

Elite Universities: Incubators of Leftist Ideology

by Yuriy V. Karpov

Many American parents, whose dream is to have their kids enrolled in one of the elite American Universities, do not suspect that the realization of this dream will result in the almost guaranteed leftist indoctrination of their children. The economist Richard Vedder wrote: “For several years, something has puzzled me: the most elite, selective, expensive American universities are hotbeds of liberal activism.”¹ Indeed, 91 percent of faculty of the American elite universities are liberals.² And, sometimes, defining such faculty members as simply “liberals” is a gross understatement. For example, one such denizen of the “liberal faculty” is Angela Davis, a radical communist and a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz, who has been awarded the Lenin Peace Prize from the Soviet Union. Another “liberal faculty” member who until recently held the titles of Distinguished Professor of Education and Senior University Scholar at the University of Colorado Boulder, was

William Ayers. In his youth, William Ayers was the head of a leftist terrorist group (a period of his life for which he has never been sorry), and his major “scientific contribution” to the field of education relates to writing several books on topics of the leftist indoctrination of young people.

My acquaintance with university leftists started in 1992, when I was appointed a Visiting Associate Professor at a university that has shared the proud title “Harvard of the South” with several other elite southern schools. In all the political conversations, my new colleagues would describe the United States as a racist, sexist, and imperialist country, which must repent for its sins to both Third World countries and domestic minorities. Sometimes their manifestations of ideological beliefs were simply crass. I remember a professor attaching a copy of an angry letter that her teenage daughter had sent to President Bush to her office door. The next day, she was proudly accepting congratulations from

our colleagues on the wisdom of her offspring's political views.

The ideological views of the university students mirrored those of their professors. In one of my graduate courses, I described the famous study by Alexander Luria demonstrating that the ability to solve theoretical problems develops as a result of school instruction.³ I was astonished to see that simply discussing data from the study resulted in outrage among my students who immediately accused Luria (and me) of "Eurocentrism," with one of them subsequently dropping the course.

Various publications have provided many striking examples of the leftist views of students in American elite universities. For example, Georgetown University students openly announced they were "embarrassed" to be Americans, and some of them admitted that "going to college shaped their anti-American perception."⁴

It is worthy of note that humanities or social studies are not the only subject domains that have been used by the leftist faculty to brainwash their students. For example, Professor Eric Gutstein of the University of Illinois at Chicago has built his math class on the idea that math problems should help students better understand the "injustice" of capitalism.⁵

Indoctrinating their students and demanding "at least a rough allegiance to a leftist perspective as qualification for membership in the [humanities and social science] faculty,"⁶ the academic elite tend to be very lenient toward even the

most outrageous statements and views as long as they are in line with leftist dogmas. In 2001, Ward Churchill, a professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, published an essay in which he claimed that the U.S. deserved the September 11 terrorist attack and called the victims of this attack "little Eichmanns." It was only in 2005, as a result of a public uproar, that university officials launched an investigation, and in 2007, Churchill was finally axed. However, his termination was not due to his outrageous essay (which, as per the university officials, "was protected speech under the First Amendment"); the investigation simply revealed cases of plagiarism, fabrication, and falsification in his research.⁷

Another scandalous incident recently took place at Yale, where a psychiatrist of Indian-origin invited by the university (and who had been trained at New York University, Cornell, and Columbia University) spoke about her fantasies of shooting white people. Her presentation, entitled, "The psychopathic problem of the white mind" included statements like: "White people make my blood boil" or "I had fantasies of unloading a revolver into the head of any white person that got in my way, burying their body, and wiping my bloody hands as I walked away relatively guiltless with a bounce in my step, like I did the world a favor." After a painstaking two months of profound intellectual deliberation, school leaders concluded that the tone and content of this lecture were "antithetical to the values of the school." A decision was made "to limit access to the video to

those who could have attended the talk: members of the Yale community.”⁸

On the other hand, it takes the “academic Themis” much less deliberation to severely punish anybody who has dared to say or do something that does not fit the standards of “political correctness.”⁹ As a recent example, a Georgetown University law professor was fired for just expressing a concern about her black students’ law grades in a zoom conversation, which was overheard and recorded without her knowledge.¹⁰ The accusation against the professor’s should be checked against the statement made by the Georgetown Black Law Students Association, which asserted that this case “is also illustrative of the conscious and unconscious bias systematically present in law school grading at Georgetown Law and in law school classrooms nationwide.”¹¹ But American “law professors . . . are really quite liberal,”¹² so we have two options: conclude that “really quite liberal” American law professors are racists, or to explore alternative explanations for the lower grades of black students in the Georgetown professor’s class, as well as in law school classrooms nationwide.

