact same set of facts that Rowling is pointing out than to cast an entire movement that's calling for civil rights as being themselves authoritarian. Because my fairy actually takes those people's beliefs into account. To not understand people's beliefs and motivations or to not take them into account, opens us up to very easily making pretty wild misinterpretations and then even more incorrect conclusions eventually, [00:16:00] some to the point where we end up in this sort of bizarro world mirror image of reality, all based on what started as small misinterpretations, that then sort of cascade out of control.

Another counterpoint to the authoritarianism view of trans rights activists was laid out in the podcast by Natalie Wynn, also known as ContraPoints on YouTube. As I said, the show really did try to give a balanced view of both sides and Natalie was a major counterweight to Rowling in the show.

CONTRAPPOINTS: I think that to be authoritarian you have to be able to leverage authority. And trans people are in a weak position, right? I don't see the, like, this trans big brother that you can't question, like that's a very melodramatic and self-pitying way of framing this, that I understand why do people feel like, Oh the mob is attacking me. Well, I don't know. Is it that the mob can be vicious and unreasonable and unsympathetic and un-nuanced? Absolutely. But to me that's fundamentally different [00:17:00] from Big Brother.

MEGAN PHELPS-ROPER: In her J.K. Rowling video, Natalie talks about the way that some trans people wield power online, including why that power is sometimes wielded so fiercely.

CONTRAPPOINTS: A lot of extremely online trans people really don't have a strong sense of conviction in their own identity, which is why they need constant external validation to prop them up. They need to constantly be told that they're valid, that they really are the gender that they say they are. And if someone even obliquely threatens or questions their fragile self-concept, they lash out. And for some of those trans people canceling celebrities on Twitter is the one kind of power they have ... you know, have people been abusive, disproportionate, out of line, and reacting against J.K. Rowling? Of course. Do I endorse people saying like violent or abusive, cruel things? No. [00:18:00] I've been the target of a lot of that myself, but I also kind of understand what people are mad about.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: And speaking of what people are mad about, that brings us to our next stage of genocide: dehumanization. Along with a clip describing the all-that's-old-is-new-again argument for dehumanizing the trans and broader LGBTQ community: protecting the children.

Stage 4 - Dehumanization | The Ten Stages of Genocide by Dr. Gregory Stanton - Genocide Watch - Air Date 9-22-21

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: Dehumanization is the fourth stage. When dehumanization occurs, one group denies the humanity of the other group. Dehumanization overcomes the normal human revulsion against murder. At this stage, hate propaganda in print, on hate radios, and in social media is used to vilify the victim group. It may even be incorporated into school textbooks. Indoctrination paves the way for incitement. The majority group is taught to regard the other group as less than human and even alien to their society.

American Fascism And The Groomer Panic Part 2 - Second Thought - Air Date 2-24-23

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: But we haven't gotten to the part where this turns into violence yet. We have the foundation: an association between queerness and [00:19:00] grooming, and the association of those two things with wokeness, making it a civilization-ending threat. Now we can bring in the vigilantes.

NEWS CLIP: Right now at six, drag queen's story time interrupted at an East Bay library. A hate crime investigation now underway.

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: Like I mentioned earlier, an increase in targeted and demonizing rhetoric is associated with a rise in hate crimes in a statistically significant way. And the same can be said of more extreme events like shootings. Once the groundwork has been laid, that basically any queer person can be considered guilty until proven innocent, and part of a plot that could literally end civilization, only two things are left to do.

One, convince your audience that this goes all the way to the top, and therefore that the government, generally speaking, won't be there to stop it. And two, that it is therefore your responsibility to intervene, often in explicitly violent terms.

The first is easy enough. As soon as someone like [00:20:00] Biden calls out the increase in violence against the LGBT community and the increase in anti LGBT rhetoric, conservative media will portray him as protecting groomers.

FOX NEWS CLIP: Does the Biden administration even know that American students can't do math anymore? We just saw the biggest drop of all time in math scores for fourth and eighth graders across the country. The Democrats closed the schools down and told all the students they were racists who needed sex changes. I wonder why they're failing algebra.

It's almost like they want our children dumb and guilty and confused.

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: For an audience susceptible to QAnon-style conspiracies, it's not hard to guess what an open-ended statement like that might evoke. Basically, Democrats won't be there to protect kids. So what is left to do?

TUCKER CARLSON: You shouldn't be talking to kindergartners about gender identity, especially if you're not their parents. That's creepy. You should be arrested for that, in fact. You talk to a normal person's kids about sex in kindergarten, you get beaten up. You should be beaten up. Please.

REP. MARJORIE GREEN: [00:21:00] If I was a parent and my fifth grade daughter had had to sleep and shower in some kind of cabin at some summer camp that I paid money to send my child to, and there was a man calling himself a woman, sleeping in her cabin, showering with her, that guy would, he'd be in jail. He would be in jail. Well, first off, my husband would've beat

him into the ground and then he'd be in jail. But this is exactly how we need to stand up against this stuff.

TUCKER CARLSON: No one should put up with this. No parent should put up with this for one second, no matter what the law says. Your duty, your moral duty is to defend your children. This is an attack on your children and you should fight back.

JT CHAPMAN - HOST, SECOND THOUGHT: When you put it all together, the consequence is obvious. It's stochastic terrorism: acts of terrorism that are incited by the public demonization of a person or group, and that cannot be predicted in detail, but are statistically highly probable.

