Introduction

In the heyday of the Vietnam War, conservative critic Irving Kristol excoriated irresponsible university protestors for delivering “harangues on ‘the power structure’” and for stooping to read “articles and reports from the foreign press on the American presence in Vietnam.” What elicited Kristol’s ire was his sense that universities seemed to be providing spaces where alternatives to the dominant ideology could be articulated and contested. In the aftermath of 9/11, universities have come under virulent attack for the same reasons, creating a general climate of fear and intimidation. The firing and arrest of University of South Florida professor Sami Al-Arian, the dismissal of Ward Churchill for his refusal to recant his statements about 9/11, the sabotaging of Juan Cole’s appointment in Middle Eastern history at Yale because of his criticism of US foreign policy, and the 2007 derailment of tenure at De Paul University for renowned scholar Norman Finkelstein are only the most overt and obvious examples of administrators capitulating to government efforts to turn universities into ancillaries of the war on terror.

Dangerous Professors takes these current threats to academic freedom as an opportunity to analyze the status of academic freedom today. By looking at the very idea of academic freedom in historical perspective, it also seeks to re-examine its underlying assumptions and limitations. The stakes in recent struggles over academic freedom are far higher than they might at first appear: this is not simply a tussle over some isolated professional protocol. Education and culture are vital components in the struggle for political power and, as we discuss below, the Right has absorbed this lesson all too well. For most of the “American century,” the battle over
educational curricula and institutions has been one of the key foci of the systematic and wildly successful organizing efforts of movement Conservatives, and this has been particularly true in the last thirty years. These efforts are bearing fruit today not simply in the isolation and persecution of outspoken progressive intellectuals but in a wholesale assault on critical thinking and teaching in general. In tandem with these assaults, the corporatization of the university has produced a predominantly contingent labor force on campuses, thereby significantly eroding traditions of collective governance and institutional autonomy. At stake, then, is democracy on the college campus and beyond. After the attacks of September 11th, 2001, for example, on-campus discussions which raised questions about the relationship between imperialism and terrorism or challenged the Bush Administration’s plans to export democracy to the Middle East by force of arms became the targets of severely jingoistic attacks.

We suggest that the contemporary moment reveals the limits of the professional, privatized, and privileged notion of academic freedom put forth in the past statements of professional bodies such as the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). As our contributors demonstrate, notions of academic freedom are mobilized today not just by critics of U.S. imperialism. They are also deployed by ardent nationalists intent on silencing dissent and by university administrators determined to squelch the organizing efforts of contingent university personnel. Dangerous Professors thus places recent high profile attacks on individual dissidents within a broader context, contending that the casualization of academic labor is critical to the current transformation of universities into national security campuses. Recent interventions of the AAUP on behalf of contingent faculty are welcome steps toward fighting this trend. It also demonstrates that academic corporatization, the curbing of dissent, and the imperial policies of the US state are intimately linked.
In challenging the inequalities of the nascent national security campus, this volume emphasizes the need to expand our conceptions of democracy on campus beyond individualized and often exclusive conceptions of professional rights. Academic freedom is a necessary but insufficient condition for fostering effective critique. Against the narrow definitions of the concept articulated historically by professional bodies such as the AAUP, we thus seek to highlight an activist agenda for claiming the campus as a site for radical democracy, a critical public sphere which provides a bulwark against neo-liberalism and imperialism. While campus democracy surely cannot achieve radical social and political change by itself, engaged teaching and research nevertheless have a vital role to play in maintaining a critical public sphere. Fresh definitions of academic freedom must take this expanded notion of campus democracy as their point of departure. In this project of reexamining the conditions for activist teaching and critical thinking, we take as our inspiration the work of Edward Said who argued for the importance of the engaged intellectual and the central role of the humanities in critiquing orthodoxy and dogma.

The Stakes of Academic Freedom

Although the current political attacks on academics must be decried as the policing of dissent, it is important to remember that the most influential guidelines about academic freedom in the American context have not only discussed the vital role of campus-based public intellectuals but also the appropriate limits of faculty expression. A key feature of the “1915 Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure,” Arthur O. Lovejoy’s and John Dewey’s pioneering document on this subject, was the way it distinguished the university from a businesses venture and university teaching from private employment. Faculty
members were not employees in the ordinary sense because “in the essentials of his [a faculty member’s] professional activity his duty is to the wider public to which the institution itself is morally amenable.” The declaration charts the three components of academic freedom, “freedom of inquiry and research; freedom of teaching within the university or college; and freedom of extramural utterance and action.”

In essence, the 1915 document seeks to delineate the special freedoms accruing from a commitment to the public good.

Yet the 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, the most widely accepted document on academic freedom, articulates a tense relationship between the university and the nation, with the university being portrayed on the one hand as an active public sphere organization, a conduit for the nation’s health, and an institution for social good and, on the other, a sphere of learning apart from the world. The document begins by linking universities to the society at large. Universities are “conducted for the common good and not to further the interests of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.” Academic freedom, it argues, “is essential to these purposes.”

It also continues, however, to define the rules of behavior that their professional role entails:

College and university teachers are citizens, members of a learned profession, and officers of an educational institution. When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. Hence they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution.

In aftermath of the civil rights struggles, and the major legal challenges to academic freedom
which they inspired, a joint committee of the AAUP and the Association of American Colleges met to reevaluate the 1940 policy statement and adapt it to changing times. Their interpretive comments, adopted in 1970, reveal a willingness on the part of the AAUP to circumscribe the sphere of academic freedom. While vigorously maintaining the organization’s commitment to free inquiry and controversial subject matter in the classroom, the 1970 statement underscores “the need for teachers to avoid persistently intruding material which has no relation to their subject.” While seemingly benign, such a statement is clearly a disincentive for interdisciplinarity and a curb on the potential of the humanities to engage with and change society.

