

License for Leftists

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Libertarians should avoid taking sides in left-right antagonisms when promoting a principled third position would make more sense.

Regrettably, in [*“Christopher Rufo Wants To Shut Down ‘Activist’ Academic Departments. Here’s Why He’s Wrong.”*](#) libertarian magazine *Reason* fails to offer that alternative.

“In an essay published this week in *City Journal*,” author Emma Camp begins, “conservative activist Christopher Rufo [argued](#) that universities — or rather, the state legislatures governing these universities — should shut down ‘activist’ academic departments. But rather than protecting higher education,

Let Marxist professors find payers in the private sector.

forcibly shutting down left-wing academic departments would be nothing more than routine censorship.”

Tellingly, she never defines “routine” censorship.

Let me help: routine censorship is the governmental policy of preventing or punishing private speech on private property.

State colleges and universities are public institutions, *politically* established and *subsidized* by taxpayers. With few exceptions, “private colleges” are also routinely tax-funded at the demand end, and are further supported with research contracts.



Getting rid of Marxist professors preaching political revolution is no more anti-free speech than preventing the CDC and Anthony Fauci from conducting gain-of-function virus research within some college laboratory.

Ms. Camp quotes the Supreme Court about the importance of “safeguarding academic freedom, which is of transcendent value to all of us and not merely to the teachers concerned.” Freedom sounds great, but as usual, the Supremes forget that taxpayers have an interest, and that constraints on public schools was once routine.

So how not to “cast a pall of orthodoxy over the classroom”?

Offer a third position: de-subsidize and dis-establish government “education” by empowering higher education’s customers. Let Marxist professors find payers in the private sector.

Instead, Emma Camp effectively tells conservatives they have no choice but to fund every leftist program that politics and the bureaucracy allow. She could have recognized that “Academic freedom” in the context of tax-subsidized schooling is merely ideological license.

Which is itself a sad alternative to real liberty.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.