Comments 3

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: And so it is against this backdrop of a barrage of hate media and policy proposals to completely otherize the LGBTQ community, putting their lives in direct [00:22:00] danger, that the trans community is being criticized by Rowling and others for not opening themselves up for a debate about their humanity.

J.K. ROWLING: If you want to debate with me, I am absolutely open to that, and I think I have proven that I'm very willing to engage on the ideas, but I notice a remarkable disinclination to engage on the ideas. The response is, Well, we can't listen to you. You are evil. You must not be listened to. That to me is intellectually incredibly cowardly. I don't believe that any righteous movement behaves in such a way.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: In reality, of course there are trans people who are willing to engage in this debate even though they may find having the discussion to be insulting and dehumanizing, because they understand that it is sadly necessary. Some of those people were interviewed for this exact same podcast, but again, there's also a simpler explanation for why some trans rights activists would [00:23:00] refuse to debate as opposed to the intellectual dishonesty theory that Rowling puts forward.

MEGAN PHELPS-ROPER: Just as there are some trans advocates who send violent and harassing threats toward the people they call TERFs, there are also many others, often coming from the right and the alt-right, who send violent and harassing threats towards trans activists and their allies, some based on accusations that any attempt to teach kids about trans identities is actually a smoke screen for a desire to sexually exploit young children. And in this

climate, many activists feel that feminists calling for open dialogue and good faith debate are really just opening them up to greater harm.

EXPERT: I think that what is so painful for them is that, you know, they feel like these issues of daily survival are being treated as secondary to culture war flashpoints, you know, around these kind of relatively [00:24:00] few handful of cases involving women's sports, these few cases where there's really hard calls about things like prisons or domestic violence shelters. And people that I've spoken to feel that the intense focus on these issues is itself kind of undermining them, right? That, like, they feel so under siege and when people are really scared and they're really under siege then they don't wanna have a kind of searching, probing conversation about the legitimacy of their identity for kind of obvious reasons.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. And they don't wanna hear debates about, you know, nuanced issues when they feel like they're fighting for basic rights.

EXPERT: Right. I mean, I think you'll often hear people say, you know, I'm not gonna debate my basic humanity.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: And as for the general idea of asking questions or debating the issues, not all questions are created equal nor are all forums appropriate to host a debate. Natalie Wynn takes on that particular topic in the podcast.

EXPERT: There are a lot of people, and I've [00:25:00] met many of them while working on this project, who just genuinely have a lot of questions and sometimes they're afraid to ask them. And I think asking tough questions and pulling apart arguments is, yeah, it's obviously a cornerstone of reasoning and it's actually a thing that you do so well on your YouTube channel. So I just wonder like why is it that you see Rowling and other people in this debate, why do you see that as if they're just, like, clearly trying to disguise bad intentions?

CONTRAPPOINTS: I don't necessarily see it as just trying to disguise bad intentions. I think my less concerned with the intentions than I am the consequences. And when you have someone who is as influential as J.K. Rowling posing ignorant, loaded questions on Twitter, like, this is not the acceptable forum for that level of discourse, right? So, okay, yes, there's very complicated questions that are legitimate to be [00:26:00] asked, but I feel like, I don't know, if you're going to be someone with a huge platform who wants to, like, pose these questions, you kind of have to be responsible for the way that you go about doing that. If you do it in a way that's harmful to trans people, as, I

consider it beyond any question that the way J.K. Rowling has done it has been harmful, then I think it's valid for people to be upset with you and to criticize that.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Now, getting back to the direct harm to trans people, we move on to another stage of genocide: organization. With more analysis of the anti-trans media frenzy currently underway.

Stage 5 - Organization | The Ten Stages of Genocide by Dr. Gregory Stanton - Genocide Watch - Air Date 9-29-21

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: Organization is the fifth stage. Genocide is always organized, usually by the state. Often using militias to provide deniability of state responsibility. Sometimes organization is informal or decentralized. Motivations for targeting a group are indoctrinated through mass media and special training [00:27:00] for murderous militias. National legal systems should prosecute and disarm groups that plan and commit hate crimes.

American Fascism And The Groomer Panic Part 2 - Second Thought - Air Date 2-24-23

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One, convince your audience that this goes all the way to [00:28:00] the top, and therefore that the government, generally speaking, won't be there to stop it. And two, that it is therefore your responsibility to intervene, often in explicitly violent terms.

The first is easy enough. As soon as someone like Biden calls out the increase in violence against the LGBT community and the increase in anti LGBT rhetoric, conservative media will portray him as protecting groomers.

FOX NEWS CLIP: Does the Biden administration even know that American students can't do math anymore? We just saw the biggest drop of all time in math scores for fourth and eighth graders across the country. The Democrats closed the schools down and told all the students they were racists who needed sex changes. I wonder why they're failing algebra.

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TUCKER CARLSON: You shouldn't be talking to kindergartners about gender identity, especially if you're not their parents. That's creepy. You should be arrested for that, in fact. You talk to a normal person's kids about sex in kindergarten, you get beaten up. You should be beaten up. Please.

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Harm, strawman argument Comments 4

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Now that we can see where extreme anti-LGBTQ rhetoric will take us, I think it's perfectly easy to understand why people are so concerned about comments that even mildly contribute to that mentality. During a discussion about the possibility of being wrong in this debate, Rowling argued that if she's right, then she's helping to prevent young people from being harmed by going through gender-affirming care that they later regret. But if she's wrong, then no harm done. The host pushed back slightly on this and made the counterpoint about harm.

