

# [PDF] Intellectuals

## Paul Johnson - pdf download free book

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### Books Details:

Title: Intellectuals

Author: Paul Johnson

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### **Description:**

Conservative historian Paul Johnson wears his ideology proudly on his sleeve in this often ruthless dissection of the thinkers and artists who (in his view) have shaped modern Western culture, having replaced some 200 years ago "the old clerisy as the guides and mentors of mankind." Taking on the likes of Karl Marx, Bertrand Russell, Lillian Hellman, and Noam Chomsky in turn, Johnson examines one idol after another and finds them all to have feet of clay. In his account, for instance, Ernest Hemingway emerges as an artistic hero who labored endlessly to forge a literary style unmistakably his own, but also as a deeply flawed man whose concern for the perfect phrase did not carry over to a concern for the women who loved him. Gossipy and sharply opinionated, Johnson's essay in cultural history spares no one.

Does it really matter that Henrik Ibsen was vain and arrogant, that Jean-Paul Sartre was incontinent? In Johnson's view, it does: these all-too-human foibles disqualify them, and other

thinkers, from presuming to criticize the shortcomings of society. "Beware intellectuals," he concludes (though, given the subjects of his book, it seems he means intellectuals only of the left). "Not only should they be kept well away from the levers of power, they should also be objects of particular suspicion when they seek to offer collective advice." Whether one agrees or not, Johnson's profiles are frequently amusing and illuminating, as when he suggests that the only proletarian Karl Marx ever knew in person was the poor maid who worked for him for decades and was never paid, except in room and board, for her labors. --*Gregory McNamee* --This text refers to the edition.

**From Publishers Weekly** Written from a conservative standpoint, these pummeling profiles of illustrious intellectuals are caustic, skewed, thought-provoking and thoroughly engaging. The author of *A History of the World* skeptically weighs each pundit's moral and judgmental credentials to give advice to humanity. He plays up the personal shortcomings of Marx, a failed academic given to pseudoscientific jargon, habitual anger and dictatorial habits; Sartre, a spoiled only child, existentialist philosopher of action who did nothing of consequence for the French Resistance and never lifted a finger to save the Jews; pacifist Bertrand Russell, who repeatedly advocated "preventative" nuclear war against Stalinist Russia between 1945 and 1949; Hemingway, whose adolescent rejection of his parents' religion is said to have triggered his secular ethic of action and violence. This rogues' gallery includes "notorious liar" Lillian Hellman; self-publicists Norman Mailer and Bertolt Brecht; leftist publisher Victor Gollancz, "a monster of self-deception"; Shelley, Rousseau, Tolstoy, Ibsen, others.  
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