

Intellectuals and Society
by Thomas Sowell
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(Page 2) The capacity to grasp and manipulate complex ideas is enough to define intellect but not enough to encompass intelligence, which involves combining intellect with judgment and care in selecting relevant explanatory factors and in establishing empirical tests of any theory that emerges.

George Orwell said that some ideas are so foolish that only an intellectual could believe them, for no ordinary man could be such a fool.

(Page 8) Not only have intellectuals been insulated from material consequences, they have often enjoyed immunity from even a loss of reputation after having been demonstrably wrong.

(Page 17) The ignorance, prejudices, and groupthink of an educated elite are still ignorance, prejudice, and groupthink----and for those with one percent of the knowledge in a society to be guiding or controlling those with the other 99 percent is as perilous as it is absurd.

(Page 25) The fact that central planning was abandoned by country after country in the late twentieth century----even in countries with communist or socialist governments suggests the depth and undeniability of that failure.

(Page 32) Fiscal irresponsibility has seldom provided a way out of poverty, whether for individuals or for nations.

(Page 39) Just over half of all Americans earning at or near the minimum wage are from 16 to 24 years of age----and of course these individuals cannot remain from 16 to 24 years of age indefinitely,.....But the routine rise of millions of people out of the lowest quintile over time makes a mockery of the barriers assumed by many, if not most, of the intelligentsia.

(Page 49) Among the other unsubstantiated notions about economics common among the intelligentsia are that there would be chaos in the economy without government planning or control.

(Page 61) The fundamental difference between decision-makers in the market and decision-makers in government is that the former are subject to continuous and consequential feedback which can force them to adjust to what others prefer and are willing to pay for, while those who make decisions in the political arena face no such inescapable feedback to force them to adjust to the reality of other people's desires and preferences.

(Page 70) Prior to this time(FDR), no president had attempted to have the federal government intervene to bring a depression to an end.

(Page 71) While unemployment went up in the wake of the stock market crash, it never went as high as 10 percent for any month during the 12 months following that crash in October 1929.

But the unemployment rate in the wake of subsequent government interventions in the economy never fell below 20 percent for any month over a period of 35 consecutive months.

(Page 73) The irony in this was that FDR presided over an economy with seven consecutive years of double-digit unemployment, while Reagan's policy of letting the market recover on its own, far from leading to another Great Depression, led instead to one of the country's longest periods of sustained economic growth, low unemployment and low inflation, lasting twenty years.

(Page 88) The real issue is why such things are regarded as obligations — the logical corollary of rights — upon other people who have agreed to no such obligation. If someone has a right, someone else has an obligation.

(Page 145) Intellectuals who take it upon themselves to filter facts, in the interest of their own vision, are denying to others the right they claim for themselves, to look at the world as it is and reach their own conclusions. Having an opinion, or expressing an opinion, is radically different from blocking information from reaching others who could form their own opinions.

(Page 149) It has been said that a fool can put on his coat better than a wise man can put it on for him....Credentialed ignorance is still ignorance.

(Page 170) The real issue regarding judicial activism is over whether the basis of a judge's decisions is the law created by others, including the Constitution, or whether judges base their decisions on their own particular conception of the needs of the times or of social justice or of other considerations beyond the written law or the legal precedents.

(179) If Congress itself is to decide how far its powers extend, what purpose can there be in Constitutional limitations on the power of Congress or of the federal government?

(Page 187) Those who founded the United States of America and wrote the Constitution saw property rights as essential for safeguarding all other rights.

(Page 239) The wartime costs of prewar self-indulgences in pacifist moral preening and anti-military crusades by the intelligentsia were staggering in both blood and treasure.

(Page 280) Patriotism is a recognition of a shared fate and the shared responsibilities that come with it. National honor is a recognition that one-day-at-a-time rationalism is a delusion that enables politicians to escape the responsibilities of statesmanship.

(Page 311) The intelligentsia have largely ignored or downplayed the things in which Americans lead the world — including philanthropy, technology, and the creation of life-saving medicines — and treated the errors, flaws and shortcomings that Americans share with human beings around the world as special defects of our society .

In the schools and colleges, the intelligentsia have changed the role of education from equipping

students with the knowledge and intellectual skills to weigh issues and make up their own minds into a process of indoctrination with the conclusions already reached by the anointed.