Ostracism and disciplinary actions are not the only dangers that dissident faculty face at elite universities. The hate and aggression demonstrated by students toward anyone who expresses views different from leftist dogma cause fear even in their liberal mentors. As one of them confessed, “I’m a liberal professor, and my liberal students terrify me.”¹³ A professor at Northwestern

testifies that most academics she knows “live in fear of some classroom incident spiraling into professional disaster” and “routinely avoid discussing subjects in classes that might raise hackles.”¹⁴ Reflecting on this sad reality, Caitlin Flanagan in *The Atlantic* wrote:

The college revolutions of the 1960s—the ones that gave rise to the social-justice warriors of today’s campuses—were fueled by free speech. But once you’ve won a culture war, free speech is a nuisance, and “eliminating” language becomes a necessity . . . Reputations and even academic careers can be destroyed by a single comment—perhaps thoughtless, perhaps misinterpreted, perhaps (God help you) intended as a joke—that violates the values of the herd.¹⁵

Alas, even doing their best to avoid any “politically incorrect” statements, professors may still get in trouble with their students. For example, students at the University of California, Los Angeles, accused their professor of racism because he “insulted” a student (probably, a native American) by lowercasing the capital *I* in the word “indigenous” when correcting her paper.¹⁶

A similar incident took place recently at the University of Michigan: a professor, who is a well-known composer, conductor, and musician, showed his students of music composition the film presentation of Shakespeare’s “Othello” starring Laurence Olivier. The students became “incredibly offended” with the fact that Olivier played in blackface and filed a complaint demanding the professor’s removal as course instructor. The professor apologized several times for

his “insensitivity,” but it did not help, and he stepped down from the class.¹⁷

Sometimes, “liberal” students consider “disciplinary actions” insufficient to punish their “ideological enemies,” so they resort to using physical violence against them. Several years ago, Charles Murray, a renowned political scientist, was invited to present at Middlebury College. His presentation was disrupted by students shouting “racist, sexist, anti-gay, Charles Murray, go away!” When Murray and the hosting college professor attempted to leave the building, they were physically attacked by the students, after which the professor was hospitalized with a neck injury and concussion. Murray later described the incident as “straight out of casting for a film of brownshirt rallies”¹⁸ (the observation that brings to mind the famous maxim attributed to Ronald Reagan: “If fascism ever comes to America, it will come in the name of liberalism”). So, what was Murray’s supposed “crime”? In their bestseller *The Bell Curve*, Murray and his co-author put forth a hypothesis suggesting that genetic factors may at least partially contribute to the differences in average IQ test performance among racial groups (they, emphasized, however, that regardless of the hypothesis’s accuracy, they strongly oppose any form of racial discrimination).¹⁹

In a similar incident that more recently took place at Yale Law School, students shouted down, intimidated, insulted, and threatened a conservative guest speaker. The irony of this case is

that it took place at the start of a bipartisan *free speech* panel.²⁰

To be sure, not only faculty at elite universities can face serious consequences for any deviation from the standards of political correctness. A student at the University of Michigan was fired from the campus newspaper, boycotted, and harassed by other students for joking about the concept of microaggression.²¹ Alas, it is difficult to disagree with the student’s ironic attitude about this concept since the quoted examples of microaggression include such statements as “America is the land of opportunity” and “I believe the most qualified person should get the job!”²² A conservative student at the University of California-Berkeley was assaulted by a violent leftist.²³ As an article in the student newspaper of Washington University in St. Louis has announced, “it’s OK that conservatives don’t feel welcome.”²⁴

American students at elite universities not only spend time and effort “disciplining” their politically incorrect mentors and classmates but also actively voice their judgment on all the major international events. Their stand in such cases is totally consistent with the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin’s position:

In what sense do we reject ethics, reject morality? In the sense given to it by the bourgeoisie, who based ethics on God’s commandments. . . . We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the proletariat’s class struggle.²⁵

The only difference between Lenin’s quoted position and the position of the

American leftist students is that their “morality” is “entirely subordinated” not “to the interests of the proletariat’s class struggle,” but to the interests of the struggle of any country, movement, or even a terrorist organization belonging to the Third World against “imperialism, colonialism, and Zionism.” This “morality” (or, to be more precise, the absence of normal human morality) was revealed by students of Harvard University, Columbia University, and a number of other elite universities in their responses to the barbaric killing and torturing of more than a thousand Israeli civilians, including women and babies, by Hamas terrorists on October 7, 2023. Rather than expressing sympathy to the victims of this massacre, the students claimed that Israel was “entirely responsible” for it,²⁶ and that Hamas’ actions were simply a “counter-offensive against their settler-colonial oppressor.”²⁷ After the outrage of the American public (and, what was probably even more important, these universities’ donors) against the pro-Hamas stand of the leftist students, their statements were criticized by some students, alumni, and faculty.²⁸

Often, however, student “mentors” enthusiastically supported the barbaric views of their pupils. Thus, after Chancellor Rodríguez wrote that the CUNY community “wholeheartedly reject the participation of organizations affiliated with CUNY in demonstrations that glorify Saturday’s violence and celebrate the killings, injuries and capture of innocent people,” more than 125 CUNY faculty and staff members signed a statement

objecting to the “censure [of] expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian people.”²⁹ The same reference to the “freedom of expression” was used by a Yale spokesperson to defend Zareena Grewal, a Yale University professor, who celebrated the October 7th onslaught in her tweets.³⁰ Similarly, Columbia University refused to condemn its professor, Joseph Massad, who called Hamas massacre “awesome.”³¹

The hypocrisy of elite university leadership invoking “the freedom of expression” to justify a very lenient attitude toward pro-Hamas activism of their students and faculty was exposed during the congressional hearings on anti-Semitism on college campuses held on December 5th, 2023.³² Members of the House Education Committee presented several instances where the principle of “freedom of expression” was not applied by the university leadership when it came to protecting “politically incorrect” views and statements (several such examples were also described in this article earlier). Moreover, the hearings revealed another troubling fact: Harvard, UPenn, and MIT, whose presidents testified at the hearings, have not only become safe harbors for anti-Israel activism but also for radical-left antisemitism, with Jewish students facing discrimination and harassment.