Indeed Edward Said has argued that instead of a humanism legitimated by culture and the state that keeps the humanist in a restricted place, the humanist should engage with worldliness or the real historical world. Said was particularly cynical about oppositional Left criticism that despite its theoretical adherence to radicalism remained silent, for instance, on the question of human rights and or that failed to distinguish between authoritarianism and totalitarianism. For Said, humanism means “situating critique at the very heart of humanism, critique as a form of democratic freedom and as a continuous practice of questioning and of accumulating knowledge that is open to, rather than in denial of, the constituent historical realities of the post-Cold War world, its early colonial formation, and the frighteningly global reach of the last remaining superpower of today.” The role of the intellectual was not to be an ally of the State but rather to present alternatives to the narratives provided “on behalf of official memory and national identity and mission.” Said’s notion of the humanist and the intellectual, that is, refuses the 1940 effort to compartmentalize the three components of academic freedom—freedom of research, teaching, and extramural utterance—and suggests that the extra-mural instead be reconceptualized as part of
humanistic inquiry itself.

We mention these limits on the profession’s dominant idea of academic freedom not to belittle the concept altogether but to point out ways in which professional self-policing can sabotage the more dynamic mission of the university for the purposes of mollifying corporations or donors, to whom the university is beholden, and the state, which commands from the university the task of ideological reproduction. Academic freedom defined as appropriate restraint can becomes a means of curbing dissent, particularly in highly charged periods such as wartime. It is this restraint that led the academic community to collaborate with McCarthyism by accepting the legitimacy of congressional committees and investigators intent on purging American universities of communists. For example, in a collective statement that they issued in 1953, a group of university presidents affirmed that the scholar’s mission involved the “examination of unpopular ideas, of ideas considered abhorrent and even dangerous” and described the university as a unique, non-profit structure which was different from a corporation. At the same time, they also stipulated that loyalty to the nation-state and free enterprise were essential to the university as well. Thus, they reasoned, membership in the Communist Party, “extinguishes the right to a university position.”

Campus Radicalism And The Right Wing War on Education

The McCarthy era’s efforts to establish individual and collective surveillance offer striking parallels to the strategies deployed in the culture wars of the 1990s and, more recently, during the War on Terror. Then as now, myriad well-funded and well-organized groups exploited public fears about national security to attack educational institutions. The National Education Association, for example, has documented five hundred different organizations
engaged in assaults on public education during the period. Perhaps the most influential of these groups was Allen Zoll’s National Council on American Education (NCAE), a highly influential organization devoted to capitalizing on fears concerning the impact of the supposedly immoral and socialistic mores indoctrinated in students by public school teachers. Distributing mass quantities of pamphlets with inflammatory titles such as “How Red Are the Schools?” “They Want Your Children,” and “Awake, America, Awake, and Pray!”, Zoll’s NCAE exploited allegations of “subversive” infiltration to strengthen the impact of local anti-tax and ultra-conservative citizens’ groups and to sway the outcomes of many local school board elections. Zoll’s searing attacks on public education drew on a potent cocktail of anti-Keynesian *laissez faire* ideology and exclusionary representations of US identity as Christian, individualist, and capitalist. This toxic combination has only grown more powerful since Zoll’s day, and now characterizes dominant segments of the conservative movement. His strategy of using anti-Americanism to smear educators has been deployed once again to silence dissent during the War on Terror. The post-9/11 report of Lynne Cheney’s American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), for example, castigated educators as the weak link in the U.S. war against terrorism and singled them out as a potential fifth column.

However, it was not simply leaders of institutions who were vulnerable to the tactics of the scaremongers. The professional organizations and unions charged with protecting educators were equally affected by the pervasive atmosphere of fear that characterized the McCarthy era. Thus, although the National Educational Association (NEA), the world’s largest organization of educators, moved quickly to create a defense committee, the National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education, the organization ended up replicating some of the Right’s central doctrines. In 1949, for example, NEA president Andrew Holt argued that
teachers had a duty to inspire “our children with a love of democracy that will be inoculated against the false ideology of communism.” In addition, the organization also refused to support the wave of teacher strikes that took place at mid-century and, although it did objected frequently to loyalty oaths, it never advised teachers to refuse to sign them.

Yet despite the purges of the 1950s and the massive increase in state funding of research following World War II, the U.S. university retained its relative autonomy as an organ of civil society, due in part to the broad institutionalization of tenure following the 1940 AAUP Statement. Thus teaching and research at universities also continued the mission of “searching for truth” and the avocation of professors to work for the “common good.” One example will serve to make our point. William F. Buckley’s rantings about the advocacy of collectivism and Marxism by the Yale economics department faculty is at once a heartening endorsement of critical thinking and a chilling prognostication of the corporate pressures to which universities are increasingly subject. Buckley argues that the “faculty of Yale is morally and constitutionally responsible to the trustees of Yale, who are in turn responsible to the alumni, and thus duty bound to transmit to their students the wisdom, insight, and value judgments which in the trustees’ opinion will enable the American citizen to make the optimum adjustment to the community and to the world.”

John Chamberlain, in his introduction to Buckley’s God and Man At Yale, explicitly insists that knowledge production should be commodified: “Should the right to pursue the truth be constructed as a right to inculcate values that deny the value-judgments of the customer who is paying the bills of education? Must the customer, in the name of Academic Freedom, be compelled to take a product which he may consider defective?”

“Does Yale Corporation, which represents the education-buying customer, want any such thing?” For evidence of the propagation of socialism, Buckley cites, for instance, his lecture
notes from Professor Lindblom’s economics course in which Lindblom assaulted the concept of private property. Buckley lamented that Yale, while being supported by Christian individualists, attempts to turn the children of these supporters into atheist socialists, in part through adherence to a Keynesian collectivism.

