

a disinclination to respect the views of the off-beat and cranky among its members.” No matter how strong the structural safeguards, academic freedom may be “chilled” from inside as well as from outside the professoriate.

Such an admission defines academic freedom in a way that invokes the principles of the 1940 *Statement*, even as it concedes the difficulty of policing nuances and motives. In a 1993 *Academe* article, Cass Sunstein declared, “Both freedom and lack of freedom are socially constructed; they are an outcome of human practices.” His formulation has the flavor of the latest discourse on the sociology of knowledge, but its enunciation in a journal that had for so long deconstructed the institutional practice of the 1940 *Statement* was a sign of the continuing dialectic between the ideal formulation and the practical application, which must constrain and liberate the truths we discover and convey in the academy. We may not now be able to speak our key words with the passionate surety that made them such markers of certitude in the past, but we celebrate their liberating power, nevertheless.

## A Bourgeois Liberal Value of the Past

*Paul Gottfried is professor of political science at Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania.*

It is not clear to me that academic freedom is a long-lived Western value or that it has much to do with what goes on in most universities today. It is a value I believe in, as a bourgeois liberal whose heart is in the last century. And I would rise to defend that value at the price of my livelihood. But academic freedom, as we understand it, has a strictly modern history: it developed in relation to the nineteenth-century state and came out of the academic institutions that existed then to teach and pursue *Wissenschaft*. At least in Europe it was connected indissolubly to the rising middle class. This was, after all, the social group that sought to limit arbitrary state power and to come up with some source of distinction for opponents of aristocratic privilege.

While aristocrats demanded social honors and access to government by virtue of ancestry, their bourgeois competitors based their social claims upon learning, critical intelligence, and wealth. The French Protestant liberal prime minister of the 1840s, and former Sorbonne historian, François Guizot designated the bourgeoisie as the “*classe capacitaire*.” Because of its acquired learning and material resources, he believed, it was especially fit to control French politics and society. While Guizot favored a franchise limited to those of abundant means, he was also willing to bend this rule. For example, he prevailed upon the French assembly to give professionals with university educa-

tion the right to vote, even if they did not meet the tax requirement set for the franchise in 1830.

The demand for academic freedom surfaced later in the United States, a country whose political culture was heavily marked by Protestant dissent and middle-class liberalism. But in the New World the defense of academic freedom was tied to different circumstances. Here those who made it were often on the socialist Left, e.g., John Dewey, Roger Baldwin, and Sidney Hook, and in some cases they had broad reconstructionist aims for society. During the First World War, John Dewey, to the consternation of his fellow socialist Randolph Bourne, advocated the turning of American education into a spawning ground for a new democratic citizen. The author of "Democracy and Loyalty in the Schools" (1917) was not being inconsistent with the principle of intellectual freedom that he championed. As Carol Gruber and Benjamin G. Rader, among other historians who have written on the Progressive era, note, freedom of inquiry was viewed by Progressive intellectuals as an instrumental good, one linked to various political plans for socializing the general population. In Europe, academic freedom, as stressed by social historian Panajotis Kondylis, had belonged to a "bourgeois world of thought." It flourished to whatever extent a rising class incarnated that value as something attached to its culture and as being reflective of its natural superiority. In the United States, by contrast, academic freedom has gone together with changing democratic agendas, from training citizens for a "scientifically" administered society to fighting Prussian autocrats, fascists, and communists. The academic advocates of these agendas have never hesitated to invite in the government to advance their own missions, particularly with funding. Nor have they worried much about the possible incompatibility between governments' pursuing educational crusades and politically uncontrolled scholarship.

The present ideological fury raging through our universities, except for its vehemence, does not bear on the state of academic freedom in any new way. While a graduate student at Yale in the mid-sixties, I was struck by the intellectual intolerance shown by then liberal historians. The only permitted views of American and European history were shaped by a triumphalist understanding of the democratic welfare state. Graduate students in modern American history were expected to imitate the left-of-center views of Arthur Schlesinger, William Leuchtenberg, J.M. Blum, and James MacGregor Burns. Republican celebrities who stood to the right of Nelson Rockefeller fared badly even in the classics lectures I attended. At the time I worked sedulously to keep my own small-government views and skepticism about human rights rhetoric entirely out of papers and exams. When opposition to the Vietnam War became an established liberal position, young faculty who did not fall into line suffered the fate I experienced twice, when my contract at a major university was not renewed. As someone who in thirty years has never found American higher education notably tolerant, I doubt that the academy only