The dominance of leftist ideology at elite American universities has serious implications not only on the process of education but also on scientific research—a fact that the academic left not only admits but celebrates. For instance,

a former president of the American Psychological Association openly “urged psychologists to advocate ‘radical’ leftist positions and ‘explicitly blend our data and values in order to make strong arguments for the kind of [radical] change we think is necessary.’”³³ As a result, in the field of psychological research, “sociopolitical biases influence the questions asked, the research methods selected, the interpretation of research results, the peer review process, judgments about research quality, and decisions about whether to use research in policy advocacy.”³⁴

Three American researchers performed a “study” that illustrates the importance of the social-political views of the researchers for determining if work gets published. They wrote twenty pseudoscientific articles on the topics of gender, race, and sexuality, stuffed with absurd arguments and leftist mantras, and sent them to very prestigious journals. By the time their “trickery” was exposed, seven of those articles had been accepted for publication (one of the papers suggested putting “privileged” white and male students on the floor in chains; another one was a chapter from Adolf Hitler’s “Mein Kampf,” re-written in feminist language).³⁵

One example of a “scientific accomplishment” in the field of social sciences resulting from the dominance of leftist ideology is the famous “critical race theory” developed at Harvard in the 1970s, according to which all white people are inherently racist.³⁶ Another such example is the leftist interpretation of the fa-

mous study of Alexander Luria, which, as I mentioned earlier, became the reason for a “clash” between me and my graduate students at a “Harvard of the South.”

Luria’s study, which was performed in the 1930s, demonstrated that, when asked theoretical questions, the typical responses of illiterate adults “were a complete denial of the possibility of drawing conclusions from propositions about things they had no personal experience of.”³⁷ Based on these results, it was concluded that the ability to solve theoretical problems is a developmental outcome of school instruction. This conclusion, however, is unacceptable to the leftist academics because they “perceive the manifestation of Eurocentrism in the identification of qualitative differences in thinking” of people in industrialized and pre-literate societies.³⁸ Therefore, they re-interpreted these findings, groundlessly suggesting that illiterate people can solve theoretical problems, but they simply cannot use this ability to solve school-content problems.³⁹ Moreover, at least one of these academics continued to defend this suggestion⁴⁰ even after it was experimentally proven wrong.⁴¹

It’s not only social sciences that suffer from the leftists’ ideological dogmas. It is the principal position of the academic left that even in math or natural sciences “social and political interests dictate scientific ‘answers’ . . . Science is . . . a mythic structure justifying the dominance of one class, one race, one gender over another.”⁴² This results in the academic left

celebrating the “scientific discoveries” about “African experimental aeronautics” during the Hellenistic period,⁴³ or making the claim that “the melanin of deep-hued Central Africans enhanced their physical powers to the point that . . . the astronomical knowledge [of the Sirius system] could be acquired by direct and unmediated insight.”⁴⁴

Reflecting on this reality, Paul Gross and Norman Levitt sadly predict that “there will be many more calls for ‘feminist’ courses in biology and ‘Afrocentric’ courses in mathematics”⁴⁵ which reminds them of the views of Nazi physicists who denounced Einstein’s “‘Jewish physics’ and proclaimed ‘Aryan physics.’”⁴⁶ This reality also reminds me of the officials of Stalin’s oppressive regime, who denounced genetics and cybernetics as “bourgeois sciences.”

Although only two to five percent of American students study at elite institutions,⁴⁷ their further impact on the ideological climate in the country far exceeds their numbers. Graduates of elite universities account for more than 50 percent of the individuals listed in *Forbes*’ ranking of American elites.⁴⁸ As shown in one study, half of all faculty vacancies in the U.S. at that time were filled by graduates from the top eight universities.⁴⁹ Another study found that more than half of the authors of scientific publications belonged to the top nine American universities.⁵⁰

Also, elite university graduates occupy influential positions within corporations, state structures, and media. All these provide them with ample opportu-

nities to propagate leftist ideas throughout American life, indoctrinate students at “regular” colleges, and efficiently “cancel” their opponents. These are just two examples illustrating the efficiency of the leftists’ indoctrination and ideological pogroms: a) 49.6 percent of young voters would prefer to live in a socialist country;⁵¹ and b) in the 1950s, during the McCarthyite “witch-hunting,” only 13.4 percent of Americans felt less free to speak their minds than they used to; in 1987, this figure reached 20 percent; and in 2019, it reached 40 percent.⁵²

Goodbye, America?

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