MEGAN PHELPS-ROPER: When you say that people aren't being harmed, if you are wrong, you mean physically. Because your critics say that you are harming people with your words and with the ideas that you are promoting.

J.K. ROWLING: Well, I actually, I received an email right after I spoke out in which a left-wing man I know emailed me and he said, a trans man had been killed [00:31:00] in Germany. And he said to me, "Your rhetoric contributes to an environment in which police are less likely to investigate that crime." Now, join the dots for me. What I had said at that point is, there used to be a word for people who menstruate. Is he genuinely arguing that by saying, women menstruate, police investigating murder will say, well, we better wrap up the investigation.

These hyperbolic accusations are thrown at anyone who challenges this ideology. Your words will cause people to kill themselves. Your words will stop police investigation. Your words will cause men to be violent to trans women. Blaming women for the violence of men is a hallmark of something that is not normally seen as progressive. That is [00:32:00] misogyny writ large.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: What I find interesting about that clip is how fairly she portrays the warning that a left-wing male friend of hers gave before wildly misinterpreting it. She doesn't appear to be overstating or relaying a cartoonish version of what he likely said. He apparently warned that anti-trans rhetoric contributes to an environment in which it's less likely that crimes against trans people will be taken seriously by the police. It would have been equally fair if he had said that her rhetoric contributes to an environment in which more murders of trans people are likely

to take place. I'd say he downplayed the danger and she referred to it as hyperbolic.

Then just a few minutes after wildly strawmanning her friend's argument, she's asked a very thoughtful question about her ability to see the other side's perspective clearly. But her answer was not encouraging.

MEGAN PHELPS-ROPER: Can you articulate your opponents' [00:33:00] perspective in a way that they recognize, or are you strawmanning?

J.K. ROWLING: And I think that's excellent and I genuinely believe I could articulate my opponents' position because I've read their books and I think people need to read these things. They need to understand what is being argued.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Now just to make the original point clear, Rowling tweeting dismissively about trans people may not be as dangerous as Fox News personalities telling people to defend their children with violence, but it undoubtedly gives cover to the same general set of ideas and maybe more crucially, she is going to reach a very different demographic with her message than conservative hate media will with theirs.

And I don't see that as a terribly difficult concept to master. But she's staunchly unable to see the argument being made for what it actually is.

And then, in another great bizarro world mirror image of reality sort of analysis, it becomes misogynistic in her view to warn [00:34:00] about the dangers to trans people, of having a very influential person being unsupportive of trans rights. I don't know if she knows this, but anti-trans feminists are not a group made up entirely of women. There are plenty of men who support that cause as well.

The talking point that it's misogynistic to criticize anti-trans feminists is a very popular one, because it's an easy way to shut down an attempt to discredit criticism. But it's equally easy to see how flimsy it is when the criticism has nothing at all to do with the gender of the person speaking, and everything to do with the impact of their ideas.

Moderates

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: And now I want to make sure to be fair and say that Rowling is definitely a moderate within the

camp of anti-trans feminists. There are people far worse than her. She at least believes that trans people are real and support for them as necessary.

J.K. ROWLING: My feeling is, and it's a feeling that was strongly expressed in the Potter books, that as many [00:35:00] diverse life experiences as possible should be explored and expressed. And having felt like an outsider in several different ways in my life. I have a real feeling for the underdog and I have a real feeling for people who feel they don't fit. And I see that hugely in the -- particularly among younger trans people, I can understand that feeling only too well.

Gender dysphoria exists. It causes massive distress. I know it's real and I know there will be, I believe, a minority of people for whom this will be a solution.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: However, being a moderate in a movement for civil rights has historically gone badly for both the movement and for the moderates themselves. Martin Luther King's "Letter from the Birmingham Jail" specifically calls out the White moderates as being potentially more harmful to the movement than the true bigots. Quote: "I must [00:36:00] confess that over the past few years, I have been gravely disappointed with the White moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens Council or the Klu Klux Klanner, but the White moderate who is more devoted to order than to justice, who prefers a negative peace, which is the absence of tension, to a positive peace, which is the presence of justice." End quote.

I think Rowling's hand ringing about authoritarianism on the left maps reasonably well on to the moderate who opposed the tactics and confrontations inherent in the civil rights movement. And in describing the tension with the moderates criticizing the civil rights movement, I think King goes a long way toward explaining the outpouring of vitriol directed at people like Rowling and her fellow moderates. King says, quote: "Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is [00:37:00] much more bewildering than outright rejection." End quote.

And so if you're looking for yet another reason why trans rights activists might better be described as simply extremely angry, rather than fascistic, there you go.

And speaking of fascists, that brings us to the next stage of genocide: *polarization*. Along with a clip describing the long, long history of the tactic currently playing out.

Stage 6 - Polarization | The Ten Stages of Genocide by Dr. Gregory Stanton - Genocide Watch - Air Date 10-6-21

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: Polarization is the sixth stage. During polarization extremists work to drive groups apart. Hate groups broadcast polarizing propaganda.

The dominant group passes emergency laws or decrees that grants them total power over the targeted group. The laws erode fundamental civil rights and liberties.

