

Oppose the ouster of Harvard University President Claudine Gay!

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On Tuesday afternoon, the Harvard Corporation announced that Harvard President Dr. Claudine Gay would resign, and the *New York Times* published her letter of resignation. Gay was president of Harvard for only six months.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) condemns Gay's forced resignation. It marks a milestone in the ongoing campaign by the state, the far right, Zionist forces and the White House to crack down on opposition to the US-Israeli genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza. Students and staff at Harvard University and nationwide must oppose this massive attack on academic freedom and democratic rights and demand Gay's immediate reinstatement.

Gay's resignation comes after the ouster of University of Pennsylvania President Liz Magill on December 9. Along with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) President Sally Kornbluth, Gay and Magill had been summoned to a congressional hearing, where Republican Elise Stefanik, an adherent of the antisemitic "Great Replacement Theory," ludicrously charged the presidents of three of the most prestigious universities in the world with supporting the "genocide of the Jews."

The state-orchestrated witch-hunt was accompanied by a large-scale "donor revolt" by billionaire donors and alumni of the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard and other major universities. They threatened to withdraw their funding unless the university administrations completely fall in line and effectively ban opposition to the genocide in Gaza on campus and eliminate free speech.

Unlike Magill, Gay initially refused to step down after the hearing, even as a December 13 bipartisan congressional resolution called for her resignation. Over 700 faculty at Harvard signed an open letter urging the Harvard Corporation, the university's most powerful governing board, "to defend the independence of the university and to resist political pressures that are at odds with Harvard's commitment to academic freedom, including calls for the removal of President Claudine Gay." The Harvard

Corporation subsequently issued a statement of unanimous support for Gay.

It was in response to the overwhelming opposition to her ouster that the charges of "plagiarism" were widely publicized, above all by the *Wall Street Journal*. These allegations are baseless. As early as October, Harvard University hired a team of three unaffiliated political scientists to test the validity of claims that Gay's work was tainted by plagiarism. By December 10, the team had found that Gay's errors did not amount to plagiarism but consisted merely of a number of improper citations.

The fingerprints of fascist forces, the state and the military are all over the conspiracy to bring down Gay.

Christopher F. Rufo, who first published allegations against Gay online in early December and is an adviser to the fascistic Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, said he immediately knew the anonymous file he received that questioned the integrity of Gay's work was a "weapon of war." Rufo, a proponent of the idea that American universities are advancing Marxist ideology, has stated he and DeSantis are at war with "woke" universities.

In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal*, Rufo directly stated his intent. "I think the entire corporation needs to resign, as well as President Gay," Rufo said. "I would be happy to join the corporation to help turn it around."

On December 17, the *Wall Street Journal* published a hack piece by the Republican academic Carol M. Swain, a supporter of Donald Trump and a leading figure behind the far-right 1776 Commission, alleging that Gay had made a career based on plagiarism. On December 20, Republican Representative Virginia Foxx, the head of the House Education and Workforce Committee, issued a letter to Penny Pritzker, senior fellow of the Harvard Corporation, demanding internal information pertaining to Harvard's response to "credible allegations of plagiarism" by Gay over her 24-year academic career.

Another figure in the campaign who was prominently featured by the *Wall Street Journal* as a "critic" of Gay is Avi Loeb, a professor of physics at Harvard University. On

his blog, Loeb has backed the genocide of the Palestinians and indicated that he was meeting with General David Petraeus, the former head of the CIA and one of the war criminals-in-chief of US imperialism in the Middle East.

Immediately following Harvard's announcement, Stefanik, the fourth-ranking House Republican, took to Twitter/X to declare that the Harvard Corporation members' "resignations must be forthcoming."

The ruthless campaign to bring down Gay is all the more significant since the Harvard president had tried to take a "neutral" position on the genocide: While she condemned the doxxing of pro-Palestinian students, she also explicitly opposed their statements against the genocide and apologized profusely for her "mistakes" in the congressional hearing.

But this "neutral" position was not enough for the billionaire and state proponents of genocide. Their aim is nothing less than the destruction of the right to free speech on campus and the complete subordination of academia to the interests of US foreign policy and the state apparatus. Under conditions where polls indicate that 66 percent of all American voters and 80 percent of all Democratic voters want an end to Israel's war on the Palestinian people, the response of the ruling class to mass popular opposition is a frontal assault on democratic rights.

This campaign has not gone unopposed. At Harvard University itself, there has been growing and principled opposition both to the genocide and the attacks on democratic rights. Hundreds of students who have been doxxed and threatened for opposing the genocide have continued to protest.

Just days before Gay announced her resignation, the student-run newspaper, the *Harvard Crimson*, published a significant op-ed by Bernie Steinberg, the executive director of the Zionist campus organization Hillel at Harvard from 1993 to 2010. Opposing the campaign against Gay, he denounced the "cynical weaponization" of antisemitism by "powerful forces who seek to intimidate and ultimately silence legitimate criticism of Israel and American policy on Israel."

He continued:

The toppling of the president of the University of Pennsylvania is a sobering example of what can happen when we empower these unscrupulous forces to dictate our path as university leaders. The stakes are as high as they've ever been. Our vigilance must be up to the task.

As a leader in the Jewish community, I am particularly alarmed by today's McCarthyist tactic of

manufacturing an antisemitism scare, which, in effect, turns the very real issue of Jewish safety into a pawn in a cynical political game to cover for Israel's deeply unpopular policies with regard to Palestine...Antisemitism in the U.S. is a real and dangerous phenomenon, most pressingly from the alt-right white-supremacist politics that have become alarmingly mainstream since 2016. To contend against these and other antisemitic forces with clarity and purpose, we must put aside all fabricated and weaponized charges of "antisemitism" that serve to silence criticism of Israeli policy and its sponsors in the U.S.

Hours after Gay's resignation, a Harvard employee submitted a letter to the *World Socialist Web Site* calling upon their colleagues at the university and beyond "to turn to the working class, which is the only social force that is not organically tied to the nation-state, and which has an objective interest in replacing the capitalist system that breeds war, bigotry of all forms and authoritarianism."

The toppling of the president of Harvard University by means of a far-right state conspiracy marks a milestone in the attack on democratic rights in the US, the strengthening of fascist forces and the attempt to criminalize all opposition to the crimes of imperialism and capitalism.

Opposition to this outrage must be organized urgently and as widely as possible. We urge students and employees at Harvard University and elsewhere to contact the *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality: Share information with us about the attacks on free speech on your campus and discuss the organization of meetings and demonstrations to oppose the genocide in Gaza and defend democratic rights.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact