



ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

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FOR LIFE, LIBERTY AND PROPERTY

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY

DAVID BOTSFORD

Those of us who read the British press have heard a great deal about the increasing domination of the American universities by the ideology of “political correctness”. Although a number of books exposing the nature and scope of this development have been published in the United States, few have yet appeared in British editions. I am grateful to Kevin McFarlane for having lent me a copy of one of these volumes, *Inside American Education*, by the well-known classical liberal scholar Professor Thomas Sowell, who is senior fellow at the Hoover Institution.

THE AMERICAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Professor Sowell paints a shocking picture of the regime currently reigning on most American campuses, ranging from the leading Ivy League universities to obscure local colleges. The following are some examples from the book which will give readers some idea of what is going on in the world of “higher education” in the United States:

[W]hen a white woman at the University of Pennsylvania expressed her “deep regard for the individual and my desire to protect the freedoms of *all* members of society,” she was chided by an administrator who said that the word “individual” is “considered by many to be RACIST”. The reason is that emphasis on the individual could be construed as “opposition to group entitlements”.¹

...

When dozens of minority students have invaded classrooms to shout down the professor, intimidate the students, and prevent the lecture from being given, they have done so with impunity at San Francisco State University, at Berkeley, and at the City College in New York. On the campus of the State University of New York at Binghamton, a public lecture by a 70-year-old retired professor was invaded and disrupted by dozens of students — mostly minority — carrying sticks. One of the black students blew his nose on a tissue, which he then deposited in a cup of coffee from which the professor had been drinking — to the cheers of the mob, while an administrator sat silently in the audience, grinning.²

...

Mark Mathabane, black South African author of *Kaffir Boy*, traveled to America to go to college and escape apartheid — only to discover its philosophy flourishing here:

When I was in college, I and a few other black students were labeled Uncle Toms for sitting with whites in the cafeteria, sharing with them black culture, working with them on projects and socializing with them.³

...

[B]lack educator Kenneth B. Clark resigned from Antioch College’s board of directors in protest against the administration’s silence as militant black students “intimidate, threaten, and in some cases physically assault” other black students who disagreed with them. ... At Stanford, Hispanic students who complained of intimidation by more militant, organized Hispanic students found a similar indifference on the part of the administration. Moreover, a copy of their letter of complaint, complete with signatures of the complaining students, was turned over to the militant Hispanic organization.⁴

Sowell quotes a student at the University of Virginia as saying:

Apparently there is a double standard for racism at the University. When a sign was found on Route 29 containing

a racial slur, the entire University was up in arms. However, when a black fraternity distributed a flyer with a picture of a black man holding a sword in one hand and the decapitated head of a white man, entrails and all, aloft in the other, no one seemed concerned.⁵

Many invited speakers have been prevented from speaking at Harvard by disruption and violence, and the university has either done nothing at all or has given only the most nominal punishment — when the disrupters were “politically correct” and the speaker was not. Such conservative figures as Caspar Weinberger, the Reverend Jerry Falwell, Contra leaders, and others have been disrupted and assaulted by radical students. In one episode, the speaker — Contra leader Aldo Calero — was ready to resume his talk after having been physically assaulted, but was prevented from doing so by Harvard University authorities. One rationalization for this surrender to the opponents of Calero was that there was now “a solidly conservative audience” remaining in the lecture hall, which would create the impression that the sponsors “were trying to exclude liberals”. ... Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick has been driven off the stage at Berkeley by disrupters shouting and throwing objects — and has been similarly disrupted at the University of Wisconsin, the University of Washington, and other institutions. Former Black Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver, once welcomed on campuses across the country during his radical days, has now turned against the left after living in countries with left-wing dictatorships — and has been prevented from speaking by disrupters at Berkeley, Wisconsin and Minnesota. ... Lesbians at Mount Holyoke College objected to a campus lecture by James Meredith, the first black man to attend the University of Mississippi, because he was promoting the traditional family. As with other intolerant people, disagreement did not imply debate but suppression. For themselves, however, Mount Holyoke’s organized lesbians claimed not only freedom but license, chalking up the sidewalks with slogans like “lesbians make great lovers” and “try it — you’ll like it”.⁶

Sowell describes the case of Steven Mosher, a post-graduate student at Stanford University, who had completed his coursework, visiting China before writing his doctoral dissertation in anthropology:

After his stay in China, Mosher shocked much of the world by revealing that country’s widespread compulsory birth control program, including compulsory abortions, imposed on Chinese women by the Communist government. His book, *Broken Earth*, became a best-seller and helped shatter the rosy picture of Maoist China being promoted by many Western intellectuals on the left, including academics on American college campuses. ... Chinese government officials wrote to Stanford, denouncing Mosher’s activities in China.

Steven Mosher was terminated as a graduate student from Stanford, prevented from earning the Ph.D. which plays such a crucial role in an academic career. As with so many other punishments inflicted on those who have violated political correctness, the basis for Mosher’s expulsion was left vague and inconsistent. Not one stated requirement for the doctorate in anthropology was even claimed to have been violated, nor the facts in his book challenged. Instead, criteria of personal behavior were created *ex post* as a reason why the department “could not certify you as an anthropologist,” even

if the remaining academic requirements of a doctoral dissertation were met.

These new personal behavior criteria included “responsibility for the welfare of those he is studying” and a “professional imperative for sensitivity to others.” Moreover, these nebulous personal behaviour standards were repeatedly and insistently depicted by Stanford University’s President Donald Kennedy as professional criteria in anthropology, rather than university rules about personal conduct — for the latter have due process protections which Mosher was never accorded. ... Even if every charge and every interpretation in the thousands of words in Kennedy’s official decision were 100 percent correct, there would still not be a single violation of the existing rules for receiving a Ph.D. in anthropology at Stanford.⁷

Dartmouth College has hired forensic experts to try to trace anonymous, abusive letters to feminists and blacks, but it took no action when one of its professors received death threats because he co-sponsored a speaker (on the sinking on the *Titanic*) with the *Dartmouth Review* [a conservative newspaper published off campus, to which the Dartmouth authorities are extremely hostile]. Nor was the Dartmouth administration interested when a black writer on that newspaper was threatened, even though he had faculty witnesses and named the other black students from the Afro-American Society who had threatened him. There was a similar disinterest when members of the same society threatened another black student, even though he is handicapped and in a wheelchair.⁸

Apart from incidents such as the above, academic study itself has been corrupted, so that many university courses have been converted into propaganda sessions against Western civilisation and its achievements. It is no exaggeration to say that American universities are becoming the scene of a cultural revolution comparable to that which was imposed on China in the 1960s, when Maoist fanatics attempted to systematically root out and destroy the remnants of the world’s oldest surviving civilisation. Although the public flaying alive of “reactionaries” which was a prominent feature of the events in China, has yet to take place in the United States, we can be confident that once the American legal system has been shorn of its surviving protections of “individual” freedoms, which are “considered by many to be RACIST”, then “group entitlements” will allow the proponents of “political correctness” to emulate their Chinese forebears in this respect also.

SUPPRESSION OF DISCUSSION ON THE MIDDLE EAST

In addition to the imposition of a regime of “political correctness”, the nature of the US university system enables powerful political organisations to interfere in the content of courses. Whatever one’s opinion about the Middle East, it is a documented fact that the highly influential pro-Israeli lobby in the US has repeatedly used its political leverage to intimidate American universities from allowing any significant learning about Arabic culture and the Arab point of view on the Middle East. Paul Findley, formerly a member of the House of Representatives for Illinois, wrote an important book, first published in 1985, about the highly organised suppression of information and debate about the Middle East in the US by the organised pro-Israeli lobby, a suppression which goes much further than anything experienced in Britain, Continental Europe, or even Israel itself. The following examples from Congressman Findley’s book demonstrate that pro-Israeli forces in the US have actively prevented academic freedom on the subject, rather than encouraging the wide range of views and debates about the situation in that part of the world which is necessary to bring about a permanent end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Professor Edward Said, who teaches comparative literature at Columbia University and often speaks in support of the Palestinians, has repeatedly experienced attempts to prevent him from speaking. He reported that in 1983 at Washington University

“They stood at the door of the auditorium and distributed ... a denunciation of me as a ‘terrorist.’ There were quotations from the PLO, and things that I had said were mixed in with things they claimed the PLO had said about murdering Jews. The idea was to intimidate me and to intimidate the audience from attending.”⁹ At Florida University, Professor Said reports, “They tried to disrupt the meeting and [the chairman] finally had to be taken out by the police. It was one of the ugliest things, not just heckling but interrupting and standing up and shouting. It’s pure fascism, outright hooliganism.”¹⁰ At Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1982, Said was scheduled to speak to the department of religion on the significance of Palestine to Christians and Muslims as well as Jews. The college was deluged with letters demanding that the talk be cancelled, and a move was made to deny the department a new \$1 million chair in Jewish Studies. Asked if the department would feel free to invite Said again, a spokesperson said, “No, I don’t think we would.”¹¹

At **Harvard University Law School** in 1982, the American Indian Law Students Association and the Harvard Foundation hosted a conference on the legal rights of indigenous peoples, with Deena Abu-Lughod, an American of Palestinian origin, scheduled to speak about the Palestinians. Pro-Israeli students appealed to the dean of the law school to withdraw funding from the conference. Although he refused to do so, he backed out from giving the opening address to the conference. Several organisers received telephone death threats. Although the conference took place, one organiser recalled that

The atmosphere was incredibly tense. We were really very concerned about Deena’s physical safety and about our own physical safety. ... We had searches at the door, and we confiscated weapons, knives — not pocket knives — but butcher knives. ... the event did occur, but in a very threatening atmosphere.¹²

Also at Harvard, in 1983, **Hassan Abdul-Rahman**, a PLO representative, spoke on the theme “Palestine: Road to Peace in the Middle East”. The meeting was disrupted. A student who attended recalled that

Abdul-Rahman spoke for probably an hour and a half to virtually constant taunting, jeering, insults, screams, shouts, cursing. ... the intimidation is really very overt and very strong.¹³

Also at Harvard a law professor who had visited the occupied West Bank was scheduled to give a talk about the trip to students on his return. Before the speech, pro-Israeli students visited him and threatened to picket the talk if he wasn’t intending to give a “balanced” talk. When the professor gave the talk, he said that “the presence of a highly charged group of Jewish law students” made him alter what he had intended to say. He said that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was “an issue about which we’ve never had a successful, open discussion at this school,” and that “I felt that I was operating in a place in which there were limits on what I could say.”¹⁴

Professor Noam Chomsky, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who is one of the world’s most distinguished philosophers of linguistics and an outspoken critic of US foreign policy, including the massive American support for Israel, and who is himself Jewish, has been subjected to disinformation campaigns by the Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith. Professor Chomsky says:

