

CALL FOR PAPERS

JAF

Practices of Academic Freedom in Times of Austerity

On Twitter, Kenyan blogger Keguro Macharia (@keguro_) regularly poses the question, “How will you practice freedom today?” It is a useful reminder that freedom is not only an ideal but also a practice and lived experience. The question prompts us to ask, How does one practice, rather than merely protect, academic freedom? And how can these practices be expanded and made irresistible?

As these practices are enacted in the context of austerity that curtails academic freedom, we also ask, How can collective and individual responses to austerity redefine available practices of freedom? How might posing academic freedom as a struggle over material means change our ideas and strategies? What is the relationship between academic freedom, other ideas of freedoms, and other freedom struggles? How does academic freedom function for precarious faculty and staff, for students, for tenured and tenure-track faculty from marginalized groups?

For its next volume, scheduled for publication in fall 2021, the *Journal of Academic Freedom* will consider any original article on the topic of academic freedom, but we are especially interested in the following topics:

ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM STRUGGLES

Black studies scholar Barbara Ransby observes that the Black Lives Matter movement “is nothing less than a challenge to all of us to rethink, reimagine, and reconstruct the entire society we live in.” This includes the university and practices of academic freedom. The ongoing uprisings associated with the Movement for Black Lives demand that we reconsider higher education’s physical spaces and cultural practices, including monuments and public art; classroom curricula and conversations; the peopling of the university; and the relationship between institutions and the communities they serve, or fail to serve.

SANCTUARY CAMPUSES

How do calls for sanctuary campuses affect the practice of academic freedom? What are aspirational and actually existing models of sanctuary campuses, and how do these engage broad questions of shared governance and academic freedom? How does the struggle for sanctuary campuses link higher education advocacy to broader social movements?

PEDAGOGY AND AFFECT

The classroom is an important space for the practice of academic freedom. Contemporary freedom movements raise important questions about access to the classroom and diverse experiences within it. Along with the dynamic challenges posed by teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic, insights from freedom struggles provide new models for teaching and learning. How do LGBTQ, disability rights, and BIPOC formations propose alternative practices of academic freedom? What are the parameters of these new models, and what opportunities and challenges do they convey?

THE MATERIAL MEANS OF MENTAL PRODUCTION

Academic freedom is conditioned on access to resources—libraries, classrooms, research funds, time, access to a community of scholars—that are the tools that Karl Marx called the “material means of mental production.” Though the ideal of the university promises academic freedom to faculty, in reality external boards and state governors are the legal guardians of university property and ultimately control access to the instruments of knowledge production. How do academics fight to wrest control of the material means of mental production? What is the relationship of this struggle to broader social transformations? How has the imposition of austerity budgets at public and private institutions changed the terms of these struggles?

LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS

In the struggle for academic freedom, libraries are essential sites and librarians are essential workers. How can libraries be spaces for the expansion of academic and other freedoms? How do issues around collections, catalogs, access, reference, and information literacy affect academic freedom? How have librarians expanded academic freedom in fights against austerity budgets, profit-driven publishers, and surveillance, and in fights for open access, privacy, and freedom from harassment?

INTERNATIONALIST PRACTICES

How are practices of academic freedom staged outside of the United States? What lessons in fighting austerity emanate from other geographic contexts? How are austerity regimes outgrowths of colonial and neocolonial ones? How are practices of academic freedom also practices of decolonization?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Electronic submissions of 2,000–8,000 words should be sent to jaf@aaup.org by February 8, 2021, and they must include an abstract of about 150 words and a short biographical note of one to two sentences about the author(s). Authors using pseudonyms must notify the journal at the time of submission, disclose their real names, and explain their reasons for wishing to keep their identities confidential. **Please read our editorial policy and the complete call for papers at <https://www.aaup.org/about-jaf> prior to submitting.** We welcome submissions by any and all faculty, staff, graduate students, and independent scholars. If you have any questions, contact faculty editors Rachel Ida Buff at rbuff@uwm.edu or S. Ani Mukherji at mukherji@hws.edu (please do not send submissions to these addresses).