Can We Stop the GOP From “Eradicating” Trans People? - Thom Hartmann Program- Air Date 3-8-23

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: They're following a script. It's a very old script. It's a script that goes back to ancient Rome. Pastor Ne, Martin Niemöller's famous poem [00:38:00] begins with, first they came for the socialist, but I was not a socialist, so I did not speak out. But in fact, first they came for the queer people, specifically the trans people.

me, A year before nazis began attacking union leaders and socialists a full five years before Kristallnacht when they were, uh, attacking Jewish owned stores, the Nazis came from the trans people at the Institute for Sexual Research in Berlin. In 1930, this was three years before the Nazis. The institute had pioneered the first gender affirming surgery in modern Europe. Its Director Magnus Hirschfeld had compiled the largest library of books and scientific papers on the LGBTQ spectrum in the world and was internationally recognized in the field of sexual and gender studies.

Being gay, lesbian, or trans was tolerated in Germany and uh, at least in the big cities, when Hitler came to power on January 30th, 1933. But the German [00:39:00] queer community was his first explicit target, literally within weeks

of Hitler coming to power, he began a campaign to demonize queer people with especially vitriolic attacks on trans people across German media.

German states put into law bans on gender affirming care. Drag shows in any sort of quote, public display of deviance, end quote.

A mere five months after Hitler came to power on May 6th, 1933, Nazis showed up at the institute and hauled over 20,000, priceless, many of them priceless books and manuscripts. This was the largest collection of literature, scientific, and otherwise on gender studies and particular on LGBTQ studies in the world.

Hauled them out into the street and created a bonfire You could see from half of Berlin. This was the first major Nazi book Burning the parties leaders, said that by burning these books in literature about gays, lesbians and trans people that, uh, [00:40:00] dated back centuries in some cases, some even they were consigning to the flames the intellectual garbage of the past, and were protecting Germany's youth from deviance.

Fascists always start by declaring themselves the victims of others. Victimhood is essential to the fascist worldview. It's at its core, it's their excuse for destroying other people's lives. They then cast the weakest and least popular minorities in a society as the victimizers of the fascists.

Fascism is never directed against the rich and powerful. It's always against those least able to defend themselves. It's basically bullying turned into a political movement, and when fascists throughout history have looked for victims, they always begin with queer people.

Once the fascists have have shatter, the LGBTQ people and, and you know, turn the country against [00:41:00] them.

Then they move on to demonizing and politically disenfranchising racial minorities and religious minorities. Then they suppress the rights of women, celebrate masculinity in guns, seize major political parties and the courts, and then take over the nation itself. This formula goes all the way back to Rome. In, in the year 326, Constantine, the Great who converted Rome to Christianity put into place the death penalty for homosexuality.

Today, state authorities are coming for the parents of trans. . Red states that have been seized by fascist demagogues are purging libraries in schools of books, banning drag shows and outlawing women's rights to abortions and contraception.

Fascists always weaponize sexuality, race, and religion, but it usually begin. With sexuality and gender. The A [00:42:00] C L U right now is tracking 371 anti-trans bills across the United States. Every single one was introduced by Republicans. Most of them include draconian, criminal penalties. Most are promoted as protecting our children.

Comments 5

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Now. We've been somewhat circling the idea of there being some fundamental misunderstandings at play here but now we're going to take a few of them head on and we'll start with the accusation that either rolling or some of her readers Don't really understand the harry potter books

Death eaters like trans movement

J.K. ROWLING: I'm constantly told I don't understand my own books. I'm constantly un told that I have betrayed my own books.

My position is that I am absolutely upholding the positions that I took in Potter. My position is that this activist's movement in the form that it's currently taking, echoes the very thing that I was warning against in Harry Potter.

MEGAN PHELPS-ROPER: What do you say to the people who say [00:43:00] that you, maybe because of your experiences that you can't see that you've actually become like the villains in your books, that this fight you jumped into is a betrayal of some kind?

J.K. ROWLING: I suppose the thing I would say above all to those who seek to ex , to seek to tell me that I don't understand my own books. I will say this, some of you have not understood the. The death eaters claimed we have been made to live in secret and now is our time, and any who stand in our way must be destroyed.

If you disagree with us, you must die. They demonized and dehumanized those who were not like them. I am fighting what I see as a powerful, insidious, misogynistic movement that I think has gained huge purchase in very influential areas of society. I do [00:44:00] not see this particular movement as either benign or powerless.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Okay. Let's pack all the headline from that clip first. If you didn't catch it there, she made a direct comparison between the trans community. A group ostracized, vilified, endangered, and often killed because of something intrinsic to who. They are. And the death eaters from the Harry Potter books, who are the quintessential racist, fascist of the magical world that she created.

In other words, a group of people bound together by their ideology. Not anything intrinsic to who they are. So it's not really an issue of misunderstanding her books so much as she's clearly misunderstanding reality itself. By ignoring the key differences that make her comparison absurd.

She points again and again, to the idea that refusing to debate one's positions. Makes a group fascist because that's how fascist behave. But Rawlings fundamental problem here is [00:45:00] that she's drawing a parallel that is too broad of a comparison to be useful because refusing to debate, isn't just a hallmark of fascist.

People of color used to be thought of as subhuman, and then later, simply different enough to justify segregation. But if you met one today who refused to debate those ideas, you wouldn't assume they're authoritarian. You would think it absurd. If anyone wanted to have that debate at all.

Former Democrat and current conspiracy theorist Tulsi Gabbard. Recently had a similar problem making too broad of a comparison. She claimed that a hallmark of authoritarians is that they justify themselves by believing that what they're doing is best for their nations. And then she used that broad parallel to compare Biden with Hitler.

And she said, quote, we look at authoritarian leaders and dictators in other countries. I'm pretty sure they all believe they're doing what's best on quote. But believing that you're doing what's best for your country applies to nearly 100% of all [00:46:00] politicians. So using it to draw any kind of comparison is just silly.

But this is what happens when you use too broad of a comparison and to try to draw conclusions from it. You end up with an almost sounds like it makes sense sort of argument without realizing how far off the mark you really are.

Comments 6

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: So now let's tackle the claim of misogyny rallying and the anti-trans feminists use that framing a lot. So it's worth understanding.

The podcast goes into a bit more detail about the echoes of traditional misogyny that she sees as being heard in the trans rights debate. You'll hear an expert speaking first

then rolling along with some archival audio.

EXPERT: British feminism faced all the same attacks that American feminism did, that it was being carried out by ultra leftists, by overgrown student protestors, by people who were, you know, probably lesbians or not normal women in some other sense.

J.K. ROWLING: Feminists were hugely disparaged [00:47:00] across the mainstream. They were ugly. They didn't shave their armpits. They were aggressive, they were butch. And I suppose I see real parallels with. With the slur that is turf.

AUDIO: There? No. Out there. No there, no.

J.K. ROWLING: All the same tropes about a woman not behaving the way a woman is supposed to behave.

You know, all of the cliches.

AUDIO: Ugly shit,

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: And now let's just start with a blanket condemnation of misogyny and get that out of the way. Besides we've already addressed earlier in the show that one can separate a condemnation of vicious and vile rhetoric from a mob. And have an understanding of what the people are mad about. But Rowling's primary focus was to point to the term turf and also to look beyond the rhetoric to a perceived undercurrent of traditional misogyny, linked back to the tropes of controlling women's behavior. [00:48:00]

First, I will reiterate that the offensiveness of the term turf trans exclusionary, radical feminist. Is very much in dispute. I first heard the term years ago and thought it was what anti-trans feminist called themselves because it stems from the self-made radical feminist movement of decades past.

And accurately describes their exclusionary position on trans women not being included in women. This.

So rallying and others now considered turf to be a misogynistic slur, but it's genuinely unclear why. But then she goes on to suggest that the usual tropes of misogyny, where women are being told that they're not behaving the way a woman is supposed to behave are also there. The very basic idea they're putting forward is that we have a biological gender binary. This isn't true, but it's sort of close. The sexes of humans look like a binary at first glance, but that's revealed as an [00:49:00] illusion. Once you realize that there are significant exceptions to that rule.

And they also point to the way that this perceived biological binary has calcified into very real social and political systems. Think gender segregated, sports bathrooms, prisons, and schools, all the places where the most acute battles are taking place. So then the accusation is that the existence of trans women is challenging the established definition of what it is to be a woman.

And that this is happening at a time when women, as a political group are just beginning to achieve some of the goals for equality that feminists have been working on for decades. There's a new demand that cis-gender women be accepting of trans women, which many do, but if they don't, they're criticized. So that's my best guess at what rallying is referring to when she says there's an accusation that women aren't behaving properly.

Now this idea of defending the definition of a woman often, it's talked [00:50:00] about like the defending of a castle under siege. It took decades to build our castle to rival that of the male castle. But now there are barbarians at the gate putting us in danger.

But here we are again with misleading framing and creating an incomplete picture. What this version of the story always leaves out is that trans and binary people have been there all along. They've just been completely ignored.

These fortresses of our understanding of the social and political gender binary have been built in a very imperfect match to biology because they very explicitly leave many, many people out in the cold. And this paradigm was largely driven by social norms stemming from religion. A great pillar of patriarchy that feminists have been fighting against for decades.

Native people in the Americas had two spirited people, their concept for describing those who did not fit the gender binary [00:51:00] for thousands of

years before European colonization and the enforcement of heteronormativity, the colonizers brought with them.

It is inescapable that trans and non-binary people have always existed. Our fundamental problem is that we built the structures of society while pretending they didn't.

So now we're stuck with a mismatch between the reality of trans people, existing and our social and political traditions of pretending they don't.

And now we're finally to the point where people are able to demand that we reimagine the system and recognize where we went wrong so long ago.

Instead of the current debate over which bathroom trans and nonbinary people should use. Imagine we got to wipe the slate clean and build our society with the understanding that there are not just two rigidly defined genders. And also that individuals within a given gender have wildly different experiences and socializations. [00:52:00] Then how would we design our social fabric, build our physical structures and design our politics.

I don't have the answer to that, but I find it liberating to imagine a world in which we get to design for the reality of our needs as a society, rather than the mismatched perception we were given by a patriarchal religious institution, hundreds of years ago.

But in the meantime, feminist progress toward equality within the current understanding of a strict gender binary can be both applauded and also recognized as insufficient because the progress that was made wasn't about equality for all. It was greater equality for cisgender women at the expense. Once again of trans and non-binary people continuing to be ignored.

That's not a contradiction. But the desire by Rallings brand of anti-feminist to continue to exclude trans people from being fully embedded into our shared conception of the [00:53:00] diversity of humanity. Seems to mostly stem from a fear. That recent social and political gains for cis-gender women may be at risk by this change.

And that's an understandable fear. But the existence of trans people being inconvenient to your worldview of progress in gender equality is not a good foundation for an argument. When that argument requires maintaining a social system that systematically excludes an entire group of people from society.

I mean, y'all did a good job bringing about a greater equality within a broken system,

but that's success. Doesn't justify maintaining the broken system and it's not misogynistic to believe the system needs fixing to better reflect reality.