When I give a talk at a university or elsewhere, it is common for a group to distribute literature, invariably unsigned, containing a collection of attacks on me spiced with “quotes” (generally fabricated) from what I am alleged to have said here and there. I have no doubt that the source is the ADL and often the people distributing the unsigned literature acknowledge the fact. These practices are vicious and serve to intimidate many people.¹⁵

At the **University of California at Berkeley** in 1982, James Schamus, editor of the newspaper *Berkeley Graduate*, who is

Jewish, published articles critical of the policies of the Israeli government of Menachem Begin. As a result, pro-Israeli students had the funding for the magazine cut off and closed it down.¹⁶ In 1983, a vicious campaign involving death threats and an attempt to cut off advertising was launched for the dismissal of the editor of the *Arizona Daily Wildcat* at the University of Arizona at Tucson after an editorial criticised the Begin government's actions during the invasion of the Lebanon.¹⁷

The Hartford Seminary in Hartford, Connecticut has the oldest Islamic studies course in the US. From the early 1970s, the seminary's president began to receive complaints that the course was anti-Jewish. In 1983 Willem A. Bijlefeld, director of the Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, published an article about Yasser Arafat in the local *Hartford Courant*. The next day he received a telephone death threat.¹⁸

Eqbal Ahmad, an American of Pakistani origin who holds two PhDs from Princeton, has been ostracised by the academic community because of his frequently expressed criticism of Israeli policies and support for Palestinian rights. In 1965 he joined the faculty of Cornell University. After the 1967 Middle East war, Dr Ahmad made a speech at Cornell criticising the Israeli conquest and retention of Arab territory and signed petitions supporting Palestinian self-determination. For his remaining two years at Cornell, only four people on the entire faculty spoke to him, three of them Jewish. Dr Ahmad said:

The issue is not one of Jew versus gentile. There is a silent covenant within the academic community concerning Israel. The interesting thing is that the number of prominent Jews who have broken the covenant is much larger than the number of gentiles.¹⁹

In 1983 Ahmad was named in the B'nai B'rith "enemies list" *Pro-Arab Propaganda in America*. He says, "This they are doing to somebody who has not to date received any form of support from an Arab government or an Arab organization."²⁰ Since the list's publication, his invitations to speak at universities has fallen by 50%. Since 1969 he has not been able to obtain a regular teaching appointment. At Rutgers University College in Newark, New Jersey, he was considered for a full professorship, but the appointment fell through. Ahmad says:

I have been told privately that it was because Zionist professors objected to my appointment. The dean was told that I would not get the vote of the faculty because accusations had been made that I was anti-Semitic and had created an anti-Semitic atmosphere on the campus while I was teaching there. All this was told to me in private; I have nothing in writing.²¹

In 1977, three small American colleges, **Swarthmore**, **Haverford** and **Bryn Mawr**, proposed to seek funds from the Triad Foundation, a private foundation set up by the Saudi entrepreneur Adnan Khashoggi, for a joint Middle East programme. The three-year programme intended to grant scholarships to Arab students, expand the colleges' collections of publications relating to the Middle East, and strengthen existing Middle East-related courses, as well as to finance a visiting professorship to teach courses on the Middle East in disciplines such as anthropology, art history, economics, history, political science and religion. The faculty of the three colleges were to be in control of how the money was to be used, and it was clearly understood that the study of Israel would be included in the program and Jewish academics invited to hold the visiting professorship. Just before the agreement with the Triad Foundation was signed, Professor James Kurth of Swarthmore told the American Jewish Committee about it. In a confidential memorandum to the AJC's National Committee on Arab Influence in the US, Ira Silverman of the AJC wrote:

Professor Kurth, who is not Jewish, believed that the proposed program should be of concern to the AJC inasmuch as it would not only expand study of the contemporary Arab world but would explicitly seek to bring the Arab political message to those campuses.

Professor Kurth ... asked for AJC help in blocking the implementation of the program. We ... agreed that it would make most sense to try to kill the program through quiet, behind-the-scenes talks with college officials, before 'going public'.²²

Using such methods, the AJC was able to intimidate the three colleges into cancelling the entire program and refusing the Triad grant. Silverman boasted that:

Our participation was not widely known on the campuses and not reported in the public press, as we wished. This is a good case history of how we can be effective in working with colleges to limit Arab influence on campuses.²³

In 1975, Georgetown University established the **Center for Contemporary Arab Studies**, the first academic programme in the US devoted exclusively to the Arab world. Georgetown twice applied for, and was refused, US Federal funding for a Middle East centre, so it applied to Arab governments for funding. Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Saudi Arabia all contributed, and in 1977 Libya committed \$750,000 to establish a professorial chair in Arab studies. Then Jordan and Qatar contributed, and Iraq gave \$50,000 in 1978. Under intense pro-Israeli pressure, Father Timothy Healy returned the Iraqi gift. In 1980, Kuwait and Oman also donated grants to the centre. Ira Silverman, of the AJC, claimed that the centre "has a clearly marked pro-Arab, anti-Israel bias in its selection of curriculum material, its faculty appointments, and speakers." He claimed that by accepting money from "political sponsors of one point of view", Georgetown might be "selling something very precious to Americans — the integrity of its universities."²⁴

In 1981, Father Healy, under intense pro-Israeli pressure, returned the Libyan donation. In an interview with him, the *Washingtonian* magazine reported:

His Jewish friends screamed at him privately, and the American Jewish Committee issued a statement publicly condemning the university. Even his gestures of appeasement and balance — a goodwill trip to Israel, an honorary degree for the Israeli ambassador to the United States, refusal of a gift from Iraq, wearing a yarmulke at a Jewish service on campus — did little to offset Jewish anger over the Libyan money.²⁵

The return of the Libyan money was taken as an affront to the entire Arab world, and Arab governments were far less forthcoming than they had been before. Nevertheless, the centre managed to survive, purely because it is part of a private university. According to John Ruedy, director of Arab studies,

You could probably not have an Arab studies program in a public institution. You can have a Jewish studies program, of course. In fact, that is politically very advantageous. ... Georgetown and the Jesuits are as far from dependency on Jewish support as you could be.²⁶

In 1983, **Villanova University** in Pennsylvania established an Institute for Contemporary Arab and Islamic Studies, under the directorship of Father Kail Ellis, a priest of Lebanese origin. The institute had no funding from Arab sources. Nevertheless, the programme faced considerable opposition. According to Father Ellis, "The pressure wasn't really overt as such. It was always behind the scenes."²⁷ John Ruedy, of Georgetown, was invited to Villanova as a consultant. He said:

The opposition was very interesting. It was the Zionist issue but nobody said it. I could just tell, because I'd been there before. The first line of opposition is on academic grounds. But when you get around all these and answer all the questions, then they bare their fangs and say, "This is anti-Israel, this is anti-Semitic, and it will be against the interests of the university. And we have to relate to Jewish donors and so on." This is precisely what happened at Villanova.²⁸

Georgetown University's **Center for Strategic and International Studies** is a "think tank" which was set up in 1965. In 1980, Mazher Hameed, a native of Saudi Arabia who is blind,

was employed as a research fellow with responsibility for research on a project on Saudi oil field security. In 1981 Hameer completed the report, which recommended the purchase of AWACS fighter planes from the US, the sale of which to Saudi Arabia was opposed by the pro-Israeli lobby. Just before the report was due to be published, orders came from high up to halt publication. Hameed had to pay for its printing out of his own pocket, and was forbidden to use the centre's name. Copies were widely distributed, and the Senate rejected a resolution to halt the sale of AWACS to the Saudis. This was a rare Congressional defeat for the pro-Israeli lobby. The lobby then used its influence, through the pro-Israeli *New Republic* magazine, to have Hameed fired from the centre. He, his friends and associates were harassed. His office was burgled, his post-office box and home mailbox illegally opened, and he was encouraged by a senior administration official to "leave town". William Quandt, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, said: "The way they terminated his whole relationship there was rather strange. He was very shabbily treated, to say the least."²⁹

The **Near Eastern Center of the University of Arizona** is a Federally-funded facility devoted to increasing knowledge of the Middle East. In order to qualify for Federal funding, it must devote some of its resources to "outreach" for the local community. In 1981, the Tucson Jewish Community Council complained to William Dever, chairman of the Oriental Studies Department, of which the Near Eastern Center is a part, that the centre had an "anti-Israeli bias which called into question their objectivity about the Middle East."³⁰ Dever invited the TJCC to check all the centre's materials for bias, and promised to eliminate any which contained bias. The TJCC rejected this offer and complained directly to the US Department of Education in Washington, questioning the use of Federal funds to promote outreach "in an area so inherently complex and conflictive [sic] as Middle East studies."³¹ Their report strongly suggested that their aim was to close down the outreach programme:

Even if numerous materials were added objectively portraying Israel and her interests, coupled with the removal of objectionable and propagandistic material regarding the Arab viewpoint, the problem would still exist.

It is the outreach function per se ... which ought to be addressed.³²

The Department of Education replied that the content of the outreach material was the university's responsibility. With the cooperation of the university, the TJCC compiled a report complaining of "bias" in the outreach programme's material. This was the beginning of an extremely unpleasant campaign by the TJCC against the outreach programme, including, among other actions, attempts to cut off the programme's Federal funding and slanderous personal vilification of its teachers. Eventually, the TJCC succeeded in getting the programme's materials banned from Arizona's largest school district, and brought about the resignation of the two leaders of the centre, thus crippling it, despite the findings of a panel of nationally-known Middle East scholars that the programme had no anti-Israeli bias. Professor Jerrold Levy, of the University of Arizona, who is Jewish, courageously spoke out against the TJCC's campaign. He explained why other Jews were reluctant to defend academic freedom in this context, despite the traditional Jewish commitment to civil liberties and education:

I don't depend on Jewish funds for my academic work or for my livelihood. It's the people in the professional classes, doctors, lawyers, who feel intimidated. The friends I have within the [Reform] congregation are very, very close to the chest on political matters. I know a professional man who is very liberal, but now that he's got a well-established business, he's not coming out against the TJCC. There are some concerned people who are not saying anything. We're up against a very well-organized group of co-religionists here. There's some fairly good blackballing going on.³³

Professor Levy tried to reason with members of the TJCC, who invited him to an "educational series" on why Jews should support Israeli Prime Minister Begin. He remarked:

It was a series of evening lectures which were strictly brain-washing. And at the second one I got up during the discussion and told them the facts that they'd got wrong. They had manipulated maps and all kinds of funny things. And they disinvited me from the group. It's that simple. This is not a group that's open to discussion.³⁴

He said of Tuscon:

It's an awful lot like the McCarthy period. And I include not only the Near Eastern Center [controversy] but the whole line taken on Israel. It's an awful lot like Germany in the thirties, too. It's a lot like what we Jews have been yelling about, that we want to be free from. And then who starts doing it again? It's a very scary business.³⁵

INTIMIDATION IN THE UK

Some aspects of the new regime in American universities are already familiar to us in Britain. For the past 25 years, mobs of Marxist thugs, whom the taxpayer is financing as "students", have taken upon themselves the right to decide who may or may not speak at British universities. Any speaker, whether a working academic or an invited visitor, whose opinions or activities have incurred the displeasure of the far left can expect his or her meeting to be disrupted, and often to be subject to physical assault as well. In 1969, for example, Professor H. J. Eysenck, one of the world's most distinguished psychologists, was delivering a lecture at London University when a gang of Marxist stormtroopers who were supposedly "students" invaded the lecture hall, punched him to floor, smashed his glasses and repeatedly punched and kicked his prostrate body, causing him serious injury. These scholars were expressing their difference of opinion with Professor Eysenck's conclusions about the relative importance of hereditary and environment in producing the differing average IQ scores of different population groups. Professor Eysenck, who arrived in Britain as a 15-year-old refugee from National Socialist Germany, might have been forgiven for experiencing a certain sense of *dejà vu*.