lately began being unpleasant. The personal crusade to make the world safe for democracy unleashed at Columbia by President Nicholas Murray Butler in 1917 involved the booting out of professors for lack of patriotic belligerence or sufficient Teutonophobia. Butler's inquisition seems to have been as horrendous as any of the academic horrors now being reported by the National Association of Scholars. Moreover, the good times as evoked by Allan Bloom, when postwar American universities were not yet taken over by the counterculture, may have been a period of relative calm before the storm. But, other than by comparison to what followed, it was by no means an age of academic tolerance. As for the Great Books program that Bloom and his devotees have supported, there is a downside to that too: it was devised, and certainly justified, at Columbia as a vehicle for Butler's uncivil crusade. While this program has instructional merit, one does violence to history by ignoring the intolerant context in which it was developed.

Rendering a principled defense of academic freedom even more problematic in the United States is the commercialization of higher education. A recently published book by Ann Matthews, *Bright College Years*, indicates exactly the scope and direction of this commercial enterprise. In the United States, according to Matthews's data, the annual institutional endowment for higher education, one hundred billion dollars, exceeds the annual gross national product of Belgium. Despite the staggering size of this endowment (Yale University alone has accumulated enough to bestow free educations upon its undergraduates without falling into debt), about 60 percent of these endowment funds are earmarked for just fifty universities and colleges. The other institutions of higher learning must scramble just to break even and are perpetually searching for money and the bodies that bring it.

Because of this financial insecurity, colleges go the way of beautification and expansion, to the neglect of academic programs. Their aim is to acquire a competitive edge in the search for tuitions by showcasing their campuses. But the effect of such cosmetics is to put institutions farther behind the eight ball. More useful for capital formation are dumbed-down curricula and sensitized faculty. Unlike recreational expansion and affirmative action outreach, a therapeutic approach to education will likely attract those who are lazy or intellectually limited, at little material cost to the institution. The struggle for funds among accredited colleges and universities may come closer to Marx's crisis of advanced capitalism than the changing economic world that Marx simplistically described. Financial desperation over one's stake in a limited capital pool may explain more about the degradation of American learning than scatter-brained ideologies. Indeed, the appeal to therapeutic and egalitarian slogans may be used to mask something far less abstract: the urgent need for operating funds, some inflicted by administrators, behind the well-documented academic fraud that goes on across the country.

All of this has an impact on the future of academic freedom. Does that nineteenth-century liberal value have any meaning at institutions that resemble Howard Johnson resorts more than the Heidelberg of Max Weber or the Harvard of George Santayana? Is academic freedom even relevant for those who purvey a "college experience," as opposed to seriously transmitting and discussing ideas? In any case, what do reasoned inquiry and disinterested scholarship have to do with raising the self-esteem of one's customer? And do those who do such work believe, without deliberate self-delusion, that they are true bourgeois academics, particularly after they receive documents affirming their employer's commitment to quotas and minority self-esteem? Mind you, what is being asked for minorities is not different from what is demanded for nonminorities, but neither has much to do with learning and scholarship. It has to do with being in a job situation that requires happy customers and steady government aid.

## Two Plus Two or a Hill of Beans

*Paul R. Gross is University Professor Emeritus of Life Sciences at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.*

George Orwell's "Winston Smith" writes in his diary this definition of freedom: "Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows." It's circular, of course. Orwell did not mean Winston to be a logician. But we get the point. Whatever language is used to identify "two" and "four," the meaning is the same. For every practical purpose, as well as by definition, a collection of two twos is a four, and the statement is true whatever word we use to mean "true." Freedom is being allowed to say so. It is very rare. Depending upon your employers and what they sell, speaking certain truths to others than your spouse and children, and sometimes even to them, can be forbidden, not just in bad taste, but forbidden. Big Brother is everywhere and has, apparently, always been.

By contrast, now, the production or teaching of untruths or half-truths is an ordinary paying job. Un- and half-truths are among the regular outputs of professional advertising copywriters, journalists, propagandists, public relations agents, politicians, and behavior-modifiers of many descriptions. Holders of such jobs may not proclaim that two plus two equals four unless it fits company or client policy. And nobody argues seriously against the right of employer or client in a typical information business to forbid employees to say things, however true, that belittle the company. You take a job like that knowing the limits on speaking. Spin-doctors renounce freedom in