

educational traditions, challenges, and resources to the make-up of schools and society. It is hard to see a collection which purports to deal with teacher education for the diversity of schools without addressing more explicitly both the education of teachers for Native children and also the professional education of Native American teachers. Although the book's various analyses, proposals, and themes may by extension have application for education of and by Native Americans, there are important cultural, legal, and moral differences between them and the post-contact majority and minority groups, and these need to be recognized and considered in discussions about preparing teachers for all students. It is a weakness of the collection that it pays so little attention to the Native American reality.

The book does, however, have many strengths. The style is clear and readable throughout, thus freeing the reader from wrestling with the text to wrestle with the issues. Extensive references at the conclusion of each paper are a real bonus for those who are tantalized, provoked, or disturbed by what they read and who are stimulated to pursue matters further.

Russell, Conrad, *Academic Freedom*. New York: Routledge, 1993, pp. xi, 119. Reviewed by Michael Skolnik, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Conrad Russell is Professor of British History at King's College, University of London and an active member of both the House of Lords and the Liberal Democratic Party. As one with a foot in both camps, he intended this book as a contribution to the task of working out new terms of cooperation between the universities of the United Kingdom and its government. In addition to his capacity for demonstrating an historian's insights into the relationship between the universities and the state over the centuries, there is another aspect of Lord Russell's relationship to the topic of the book which merits a footnote. His father, Bertrand Russell, had the notoriety of twice being dismissed from academic positions for expressing opinions which were at the time unpopular or controversial.

In the frontespiece, Lord Russell quotes the Academic Freedom amendment to the Education Reform Bill of 1988, moved by Lord Jenkins:

The freedom within the law to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas and controversial or unpopular opinions without placing themselves in jeopardy of losing their jobs or privileges they may have at their institutions.

While the book contains some interesting observations about earlier centuries relative to the conceptualization of academic freedom embodied in the passage quoted above, in regard to its principal theme – that there has been an alarming erosion of academic freedom in the U.K. – it is referring to a rather different view of what constitutes academic freedom. An indication of Lord Russell's orientation toward academic freedom is that, of the four chapters, the one that is perhaps most central to his argument is one entitled, "Unit Costs."

The essence of Lord Russell's argument is that beyond the Lord Jenkins amendment, the idea of academic freedom includes some sphere of autonomous professional judgment:

If we cannot decide how to teach, what the standard of the degree should be, what its justification and purpose are, or whether students are good enough to be admitted, what academic freedom do we have left?

The Jenkins amendment type of academic freedom, in the name of which scholars in various times and places have gone to the barricades, the prison, or the executioner, Lord Russell regards as irrelevant to today's struggles. He likens this amendment to the *pagan temple of Victory preserved in the Senate of Christian Rome*, "a sentimental reminder of departed glories."

The ways in which Lord Russell claims that the State has encroached on academic freedom (or threatened to encroach – he is not always clear on the distinction between what has been proposed and what has happened, a source of frustration to the overseas reader) mostly involve funding, more specifically the system of financial rewards and punishments which the Government uses to spur the universities on to greater efficiency. For example, Lord Russell criticizes Government attempts to dictate the amount of time a Ph.D. must take. What he is referring to is the practice whereby degrees not completed in four years are classified as not completed – even if later completed to universal acclaim – and the university loses funds as a result. He accepts the Government's right to limit the number of years of postgraduate study for which it will pay, but objects to this practice as an infringement on what should be a matter of academic judgment. Since the policy on this matter which he says he would accept seems awfully close in its practical effects to the one to which he strongly objects, I would like to have seen some discussion of the distinction between the two. In general, this book would have been better had the author anticipated the obvious criticisms of his arguments and responded to them.

Nowhere does the absence of any defense of the book's intellectual ram-parts make them more inviting to attack than in the chapter on unit costs. The

conceptual underpinning of this chapter is what in the Canadian literature on higher education policy has been known as the Accessibility-Quality-Funding Triangle (COU, 1982). The essential idea is that quality is determined by the ratio of funding to the number of students, or unit costs in Lord Russell's terms. Thus, if funding is held constant, accessibility and quality are inversely related. With Government controlling funding, academics must choose between maintaining quality or increasing accessibility, or the least undesirable combination of values of the two that is attainable with given funding.

Lord Russell's argument is that the Government in the U.K. determines both funding and student numbers. He does not explain exactly how the Government determines enrolment, but intimates that it is through a combination of an enrolment-driven funding policy, exhortation, and threat. Thus, the Government determines unit costs. For Lord Russell, unit cost is a surrogate not only for quality, but for degree standards and teaching methods. Hence, he concludes that by controlling both funding and enrolment levels, the Government determines degree standards and teaching methods; and that constitutes a massive infringement on academic freedom.

There is some validity in this chain of reasoning which would apply, in varying degrees, to just about every publicly funded system of education in the world. However, none of the relationships in the chain is as tight as Lord Russell assumes. Conceptually, there are reasons to expect a great deal of variance in quality associated with any level of unit cost; and, in fact, empirical studies of cost and quality generally have failed to demonstrate a very close relationship between the two. Similarly, while unit costs levels might constrain the choice of teaching methods, there is probably more flexibility available within any unit cost range than lack of imagination and institutional rigidity allow us to exploit. There is also some margin within which Government does not control funds or enrolment. The question is, when all these margins of flexibility are put together, just how absolute is Government's control over quality, degree standards, and teaching methods? Lord Russell might have been more persuasive if he had addressed that question.

If one grants the validity of all Lord Russell's observations, there remains the question of whether academic freedom is really the issue here. In the typical exposition of academic freedom, for example, the encyclopedic entry by Shils (1991), a distinction is made between academic freedom and institutional or professional autonomy. For Shils, it is not an infringement of academic freedom for the state to determine what subjects will be taught and by how many professors, but it would be an infringement for the state to prescribe the substantive content of or point of view in what is taught, or the conclusions of research.

Lord Russell is mindful of this distinction, but he is also wary about it. The essence of his position is encapsulated in the following comment which he makes about the medieval Church, of which, he claims, academics are the lineal heirs:

...the claims of the medieval Church to freedom to discharge its own spiritual functions were always treated as inseparable from its claims to jurisdictional autonomy. So great a power of ideas, facing so great a power of the sword, could only survive if it established a very firm taboo on State interference in its own affairs in any shape or form.

Translated to the United Kingdom of the Thatcher-Major Era, what Lord Russell sees is a Government hell-bent on bringing about a massive change in the culture of the universities and wielding unprecedented control over them, and in doing so backed strongly by public opinion. As Lord Russell describes the context and climate of relations between the universities in the U.K. and the State, the conceptual boundary between academic freedom and professional autonomy seems most permeable.

Ultimately, recognizing the phenomena to which Lord Russell calls attention is more important than how they are labeled. Titling his book, *Academic Freedom*, no doubt serves the purpose of a call to arms much better than had it been called, *Professional Autonomy in Academe*. Still, as one who specializes in this area of study, I have a little trouble viewing a situation in which teaching loads are too heavy for professors to do much research as a violation of academic freedom. To stretch the term, academic freedom, too far, is to risk losing credibility and understanding with those groups outside the university whose respect for this principle is essential. Also, it will be necessary to introduce new terms to differentiate among types of academic freedom. It is, after all, quite possible to find trends and practices in higher education which one deplores but which are not violations of academic freedom. In summary, this is a wonderfully thoughtful and provocative book, but I'm not sure it's appropriately titled.

## References

- Council of Ontario Universities (COU). (1982). *Squeezing the triangle. Review 1978-79 to 1981-82*. Toronto: Council of Ontario Universities.
- Shils, Edward. (1991). Academic freedom. In Philip G. Altbach, (Ed.), *International higher education: An encyclopedia*. New York: Garland Publishing Inc., Vol. 1, pp. 1-22.