It is one thing to read about these actions, another to witness them. When I was at university, the late Enoch Powell, then a member of parliament, was invited by a society of law students to give a speech on the subject of immigration and nationality law. Apart from his achievements in the military, political, literary and journalistic fields, Mr Powell was a distinguished Classical scholar, and the author of several studies of Greek and Roman civilisation, including the definitive translation of Herodotus. He has also published numerous scholarly works on other subjects; he is, for example, co-author of the most authoritative history of the medieval English Parliament. Although freedom of expression is, of course, an absolute value, it would be difficult to think of an individual more deserving of the opportunity to speak to students than Mr Powell. Mr Powell's crime, of course, was his speeches against immigration of the late 1960s. The mob was not going to allow him to return to that subject.

I took my seat in the packed lecture hall, where Mr Powell was sitting on the dias at the front. Even before the meeting began, voices in the crowd began sporadic booing and hissing at him. When the chairwoman of the meeting introduced the speaker, she was subjected to foul-mouthed heckling from several places in the crowd. When Mr Powell rose to the podium, a large crowd of hecklers began an orchestrated chanting of the words "racist", "fascist" and "Nazi", which drowned out the sound of his voice. Mr Powell made several attempts to speak, and each time was interrupted in the same way. Then one thug ran down to the front of the hall, standing directly in front of the podium, and turned to the audience. "Everybody here who opposes Powell, come down here and form a human wall to prevent him from speaking," he shrieked at the top of his voice. On this cue, some two dozen hoodlums swarmed down to the front and stood with

their backs to Mr Powell, partially blocking the audience's view of him, while keeping up a continuous chant of abuse against him. Presumably even a man of Mr Powell's fortitude was unable to tolerate the stench, for at this point he walked out of the hall, to the loud cheers of the mob. It is true that on this occasion an attempt was made at the students' union, which was, surprisingly enough, led by Conservatives, to censure some of the ringleaders of the disruption, but this came to nothing.

Yet although there is certainly a great deal to criticise in British universities, the rot of "political correctness" has not gone anywhere near as far here — or, indeed, anywhere in western Europe — as it has in the United States. It is highly doubtful, for example, that any British university would cancel a student's PhD simply because he or she had written a critical study of the policies of the Chinese communist regime. Nevertheless, it is well known that universities throughout western Europe are bastions of statist and collectivist thinking. Although free-market orientated scholars do have a sizeable presence on the campuses of the English-speaking world, on the Continent it seems as if hardly anybody has heard of, let alone been influenced by, the classical liberal position.

The question before us is how such a regime has developed in the universities of the Western world, and why it the phenomenon of "political correctness" has gone further in the United States than it has elsewhere in the West. Here we can only make a few brief and cursory points in relation to the problem, which readers may like to take as a starting point for a more thorough study of it.

UNIVERSITIES IN ANCIENT GREECE

Inherent in the concept of a "university" is the idea that our knowledge of the world is not yet complete, and that there are established scholarly methods by which we can increase that knowledge. A scholar drawing conclusions from examining the evidence and making rational deductions from it must be prepared to subject those conclusions to criticism by other scholars. The principle of freedom of enquiry, within a rational intellectual system, then, are necessary prerequisites of the concept of a university. Ancient Greece was the first civilisation in which such a conception of freedom developed. In his study of ancient Greek society, Professor Antony Andrewes, of Oxford University, concludes:

If a Greek were asked what distinguished his own nation from the rest, one likely reply would be that Greeks were free and barbarians were slaves. ... Looking back at this civilization from our distance, one of its most remarkable features is the Greek capacity for free, general speculation, uninhibited by myth or authority. ... The openness of mind and readiness to discuss ... must take pride of place among the claims which the Greeks have on our attention, along with the clear vision of their artists and the vigorous beauty of their poetry and the best of their prose. Their contemporaries, the barbarian, from whom at the start they learnt so much, achieved many things, but not this freedom. The monumental rigour of Egypt stiffened thought as well as art, priestly authority weighed heavily, and the insidious influence of magic wrecked much, including the empirical advances of their medicine. Babylon is still with us in the 360 degrees of our circles; but their mathematics and astronomy, like their law, served practical ends which have merely perished. The imagination of the Scythians, and later of the Celts, made fascinating abstract patterns out of living forms, but did not nourish a organized body of knowledge. Of all the various cultures which the Romans met in their career of conquest, it was Greece that took them captive, and that was no accident.³⁶

In ancient Greece, what we would today call "universities" developed as educational free markets. Individual professors would set themselves up in practice as educators, and students would attach themselves to them, often with remarkable enthusiasm. The more students a professor attracted, the more money he

made. Any student was free to study with any professor he chose. This educational system played a central role in developing the achievements of the Graeco-Roman civilization in every sphere of endeavour.

Any attempt to summarise the reasons for the decline of learning in the later centuries of that civilization is beyond the scope of this essay. Nevertheless, in view of the propaganda to which young people in Britain are subjected during at least 11 years of compulsory Christian brainwashing in state schools, at the taxpayers' expense, it is worth pointing out that the rise of Christianity, particularly after it became the official religion of the Roman empire, was one of the most important causes. The Christians attacked secular learning and the pagan values of the Graeco-Roman civilisation with fanaticism and violence. For example, in 389, Theophilus, the Christian bishop of Alexandria, acting on a decree of the emperor Theodosius concerning pagan monuments, organised the systematic pillaging by Christians of the Serapeum, the great library at Alexandria, which contained hundreds of thousands of scrolls. In 415, Hypatia, a Greek Neoplatonic philosopher who taught at Alexandria, and who had criticised the claims of Christianity, was murdered by a mob of Christians who were incited by Cyril, archbishop of Alexandria. The Christians dragged Hypatia from her carriage, and flayed her skin with oyster shells while she was still alive before crushing her to death.

THE MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

It was centuries before the appearance of the first universities of medieval western Europe. Although Christians had been largely responsible for the destruction of intellectual life in the Classical civilisation, it is nevertheless true that other Christians, centuries later, must be given credit for the beginning of the revival of learning. The emperor Charlemagne, his educational advisers Peter of Pisa and Alcuin of York, and a small group of scholars, were responsible for the preservation of the Latin language and of many classic Roman and Greek texts. In 787, Charlemagne organised the establishment of schools connected with monasteries and cathedrals throughout the Frankish empire. He ordered the abbots and bishops of the empire to make available learning to both the clergy and those laymen who desired it. These schools survived the collapse of the Carolingian empire and the barbarian invasions and chaos of the later ninth and the tenth centuries.

The formation of these schools was highly significant in that it marked a change in the role of Christianity in intellectual life. Secular learning was now increasingly accepted by the Church as a valid part of Christian activity. The medieval Church became the context in which scholarship and culture made enormous strides forward. Thus began the intellectual movement known as Scholasticism, which was the endeavour by medieval scholars, working under the auspices of the Church, to understand all aspects of the world. These scholars, needless to say, took for granted that the doctrines of Christianity, as codified by the Papacy at Rome, were true. However, the more knowledge they acquired about the world, as the centuries went on, the more difficult it became to reconcile this knowledge with the claims of Christianity.

The dominant influence in medieval intellectual life was Aristotle, whose works had come to the attention of Western scholars from Arabic sources. As Professor Helene Wieruszowski explains:

Books and knowledge reaching the Western schools from the East through Spain, Sicily, and the Provence, at first a trickle, had grown by 1200 into a broad and irresistible stream. By now the Western world possessed in Latin translations (from the Arabic) all the logical works and most of the physical, metaphysical, and ethical works of Aristotle, plus an enormous amount of Moslem paraphrases and commentaries written on them. But the Aristotle who made his appearance at the Parisian schools at the beginning of the thirteenth century was anything but the Aristotle of Greek

and Alexandrian tradition. This was an Aristotle in Oriental garb, his language tinged with orientalisms, and his content heavily touched up with concepts drawn from Islam, from the books of Arabic theologians and philosophers. ... In fact it can be said that the West inherited the orientalized Aristotle directly from the Moslems, since the Latin integration began at the very time when Aristotle was rejected by Islamic scholars. But in the West, Aristotle had come to stay, and wherever he appeared he revolutionized the study of philosophy and the liberal arts.³⁷

Aristotle's domination of the medieval university curriculum is demonstrated by the list of required textbooks for the degrees of bachelor of arts and master of arts at the University of Paris in 1254:

The "Old" Logic

1. Introduction to the Categories of Aristotle, Porphyry
2. Categories, and On Interpretation, Aristotle
3. Divisions and Topics (except book IV), Boëthius

The "New" Logic

1. Prior and Posterior Analytics, Aristotle
2. Sophistical Refutations, Aristotle
3. Topics, Aristotle

Moral Philosophy

1. Ethics, four books, Aristotle

Natural Philosophy

1. Physics, Aristotle
2. On the Humours and the Earth, Aristotle
3. Meteorics, Aristotle
4. On Animals, Aristotle
5. The Soul, Aristotle
6. Generation, Aristotle
7. Sense and Sensible Things, Aristotle
8. Sleep and Waking, Aristotle
9. Memory and Recollection, Aristotle
10. On Life and Death, Aristotle
11. Plants, Aristotle

Metaphysics

1. Metaphysics, Aristotle

Other books

1. On the Six Principles, Gilbert de la Porrée
2. Barbarians (book three), Donatus
3. Grammar (Major and Minor), Priscian
4. On Cares, Costa len Luca
5. On the Difference of Spirit and Soul (another version of above)

Rhetoric

1. Rhetoric, Aristotle
2. Nivea rhetorica, Cicero
3. Topics, Boëthius

It was hardly surprising, then, that in the middle ages Aristotle was known simply as "The Philosopher".

