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When Alan Dershowitz Says You're Liberal — *You're Liberal*

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I was interested and somewhat amused to see [*The Wall Street Journal*](#) quote Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz in its [front-page story](#) on the resignation of Harvard president Lawrence Summers [see entries below].

Here is how the paper set up the quote:

Law professor Alan Dershowitz says he and other Harvard faculty are furious that the university's board, which is called the Corporation, apparently caved to pressure from the professors who led the ouster charge. "This is an academic coup d'etat by one small faction...the die-hard left of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences," he says.

Wow. When Alan Dershowitz thinks you are liberal, you are *really* liberal. This ought to tell us something about the state of affairs at Harvard University.

The paper also offered a very insightful and bold [editorial](#) on the resignation. Here are a few key excerpts:

A Harvard education isn't what it used to be. That's the principal lesson of yesterday's news that Lawrence Summers is resigning as the 27th president of the nation's oldest university.

By "used to be," we mean the days before the faculty ran the academic asylum, the days when administrators, students and, yes, even the trustees also had a say in setting priorities and making decisions about how a great university is run. If you remember such a time, you probably graduated with the Class of 1965 or earlier. In a letter posted on Harvard's Web site yesterday, Mr. Summers said that "I have reluctantly concluded that the rifts between me and segments of the Arts and Sciences faculty make it infeasible for me to advance the agenda of renewal that I see as crucial to Harvard's future."

Those "rifts" included quarrels with a largely left-wing faculty that has about as much intellectual diversity as the Pyongyang parliament. Or, as a group of Harvard protesters so charmingly put it a year or so ago, "Racist, sexist, anti-gay — Larry Summers, you must pay." Only on an American university campus could Mr. Summers, a former Clinton Treasury Secretary, be portrayed as a radical neocon.

And:

Mr. Summers's fate has unfortunately become all too typical at elite schools in recent decades. The Dartmouth faculty looked down on David McLaughlin as an "anti-intellectual" (he had an M.B.A. instead of a Ph.D.); he was run out of Hanover in 1987 over bitter quarrels over ROTC and disinvestment from South Africa. Benno Schmidt left Yale in 2001, saying his six-year tenure had been marked "by more argument . . . than I would have wished." Donald Kagan, the dean of Yale College who had handed in his resignation a few weeks earlier, was franker, noting the threat from an "imperial faculty."

