



Freedom for the Thought That We Hate: A Biography of the First Amendment

By Anthony Lewis



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More than any other people on earth, we Americans are free to say and write what we think. The press can air the secrets of government, the corporate boardroom, or the bedroom with little fear of punishment or penalty. This extraordinary freedom results not from America's culture of tolerance, but from fourteen words in the constitution: the free expression clauses of the First Amendment.

In *Freedom for the Thought That We Hate*, two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner Anthony Lewis describes how our free-speech rights were created in five distinct areas—political speech, artistic expression, libel, commercial speech, and unusual forms of expression such as T-shirts and campaign spending. It is a story of hard choices, heroic judges, and the fascinating and eccentric defendants who forced the legal system to come face to face with one of America's great founding ideas.



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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The First Amendment's injunction that Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press seems cut and dried, but its application has had a vexed history, according to this lucid legal history, Lewis's first book in 15 years (after *Make No Law* and *Gideon's Trumpet*). Some suppressions of free speech passed constitutional muster in their day: the 1798 Sedition Act criminalized criticism of the president, and the WWI-era Sedition Act sentenced a minister to 15 years in prison for telling his Bible class that a Christian can take no part in the war. Law professor and Pulitzer Prize-winning ex-New York Times columnist Lewis explores other First Amendment legal quagmires, including libel law, privacy issues, the press's shielding of confidential sources, obscenity and hate speech. Not quite a free speech absolutist, he's for punishing speech that urges terrorist violence to an audience... whose members are ready to act. Lewis's story is about the advancement of freedom by the likes of Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., Louis Brandeis and others whose bold judicial decisions have made the country what it is. The result is an occasionally stirring account of America's evolving idea of liberty.

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About the Author

Two-time Pulitzer Prize-winner **Anthony Lewis** was a columnist for the *New York Times* op-ed page from 1969 through 2001. In addition to his long and distinguished career with the *Times*, Mr. Lewis has been a lecturer on law at Harvard Law School and a visiting professor at the Universities of California, Illinois, Oregon, and Arizona, and, since 1983, the James Madison Visiting Professor at Columbia University. His previous books are *Gideon's Trumpet* and *Make No Law*. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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