

## *A Brief Statement*

Karl Marx was a champion of civic freedom, an opponent of all absolutist doctrine and a deep believer in the cut and thrust of open argument. He would have been appalled by the prospect that his own ideas might be used as a way of stifling alternative views. In a world marked by the clash of different forms of despotism, both political and intellectual, universities have a greater obligation than ever to act as centers of free, unfettered inquiry. In the West, this role has been profoundly threatened by the submission of higher education to market forces and soulless neo-managerial ideologies; elsewhere in the world, it is being put in jeopardy by ideological dogmatism. In both cases, the effect is the same: to undermine institutions which are supposed to thrive on dialogue, free investigation and open debate. The results of this for the spiritual and intellectual life of humanity could be catastrophic.

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