

It's No Surprise Cornel West Would Blame the Jews For His Not Receiving Tenure

by Hugh Fitzgerald



[Cornel West](#)'s blaming his failure to be given tenure on those angry with his position on the Palestinians and Israel:

West is not telling the truth.

He was not denied tenure – his position was not a tenure track position!

As this article notes, most academic jobs – even senior ones – are not tenure track anymore. West's position wasn't ever eligible for tenure to begin with, and he knew this when he rejoined Harvard in 2016.

During his normal 5-year review, the faculty committee offered him a raise and a 10 year contract, which for a 67-year old man is as good as tenure. But he refused, insisting that they change his position itself into a tenured position – something that this review board couldn't do. "As the Boston Globe reported, "The faculty committee was only in charge of reviewing his reappointment and does not have authority to conduct a review for tenure, [Harvard's] spokesman said."

Now, it is obvious why he wasn't granted tenure – he did not have a tenure-eligible job and one cannot make that change at the drop of a hat. West asked for the job to be changed, which is quite a different matter than being denied tenure!

Yet West is insisting in multiple interviews that he was forced out by Zionists at Harvard rather than his own hubris. Yet if the Zionists at Harvard were out to silence him, why did they offer him a raise and a ten-year contract?

And is it really that difficult to find professors in Ivy League schools who are anti-Israel?

If the "Zionists" are so powerful at Harvard, how is it that so many other anti-Israel professors have been hired and given tenure? There is West's own colleague in African-American Studies, J. Lorand Matory, who speaks of a Zionist cabal managing to prevent anti-Israel speakers from coming to the campus; there is Professor of Psychology Patrick Cavanagh; there is the now-retired Professor of History John Womack; and many others. As for the notion that Harvard prevents anti-Israel speakers from being invited to the campus, the poet Tom Paulin, well-known for his anti-Israel views that he spews forth on every conceivable occasion, was invited to speak after he made many anti-Israel remarks including, in an interview he gave to the Egyptian newspaper Al-Ahram, his remark that Brooklyn-born Jews who had settled in the West Bank "should be shot dead," adding "I think they are Nazis, racists; I feel nothing but hatred for them."

Now, what does it look like when a professor lies about being denied tenure – and claims that the Jews (sorry, "Zionists") are secretly behind it?

It sounds far more like West planned to leave Harvard anyway, and decided to make a stink accusing "Zionists" of mistreating him.

Cornel West has throughout his career been a spoiled child of the academic system. Thousands of graduate students over the past three decades, when universities began to contract, and Race and Gender pushed aside all other matters, have been

unable to find suitable and stable employment, and have suffered in various ways. Some adjust to the constant insecurity of jobs that must be renewed yearly; some give up searching for university employment after years of fruitless applications and become high school teachers; some attempt to eke out livings as private tutors, or as college-application-essay advisors; some go back to school to earn a law or business degree.

But Cornel West has never suffered; he has always been hired by the most prestigious universities, including Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia's Union Theological Seminary. He has spent much of the time that any other professor would have been expected to devote to his teaching and scholarship, to instead making a name for himself as a dispenser of his wisdom on what he calls "race matters," and as a far-left political activist. For years he had a radio show with the now-disgraced Tavis Smiley (fired after multiple credible charges of sexual misconduct with his NPR subordinates); he's been a speaker at countless events for BLM; he's marched and sung; he's campaigned vigorously for Al Sharpton and for Bill Bradley, and spent much of 2016 speaking for Bernie Sanders as a surrogate – rather than preparing for his classes, or meeting with students. Although West famously hands out A's like confetti, which of course helps his "Rate My Professor" ratings – it's an easy way to get good reviews – not all of his students have been so readily won over.

At Princeton, for example, the first two student entries for "Rate My Professor" judged him to be "Awful." Here are their comments:

Rating #1

"This professor uses informal language in his books; he has trouble with academic English related to subject verb agreement related to NUMBER, as in singular versus plural.

Rating # 2

“Unprepared and indifferent. He would come to class and wing it. He’d often let class out 45 minutes into a two-hour lecture when he ran out of material. Did not put any serious effort into the class or in getting to know his students. He was always off campus and reaching him personally was nearly impossible. But he does have a famous name.”

Naturally Harvard expects its faculty to concentrate on academic matters; that’s something Cornel West, appearing hither and yon, has not been doing. Dropping into his classes as if he were doing the students a favor, often unprepared (“he would come to class and wing it”), at times leaving early (“letting class out 45 minutes into a two-hour lecture”), if he had nothing to say, or didn’t feel like staying when there were other, so much more interesting, things for him to do outside of class: another interview for a newspaper, or on radio or television, a plane trip to a distant state to act as a candidate’s surrogate, a studio recording of one of his hip-hop albums, a movie part, an award to receive as “one of the leading intellectuals of our time” (or words to that preposterous effect). He’s also been named, don’t forget, by some British mass-market magazine as “the fourth greatest thinker for the Covid-19 era.” He’s very busy – he’s practically a conglomerate – is Professor Cornel West.

Harvard was simply not going to yield to his demand that his non-tenured position be turned into a tenured one. So he made his threat – “give me tenure or else I leave” – and then set in motion the protests on his behalf, including a letter signed by 60 graduate students [Jihad Watch](#).