And besides, it's also important to understand that fundamental to the anti-trans argument is the idea that millions of cis-gender women who are supportive of trans rights simply don't know what's best for themselves. [00:54:00] And are being misled.

So the broad scope of this debate is that there's a group of left wing feminists fighting for equality and justice for all, including trans people while Rawlings group is telling them that they're wrong. They're going to upset the established order. Their methods of protest are brutish and authoritarian, and they don't know what's good for themselves.

If you tried to draw a parallel between the gender wars of the 1970s and today, which group fits better with the traditional mold of the message dentist telling the feminists to stop upsetting the system.

And just to be clear, this is a quick clip from a larger segment. We'll hear a little bit later. This is Rawling describing the sad state of people. Apparently unknowingly colluding with misogynists.

J.K. ROWLING: For many feminists, we are despairing of the fact that people are, in our view, um, colluding with an, a deeply misogynist [00:55:00] movement

Understanding different arguments

J.K. ROWLING: which is benefiting politically speaking the far right.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: It is really worth thinking through what she is asking us to believe here. It's not just that non message. Nest or being duped into colluding with message dentists and not realizing it.

It's also that there must be a substantial group of message nests. People who hate women. Who are themselves huge supporters. Of the LGBTQ community,

all of a sudden trans folks in particular. Now, knowing what we do about the history of how authoritarian and patriarchal people. You know, traditional misogynists have traditionally treated gay and trans people. It seems a bit of a stretch that after thousands of years of wanting to oppress both women and anyone not fitting the heteronormative mold.

That they would suddenly switch tactics. And I guess in an effort to further subjugate women become huge defenders of trans people. [00:56:00] That's quite a switcher row.

Understanding different arguments - Fueling the right Comments 7

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Meanwhile, I've been reiterating the importance of understanding where people are coming from and the next segment of the podcast, featuring an expert being interviewed. I talked about just that regarding separate anti-trans criticisms from the far right and ramblings brand of anti-trans feminists.

EXPERT: there are two different arguments going on. One is the traditional conservative right argument, which is anti L G B T. So someone like Victor Orban in Hungary doesn't think people should be allowed to transition and you know, wants to take away that that right from them.

That is one criticism of modern L G B T politics. The other one is a criticism from the left in which it says sometimes male people and female people have different interests no matter how the male people identify. And we need to work out those conflicts in policy and

that is very different from saying someone's a pervert or a [00:57:00] degenerate, right? It says You are perfectly free to live your life. This is a perfectly valid identity to adopt.

However, there might be times when it comes into conflict with other identities.

Who's fueling the right? - Clip (degeneracy, misogyny)

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: And the reason I bring this up now is because it's perfectly describing exactly what the anti-trans rights

feminist do not do when assessing their opponents. Rowling thinks that the trans rights movement sounds similar to authoritarians and misogynists, but completely ignores their reasoning and motivations while equating them to some of the most terrible humans in history, both in the real world and her fictional world of magic. Trans people are fighting for their lives against fascist, just as they have done for thousands of years. But she equates them for purely superficial reasons. And her accusations of misogyny attempted to equate today's trans rights feminists with yesterdays, anti feminist misogynists, as the one group evolved from the other.

In their [00:58:00] view, it's very important to understand the difference in their position compared to the traditional right wing attacks against the LGBTQ community, because they understand that they come to a lot of maybe uncomfortably, similar conclusions as the far. Right. But don't want to be lumped in with them.

But when those anti-trans feminists are criticized. By people who stand diametrically opposed to the far right. There is no similar careful delineation. And quite to the contrary, the accusation is made that those fully opposing the far right. Are in fact just like the far right.

While the anti-trans feminists who actually have many shared opinions and goals as the far right. Want To be seen as fully separate from them.

It's the sort of pretzel logic that makes it easy to understand how people end up finding themselves in a bizarro reality where things only make sense when looked at thorough mirror.[00:59:00]

And now. For our last clip in the series, Rowling is asked another question that I think suffers from poor framing. And again, leads to a fundamental misunderstanding of the dynamics at play.

MEGAN PHELPS-ROPER: there are a lot of critics who say, you and your comments are giving fuel to the right.

J.K. ROWLING: Uh, well, my, my answer would be, I think you are giving fuel to the right.

This is, this is wh why many left wing feminists in particular are sitting with their head in their hands. The, the right has wanted for years and years and years to ca not all of the right, but certainly the further right in the religious right have

wanted to castigate, um, the lesbian and gay and bisexual movement as is inherently degenerate and part of the left's broader degeneracy.

When you defend the placing of rapists in cells with women, you are handing the right a perfect opportunity to [01:00:00] say, you see, we told you the moral deed that would result. If you say homosexual relationships are okay. And I think for many leftists, for many feminists, we are despairing of the fact that people are, in our view, um, colluding with an, a deeply misogynist movement, which is benefiting politically speaking the far right.

Introducing the clarifying power of nazis

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: I think the use of the word fuel dooms, this line of thinking from the beginning. I think that fuel is the wrong frame, because if you adopt the fuel framing, then you end up arguing in favor of continually placating the right to avoid fueling their fear and anger, which is clearly not a sustainable position for anyone on the left, who opposes doing things that the right is in favor of.

Because to be clear, the right doesn't primarily hate trans people because they fear that a rapist will be put in the wrong cell block. At some point [01:01:00] that's just an edge case. They point to, to rile up anger and support for their side.