As the emergence of community colleges increased minority enrollment and Northern institutions began recruiting black students, campuses diversified. Radicalized by the Vietnam War, minority students such as those in the Third World Movement of 1968 articulated connections between imperialism abroad and the repression of people of color, the wretched of the earth, at home; among their demands were the employment of minority faculty as well as the creation of new programs such as ethnic studies and African-American studies. Mass higher education, viewed as essential to economic competitiveness and national security, was generating levels of dissent conservatives have since attempted to curb. But while universities such as Stanford attempted to stifle dissidence by firing faculty like H. Bruce Franklin who dared to publicly proclaim the relationship between capitalist power, imperialism, and racism, entire fields of study such as American history (to take just one example) were thoroughly changed.

Revisionist historians such as William Appleman Williams gave legitimacy to the study of US imperialism while others pursued history from below. By the time Howard Zinn published his *A People’s History of the United States* in 1980, there was a wider public that had been touched by this new history. In the next fifteen years, Zinn’s book went through twenty-five printings and sold over 400,000 copies. A similar reception was accorded to Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), which ushered in the field of postcolonial studies in the US academy, provoking the enduring wrath of neo-conservatives by making it impossible for Middle East Studies to continue to provide an alibi for US foreign policy.
The conservative reaction to this mounting politicization of academia was swift. In June 1969, recently elected president Richard Nixon delivered a speech at a public college in South Dakota in which he linked “drugs, crime, campus revolts, racial discord, [and] draft resistance” and lamented the loss of integrity in academia in the following terms: “We have long considered our colleges and universities citadels of freedom, where the rule of reason prevails. Now both the process of freedom and the rule of reason are under attack.” Despite Nixon’s prominent role in the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings early in his career, the conservative counteroffensive against the campus movement did not follow the familiar inquisitorial script of the McCarthy era. Instead, the right-wing strategy for dealing with dissenting students and faculty was built on a memorandum penned by future Nixon Supreme Court nominee Lewis Powell. In an August 1971 letter entitled “Attack on American Free Enterprise System,” Powell wrote to his friends at the National Chamber of Commerce to decry the liberal establishment’s “appeasement” of anti-capitalist sentiment on campuses around the United States. It was high time, Powell argued, that business learned how to fight back against charismatic radicals such as Herbert Marcuse, whose influence was, in his opinion, corrupting an entire generation. Powell argued that the Chamber should begin its campaign by establishing a stable of social scientists whose work would articulate pro-corporate perspectives in the public sphere. In addition, the Chamber should aggressively insist on “equal time” for “independent scholars who do believe in the system” at campus speaking engagements. Finally, however, Powell conceded that the fundamental problem – the “imbalance of many [academic] faculties” – would take time to repair:

Correcting this is indeed a long-range and difficult project. Yet, it should be taken as a part of an overall program. This would mean the urging of the need for faculty balance
upon university administrators and boards of trustees. The methods to be employed require careful thought, and the obvious pitfalls must be avoided. Improper pressure would be counterproductive. But the basic concepts of balance, fairness, and truth are difficult to resist, if properly presented to boards of trustees, by writing and speaking, and by appeals to alumni associations and groups. This is a long road and not one for the fainthearted.29

Powell’s memorandum spread like wildfire through America’s corporate boardrooms. Not only did it clearly identify a pivotal ideological struggle; it also advanced a sustainable strategy for changing campus culture, one that did not rely on the discredited tactics of government-sponsored witch-hunts that typified the McCarthy era. Rather than simply seeking to clamp down on wayward organizations such as the Modern Language Association (MLA), in other words, Powell advised the corporate elite to fund the work of intellectuals who would engage in what Gramsci called a war of position against critics of US policies, both foreign and domestic, and of the capitalist world system in general.

Powell’s memo has been plausibly credited with stimulating the foundation of such pivotal right-wing think tanks as the Heritage Foundation, the Manhattan Institute, the Cato Institute, and Accuracy in Academe, each of which has achieved dramatic success in swaying public policy over the last couple of decades while simultaneously producing research of dubious value.30 From 1970 to 1996, the number of think tanks in the United States increased from fewer than sixty to more than three hundred.31 And their numbers have grown at least ten times more since then.32 Most importantly, conservative think tanks outnumber liberal think tanks by a ratio of roughly 2 to 1 and outspend them by more than 3 to 1.33 This should not of course be surprising given the strategic focus of the conservative foundations that support think tanks. As
James S. Piereson, the executive director of the John M. Olin Foundation, put it, ““The liberal foundations became too project oriented—they support projects but not institutions. They flip from project to project.... We, on the other hand, support institutions. We provide the infrastructure for institutions.””

Frank Chodorow’s Intercollegiate Society for Individualists (ISI), renamed the Intercollegiate Studies Institute following his death in 1966, offers a particularly clear example of how the Right fosters its organic intellectuals and projects their voices using educational institutions. Today the ISI administers the Collegiate Network (CN). With guidance from Right-wing luminaries like William Bennett and Allan Bloom, the Network offers financial and technical aid to editors and writers at scores of student publications at top universities around the country, including The Dartmouth Review, Princeton’s American Foreign Policy, University of California Berkeley’s The California Patriot, and The Stanford Review. The Network essentially offers young conservative intellectuals an alternative education and a gateway to future careers through annual journalistic training conferences, campus mentoring sessions, and summer and year-long internships at leading national media outlets.

The think tanks spawned by the Powell Memorandum have deployed a remarkably consistent combination of neo-liberal and neo-conservative ideology across their thirty-year history. A key player early in this story was the Philanthropy Round Table, a consortium of conservative foundations organized in the late 1970s to coordinate donor efforts. This body was founded at Irving Kristol’s Institute for Educational Affairs (IEA). Kristol, of course, is one of the grandfathers of neo-conservatism, active, as we noted at the outset of this introduction, in opposition to the social movements of the 1960s. Kristol’s IEA, which identified promising young scholars, supported them with grants, and then helped them find work with activist
organizations and publications, was funded by some of the biggest Right-wing philanthropical
groups, including the Olin, Scaife, and Smith Richardson Foundations, as well as by corporations
such as Coca-Cola, K-Mart, Mobil Oil, General Electric, and Dow Chemical. Of course, these
same foundations also went on to support more patently ideological organs of the Right such as
the Project for a New American Century, the think tank that infamously laid out plans for a
preemptive, unilateralist US foreign policy during the Bush administration.

This funding overlap between organizations putatively devoted to educational issues and
those devoted to more explicitly imperialist goals should not be particularly surprising given the
consistent ideological emphasis of the major Right-wing philanthropic foundations on free
market capitalism and aggressive nationalism. As the Bradley Foundation website puts it, “The
Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation is likewise devoted to strengthening American democratic
capitalism and the institutions, principles and values that sustain and nurture it. Its programs
support limited, competent government; a dynamic marketplace for economic, intellectual, and
cultural activity; and a vigorous defense at home and abroad of American ideas and
institutions.” We should note that this ideological orthodoxy is also potently alluring to the
increasingly powerful evangelical Protestant groups within the Right, with their neo-Victorian
emphasis on the market as a divinely ordained mechanism for rewarding the virtuous and
punishing the sinful and their frequently apocalyptic embrace of a thinly veiled racist war on
Islam in the name of combating terrorism.

Right-funded think tanks have also been the major source of post-9/11 attacks against
academia. David Horowitz, for instance, is president and founder of the David Horowitz
Freedom Center, formerly the Center for the Study of Popular Culture (CSPC), an organization
that receives significant support from the Bradley foundation, and which Horowitz has used to
launch his attacks on the Left. In 2003, Horowitz founded Students for Academic Freedom (SAF), an organization using the discourse of freedom and diversity to suppress any critique of the neoconservative agenda and the war on terror by policing classrooms, syllabi, and conferences in humanities departments. The conjunction of Right-wing educational and political agenda is clear. Horowitz’s major objective is to get states to pass an “Academic Bill of Rights,” a bill which he contends is necessary given the liberal biases of university faculty. Modeled after and echoing phrases from AAUP documents on Academic Freedom, the Academic Bill of Rights attempts to restrict and regulate faculty expression and course content. Horowitz writes: “When I visited the political-science department at the University of Colorado at Denver this year, the office doors and bulletin boards were plastered with cartoons and statements ridiculing Republicans, and only Republicans. When I asked President Hoffman about that, she assured me that she would request that such partisan materials be removed and an appropriate educational environment restored.”

Leaving aside the fact that Horowitz doesn’t comment on the postings in business schools or medical schools, the problem is that “diversity” becomes an issue of political affiliation and education is straitjacketed as nationalism. Indeed, as Horowitz makes clear, he is bothered by “the role of the Left-wing university in undermining American self-respect and self-confidence at a time when the nation was facing enemies who were deadly.”

What is most dangerous about Horowitz’s agenda is the attempt to police faculty through Orwellian doublespeak under the guise of terms such as “pluralism, diversity, opportunity, critical intelligence, openness and fairness.” The Academic Bill of Rights, for instance, asserts that, “reading lists in the humanities and social sciences should reflect the uncertainty and unsettled character of all human knowledge by providing dissenting sources and viewpoints where appropriate.” At first glance the statement simply appears as an endorsement of a
Socratic methodology that has been central to the university classroom for decades. Clearly, a conception of academic freedom that denies the freedom to teach Right perspectives on history, literature, or sociology has no place in the academy. Nor, more importantly, should a student’s intellectual freedom to challenge any viewpoint, be it from the Left or Right, be challenged. But what proponents of the Academic Bill of Rights are proposing is a mandating and surveillance of course content that should, in principle, not be tolerated. The freedom to teach what one pleases in the classroom is central to the academy, even though, as Cary Nelson notes in his essay, the practice of such freedom is never absolute. It is crucial, however, that the status of a particular discipline not be determined for an instructor by an outside body. Right organizations, unfortunately, have been quick to propose agendas for the teaching of particular disciplines. Thus the above argument of the academic bill of rights about the unsettled nature of the humanities and social sciences is more than a validation of pluralism. While seemingly benign, such a position, as the AAUP notes, reduces all knowledge to uncertain opinion and suggests that all opinions are equally valid, thus negating the essential function of education. In practice, this position has involved insidious policing: SAF urged its members to check if a conference on environmental issues included solely panelists who believed in global warming and encourages student vigilantism over liberal bias in all departments dealing with minority issues – Women’s Studies, African-American Studies, Asian-American Studies, etc. Horowitz also published a blacklist of 101 professors deemed dangerous, some because of their involvement in peace centers. Most notoriously, under the pretext of “balance,” the David Horowitz Freedom Center sponsored an “Islamo-Fascism Awareness Week” in October 2007 in which 114 college and university campuses participated. SAF, which distributes the booklet, “Unpatriotic University,” now boasts 150 chapters in colleges and universities nationwide and over a dozen legislatures
have considered academic freedom legislation. Such campus vigilantism for patriotism –
defined as unquestioning support for the State’s policies in the Middle East – is also being
vigorously promoted by Daniel Pipes, founder of Campus Watch, a project of the Middle East
forum that is committed to monitoring Middle East studies at universities.

Much of the vituperation about “bias” was channeled into attempts to monitor course
content in Middle East and other area studies programs. In 2003, proponents of HR 3077, the
International Studies in Higher Education Act, launched a vigorous campaign to make Title VI
funding to area studies programs contingent upon the establishment of an “International Higher
Education Advisory Board” comprised partly of appointed members from the Department of
Homeland Security. The function of the board would be to “balance” readings considered anti-
American (included under this rubric were all critiques of imperialism and colonialism,
especially included those of Edward Said and anyone influenced by him) with those supporting
US foreign policy. Said’s works continue to be a targeted by the likes of Horowitz, Pipes, and a
host of neoconservatives, in part, no doubt, because his entire career testified to the inseparability
of pure and political knowledge and above all because his key work, Orientalism, questioned
American claims of exceptionalism from empire by firmly locating the U.S. within the trajectory
of Western colonial empires. 48 Orientalism also challenged the legitimacy of Orientalist social
scientists whose expertise US policymakers have relied upon and taken as truth in their dealings
with areas as diverse as the Middle East and Vietnam. As Said stated in the 2003 preface to the
twenty-fifth anniversary edition of Orientalism, the Iraq war, waged for world dominance and
scarce resources, was “disguised for its true intent, hastened, and reasoned for by Orientalists
who betrayed their calling as scholars. The major influences on George W. Bush’s Pentagon and
National Security Council were men such as Bernard Lewis and Fouad Ajami, experts of the
Arab and Islamic world who helped the American hawks think about such preposterous phenomena as “the Arab mind” and centuries-old Islamic decline that only American power could reverse. **49**

