

The New York Times

JEWISH WOMEN WATCHING'S ANTI-SEXIST MESSAGE HITS NEW YORK TIMES

JEWISH WOMEN/GIRLS HOLD YOUR COMMUNITY accountable. Sexism is a sin. Jewish Women Watching. — ADVT.

New York, Friday, September 21, 2001—The front page of the New York Times today urges Jewish women to speak out against sexism in their community.

In a notice beneath the paper's most prominent articles, the anonymous activist group that calls itself Jewish Women Watching posted a reminder for the Jewish High Holidays, which take place this month and encourage reflection and atonement:

JEWISH WOMEN/GIRLS

Hold your community accountable. Sexism is a Sin.

Jewish Women Watching

The notice took the place of a directive, sponsored by the Lubovitch Women's Organization, which ran for years until funding was lost in July. That message also began JEWISH WOMEN/GIRLS and told its readers when to light candles for the Sabbath.

"The front page of the Times is the perfect pulpit for our High Holiday announcement," said one member of the anonymous group. "We want Jews to ask forgiveness for the sexist behavior it practices and allows within its institutions. Sexism must be considered as grave a sin as the others that call for atonement."

When asked why the group is targeting an anti-sexist message at women and girls, one member offered this explanation: "We are calling for change. I am appalled that what has claimed the attention of Jewish women and girls every Friday—until now—has been a directive. This is one of many problems that Jewish Women Watching sees in the community. Now, we're asking Jewish women to pay attention to these problems, and to point them out—loudly."

This clever High Holiday greeting is not the group's first. For the past two years, Jewish Women Watching has mailed hand-addressed Jewish New Year cards to organizational leaders, rabbis,

elected officials, and members of the press. The cards' traditional covers belied their piercing message, which demanded that women be fully represented, paid, and respected in the Jewish community.

An interview with Jewish Women Watching is currently featured on the cover of a San Francisco-based zine, Maideleh. The group is, of course, secretive about its next action.

As one Jewish Woman Watching said, "Look, if we've got to tell people three years in a row that sexism is a sin, we have our work cut out for us."

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