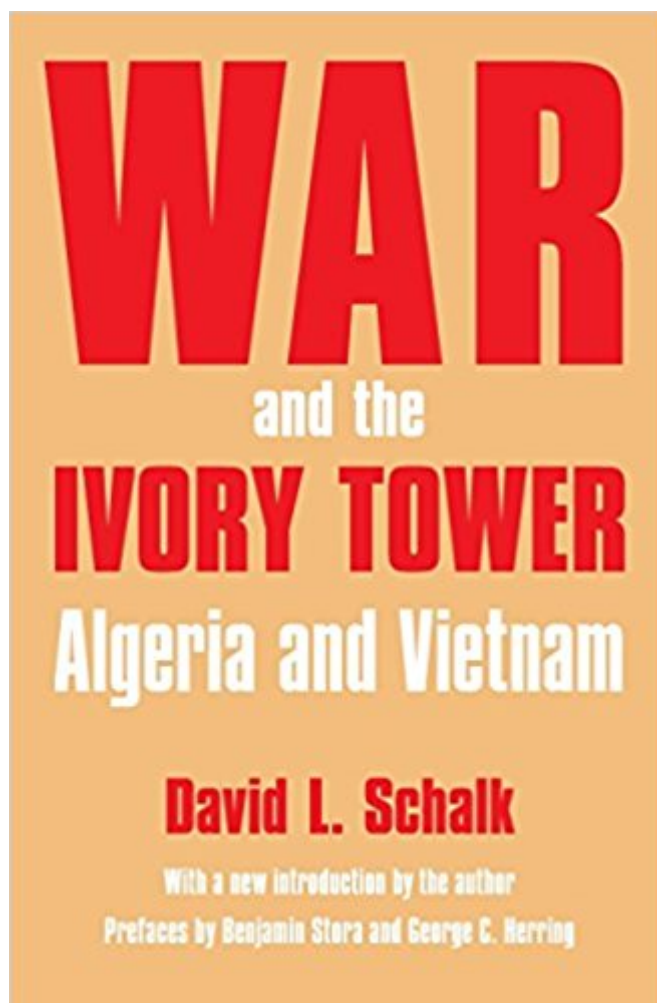


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War And The Ivory Tower: Algeria And Vietnam



Synopsis

In *War and the Ivory Tower*, David L. Schalk explores the public role of the intellectual in times of national crisis. He compares American responses to the Vietnam War with French responses to the Algerian War, finding many similarities in the way intellectuals voiced their outrage at the policies of their governments. At a time when national crises abound but protest is out of fashion, and intellectuals are possibly a dying species, this book presents a needed reexamination of what it means for intellectuals to speak out on issues of international importance.

Book Information

Paperback: 260 pages

Publisher: University of Nebraska Press (January 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0803293437

ISBN-13: 978-0803293434

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.6 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

Schalk (*The Spectrum of Political Engagement*) offers a comparative analysis of domestic opposition to France's Algerian war and America's Vietnam war, showing how the intelligentsia in both countries expressed disapproval in similar ways. He notes that Jean-Paul Sartre's 1960 signing of the "Manifesto of the 121" was not only a turning point in the French antiwar movement but directly inspired the "Call to Resist Illegitimate Authority" in its American counterpart seven years later. Schalk makes the unsupported charge that President Lyndon Johnson "took steps, perhaps out of spite," to prove that antiwar activism would have the opposite effect of what was intended. Some readers may wonder what the author means by "the intellectual elite;" nor does the author explain how the influence of that "elite" on the conduct of the 1954-62 war in Algeria and the 1964-75 war in Vietnam was more significant than that of the "non-elite." Photos. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A comparison of the role of intellectuals in opposing the wars in Algeria and Vietnam, respectively, by Schalk (History/Vassar). Schalk traces marked similarities between the wars themselves- -in the savagery with which they were fought; in the diplomatic and political burdens they imposed on the governments waging them; and in the ``almost uncanny'' similarity of the impact of their loss on each country, leading to the death of the Fourth Republic in France and the end of LBJ's presidency in the US. He finds a similar evolution in the activism of the intellectuals opposing both wars: initially pedagogic, composed of ``calm, rational, frequently scholarly writings'' in an effort to educate the publics and persuade the governments of the error of their ways; then moral, ``an ethically based protest and a growing sense of outrage and shame''; and finally ``counter legal,'' based on the precedent of the Nuremberg Trials, with small numbers participating in activities like refusing to pay taxes, assisting draft resisters, or destroying draft files. Schalk traces the impact of these events on antiwar intellectuals like Sartre and Camus in France and Noam Chomsky and Susan Sontag in the US, while giving much less attention to those like Raymond Aron or Sidney Hook who supported the war effort. Finally, in the least satisfactory section here, he considers whether such a concerted protest could happen again, at a time when some argue, rather unconvincingly, that the intellectual is almost extinct. Valuable for outlining the major and hitherto relatively unremarked parallels between the two experiences, and for doing so in a cool and dispassionate way. -- Copyright ©1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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