It is crucial here to recognize that Said’s career stands as a challenge not only to neo-conservative hostility to critique of the State but also to both neo-conservative and neo-liberal conceptions of the subject/the human. For Said it was imperative that his project be linked to his consciousness of being an “Oriental,” of thinking about the self in Gramscian terms, as a product of historical processes. **50** For neo-conservatives such as Horowitz and Pipes who argue ostensibly for diversity and balance, the self or subject is the raceless, classless subject of liberal humanism, and apart from historical processes, hence ostensibly “unbiased.” This is also the subject of neo-liberalism, answerable to the calls of the market alone; it is in the interest of advocates of neo-liberalism to close off avenues where the marked historical subject can articulate alternatives other than those of the free market or the State and nationalism. The two-pronged push to hire adjunct workers and to create more programs answerable either directly to corporations or indirectly through contracts from the Department of Homeland Security is a means of silencing people like Said who stand for curricular change and alternative intellectual practices. Perhaps the perfect embodiment of neo-con politics and neo-liberal economic agenda is Governor Jeb Bush, the first Chancellor of the State Board of Education in Florida and also an active participant of ACTA.

Effectively, intellectual vigilantism has been trumped, although not replaced, by universities’ managerial complicity with the State agenda and corporate concerns. What has taken place since 9/11, in other words, has been nothing short of a re-building of the national security campus. Thus, although HR 3077, the bill to regulate the postcolonial influence in area
studies, was quashed after nationwide protests by academics, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has found better, more proactive measures to direct curriculum by funding centers and scholarships for financially strapped universities. Since 2003, DHS has offered 439 fellowships to students for homeland security research and 227 schools offer degree or certificate program in homeland security. Such fellowships and Centers of Excellence, again created by DHS money, effectively redirect research at a time when federal funding of research and development (except for DHS, the Defense Department and “terror” related research at NIH) is at an all time low. Other components of the new national security campus include the Department of Defense’s post-9/11 decision to enforce the 1995 Solomon Amendment that withdraws federal funds from universities that refuse to grant access to military recruiters; the provisions of the 2001 PATRIOT Act that increase government oversight of university education and research by expanding the definition of classified and sensitive information, restricting the movement and work of foreign-born students and scholars, and initiating surveillance of academic conferences and other research and teaching activities; the 2004 Intelligence Authorization Act and Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act, which created the Pat Roberts Intelligence Scholars Program (PRISP) and the Intelligence Community Scholars Program (ICSP) respectively, both of which provide fellowships for students working for US intelligence agencies; and, most recently, the National Defense Authorization Act of 2006, which establishes Science, Mathematics and Research for Transformation (SMART) Scholarships for students who will work for the Department of Defense. At the same time, budgetary crises are taken as opportunities to decrease the number of permanent faculty as well as reorganize priorities around national security. Witness the University of Florida’s 2008 establishment of a grandiose center with a stated mission of fostering public leadership and addressing homeland
security with the university’s efforts a few months later to fire eleven tenure-track faculty in the humanities. Taken together, these measures demonstrate the sweeping institutional re-alignment of U.S. higher education with the bellicose policies of neoconservative unilateralist militarism and nationalism.

Dismayingly, professional organizations today are not only reacting in a defensive manner similar to NEA in the 1950s but have grown even less combative than their forerunners. Today, for example, prominent professional organizations and unions seem almost completely incapable of affecting the state and federal legislative agenda in any substantial way. The success of groups like Students for Academic Freedom in pushing for hearings concerning abuses of professorial power around the country by making charges that sound uncannily familiar to those familiar with the red scares of the 1950s exemplifies how the very organizations that should be defending the right to free and critical inquiry today are failing to achieve their core mission. Our professional organizations should be moving to combat such hyper-nationalist gambits aggressively instead of simply issuing reactive statements such as the AAUP report on Freedom in the Classroom (2007). This report, for instance, critiques Right surveillance tactics but fails to offer a proactive notion of freedom capable of promoting campus democracy, dissent, and anti-imperial critique.

Given contemporary moves to create national security campuses, the explicit alignment of education and imperialism that sparked works such as Said’s *Orientalism* should be even more salient today than it was during the Vietnam era. Said’s charge to the engaged intellectual to militate against orthodoxy is more urgent than ever for we need to remember that, despite frequent genuflections to academic freedom on the part of administrators, scholars, and even policymakers, universities are now more rather than less complicit in corporate neo-liberalism
and bellicose neo-conservativism than they were in the past. We hope this collection will play a role in fostering discussion of the changing conditions for effective defense of campus democracy. In their different ways, contributors to Dangerous Professors explore the means by which contemporary educators and intellectuals can challenge the new national security campus and the even more ubiquitous forms of insecurity and contingency that characterize academic capitalism.