In the 13th century the movement produced St Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of medieval philosophers, whose defence of reason and free will, and the distinction between natural law and divine law, makes him the first significant intellectual figure in Western civilisation to provide the philosophical foundations for what we would today describe as classical liberalism. It is also worth

pointing out, in passing, that the medieval European intellectual world was by no means a male preserve. The Germanic nun Hildegard of Bingen, and the English philosopher Julian of Norwich were two examples of women who made outstanding contributions in a wide range of areas of scholarship.

What we are concerned with here is the nature of the universities of western Europe, which, under the auspices and protection of the Church, played a crucial part in the development of medieval intellectual life. Professor C. W. Previt -Orton, of Cambridge University, described the universities as

the most lasting of medieval creations. ... [T]heir appearance was the most organized embodiment of that reawakening of intellectual interests and change to a more civilized mentality which have not inaptly been named the Twelfth-Century Renaissance, an era of progress as momentous as the Italian Renaissance and the Reformation of a later age. ... It is hard to overrate the influence of the Universities on the life of the central Middle Ages. ... The universities were the homes of the advance in creative thought which was displayed in 'Scholasticism'.³⁸

Professor Wieruszowski remarks that

[T]he early universities were not created, but ... in the words of Frederick M. Powicke, "they grew as a natural expression of the spiritual, intellectual and social energies" of the age. Fundamentally, the medieval universities were meeting places of students and masters drawn together by a common desire for learning. It was a spontaneous movement and not the result of planning. Students gathered around teachers or resorted to famous schools attached to cathedrals in centers soon known as *studia*.³⁹

Communicating in Latin, the common language of the educated West, scholars would travel from one place of learning to another in order either to teach or to learn. Professor Wieruszowski says of the wandering scholar:

Except for the physical and technical handicaps that impeded travel in general at that period, he encountered few obstacles when moving from one place to another. For all purposes of culture, political boundaries between nations were immaterial. News, ideas, and books travelled faster than is generally assumed. ... A scholar might well be aware of differences separating him from a fellow student in other regions; still he might have been constantly reminded that they had a common heritage: the Latin language, the Latin literature both sacred and profane, and the Latin Church centered at Rome. When setting out from his patria to venture on the unstable life of an "exile," the scholar was at least sure of finding admittance at any church or school. ... Nobody asked for his papers or bothered him with bureaucratic restrictions or scholastic requirements. The days of academic guilds and their jealously guarded privileges had not yet come. If he wanted to teach he could do so without a license.

The boundaries between masters and students, both known under the common name of scholar, were shifting as were those between layman and clerk. The scholar enjoyed the status of a clerk whether or not he had received clerical orders. The wandering scholar obeyed only the "rules" of his own *Ordo Vagorum* or *Vagantium*, dictated more often than not by such "authorities" as Bacchus and Venus. The ideal of a free life in defiance of conventional morals, law and order, along with the sufferings that life entailed, loosened his tongue to render pieces of immortal poetry in the Latin lyric of the Goliards or *Vagantes*.⁴⁰

Paris was the first of the great medieval centres where scholars gathered:

Since students from France and from many countries flocked to Paris to get an education, the demand for teachers temporarily may have exceeded the supply. Teaching was not an unprofitable business. The income and the promise of status

inherent in it may have attracted many to set up schools. Scholars who had just finished the course in arts and who wished to stay at Paris to continue studying in one of the higher faculties, settled down to instructing younger boys in the rudiments of the arts in order to make a living. For a long time, nobody cared whether or not they were authorized to do so. ... Facing this situation, the Third Lateran Council (1179), presided over by Pope Alexander III, issued rules that aimed primarily at eliminating the profit motive in education. Each cathedral church, so the decree ruled, was to provide a benefice for the support of a teacher; the teacher was forbidden to collect fees from poor boys; the license was to be granted without charge and was not to be denied to any qualified candidate. ... While this decree assured the Church a permanent position in the organization of the university schools, the provision concerning the qualified teachers was in the masters' own interest and seems to have been dictated by them. By no means the first indication that the masters had taken matters into their own hands, this provision clearly points to a concerted action on the side of the teachers.⁴¹

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose. Who says the study of medieval European church history is irrelevant to today's society?

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

The greatest scholar in 12th-century Paris was the Breton, Peter Abélard. According to Wieruszowski,

When the student Abélard set up schools of his own, either at his former master's place or elsewhere, inside or outside Paris, he seems to have met with very little opposition.⁴²

She continues:

It had become the ambition of a scholar to test the truth of a metaphysical proposition or a theological doctrine by putting reason to work, and by using the dialectical method of syllogism for the analysis of the difficulties inherent in a problem. It is because of the masterly application of this method that Abélard's classrooms were overflowing with enthusiastic students, and that, even today, he is still hailed as the "herald of free thought." Instead of taking recourse to authorities, he approached each problem by inquiring into the contradictions it might contain. Thus he encouraged free inquiry and self-reliance among his students. One of his basic principles (which reminds one of the founder of modern philosophy, Descartes), was: "Through doubting we come to inquiry, and through inquiry we perceive truth."⁴³

Gradually, the universities, at such centres as Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Prague, Heidelberg and elsewhere became more formalised institutions, and were granted charters and privileges by popes and princes on their road to self-government. Some of the academic positions became remarkably specialised: at the University of Florence, for instance, a chair for the explanation of Dante was established in 1373. The concept of "academic freedom" developed as the guiding principle at these institutions, as indicated in the following dialogue between two students, from the *Manuale Scholarium* of Heidelberg University:

Cam. ... [I]f there were more than one method the students would become keener and more versed and more ready in argument. ... But you asked me to explain the usage of our university to you. It's very different from yours, from what I hear. First, we don't shut out the nominalists; if we can get any good out of them we are perfectly willing to do so. Second, masters of each method are admitted. Each is permitted to state what he may have in his demonstrations. Indeed, among us there are some who follow Albert, some who esteem Thomas, some who admire the most subtle John the Scot [Duns Scotus] and follow in his footsteps; and the teaching of all these doctors contributes to the exercise of the understanding.

Bar. To tell you the truth you have now aroused in me a great desire for study. Nothing is sweeter to me, nothing more enjoyable than to hear what most excellent men think. Worthy patron, be kind enough to direct me to a lodging house in which study is held in great respect.⁴⁴

Thus the medieval universities were centres of comparative intellectual freedom at a time centuries before the concept had become generally accepted. As the historian Professor Harry Elmer Barnes puts it:

There does not seem to have been a great amount of direct and overt interference with the freedom of teaching in medieval universities. At least, we find few records of actual repression. The intellectual radical courted trouble mainly when he tried to popularize heresies. Considerable tolerance for unorthodox views prevailed when expressed semiconfidentially in the solemn and esoteric setting of the university classroom.⁴⁵

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

Historians today generally accept that the "Renaissance" of the 15th and 16th centuries never really happened; it was merely a continuation of earlier tendencies. The more scholars discovered about science, history, the Graeco-Roman world, and philosophy, the more threadbare did the doctrines of Christianity become. Despite the doctrine of academic freedom, the rise of religious intolerance during the 16th century meant that scholars had to find methods of disguising their increasing departure from Christian teaching. There was, for instance, the "two truths" concept, in which a scholar could say that while reason and knowledge lead him to one conclusion, his faith leads him to accept another. In contrast to our own time, where extreme specialisation in the academic world has become the norm, scholars would expand their learning across a wide field, thus giving us the term "Renaissance man". Jacob Burckhardt, the great Swiss historian, explains:

Of the chairs which have been mentioned, that of rhetoric was especially sought by the humanist; yet it depended only on his familiarity with the matter of ancient learning whether or not he could aspire to those of law, medicine, philosophy, or astronomy. ... The high estimation in which these branches of science were held makes it intelligible why distinguished philologists turned their attention to law and medicine, while on the other hand specialists were more and more compelled to acquire something of a wide literary culture. ... Nevertheless, the position of the philologists, as such, even where the salary was large, and did not exclude other sources of income, was on the whole uncertain and temporary, so that one and the same teacher could be connected with a great variety of institutions. It is evident that change was desired for its own sake, and something fresh expected from each newcomer, as was natural at a time when science was in the making, and consequently depended to no small degree on the personal influence of the teacher. Nor was it always the case that a lecturer on classical authors really belonged to the university of the town where he taught. Communication was so easy, and the supply of suitable accommodation, in monasteries and elsewhere, was so abundant, that a private undertaking was often practicable.⁴⁶

The 17th and 18th centuries in Continental Europe was the age of absolute monarchies. The pioneer in this respect was Louis XIV of France (reigned 1645-1715), who concentrated literally all power in the kingdom into his own hands. When he declared that "*L'état, c'est moi*", he meant that his word was quite literally law. All the other nations of Europe, except for Great Britain and the Netherlands, strove to achieve a similar degree of absolute power, although nowhere did they achieve the same degree of success as did the Sun King. This inevitably had an effect on the universities. In Prussia, under Friedrich Wilhelm I, the University of Halle became overwhelmingly Pietist in outlook, and the Enlightened philosopher, Christian Wolff, was dis-

missed in 1723 and given 48 hours to leave the country, as the Pietists had convinced the king that Wolff's ideas could be used to justify desertion from the army.⁴⁷ In 1897, Gustave Le Bon complained about

how little the critical spirit is developed by the system of university education in vogue in France. I cite as an example the following extracts from the French Revolution of M. Rambaud, professor of history at the Sorbonne:-

"The taking of the Bastille was a culminating event in the history not only of France, but of all Europe; and inaugurated a new epoch in the history of the world!"

With respect to Robespierre, we learn with stupefaction that

"his dictatorship was based more especially on opinion, persuasion, and moral authority; it was a sort of pontificate in the hands of a virtuous man!"⁴⁸

MARX THE CLASSICIST

In the 18th century, thinking individuals, such as Voltaire and Thomas Paine, came to critically examine and expose the claims of Christianity and the historical accuracy of the Bible in such works as Paine's *The Age of Reason*. Nevertheless, many universities retained the requirement for Christian religious oaths. In England, when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries and made himself head of the Church in his own realm, thereby establishing the first state Church and ending the separation of Church and state in this country, academic freedom was compromised. At Oxford, for instance, students could only be admitted if they affirmed the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England: this meant that Edward Gibbon, who went on to write the masterful *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, was unable to attend. Percy Bysshe Shelley, one of the greatest of the Romantic poets, was rusticated for publishing his pamphlet *On the Necessity of Atheism* (1799). By that time, however, it was probably the case that these religious requirements were continued more to prevent the university being used as a centre for Nonconformist radical political agitation than because of a literal belief in the truth of every one of the Articles. Nevertheless, it was not until the work of scientists such as Charles Darwin and Julian Huxley relating to the theory of evolution that the Christian explanation of the world was finally discredited to those who base their *Weltanschauung* on science, reason and observed reality.