And Raleigh knows this. She made the point herself that they've been making these arguments about the left and LGBTQ people being inherently degenerate for decades or longer. What would possibly make her think that placating them on the issue of gender segregated prisons would calm them down. No, the better framing ban who is giving fuel to the right is who is emboldening the right. The right has all the fuel they need, but it's when circumstances change in a way that the right feels emboldened to act on their hate and fear that things get dangerous.

Think of Trump getting elected and the wave of hate crimes that followed, or the unite, the right rally that got organized. Those things didn't happen because the left finally added enough fuel to the right. It happened because they finally felt emboldened by powerful, [01:02:00] influential people giving credence to their hate and fear. Roundly may think that supporting drains people in rages the right in a way that fuels them. But there's no way that you could argue that the trans rights activists in Bolton or give comfort or intellectual cover to the right. Whereas rallying and her kind most certainly give perceived legitimacy to the right's desire to stop and reverse trans rights.

And it is with this perceived legitimacy that they become more emboldened and more dangerous.

But with all of this debate over theoretical harms the poor frames of understanding that cloud more than they clarify and completely ignoring people's motivations while effectively labeling them as Nazis.

Maybe something will happen in the real world that finally brings clarity as to who is emboldening the authoritarians, the message dentists' and who they perceive to be on their side.[01:03:00]

TERFs and the Fascist Roots of Anti-Trans Movements - Jessie Gender - Air Date 3-22-23

JESSIE EARL - HOST, JESSIE GENDER: Around 30 members of the Neo-Nazi group, the National Socialist Movement in Australia, marched down these streets of Victoria carrying a banner that read destroy pedo freaks, yelling anti slurs, at counter protestors of Keen-Minshull's rally chanting white power and throwing up Nazi salutes.

To many stark display of fascistic support of a gender critical TERF rally was absolutely shocking. That this rally in anti-trans rhetoric had galvanized and given confidence to a Nazi group that they could walk openly in the streets showing their hateful bigotry.

Many gender critical TERFs who have supported Key Mitchell in the past have attempted to downplay the appearance of these Nazis in support of Keen-Minshull's rally. For example, JK Rowling, who has expressed support for Keen Minche in the past, while simultaneously vilifying trans supportive counter protestors, retweeted a tweet that stated.

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: Am I right?

So there were three different groups in Melbourne yesterday. The Let Women Speak Group, the Gender extremist Trans Rights activist, [01:04:00] and the Neo-Nazis and the gender extremists decided to protest and attack the Let Women Speak Group, but they left the Neo-Nazis alone?

JESSIE EARL - HOST, JESSIE GENDER: The idea being spread in this tweet is that there were actually three separate groups at the event and that the Neo-Nazis had nothing to do with the gender critical group, and in fact, they tried to play up that the counter-protesters who they're framing here as gender extremists in actively vilifying terms, were the ones that wished the Neo-Nazis to be there.

Sal Grover, another anti-trans advocate, and the CEO of Giggle, which is an app that reinforced gender stereotypes and discriminated against trans women and who has appeared at Keen-Minshull's rallies in Australia also reiterated the idea that there were three groups at the event.

And went further to say that trans advocates were the ones that were benefiting from the Nazis at the event.

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: I'm only going to say out loud what we're not supposed to say. The only group that has benefited from Nazis invading a Let Women Speak event are trans activists who are using it as a tool to stop women being heard.

If Nazis are benefiting your movement, you're in a bad. [01:05:00]

JESSIE EARL - HOST, JESSIE GENDER: This is kind of a strange argument from Cell, given that it ignores the motivations of the Neo-Nazis at all, and just discusses the Neo-Nazis mere presence and how it has cast a negative light onto anti-trans gender, gender critical TERF spaces as evidence that the Nazis were somehow there for trans people.

The strength of this argument doesn't really hold up.

However, there is video and photos of those attending the anti-trans protest going and being supportive of the Neo-Nazis. As you can see in this video, most notably with the woman, with the anti-trans, keep your dicks out of our bathroom sign. So this argument doesn't really hold weight. The other argument used to announce the Nazis by TERFs is that the attendees at the TERF rally were too intimidated by the Neo-Nazis to face them.

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: We can't keep men out of our bathrooms or stop them from standing on our sports podiums, but somehow, Supposed to stop Nazis from showing up at our rallies. We can't stop Antifa either. Katie, a man blames women for the actions of men. Story as old as time.

JESSIE EARL - HOST, JESSIE GENDER: The [01:06:00] idea of women being too scared and intimidated by the neo-Nazis, which certainly understandable in some contexts.

Does seem to be the wrong message if you wish to project the notion of women being able to fight back against the patriarchy and authoritarian systems. I would point out that there have been numerous protests by feminists throughout the years, actual feminist groups, not gender critical TERFs that have protested and fought against Nazis.

But one could see the argument that, yes, these were intimidating men.

Maybe you don't wish to go up to them. Yet in making this argument in tweets like this one by Angie Jones, one of the rallies organizers, they say the quiet part out loud.

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: Do you seriously think we could have removed them even if we wanted to?

JESSIE EARL - HOST, JESSIE GENDER: The implication with that sentence seems to be that they didn't want to move the Nazis otherwise.

Why would she say even if we wanted to?

And the reason for this might quite well be the fact that These neo-Nazis were expressly there to support the TERF. Thomas Well, who led the Neo-Nazi group. Ethel Rally stated on [01:07:00] Telegram.

