

Harvard President's Resignation: Don't Dare Pull the Race Card

There's an old Jewish joke that goes like this.

A Jewish man with a terrible stuttering problem tells his friend he's going to apply for a job as a radio announcer, of all things.

After the job interview is over, his friend asks him if he got the job.

He replies, "Nnnnnnnno. Th-th-th-they ddddon't llllllike Jjjjjjews."

Obviously, the man's Jewishness was not the problem. His stuttering was. And his overplaying of the antisemitism card only made him look more foolish, not to mention diminished the reality of antisemitism.

It's the same thing today when cries of "racism" are raised over the resignation under pressure of former Harvard president Claudine Gay.

To say things plainly, Gay's demise was no more the result of racism than was the failure of the Jewish stutterer to get the radio announcer's job. The big difference between the two is that Gay's story is real; the Jewish radio announcer story is a joke.

But that didn't stop Rev. Al Sharpton from saying, "President Gay's resignation is about more than a person or a single incident. This is an attack on every Black woman in this country who's put a crack in the glass ceiling."

That would only hold true if every high-achieving Black woman in America: 1) was a serial plagiarist; 2) issued a tepid response to 31 Harvard student groups who claimed that the Hamas massacre of more than 1,200 Israelis was entirely Israel's fault; and 3) was unable to state before Congress that calls for the genocide of the Jews might not be a violation of school policy.

Please.

The remarks of Ibram X. Kendi are no better: "Too often mainstream reporters join the racist mob or give it credibility—as they did in this case—just as they did a century ago."

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Not only are statements like this embarrassing and self-defeating, but they also minimize what real racist mobs actually *did* a century ago.

Unfortunately, Gay played into this victim ideology as well, writing in an op-ed for The New York Times, "Those who had relentlessly campaigned to oust me since the fall often trafficked in lies and ad hominem insults, not reasoned argument. They recycled tired racial stereotypes about Black talent and temperament."

The fact is that some of the loudest voices calling for Gay's resignation were respected Black academics like professor John McWhorter, who called for her resignation in a Dec. 21 New York Times op-ed piece. He argued that Gay keeping her job "would not only be a terrible sign of hollowed-out leadership, but also risks conveying the impression of a double standard at a progressive institution for a Black woman, which serves no one well, least of all Dr. Gay."

Precisely.

As an educator myself, I can safely say that, on the plagiarism issue alone, an incoming freshman at a local community college would be strongly corrected, if not disciplined for such errors. How much more the president of one of the world's most prestigious schools of higher learning?

Little wonder, then, that conservative columnists would pounce on things like this, writing, "In her already unimpressive scholastic career, Claudine Gay committed so much plagiarism (some 47 instances, according to the far-left New York Times) that the first black woman to hold the top job at Harvard was forced to resign. The fact that this woman is Claudine Gay is immaterial. Do you have any idea how much plagiarism has to be committed before a black woman loses her job as the first black woman of anything?"

To repeat: Pulling the race card here only undermines the reality of racism in America's history and undermines efforts to expose racism where it does still exist.

Put another way, this is the boy crying "wolf" one too many times. No one is listening anymore.

And please, Dr. Gay, don't insult us with lines like this, "And at a congressional hearing last month, I fell into a well-laid trap."

Who can take this seriously?

Returning to the plagiarism issue, professor Carol Swain, another respected Black academic—and someone whose work was actually plagiarized by Gay—called for Gay to be fired, also on Dec. 21.

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She added, "Stop listening to the racist mob of whites and

blacks who cry racism while being among the worst offenders.” And, “Hire the best man or woman who can steer the university back towards sanity. Appeasing the Marxist identity politics mob should not be a consideration. The person for the job might be a middle to older age white Jewish man who believes in classical liberalism.”

Well said.

Taking things one step further, W. F. Twyman, Jr., class of 1986 Harvard Law School and a former law professor, claimed in a Newsweek op-ed that Gay was the last person who could pull the race card. He asked, “Did you know that Claudine Gay during her Harvard career has repeatedly targeted and disrupted the careers of prominent Black male professors?”

And note that it was a Black sports TV personality, Sage Steele, who was fed up with Al Sharpton’s race baiting, saying, “I just wish he would go away.”

It’s also fair to ask if the resignation under pressure of University of Pennsylvania’s former president Liz Magill was due to the racist mob, seeing that Magill is white.

If you chalk it up to sexism, we could just as readily ask if it might be *anti-male sexism* that resulted in six out of the eight Ivy League school presidents being women rather than men. (Just putting this on the table.)

This, of course, leads back to the renewed focus on the dangers of diversity, equity and inclusion, with many now calling for the dismantling of these discriminatory policies while others claim that Gay’s hiring in the first place was the direct result of DEI.

It is true that Gay reports that she has been the subject of racist attacks and even death threats. This is ugly and inexcusable.

Unfortunately, this is the norm for public figures these days.

Speaking for myself (as a *much* lower-profile figure), I could fill books with the vicious attacks that are directed against me on a daily basis, sometimes including death wishes (and occasionally, even death threats). It's despicable, yet it comes with the turf.

But to equate these ugly and inexcusable attacks on Gay with the rightful calls for her to resign or be fired is to hide from reality.

Gay deserved to go, and this had no more to do with racism than the Jewish stutterer's failure to get the radio announcer's job had to do with antisemitism.

Where racist policies or attitudes or actions still exist, let's confront. But enough with this cheap race-baiting. It does far more harm than good.

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