It is worth pointing out, in passing, that the Classical world had an enormous influence on all educated individuals from the Italian Renaissance to the 20th century, even those who were the most implacable enemies of Western civilisation. For instance, here is the 19-year-old Karl Marx, writing as a law student to his father:

having arrived in Berlin, I broke off all my previous connections ... and tried to immerse myself in the arts and sciences ... I acquired the habit of making extracts from all the books I read, thus from Lessing's *Laocoon* ... Winckelmann's *History of Art*, Luden's *German History* and to scribble down my thoughts as I went along. At the same time I translated Tacitus' *Germania*, Ovid's *Libri tristium* and started to learn English and Italian privately, i.e. from grammar books. ... Then I translated parts of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, read the *de augmentis scientiarum* of the famous Bacon of Verulam and occupied myself intensively with Reimarus, on whose book *Of the acquired instincts of animals* I reflected with great pleasure.⁴⁹

And the following is a letter from Karl Liebknecht, later co-founder of the German Communist Party, to his son while Liebknecht père was in prison in 1917 for his anti-war agitation:

Herodotus, Xenophon, Thucydides, Demosthenes and the divine Plato, Homer, Cornelius Nepos, Caesar, Livius, Sallustius, Tacitus, Ovid, Virgil, Catallus, Horace — take any history of civilisation, knowledge, art or literature ... these names will be enshrined in it in letters of gold. If you do not get to know them now — you will never learn to know

them. You will be immeasurably the poorer for the whole of your life. How much I would love to have my Virgil, Horace, Homer, Sophocles, Plato here. How vividly many of the odes of Horace have come back to me, they come during the night — in the long, long nights and keep me company — how happy I would be if my store of such knowledge were ten-fold, as large as Lessing's.⁵⁰

And our contemporary Marxists dismiss the study of the Classics as "reactionary" and "elitist"!

UNIVERSITIES AND THE STATE

The universities of western Europe, as we saw above, began as entirely voluntary and spontaneous gatherings of scholars at centres of learning under the auspices of the Church. Because of the separation of Church and State, this meant that the State authorities could neither control, nor interfere with, the functioning of the universities. It was in the early years of the United States of America where the concept of a State university developed. The figure primarily responsible for this concept was Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and later president. He set up not only the institution of the American public school (that is, a State school), but also founded the University of Virginia as the world's first State university. It is sometimes assumed, by Americans and Britons alike, that the United States is a country characterised by the independence of individuals and institutions from the state, while Britain is characterised by dependence on the state. In fact, in many areas, such as medical practice, alcohol consumption, drug consumption, sexuality and others, the reverse is true. The American State interferes, and has always interfered, far more in the life of the citizen in these areas than is the case in Britain. And not only is the formal structure of the State more intrusive in the US, but American "public opinion" frequently manifests itself in outbreaks of mob hysteria which in terms of intolerance equal anything experienced in Britain since the witch-mania of the 17th century. Despite the fact that the First Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees freedom of the press, America is not, and has never been, a society in which "anything goes", least of all in the intellectual arena. Indeed, when it comes to intolerance of dissent, Americans, whether working directly through the State or "citizens' initiatives" and the like, are world beaters. I apologise to any American readers who may be offended by this, but those Americans who read libertarian material tend of course to be the last ones who deserve such a harsh condemnation.

The way in which State control and mob rule in the United States compromise academic freedom was highlighted in a notorious case in which Bertrand Russell was prevented from teaching at the City College of New York. In view of the lessons it provides about the problems relating to State control of the universities, and particularly in the US, it is worth examining this episode in some detail. In 1940, Lord Russell, one of the world's most distinguished mathematicians and philosophers, who was then teaching at the University of California, accepted an invitation to teach for a year at the City College of New York. He was scheduled to teach three courses only: logic and its relation to science, mathematics and philosophy; problems in the foundation of mathematics; and the relationship of pure to applied sciences and the reciprocal influence of metaphysics and scientific theories. Under the college arrangements, these courses could only be taught to male students. The problem was that he was an outspoken proponent of free thought, and had written passages in three of his books which advocated sexual freedom.

When Russell's appointment was announced, Bishop Manning of the Protestant Episcopal Church wrote a letter to all New York newspapers denouncing it. He wrote,

What is to be said of colleges and universities which hold up before our youth as a responsible teacher of philosophy ... a man who is a recognised propagandist against both religion and morality, and who specifically defends adultery. ... Can anyone who cares for the welfare of our country be willing

to see such teaching disseminated with the countenance of our colleges and universities?

He continued,

There are those who are so confused morally and mentally that they see nothing wrong in the appointment ... of one who in his published writings said "outside of human desires there is no moral standard".⁵¹

A hysterical press and political campaign was then launched against Russell and the City College. *The Tablet* said that Russell's appointment came as a "brutal, insulting shock to old New Yorkers and all real Americans". Russell was

the philosophical anarchist and moral nihilist of Great Britain ... whose defense of adultery became so obnoxious that one of his "friends" is reported to have thrashed him.

The Jesuit weekly, *America*, described him as

a desiccated, divorced and decadent advocate of sexual promiscuity ... who is now indoctrinating the students at the University of California ... in his libertarian rules for loose living in matters of sex and promiscuous love and vagrant marriage. ... This corrupting individual ... who has betrayed his "mind" and "conscience". ... This professor of immorality and irreligion ... who is ostracized by decent Englishmen.

The *Journal & American* claimed that Russell favoured

nationalization of women ... child-bearing out of wedlock ... and children reared as pawns of a godless State.⁵²

Numerous organisations, including the Knights of Columbus, the Metropolitan Baptist Ministers' Conference, the Midwest Conference of the Society of New England Women and the Empire State Sons of the American Revolution, passed motions not only demanding Russell's ouster, but also the dismissal of board members who had voted for his appointment. The Reverend John Schultz, professor of sacred eloquence at the Redemptorist Seminary at Esopus demanded: "Why not get the G-men after your Board of Higher Education?" He described Russell as "the master mind of Free Love, of sex promiscuity for the young, of hatred for parents". Monsignor Francis W. Walsh told Roman Catholic police officers that they had, on occasion, learned the full meaning of the so-called 'matrimonial triangle' by finding one corner of the triangle in a pool of blood. He continued,

I dare say, therefore that you will join me in demanding that any professor guilty of teaching or writing ideas which will multiply the stages upon which these tragedies are set shall not be countenanced in this city and shall receive no support from its taxpayers ...⁵³

John F. X. McGohey, first deputy district attorney of New York state protested against the use of taxpayers' money "to pay for teaching a philosophy of life which denied God, defies decency and completely contradicts the fundamental religious character of our country, government, and people". The New York City council passed a motion by a vote of 16 to 5 calling on the Board to cancel Russell's appointment. George V. Harvey, borough president of Queens, threatened to cut off all funding for the municipal colleges: "the colleges would either be godly colleges, American colleges, or they would be closed". Councilman Charles E. Keegan described Russell as a "dog" and remarked that "if we had an adequate system of immigration, that bum could not land within a thousand miles". Martha Byrnes, registrar of New York county, said that Russell should be "tarred and feathered and driven out of the country".⁵⁴

Many academics spoke out in support of Russell's appointment. Seventeen distinguished American scholars sent a letter to Mayor LaGuardia of New York protesting against the "organised attack upon the appointment of the world-renowned philosopher, Bertrand Russell." If the attack succeeded, then

no American college or university is safe from inquisitorial control by the enemies of free enquiry ... To receive instruction from a man of Bertrand Russell's intellectual calibre is a

rare privilege for students anywhere ... His critics should meet him in the open and fair field of intellectual discussion and scientific analysis. They have no right to silence him by preventing him from teaching ... The issue is so fundamental that it cannot be compromised without imperilling the whole structure of intellectual freedom upon which American university life rests.

Albert Einstein said,

Great spirits have always found violent opposition from mediocrities. The latter cannot understand it when a man does not thoughtlessly submit to hereditary prejudices but honestly and courageously uses his intelligence.⁵⁵

Civil liberties groups, some newspapers and even some clergy spoke out in defence of the appointment, and nine major publishers issued a statement commending Russell's selection "as one which reflects only the greatest credit of the Board of Higher Education". They said that as publishers

we do not necessarily subscribe personally to all the views expressed by those whose books we publish, but we welcome great minds to our lists, particularly now at a time when brute force and ignorance have gained such ascendancy over reason and intellect in many parts of the world. We think it more important than ever to honor intellectual superiority whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Within the City College, 300 members of the faculty signed a letter praising the Board of Higher Education for the appointment. Professor Morris Cohen said that if the appointment were revoked, then

the fair name of our city will suffer as did Athens for condemning Socrates as a corrupter of youth, or Tennessee for finding Scopes guilty of teaching evolution.

Professor Herman Randall, Jr denounced the opposition of churchmen as "sheer effrontery" and "a gross impertinence".⁵⁶ The Parent Association of City College (the association of students' parents) voted unanimously in favour of the appointment.

The New York state legislature adopted a resolution holding that an advocate of barnyard morality is an unfit person to hold an important post in the educational system of our State at the expense of tax-payers.

In the state senate, Senator John F. Dunigan said that Russell's philosophy "debauches religion, the State and the family relationship" and he complained about "the godless, materialistic theories of those now governing the New York City school system". A resolution was passed demanding an investigation into the municipal colleges. Jean Kay, of Brooklyn, filed a taxpayer's suit in the New York Supreme Court to void Russell's appointment on the grounds that he was an alien and an advocate of sexual immorality. She said she was concerned about what might happen to her daughter if she became a student of Russell's. She also argued that Russell had not been given a competitive examination, and "it was contrary to public policy to appoint as a teacher anyone believing in atheism". Her lawyer, Joseph Goldstein, described Russell's works as

lecherous, libidinous, lustful, venerous, erotomaniac, aphrodisiac, irreverent, narrow-minded, untruthful, and bereft of moral fibre.

In addition, Goldstein claimed,

Russell conducted a nudist colony in England. His children paraded nude. He and his wife have paraded nude in public. This man, who is now about seventy, has gone in for salacious poetry. Russell winks at homosexuality. I'd go further and say he approves of it.