Overview of the Collection

Although the War on Terror has made academic freedom a central concern in public discourse, only three books have explored this topic in the context of 9/11: Beshara Doumani’s U.S. based, Academic Freedom After 9/11 (Zone, 2006), Evan Gerstmann and Matthew Sterb’s Academic Freedom at the Dawn of a New Century (Stanford, 2006), and Robert O’Neil’s Academic Freedom in the Wired World (Harvard, 2008). All three works examine general debates about academic freedom before going on to focus on specific areas of concern—Doumani on Middle East Studies and languages, Gerstmann and Sterb’s on science, censorship and academic freedom in a global context, and O’Neil on particular cases of academic freedom as well as the effect of new technologies on these considerations. Dangerous Professors is markedly different from these books in three ways. First, although it recognizes the attacks on the university since 9/11, unlike other works, this collection shows how ill-equipped prevailing ideas of academic freedom are to foster campus democracy and focuses on the ways in which universities can offer resistance to empire. Second, while Doumani and O’Neill recognize the increasing corporatization of the university as one of the twin forces shaping campus life today (along with the attacks of 9/11 and the resulting atmosphere of fear), their books do not include a
detailed examination of this conjunction, as does our collection. Third, ours is the only collection that offers crucial first-hand accounts from academics who have been persecuted because of their criticism of US imperialism.

_Dangerous Professors_ consists of four sections. The first section examines the complicated legal and theoretical underpinnings of contemporary concepts of academic freedom in historical context. The dangerous convergence of the Right’s cultural project with that of academic capitalism is addressed in this section by the AAUP’s current president, Cary Nelson. The loss of state funding throughout public higher education, Nelson argues, has led to an entrepreneurial administrative culture where the parameters of academic freedom (parameters set by senior administrators rather than faculty) are vulnerable to pressures from the well-funded organs of the Right. Simultaneously, the rise of careerism at the expense of collaboration among tenured faculty and an increasingly contingent labor force have created the conditions for flagrant violations of faculty rights. The post-Katrina firings of tenured faculty in New Orleans without reason, notice, or due process should serve as a chilling reminder of how, in the absence of legally binding contracts, administrators can use crises to rule by decree.

As Robert O’Neil argues in his contribution to the volume, the relationship between academic freedom and constitutional free speech has been the subject of considerable speculation and ample misinformation. Those who teach at state supported campuses ostensibly enjoy both free speech and academic freedom, making a deeper understanding of the differences essential. But the problem with invoking the public employee speech test as the measure of a professor’s freedom in extramural utterances, O’Neil argues, is that it turns out, ironically, to be both under- and over-protective. It affords too little protection because public employees’ First Amendment rights may be limited on grounds that would be anathema to academic freedom. Meanwhile,
government workers are permitted to make statements that almost certainly would demonstrate “unfitness to teach” on the part of professors in certain fields. Thus the beguiling parallel between academic freedom and freedom of speech, so appealing to the Colorado investigators of Ward Churchill, for example, turns out to be more of a trap than a boon to defenders of freedom of inquiry.

Finally, picking up the thread of ambiguity noted by the other contributors to this section, R. Radhakrishnan challenges the rhetoric of “bias” that is often hurled at exponents of controversial positions in today’s anxiety-filled public sphere. For Radhakrishnan, notions of an “Archimedean,” unbiased perspective are dangerous humbug. His essay underlines the implicit nationalism that lurks within unqualified notions of freedom at this historical moment, whether it be the project of democratizing the Middle East by force of arms or the (sometimes) subtler forms of ideological interpellation that mark the academy. As a result, Radhakrishnan argues, in the hyper-nationalist atmosphere of the War on Terror, proponents of academic freedom have been coerced into parsing themselves as anti-State and anti-national, while the State’s agendas of national security and hyper-patriotism remain unmarked as ideology.

In the second section of Dangerous Professors, contributors place questions about the freedom to teach and research in historical context. Bill Mullen’s discussion of W. E. B. Du Bois and African-American education amplifies Radhakrishnan’s theoretical points about implicit nationalism of dominant versions of “freedom” by exploring the historical limits of the postwar promise of universal education. Through a reading of Du Bois’ The Education of Black People, Mullen demonstrates how Du Bois came to see universalist education doctrines and conceptions of academic freedom based on free speech as constitutive elements of capitalist white supremacy, with working-class African-Americans functioning as the originary
“exclusion” of western humanism. In claiming the *material* lives of African Americans as this exclusion, Mullen intends to underscore that invocations of academic freedom and free speech always disclose the socio-economic locations of the places those values are proffered and defended. Mullen contends that reading Du Bois’s own work on education provides a clear foreshadowing not only of DuBois’s own fate as an untenured radical in the American university—his partial exclusion from the American academy--- but anticipates the reconsolidation of white supremacist, capitalist, racist and nationalist forces that constitute the “free speech” right wing on today’s political U.S. spectrum.

Taking its cues from the same historical period, Stephen Leberstein’s article argues that the post-Cold War world leaves us without our usual compass for locating attacks on academic freedom. Leberstein argues that today’s threat to academic freedom is not simply a re-play of McCarthyism, the prototype for which was arguably written in New York in a 1940 state legislative investigation into subversion in the public schools and colleges. An examination of that episode, known as the Rapp Coudert Committee investigation, shows how different earlier episodes of repression were from today’s attempt to silence voices of dissent. Leberstein’s essay compares the stakes and strategies of this earlier conflict with recent attacks on CUNY professors by groups like Lynne Cheney’s Association of College Trustees and Alumni. By comparing these different assaults Leberstein seeks to chart viable strategies for defending public higher education and campus democracy today.

In her contribution, Malini Johar Schueller puts the current assault on Middle East Studies, particularly the moves to curb the teaching of postcolonial theory via HR 3077, in historical perspective. She suggests that these attacks are a response to the decolonization of knowledge consequent upon worldwide independence movements of the 1960s, which in turn
boosted racial struggles within the US. With many on the Right arguing for the U.S. to unequivocally don the mantle of empire after 9/11, anti-colonial critiques quickly became suspect. She also demonstrates how the vituperative criticisms of Middle East Studies scholars represents a frontal assault on civil rights and the culture of civil rights that brought in scholars from the third world into the academy. For Schueller, the deployment of the language of multiculturalism is part of the State’s attempt to subsume the racially marked subject into a nationalist narrative of pluralism and consensus useful for imperialism; what is distinct after 9/11, she argues further, is the State’s use of insidious distinctions between the multicultural and the foreign. Schueller closes her piece by underlining the necessary correlation between institutional struggles for academic freedom and the broader project of decolonizing knowledge by seeing knowledge not as universal but as invested in questions of empire and race.