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: Today in Melbourne, the National Socialist Network acted as a vanguard for a protest against the constant Pedophilic agenda being forced upon our children and our people.

They formed a wall between the feral Antifa freaks intent on violence and destruction, and stop them dead in their. They made their presence known and made their message clear. Pedophiles deserve destruction, and the only solution to this sickness is white Evolution destroy pedo freaks.

JESSIE EARL - HOST, JESSIE GENDER: The Neo-Nazis group's goal was to support the gender critical TERF rally, not the other way around yet keen minche herself, realizing the terrible optics of the situation has resorted to another tactic to try to downplay the Nazis at the event.

KELLIE-JAY KEEN-MINSHULL: Something about all of this doesn't make any sense. It feels really off. It feels like they were either, I mean, look, in the UK we had police impregnating women who were animal rights [01:08:00] campaign. Right, and we, we had those police, um, infiltrating groups. I don't think it's beyond the wit of anyone to think that that either was.

Um, TRAs dressed up or police or just something was just awful.

JESSIE EARL - HOST, JESSIE GENDER: Keen-Minshull unable to deny the group's relationship to her movement has resorted to framing it as a psyop conspiracy by trans activist pretending to be neo-Nazis to make her look.

And this is often a tactic employed by right-wing groups, such as when some like QAN on or Trump claimed that it was Antifa who stormed the capitol building of the United States on January 6th, 2021, despite numerous pieces of evidence to the contrary to show that no, it was actually people that were there to try to support President Donald Trump who'd been stoking this rhetoric for weeks at that point.

Comments 8

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Well, I found that clarifying, but I guess I shouldn't be surprised that Nazis showing up in support of an anti-trans rally wasn't enough to shake their beliefs.

However, they did still manage to surprise me with one [01:09:00] of the all-time greatest bizarro world arguments, suggesting that the Nazis being there to support their rally. We're indirectly benefiting the trans rights activists. And it's another good example of poor framing that leads to that kind of mirror image logic.

UNKNOWN NARRATOR: If Nazis are benefiting your movement, you're in a bad.

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: Benefiting is a terrible word to use, to describe what Nazis do when they show up somewhere. Because by the very nature of them being Nazis, they only tends to make their opponents look good by comparison. So in that way they benefit their opponents. Obviously a better framing than benefiting would be supporting if Nazis are supporting your movement.

You're in a bad movement. And that's what I would like to leave you with. I am happy to agree with anti-trans feminists as Natalie, when did. That there are legitimate questions to be asked and worked through. In this issue. But could [01:10:00] we not get some agreement in return that if a large part of your concern is that your opponents are authoritarian fascist, like the deaf theaters.

But then actual Nazis show up at a rally in support of your cause. Could we not then agree that that may be a proper occasion to consider whether you might have misjudged something along the way. And then once you stop calling people, fascists for fighting for their existence. You likely have an easier time finding people to have a reason to discussion about the future of peaceful coexistence between cis-gender women and trans women.

So that you can all come together to oppose the Nazis. Who actually want to subjugate you all?

Final comments

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: We've just heard clips today, including *Genocide Watch* in several parts, explaining the stages of genocide. *The Majority Report* spoke about how there's no one way to be a woman. *The Anti-Trans Hate Machine: A Plot Against* [01:11:00] *Equality* described the anti-trans policies of the Trump administration. *Second Thought*, in two parts, laid out how anti-trans propaganda leads to stochastic terrorism of the trans community. Thom Hartmann explained how fascism always targets the LGBTQ community first. And Jessie Gender told the story of the Nazis showing up in support of an anti-trans rally.

And now my final thoughts on the witch trials of J.K. Rowling. As I said from the beginning, the title really doesn't match the content of the show very well. The title implies false accusation while the series attempts a much more even-handed perspective. So it turns out that the title of the show is actually emblematic of the problem that plagued the logic of the anti-trans feminist throughout. It's a poor framing device that opens the door to the bizarro world.

In the real world, Rowling is using her massive platform and wealth to support an anti-trans movement that [01:12:00] has much more in common with traditional misogynists and even authoritarians and fascists than any form of liberatory feminism, past or present. But in the bizarro world evoked again and again by misleading framing and rhetoric, it is the traditional targets of fascism who are the fascists, the traditional enemies of misogyny who are the misogynists, the traditional oppressors of the LGBTQ community who are now

the staunch defenders of trans rights, and it is Rowling herself who is the metaphorical victim of a new witch trial, one of the greatest crimes against women ever committed. If you can believe that, then it's not the fictional world of the Potter books that you've misunderstood. It's the real world that you've thoroughly re-imagined into a kind of fiction of your own making.

That's going to be it for today as always keep the comments coming in. You can leave us a voicemail or text at [01:13:00] 202-999-3991 or email me to jay@bestoftheleft.com. Thanks for listening to everyone. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show and participation in our bonus episodes. Thanks to our Transcriptionist Trio, Ken, Brian, and LaWendy for their volunteer work, helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic designing, web mastering, and bonus show co-hosting. And thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at bestoftheleft.com/support, through our Patreon page, or from right inside the Apple podcast app. Membership is how you get instant access to our incredibly good and often funny bonus episodes, in addition to there being extra content, no ads, and chapter markers in all of our regular episodes, all through your regular podcast player. And if you want to continue the discussion, join our Discord community. A link to join is in the show notes.

So coming to from far outside the [01:14:00] conventional wisdom of Washington, DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the Best of the Left podcast coming to you twice weekly, thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from bestoftheleft.com