Goldstein also presumed to pass judgement on Russell's work in philosophy in the following terms:

He is not a philosopher in the accepted meaning of the word; not a lover of wisdom; not a searcher after wisdom; not an explorer of that universal science which aims at the explana-

tion of all phenomena of the universe by ultimate causes; that in the opinion of your deponent and multitudes of other persons he is a sophist; practices sophism; that by cunning contrivances, tricks and devices and by mere quibbling, he puts forth fallacious arguments and arguments that are not supported by sound reasoning; and he draws inferences which are not justly deduced from a sound premise; that all his alleged doctrines which he calls philosophy are just cheap, tawdry, worn out, patched up fetishes and propositions, devised for the purpose of misleading the people.⁵⁷

Goldstein referred to four of Russell's books to support his claims. The judge, Justice McGeehan, said,

If I find that these books sustain the allegations of the petition I will give the Appellate Division and the Court of Appeals something to think about.

Two days later, the judge revoked Russell's appointment, and described it as "an insult to the people of the City of New York". The Board's action was "in effect establishing a chair of indecency" and had

acted arbitrarily, capriciously, and in direct violation of the public health, safety, and the morals of the people and of the petitioner's rights herein, and the petitioner is entitled to an order revoking the appointment of the said Bertrand Russell.

The judge stated that

The contention of the petitioner that Mr Russell has taught in his books immoral and salacious doctrines is amply sustained by the books conceded to be the writings of Bertrand Russell, which were offered in evidence. It is not necessary to detail here the filth which is contained in the books.

He then quoted in support of this judgement the following passages from Russell's books:

I am sure that university life would be better, both intellectually and morally, if most university students had temporary childless marriages. This would afford a solution to the sexual urge neither restless nor surreptitious, neither mercenary nor casual, and of such a nature that it need not take up time which ought to be given to work.

...

For my part, while I am quite convinced that companionate marriage would be a step in the right direction, and would do a great deal of good, I do not think that it goes far enough. I think that all sex-relations which do not involve children should be regarded as a purely private affair, and that if a man and a woman choose to live together without having children, that should be no one's business but their own. I should not hold it desirable that either a man or a woman should enter upon the serious business of a marriage intended to lead to children without having had previous sexual experience.

...

The peculiar importance attached, at the present, to adultery, is quite irrational.⁵⁸

On the basis of these passages, the judge accused Russell of incitement to violate the penal law of the state of New York, which outlawed rape, sexual intercourse with an unmarried female under the age of 18, abduction and adultery. He said,

The contention that Mr Russell will teach mathematics and not his philosophy does not in any way detract from the fact that his very presence as a teacher will cause the students to look up to him, seek to know more about him, and the more he is able to charm them and impress them with his personal presence, the more potent will grow his influence in all spheres of their lives, causing the students in many instances to strive to emulate him in every respect.

The judge condemned Russell's views on nudity as "abhorrently repulsive". Russell had written that

a child should, from the first, be allowed to see his parents and brothers and sisters without their clothes whenever it so happens naturally. No fuss should be made either way; he should simply not know that people have feelings about nudity.⁵⁹

McGeehan's verdict was condemned by several national academic organisations, as well as by individuals, who urged the board to appeal to a higher court. Russell's enemies, by contrast, praised the judge. The Jesuit weekly *America* wrote, "He is an American, a virile and staunch American" and that "He is a pure and honorable jurist and ... rates among the best as an authority on law." In the city council, Charles E. Keegan proposed and passed a resolution to dismiss those board members who had voted for Russell's appointment. At a meeting of Roman Catholic post office workers, Monsignor Walsh discussed "a very much abused word", namely "liberty". Since human beings

can continue to exist only by obedience to the law of God — the law of nature, the law of the Ten Commandments — then in this America of ours no one shall be permitted to stand on the platform of liberty in order to stab liberty in the back. And this applies to all Communists and their fellow-travellers, to all Nazis and Fascists who put the law of the State above the law of God, to college professors, publishers of books or anyone else within the territorial limits of the United States.

Russell himself wrote a letter to the *New York Times*, which had suggested that Russell should have withdrawn from the position as soon as opposition reared its head:

A great many people who realise that their own interests and the principles of toleration and free speech were at stake were anxious from the first to continue the controversy. If I had retired I should have robbed them of their *casus belli* and tacitly assented to the proposition of the opposition that substantial groups shall be allowed to drive out of public office individuals whose opinions, race or nationality they find repugnant. ...

I do not believe that controversy is harmful on general grounds. It is not controversy and open differences that endanger democracy. On the contrary, these are its greatest safeguards. It is an essential part of democracy that substantial groups, even majorities, should extend toleration to dissentient groups, however small and however much their sentiments may be outraged.

In a democracy it is necessary that people should learn to endure having their sentiments outraged.⁶⁰

(Of course, libertarians would substitute the term "free society" for the problematic one "democracy".)

Mayor LaGuardia then struck from the budget the appropriation for the lectureship to which Russell had been appointed. The Board of Estimates passed a resolution which declared that "No funds herein appropriated shall be used for the employment of Bertrand Russell."⁶¹ McGeehan refused the right of appeal by Russell to a higher court on the grounds that Russell had no legal interest in the matter.

In response to his experience in being prevented from teaching at the City College of New York, Russell wrote a classic essay, "Freedom and the Colleges", which addressed the issues raised in the case. Russell was not a libertarian in the sense that the Libertarian Alliance would use the term: the late Professor F. A. Hayek described him as a "contemporary socialist ... who ha[s] inherited the liberal tradition".⁶² Russell was an outspoken critic of the supposed evils of capitalism, a member of the Labour Party until he resigned from it in 1965 because of the Labour government's support for the US intervention in Vietnam, and in his nineties the founder of the Committee of 100, which aimed to prevent Britain from having an effective nuclear deterrent against the Soviet Union through civil disobedience, the technique which proved so effective in Czechoslovakia when used against the Soviet invasion of 1968. (This was quite a change from his posi-

tion in 1947, when he had advocated forcing the Soviet Union to abandon communism under threat of nuclear attack.) Whatever one thinks about his personal opinions on political subjects, nobody has seriously disputed his central role in the development of modern mathematics and philosophy. Russell wrote a great deal about almost every imaginable subject, and "Freedom and the Colleges" is one of the most important pieces, from a libertarian point of view, that he ever produced. It is worth summarising it in some detail.

RUSSELL DEFENDS ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Russell stated that

The essence of academic freedom is that teachers should be chosen for their expertness in the subject they are to teach, and that the judges of this expertness should be other experts. ... The opponents of academic freedom hold that other conditions besides a man's skill in his own department should be taken into consideration. He should, they think, have never expressed any opinion which controverts those of the holders of power.⁶³

This principle was dominant in the Soviet Union, National Socialist Germany and fascist Italy, but:

The danger is one which democracy by itself does not suffice to avert. A democracy in which the majority exercises its powers without restraint may be almost as tyrannical as a dictatorship. Toleration of minorities is an essential part of wise democracy, but a part which is not always sufficiently remembered.

In relation to university teachers, these general considerations are reinforced by some that are especially applicable to their case. University teachers are supposed to be men with special knowledge and special training such as should fit them to approach controversial questions in a manner peculiarly likely to throw light upon them. To decree that they are to be silent upon controversial issues is to deprive the community of the benefit which it might derive from their training in impartiality. The Chinese Empire, many centuries ago, recognised the need of licensed criticism, and therefore established a Board of Censors, consisting of men with a reputation for learning and wisdom, and endowed with the right to find fault with the Emperor and his government. Unfortunately, like everything else in traditional China, this institution became conventionalised. There were certain things that the censors were allowed to censure, notably the excessive power of eunuchs, but if they wandered into unconventional fields of criticism the Emperor was apt to forget their immunity. Much the same thing is happening among us. Over a wide field criticism is permitted, but where it is felt to be really dangerous, some form of punishment is apt to befall its author. ...

The principle of liberal democracy, which inspired the founders of the American Constitution, was that controversial questions should be decided by argument rather than by force. Liberals have always held that opinions should be formed by untrammelled debate, not by allowing only one side to be heard. Tyrannical governments, both ancient and modern, have taken the opposite view. For my part, I see no reason to abandon the liberal tradition in this matter. If I held power, I should not seek to prevent my opponents from being heard. I should seek to provide equal facilities for all opinions, and leave the outcome to the consequences of discussion and debate. ...

The fundamental difference between the liberal and the illiberal outlook is that the former regards all questions as open to discussion and all opinions as open to a greater or less measure of doubt, while the latter holds in advance that certain opinions are absolutely unquestionable, and that no argument against them must be allowed to be heard. What is curious about this position is the belief that if impartial investigation were permitted it would lead men to the wrong

conclusion, and that ignorance is, therefore, the only safeguard against error. This point of view is one which cannot be accepted by any man who wishes reason rather than prejudice to govern human action. ...

There are two possible views as to the proper functioning of democracy. According to one view, the opinions of the majority should prevail absolutely in all fields. According to the other view, wherever a common decision is not necessary, different opinions should be represented, as nearly as possible, in proportion to their numerical frequency. ... According to the former view, when the majority has decided in favour of some opinion, no other must be allowed to be expressed, or of expressed at all must be confined to obscure and unimportant channels. According to the other view, minority opinions should be given the same opportunities for expression as are given to majority opinions, but only in lesser degree. ...

A man or woman who is to hold a teaching post under the state should not be required to express majority opinions, though naturally a majority of teachers will do so. ... No man can pass as educated who has heard only one side on questions as to which the public is divided. One of the most important things to teach in the educational establishments of a democracy is the power of weighing arguments, and the open mind which is prepared in advance to accept whichever side appears the more reasonable. As soon as a censorship is imposed upon the opinions which teachers may avow, education ceases to serve this purpose and tends to produce, instead of a nation of men, a herd of fanatical bigots. Since the end of the Great War, fanatical bigotry has revived until it has become over a great part of the world as virulent as during the wars of religion. All those who oppose free discussion and who seek to impose a censorship upon the opinions to which the young are to be exposed are doing their share in increasing this bigotry and in plunging the world further into the abyss of strife and intolerance from which Locke and his coadjutors gradually rescued it. ...

There are certain matters on which common action is necessary; as to these, the common action should be decided by the majority. There are other matters on which a common decision is neither necessary nor desirable. These matters include the sphere of opinion. Since there is a natural tendency for those who have power to exercise it to the utmost, it is a necessary safeguard against tyranny that there should be institutions and organised bodies which possess, either in practice or in theory, a certain limited independence of the State. Such freedom as exists in the countries which derive their civilisations from Europe is traceable historically to the conflict between Church and State in the Middle Ages. In the Byzantine Empire the Church was subdued by the State, and to this fact we may trace the total absence of any tradition of freedom in Russia, which derived its civilisation from Constantinople. In the West, first the Catholic Church and then the various Protestant sects gradually acquired certain liberties as against the State.

