

THE BANE OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

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“Confident of one’s own righteousness, especially when smugly moralistic and intolerant of the opinions and behavior of others.” That dictionary definition of self-righteousness aptly describes the way so many people have behaved in response to the protests that recently exploded across the nation. The moralizing, the grandstanding, the arrogance—it was appalling and never ending.

White guilt over “white privilege” is the height of self-righteousness. Those who apologize for their race, or feel guilty about their economic status, should tell us what they are going to do about these alleged problems.

Are they going to ask a dermatologist to darken their skin? (John Howard Griffin did that in 1959 so he could see what it would be like to live as a black person in the South—he wrote about his experience in *Black Like Me*.) Are they going to part with their money, giving their stash to the poor? If not, what purpose does their public display of white guilt serve?

There are many constructive things that these people could do. To begin with, they could help minority business owners whose stores were destroyed by white protesters: they could start a fund to raise money for them. They could set up tutorials for inner-city kids after school, volunteering to do the work. There are plenty of things that could be done, but all are predicated on self-giving, an attribute that is the very opposite of self-congratulatory exercises.

Take the business owners who have been wiped out. I recently purchased wine from a liquor store, and the Chinese owner whom I know told me a story about the man who was in front of me

and just left. He said the man, who was elderly, had his Long Island store ransacked by looters: they broke in and stole \$700,000 worth of merchandise. The owner managed to stay afloat through the shutdown and was ready to reopen when the “protesters” destroyed his store. Now he, and his 12 employees, are finished.

In the 1970s, when I was going for my Ph.D. in sociology at New York University, there was one particular class I will never forget. The subject of discussion was poor minorities. All of the students bashed our society for not doing anything to help them. I raised my hand and said that I work during the day in a poor, crime-ridden neighborhood (Spanish Harlem), and was glad to hear of their interest in the subject. I asked if they would volunteer to tutor my students on a Saturday. There was dead silence.

You may have heard about Charlie Palmer, the former ESPN reporter who now covers professional basketball. When protesters set a Minneapolis building on fire, he cheered them on, tweeting, “Burn it all down.” But a few days later when a mob tried to storm his California community-gated, of course—he went mad. He called them “animals,” screaming, “Tear up your own ****.”

Then we have the president of the Minneapolis City Council, Lisa Bender, who fought to eliminate the police force altogether. She was asked on CNN, “What if in the middle of night, my home is broken into? Who do I call?” She smugly told the woman reporter that her complaint “comes from a place of privilege.” Now if someone were to storm her house, is there anyone who thinks her response would be any different than that of Palmer’s?

Why are these white people considered the allies of blacks? If some racist mapped out a strategy to kill black people, he could do no better than to shut down the police. Every weekend in Chicago, dozens of black men are killed by black men. Does

anyone think conditions would improve by banning the police (most of whom are black)?

It's so nutty that liberal journalists are now being silenced by radicals from within their ranks. The editorial page editor of the *New York Times*, as well as the deputy editorial page editor, were forced to resign on June 7. Their offense? They allowed an article to be published by Sen. Tom Cotton. He called for law and order, allowing for the military to intervene, if necessary. After an uproar by the free speech mavens at the newspaper, the top editor said he was wrong to run the piece. But that wasn't good enough.

Similarly, when the executive editor at the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published a news story titled, "Buildings Matter, Too," it was deemed a racist play on "Black Lives Matter," so he was forced to resign. Andrew Sullivan, the liberal writer for *New York* magazine, was barred from writing about the protests because it was decided he might criticize the violence.

This is quite a development. Four men, all with sterling liberal credentials, were bludgeoned by left-wing extremists who don't believe in freedom of speech. The censors are now the ruling class.

We all have our hot buttons. Mine is rank hypocrisy. I have no patience listening to white people sitting on their moral perch calling for justice while doing nothing constructive about it. Worse is when they actually create more injustice in the name of promoting justice. Madness is in the air.