These arguments clearly remind us that the production of knowledge in the academy cannot be decoupled from questions of social justice (what the AAUP has called the “common good” and duty to the “wider public”) and that the “search for truth” requires an engagement with political issues that questions the public/private, scholar/citizen divide. As Sophia McClennen argues in her essay on the assaults on American Studies’ current emphasis on a diverse and polyvalent nationhood, Left defenses have been less than successful because they have been posed in terms of relativity rather than in terms of the “common good.” Current attacks on American studies, that is, have created a context through which to reconsider the critical methods that ground the field, methods which McClennen describes as metaphorically linked to legislation/unification and deregulation/expansion and which she argues both replicate and respond to the ideology of the nation itself. Recent right-wing attacks advance a particular vision of the United States and the globe which is a direct outgrowth of Pax Americana, manifest
destiny, the cold war, and neoliberal globalization. As a means of tackling these contradictions, McClennan proposes a reinvigorated commitment to the ethical and political motives behind challenging the traditional idea of a unified nationhood.

Contributors to the third section of *Dangerous Professors* argue that the imposition of corporate models of knowledge production has necessarily entailed the widespread casualization of teaching within post-secondary education and thus endangered the building of a culture of campus democracy. Not only do such “flexible” faculty members lack many of the protections for academic freedom afforded by tenure, but they are seldom fully included in organs of collective bargaining or self-governance such as faculty unions and senates. When the number of contingent faculty increases, the ability of the faculty as a whole to direct its own affairs diminishes. This section underlines the crucial but not always immediately apparent connections between increasing contingency and diminishing critique and democracy in U.S. higher education today, conditions that make universities vulnerable to becoming national security campuses.

As Vijay Prashad argues, now more than ever the academic left cannot rely on institutional protection alone for its adversarial positions, but must instead engage in a broader campaign within the public sphere by seeking to remind citizens of the value of academia’s (relative) autonomy. Prashad points to the history of attacks on academics who affiliated themselves with any form of collective action, suggesting that this history reflects a flawed liberal model of academic freedom based on critique that affirms the status quo rather than seeking systemic change. To overcome this tame if not supine tradition, the academic left, Prashad argues, must defend itself through the social force of its ideas rather than appeals to the individual’s right to free expression. Indeed, as the militant resuscitation of Lewis Powell’s calls
for “balance” by opportunistic post-9/11 neoconservative groups such as Students for Academic Freedom (SAF) demonstrate, doctrines of free expression can be just as easily invoked by those seeking to curtail counter-systemic research and teaching as by its proponents. While it would not do to impose too seamless a genealogy on contemporary assaults on academic freedom, neither should we ignore the place of contemporary calls for “balance” within a carefully formulated and slowly germinating political strategy.

When labor conflicts arise in a university workplace, the principle of academic freedom tends to be invoked by all parties. Taking the NYU strike of 2006-2007 as a case study, Michael Palm and Susan Valentine’s essay begins by asking whether battles over “academic freedom,” in which opposing sides fight in its name, have transformed it into the proverbial empty signifier, the hollow stakes of discursive battles and cultural politics. Then, combining ethnography and analysis of the strike, Palm and Valentine’s paper attempts to redeem the notion of academic freedom by centering it on fights to win or retain academic labor rights. Managers of academic labor seek cover in the rhetoric of the ivory-tower ideal; for instance, NYU’s anti-union administrators and spokespeople routinely complained that union grievances over teaching assignments violated not only management rights, but also the educational integrity of the institution. However, these same administrators’ management policies shone a glaring light on academia as a workplace, rather than as a sanctuary removed from the demands of wage labor.

Taking the crisis over Columbia University’s Middle East studies program as his focus, Ashley Dawson discusses the intimate connection between the corporatization of the university, hyper-nationalism, and the decline of academic freedom. As the internal structure of academia has changed, so its autonomy has declined and the impact of external political pressure has grown. Yet, faced with assaults by powerful corporate interests, educators have begun to strike
back by emphasizing that it is they who are the true conservatives, intent on preserving access to higher learning by resisting tuition hikes, budget cuts, tax giveaways to the rich, and the assault on critical thought by neo-con activists backed by wealthy private foundations. Dawson’s essay tracks several organizing campaigns within the New York metropolitan area in which issues of pay equity and academic freedom converged. For Dawson, the only way to reassert the university’s public role successfully is to challenge what French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu called the *doxa* or commonsense of neo-liberalism: that every sphere of social life should be subjected to the ruthless calculus of market-based efficiency.55

We conclude this section with an interview with Andrew Ross who argues that academic institutions today are more vulnerable to political pressure because of their commercial ties than in the postwar heyday of the public university beholden to the state. The race to consolidate intellectual property (IP) claims and rights, Ross reminds us, has significantly reduced the freedoms of academics involved in commercially viable research. From the perspective of increasingly managed academic employees in general, the result of trends towards academic capitalism is systematic de-professionalization. Within such bleak conditions, Ross argues, the traditional academic ethos of disinterested freedom of inquiry is all the more necessary to academic managers not just to preserve the symbolic prestige of the institution but also to safeguard commonly available resources as free economic inputs. Drawing on his experiences as an organizer of Faculty Democracy at New York University, Ross points out that while academic freedom is a prime component of labor organizing in the academy, it can just as easily be an obstacle or a recipe for inaction when it is invoked as an a priori principle. Academic unionism has yet to face its “CIO moment,” Ross underlines, when unions acquire the will to include all
members of the workforce--fulltime faculty, staff, contract teachers, adjuncts, and TAs. Only with such inclusive models will the university resist being a mouthpiece for the State.