Academic freedom, in particular, was originally a part of the freedom of the Church, and accordingly suffered eclipse in England at the time of Henry VIII. In every state, I repeat, no matter what its form of government, the preservation of freedom demands the existence of bodies of men having a certain limited independence of the State, and among such bodies it is important that universities should be included. In America at the present day there is more academic freedom in private universities than in such as are nominally under a democratic authority. ...

Taxpayers think that since they pay the salaries of university teachers they have a right to decide what these men shall teach. This principle, if logically carried out, would mean that all the advantages of superior education enjoyed by university professors are to be nullified, and that their teach-

ing is to be the same as it would be if they had no special competence. ...

There is perhaps a special danger in democratic abuses of power, namely that being collective they are stimulated by mob hysteria. The man who has the art of arousing the witch-hunting instincts of the mob has a quite peculiar power for evil in a democracy where the habit of the exercise of power by the majority has produced that intoxication and impulse to tyranny which the exercise of authority almost invariably produces sooner or later. Against this danger the chief protection is a sound education, designed to combat the tendency to irrational eruptions of collective hate. ... Only through a greater measure of academic freedom than has yet been achieved in the public educational institutions of this country [the US] can this evil be averted.⁶⁴

Russell quoted the following passage from the *Astronomical Journal of the Soviet Union* for December 1938 as an example from "the most perfect example of a country where ignorant bigots have the degree of control that they are attempting to acquire in New York. ..."

1 Modern bourgeois cosmology is in a state of deep ideological confusion resulting from its refusal to accept the true dialectic-materialistic concept, namely the infinity of the universe with respect to space as well as time.

2 The hostile work of the agents of Fascism, who at one time, managed to penetrate to leading positions in certain astronomical and other institutions as well as in the press, has led to revolting propaganda of counter-revolutionary bourgeois ideology in the literature.

3 The few existing Soviet materialistic works on problems of cosmology have remained in isolation and have been suppressed by the enemies of the people, until recently.

4 Wide circles interested in science have been taught, at best, only in the spirit of indifference towards the ideological aspect of the current bourgeois cosmologic theories ...

5 The exposé of the enemies of the Soviet people makes necessary the development of a new Soviet materialistic cosmology ...

6 It is deemed necessary that Soviet science should enter the international scientific arena carrying concrete achievements in cosmologic theories on the basis of our philosophic methodology.

Russell commented:

For 'Soviet' substitute 'American', for 'Fascism' substitute 'Communism', for 'dialectic-materialism' substitute 'Catholic truth', and you will obtain a document to which the enemies of academic freedom in this country might almost subscribe.⁶⁵

He then quoted the following passage from Alexis de Tocqueville:

In America the majority raises very formidable barriers to the liberty of opinion: within these barriers an author may write whatever he pleases, but he will repent it if he ever steps beyond them. Not that he is exposed to the terrors of an *auto-da-fé*, but he is tormented by the slights and persecutions of daily obloquy. His political career is closed forever, since he has offended the only authority which is able to promote his success. ... Before he published his opinions he imagined that he held them in common with many others; but no sooner has he declared them openly than he is loudly censured by his overbearing opponents, whilst those who think without having the courage to speak, like him, abandon him to silence.⁶⁶

De Tocqueville continued:

When the inhabitant of a democratic country compares himself individually with all those about him, he feels with pride that he is the equal of any one of them; but when he comes

to survey the totality of his fellows, and to place himself in contrast to so huge a body, he is instantly overwhelmed by the sense of his own insignificance and weakness. The same quality which renders him independent of each of his fellow-citizens taken severally, exposes him alone and unprotected to the influence of the greater number. The public has therefore among a democratic people a singular power, of which aristocratic nations could never so much as conceive an idea; for it does not persuade to certain opinions, but it enforces them, and infuses them into the faculties by a sort of enormous pressure of the minds of all upon the reason of each.⁶⁷

Russell described this as

a most serious menace to the world of Western civilisation, and is likely, if unchecked, to bring intellectual progress to an end. For all serious intellectual progress depends upon a certain kind of independence of outside opinion, which cannot exist where the will of the majority is treated with that kind of religious respect which the orthodox give to the will of God. A respect for the will of the majority is more harmful than respect for the will of God, because the will of the majority can be ascertained. ...

Collective wisdom, alas, is no adequate substitute for the intelligence of individuals. Individuals who opposed received opinions have been the source of all progress, both moral and intellectual. They have been unpopular, as was natural. Socrates, Christ, and Galileo all equally incurred the censure of the orthodox. But in former times the machinery of suppression was far less adequate than it is in our day, and the heretic, even if executed, still obtained adequate publicity. The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church, but this is no longer true in a country like modern [National Socialist] Germany, where the martyrdom is secret and no means exists of spreading the martyr's doctrine.

The opponents of academic freedom, if they could have their way, would reduce this country to the level of Germany as regards the promulgation of doctrines of which they disapprove. They would substitute organised tyranny for individual thought; they would proscribe everything new; they would cause the community to ossify; and in the end they would produce a series of generations which would pass from birth to death without leaving a trace in the history of mankind. To some it may seem that what they are demanding at the moment is not a very grave matter. Of what importance, it may be said, is such a question as academic freedom in a world distracted by war, tormented by persecution, and abounding in concentration camps for those who will not be accomplices in iniquity? In comparison with such things, I admit, the issue of academic freedom is not in itself of the first magnitude. But it is part and parcel of the same battle. Let it be remembered that what is at stake, in the greatest issues as well as in those that seem smaller, is the freedom of the individual human spirit to express its beliefs and hopes for mankind, whether they be shared by many or by few or none. New hopes, new beliefs, and new thoughts are at all times necessary to mankind, and it is not out of a dead uniformity that they can be expected to arise.⁶⁸

WESTERN UNIVERSITIES IN THE POST-WAR ERA

Russell's highly perceptive call in 1940 for the independence of universities from the state seems to have been completely ignored by Western governments in the post-war era. After 1945, governments began to think that a massive expansion of university education and the production of huge armies of graduates was the key to national economic success. The successful launching of the Soviet space satellite Sputnik in 1957 made many American planners think — quite erroneously, of course — that this demonstrated a vast Soviet technological lead which could only be made good by a vast expansion of Federal intervention in the field of universities. As a result, from the late 1950s onwards, the US Federal government intervened massively in higher education, in the building and expansion of state

universities, in massive subsidies to private colleges (on condition that they accepted Federal direction of the running of their institutions), and Federally-guaranteed loans to students at both state and private universities. In Britain and Continental European countries, too, the 1960s saw a massively increased state commitment to university expansion. The universities, which had begun in the middle ages, as we saw above, as free-market voluntary arrangements, now became considered as a central source of the production of wealth in the corporate state. "Third World" countries built vast numbers of universities — often with Western aid — in the belief that this would produce economic advancement. In practice, of course, this merely produced a vast expanse of university graduates, who were unable to find jobs, and the universities in most countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia became hotbeds of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. For instance, the notorious terrorist organisation in Peru known as Sendero Luminoso grew out of the universities, which had already become "no-go" areas for the forces of law and order in that country. Sendero Luminoso was led by a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Lima. The organisation went on to establish a reign of terror in many parts of the country, murdering not only police officers, soldiers, capitalists and so on, but even peasants who were found with so much as a transistor radio. Such was the result of the massive state expansion of universities in Peru.

The deschooling movement of the 1960s and early 70s, associated with such figures as Ivan Illich (from Austria), Everett Reimer (from the US), Ian Lister (from the UK), and J. P. Naik (from India), produced a radical critique of the compulsory schooling system and a programme for dramatically improved learning. (I have described this movement in another LA paper.⁶⁹) They also concerned themselves with higher education and the universities. In his classic manifesto *Deschooling Society*, published in 1971, Illich discussed the condition of the universities at that time in some detail:

Whatever his or her claims of solidarity with the Third World, each American college graduate has had an education costing an amount five times greater than the median life income of half of humanity. A Latin American student is introduced to this exclusive fraternity by having at least 350 times as much public money spent on his education as on that of his fellow citizens of median income. With very rare exceptions, the university graduate from a poor country feels more comfortable with his North American and European colleagues than with his non-schooled compatriots, and all students are academically processed to be happy only in the company of fellow consumers of the products of the educational machine.

The modern university confers the privilege of dissent on those who have been tested and classified as potential money-makers or power-holders. No one is given tax funds for the leisure in which to educate himself or the right to educate others unless at the same time he can also be certified for achievement. Schools select for each successive level those who have, at earlier stages in the game, proved themselves good risks for the established order. Having a monopoly on both the resources for learning and the investiture of social roles, the university coopts the discoverer and the potential dissenter. A degree always leaves its indelible price tag on the curriculum of its consumer. ...

The university thus has the effect of imposing consumer standards at work and at home, and it does so in every part of the world and under every political system. The fewer university graduates there are in a country, the more their cultivated demands are taken as models by the rest of the population. ...

The ability of the university to fix consumer goals is something new. In many countries the university acquired this power only in the 1960s, as the delusion of equal access to public education began to spread. Before that the university

protected an individual's freedom of speech, but did not automatically convert his knowledge into wealth. ... By virtue of his calling, the medieval scholar learned Latin, became an outsider worthy of the scorn as well as the esteem of peasant and prince, burgher and cleric. To get ahead in the world, the scholastic first had to enter it by joining the civil service, preferably that of the Church. The old university was a liberated zone for discovery and the discussion of ideas both new and old. Masters and students gathered to read the texts of other masters, now long dead, and the living words of the dead masters gave new perspectives to the fallacies of the present day. The university was then a community of academic quest and endemic unrest.

In the modern university this community has fled to the fringes, where it meets in a pad, a professor's office or the chaplain's quarters. The structural purpose of the modern university has little to do with the traditional quest. Since Gutenberg, the exchange of disciplined, critical inquiry has, for the most part, moved from the 'chair' into print. The modern university has forfeited its chance to provide a simple setting for encounters which are both autonomous and anarchic, focused yet unplanned and ubullient, and has chosen instead to manage the process by which so-called research and instruction are produced.

The American university, since Sputnik, has been trying to catch up with the body count of Soviet graduates. Now the Germans are abandoning their academic traditions and are building 'campuses' in order to catch up with the Americans. ... Students see their studies as the investment with the highest monetary return, and nations see them as a key factor in development.

For the majority who primarily seek a college degree, the university has lost no prestige, but since 1968 it has visibly lost standing among its believers. Students refuse to prepare for war, pollution and the perpetuation of prejudice. Teachers assist them in their challenge to the legitimacy of the government, its foreign policy, education and the American way of life. More than a few reject degrees and prepare for a life in a counter-culture, outside the certified society. They seem to choose the way of medieval Fraticelli and Alumbrados of the Reformation, the hippies and dropouts of their day. Others recognise the monopoly of the schools over the resources which they need to build a counter-society. They seek support from each other to live with integrity while submitting to the academic ritual. They form, so to speak, hotbeds of heresy right within the hierarchy. ...

The American university has become the final stage of the most all-encompassing initiation rite the world has ever known. No society in history has been able to survive without ritual or myth, but ours is the first which has needed such a dull, protracted, destructive and expensive initiation into its myth. The contemporary world civilization is also the first one which has found it necessary to rationalize its fundamental initiation ritual in the name of education. We cannot begin a reform of education unless we first understand that neither individual learning nor social equality can be enhanced by the ritual of schooling. ...

The project of demythologizing which I propose cannot be limited to the university alone. Any attempt to reform the university without attending to the system of which it is an integral part is like trying to do urban renewal in New York City from the twelfth storey up. Most current college-level reform looks like the building of high-rise slums. Only a generation which grows up without obligatory schools will be able to recreate the university.⁷⁰

Illich's views on universities did have considerable impact in the Canadian province of Ontario, where Douglas Wright, who knew Illich personally, was chairman of the commission on post-secondary education. The commission's report, *The Learning Society*, published by the ministry of government services in 1972,

was, in the words of Lister, “the most radical analysis of education and society produced in any post-industrial country.”⁷¹ The Wright commission argued that education should be person-centred, serving the needs of individual people rather than those of future employers, the professions or the institutions themselves. Therefore a wide range of educational services should be available to citizens throughout their lives. The Wright report made the following recommendations, as summarised by Lister:

1. The government of Ontario should provide socially useful alternatives to post-secondary education.
2. Alternatives for young adults should be funded as realistically as formal secondary education.
3. Opportunities should be provided for the employment of secondary-school leavers who wish to pursue post-secondary education on a part-time basis.
4. Teachers and administrators who have had non-school work experience relevant to their speciality should be given preference in hiring over those lacking such experience.
5. Structures should be devised, possibly through legislation, for the purpose of investing funds and/or percentages of income to provide for periodic study leave.
6. Where student intake quotas are for the present unavoidable, admission should be determined on the basis of a lottery.
7. Legislation should be enacted to prevent discrimination in employment because of attendance or non-attendance at educational institutions.⁷²

The commission’s highest aim was

to eradicate the distinction between ‘students’ and other members of the community, thereby helping to integrate education and society.⁷³

The Council of Ontario Universities observed:

The consistent educational philosophy that underlies the Report ... is clearly the philosophy of the new education ... This philosophy seems to have reached the Commission through Ivan Illich, to whom the Commission is known to be greatly beholden.⁷⁴

In Britain, the creation of the Open University in the 1960s represented an important step forward in the making of higher education available to all individuals within society, following in the tradition of Ruskin College at Oxford University. It is perhaps ironic that an institution set up by the late Lord Wilson when he was Prime Minister, and which has become a notorious centre of doctrinaire Marxism, should demonstrate important features of a more libertarian university system. The opportunity to study with the Open University is available to every individual, regardless of age, previous attendance in schooling institutions or examination results. The genuine desire to master a subject through a course of study is the only qualification you need to do a degree at the Open University, and not how many UCCA points you have, or whether you attended Eton or Roedean. The OU’s approach enables individuals to study over an extended period for their degree, while combining this with working, raising a family and other conventional activities. It uses modern technology — television and radio broadcasts, videos, and now the Internet — to communicate with its students. OU students tend to be more motivated than those attending conventional universities, and, far from being of lower intelligence, recently did extremely well on the television quiz show *University Challenge*, where they beat the large majority of universities in the country.

The example of the OU demonstrates how universities in the UK and other countries might develop in the forthcoming decades. The age in which we live is characterised by two remarkable developments, among others. The first is the extraordinary growth of knowledge, especially in the areas of science and technology: it has been claimed — I do not know how accurately — that over 80% of the information and technology that we have today has existed only since 1964. Certainly it is true that today, by the

time a student finishes his or her studies in such disciplines as medicine, electronic engineering, genetics, computer sciences, and numerous others, much of what he or she was taught at the beginning of the course will be incomplete and out of date.

The second is the staggering expansion of global communications systems, of which the mushroom-like growth of the Internet is the most significant feature, but which also includes other personal computer systems, telephone systems, satellite, cable and terrestrial broadcasting, fibre optics, video conferencing, multimedia facilities, virtual reality and numerous other technologies, some of which have hardly come out of the research and development labs. It has been claimed — and again, I do not know how accurate the claim is — that the complexity of this global network is doubling every two and a half years, and that if it continues at its present rate it will equal the human brain in complexity within three years.

These two features of our contemporary world offer both the challenge which we face in terms of keeping people educated with current knowledge, and the opportunity to meet and overcome that challenge. A “deschooled” university system would allow people to take up university courses at any time in their lives, in order to acquaint themselves with the most recent knowledge in the subject. The new technology will enable that knowledge to be transmitted to individuals all over the world who want to acquire it. This opens up the possibility of the construction of a vast new free-market system of university education comparable, in certain ways, to the spontaneous development of universities in the Europe of the middle ages, and just as open to anybody either to learn or to teach (or both) as were the original universities of Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Prague and Heidelberg. In such a system, “going to university” would not simply be a three- or four-year stint of full-time residence at a university, available exclusively to a minority of young adults who get in on the strength of their A level results and are financed by everybody, including those who have been turned away from, or are not interested in obtaining, a university education. On the contrary, it would be one in which any individual would be free to study a particular course at any time, dependent purely on the student’s desire to learn and master the subject on offer. As with the provision of any goods or services in a free market economy, supply would expand to meet increased demand. If there was an increase in the number of students wanting to study, say, the latest developments in genetic engineering, or the Japanese language, courses could simply be expanded, or new ones set up, to meet the increased demand. Academic departments at each university could examine the content of each course to ensure that it reached the required standard before granting it the prestige of the university’s accreditation. University education, whether for a weekend course or a PhD, far from being rationed, could therefore be available to anyone who wants it.

As Bertrand Russell recognised, and learned at first hand, to the extent to which the universities are dependent on state financing, they are vulnerable to political pressures which adversely affect academic freedom. Nowhere has the truth of his argument been more clearly demonstrated than in the United States, where the whole apparatus of “political correctness”, the imposition of racial and gender quotas on both student numbers and faculty, and the intimidation of dissident academics and students in the new Cultural Revolution has been more marked than in any other Western country, and is directly attributable to the massive Federal and state financing and control of the universities. In the US, the law is that if a single student attends a privately-owned college with a Federally-guaranteed student loan, then the Federal government thereby obtains the legal power to regulate all aspects of the structure, employment policies, admissions procedure, curriculum and every other feature of that college. Truly there ain’t no such thing as a free lunch. As far as I am aware, Hillsdale College is the only higher educational institute in the US that refuses to accept any student with a Federal loan, in order to protect its independence from political interference. It is perhaps hardly surprising that Hillsdale is one of the main centres

of free-market thought in the US. A feature of American life in recent decades has been the increasing insistence on more and more degrees for more and more positions. Jobs which used to require merely a BA now demand a master's degree or a PhD. Because people are therefore more dependent on universities than ever before, this means that they are required to submit to the "politically correct" agenda of the Federal government for an ever greater number of years.

The universities of the future, whether in the US, Britain, or any other country, must therefore develop as organisations which are financially independent of the state, both as a means of preserving academic freedom and in order to achieve the flexibility which will be necessary for the future structure of the universities. It is worth examining some methods by which this financial independence might be achieved.

In the first place, it is worth recognising that from the middle ages onwards, the universities enjoyed the patronage of wealthy individuals and institutions, such as the Church, a prince or aristocrat, or a guild of merchants. In order to re-establish this system of patronage in our time, it will be necessary to enable a substantial number of individuals to accumulate truly vast sums of money, of the order of hundreds of millions or even billions of pounds. This can be done by drastically reducing or eliminating income tax and corporation tax. These exceptionally wealthy individuals can then become benefactors of universities, reducing the dependence of the universities on the state. They can set up private foundations which can provide grants to centres of learning. In addition, the National Lottery has raised large sums of money which have been granted to a wide range of academic and cultural projects. A general system of educational vouchers, in which people could choose what they are to learn, would also provide finance for the system, and people would of course be free to supplement these vouchers with cash, whether from pri-

ivate resources or loans. Private companies could also sponsor academic activities, with major tax deductions being made for this activity. As finance from these private sources increases, so the level of government subsidy to the universities could be reduced concurrently, so that there would be no loss of funding at any point, and the universities would become financially independent of the state. Indeed, it is likely that many academic activities would actually be better funded under a private system than under the present system of taxpayer subsidy. University science departments are constantly complaining about the lack of funding available from the state in Britain, leading to a "brain drain" of scientists to the US and other countries where university scientific research is better financed. Because scientists do not have much political clout, it is hardly surprising that government subsidy is so meagre. The privatisation of the universities and their system of finance would enable far more resources to become available for scientific research.

The terrible corruption of the American universities which I described at the beginning of this paper has not, at least yet, reached anything like similar proportions in Britain. Yet even here one hears of unofficial discrimination in the award of research grants and prestigious positions against those academics who take a classical liberal perspective.

If the corruption of the American university system continues, and spreads to Britain and other countries which are heavily influenced by the US, then it may be necessary to recreate the universities from scratch, using the Internet as the medium of communication. The marked shortages of modems in medieval Europe did not prevent the establishment of a free-market system of universities, so the opportunity to develop such a system is surely far greater today with the spread of the Internet. If cyberspace is the only place on the planet where academic freedom and honest scholarship can thrive, so be it.

NOTES

1. Thomas Sowell, *Inside American Education*, Free Press/Macmillan, New York, 1993, page 156. Italics and capitals in original.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 158.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 160-161.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 162-163.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 166-167.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176, 184.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 192-193.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
9. Quoted in Paul Findley, *They Dare to Speak Out*, Lawrence Hill Books/Chicago Review Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1985, 1989 edition, p. 182.
10. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 182.
11. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 182.
12. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 183.
13. Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 183-184.
14. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 184.
15. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 185.
16. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 186.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.
19. Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 188-189.
20. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 189.
21. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 189.
22. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 191.
23. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 195.
24. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 199.
25. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 200.
26. Quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 200-201.
27. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 201.
28. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 202.
29. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 211.
30. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 213.
31. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 214.
32. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 214.
33. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 236.
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