The volume ends with a series of first-hand accounts of struggles over academic freedom by high-profile critics of U.S. foreign and domestic policies. Aside from offering controversial intellectuals a chance to give their own version of the events that led to their pillorying in the mainstream U.S. press and their marginalization by image-conscious academic administrators, this section also provides advocates of campus democracy with an inside view of the strategies which both internal and external critics of dissenting voices on campus have used and the best ways to challenge them. Ward Churchill begins the section by exploring the gulf between the liberal assertions of freedom of inquiry coming from university administrators and trustees and the less than ideal reality that unfolded at the University of Colorado when such assertions were put to the test. Particularly noteworthy in Churchill’s account is his documentation of the skill with which Right-wing pressure groups such as Students for Academic Freedom were able to manipulate the mainstream media and, through the media, elected politicians. As Churchill shows in his essay, however, these tactics only served to strengthen the resolve of progressive student organizations on campuses around the US. Thus, despite Churchill’s eventual dismissal by the University of Colorado, his case suggests that progressive groups can have a strong impact both within and outside the walls of the campus if they organize successfully.

Like Ward Churchill, Robert Jensen focuses on a public scandal that erupted in response to his criticism of the hyper-nationalism that followed the attacks of September 11, 2001 when the President of the University of Texas singled Jensen out for criticism. What galls Jensen more than the president’s attack and the campus campaigns of groups inspired by Students for Academic freedom, however, is the failure of the faculty itself to mount any kind of coordinated
campaign of opposition to such assaults. The committee charged with protecting academic freedom, for instance, did nothing to address the specific attack on Jensen, but simply reissued boilerplate language concerning academic freedom. For Jensen, these events suggest that the vast majority of academics are, like many other professionals, caught up in the small perquisites of their field, keeping their heads down by remaining immersed in their specialties. Jensen’s essay offers a clarion call not simply for the politicization but also for the mobilization of the profession towards progressive, anti-imperialist ends.

We close this introduction by arguing that we need to resist the efforts of putative liberals such as Stanley Fish who see universities as bastions of neutrality and excoriate those who attempt to align the structure of universities to visions of social justice. Commenting on various calls for divestment and the policing of workshops that supply sweatshirts to campuses Fish writes, “It is the obligation of the investment managers to secure the best possible returns; it is not their obligation to secure political or economic justice. They may wish to do those things as private citizens or as members of an investment club, but as university officers their duty is to expand the endowment by any legal means available.” A clearer case of enlisting universities as agents for corporate exploitation can hardly be found. We therefore also reject Robert Post’s argument that freedom of extramural expression be separated from the idea of academic freedom. Against such moves to mollify the inquisitors, we need to remind ourselves that the production of knowledge in the academy cannot be decoupled from questions of social justice. In an eloquent injunction that questions what Andrew Ross aptly terms fundamentalism about academic freedom, Howard Zinn writes: “To me, academic freedom has always meant the right to insist that freedom be more than academic—that the university, because of its special claim to be a place for the pursuit of truth, be a place where we can challenge not only the ideas but the
institutions, the practices of society, measuring them against millenia-old ideals of equality and justice.”

Echoing the comments of many contributors to *Dangerous Professors*, Zinn rejects the injunction to stay in one’s field and leave questions of politics, racial oppression and class exploitation to others in the name of professionalism. Zinn instead urges social activism: “the theorist of radical change, who does not act in the real world of social combat is teaching, by example, the most sophisticated technique of safety.”
Endnotes:


4 Ibid, pp. 299.


6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 The World, the Text and the Critic, p. 175.

9 The World, the Text and the Critic, p. 172.


11 Humanism and Democratic Criticism, p. 141


Available online at <http:/www.la.utexas.edu/~chenry/2001LynnCheneyjsg01ax1.pdf> This statement was deleted from the revised February 2002 version of the report available on the ACTA Web site at <http:/www.goacta.org/publications/Reports/defciv.pdf> ACTA also posted on its Web site a list of 115 statements made by allegedly “un-American Professors.”

Cited in Foster and Davis, 131.

Foster and Davis, 132.


22 Ibid, p. lvi

23 William F. Buckley, God and Man at Yale, p. 91.

24 Ibid, pp. lx, 88. As this account makes clear, Buckley’s attacks on the Yale faculty were clearly influenced by the rhetoric of forerunners such as Allen Zoll. Indeed, the young Buckley was the star protégé of Frank Chodorow, a colleague of Zoll’s whose Intercollegiate Society for Individualists (ISI) was one of the first organizations devoted to inculcating free market ideologies among college students. For a discussion of Buckley’s links with ISI, see Katherine Demarrais, “‘The Haves and the Have Mores:’ Fueling a Conservative Ideological War on Public Education (or Tracking the Money),” Education Studies 39.3 (2006): 217.


29 The full text of the Powell memorandum is available on


31 Ginsburg and Lyche, 19.

32 See the Foreign Policy Research Institute’s listing of 5,000 think tanks at
<http://fpri.org/research/thinktanks/>.

33 Ginsburg and Lyche, 19.

34 Quoted in Demarrais, 208. Liberal groups, it should be noted, have become far more aggressive in their efforts to establish think tanks capable of competing with those of the Right
over the last decade.

35 Demarrais, 221.

36 Demarrais, 220.

37 On the IEA-Philanthropy Round Table link, see Demarrais, 205.

38 Demarrais, 206.

39 The Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation, <www.bradleyfdn.org/pdfs/05WIgrantsReduced.pdf>.


44 Ibid.


47 David Horowitz, The Professors: the 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America (Regnery
48 Orientalism, p. 9

49 Ibid.

50 Edward Said, Orientalism, p. 25


52 See Steven Mikulan, “University of Fear: How the Department of Homeland Security is becoming a big man on campus,” LA Weekly, April 2-8, 2004,


54 For a representative discussion of academic capitalism’s impact on faculty members, see David Noble, ‘Digital Diploma Mills,’ in Steal This University: 33-48.


59 Ibid, p. 16