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978-0-521-19232-3 - Arms and the University: Military Presence and the Civic Education of Non-military Students

Donald Alexander Downs and Ilia Murtazashvili

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Arms and the University

Military Presence and the Civic Education of Non-military Students

Alienation between the U.S. military and society has grown in recent decades. Such alienation is unhealthy, as it threatens both sufficient civilian control of the military and the long-standing ideal of the “citizen-soldier.” Nowhere is this issue more predominant than at many major universities, which began turning their backs on the military during the chaotic years of the Vietnam War. *Arms and the University* probes various dimensions of this alienation, as well as recent efforts to restore a closer relationship between the military and the university. Through theoretical and empirical analysis, Donald Alexander Downs and Ilia Murtazashvili show how a military presence on campus in the form of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) (including a case study of ROTC’s return to Columbia and Harvard universities), military history, and national security studies can enhance the civic and liberal education of non-military students, and in the process help to bridge the civil-military gap.

Donald Alexander Downs is Alexander Meiklejohn Professor of Political Science, Law, and Journalism at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the author of five books: *Nazis in Skokie: Freedom, Community, and the First Amendment*; *The New Politics of Pornography*; *More Than Victims: Battered Women, the Syndrome Society, and the Law*; *Cornell ’69: Liberalism and the Crisis of the American University*; and *Restoring Free Speech and Liberty on Campus*. He is the co-founder and director of the Wisconsin Center for the Study of Liberal Democracy at the University of Wisconsin and a frequent contributor to local, state, national, and international media.

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*Military Presence and the Civic Education
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DONALD ALEXANDER DOWNS

University of Wisconsin, Madison

ILIA MURTAZASHVILI

University of Pittsburgh



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*To Jen, Leo, Zoe, Susan, Jacqueline, and Alexander; and to the student
cadets and veterans who have striven so ably and honorably to foster the
citizen-soldier ideal and to bridge the gap between the military, the
university, and society*

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[Lincoln] expressed the new idea in the Gettysburg Address... He addressed Tocqueville's worry about the longevity of liberal democratic governments. . . . But the Civil War raised the question of whether such a government could survive, "testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and dedicated can endure" . . .

But what gave force to this argument was the occasion and setting of his speech. He delivered his remarks at a battlefield cemetery, dedicating the site. His speech was about death. . . . He said nothing to suggest that death was good. . . . He did not think, as Qutb did, that martyrs go on living in some respect, and that death is a garden of delights. He did not find brotherhood in death – did not see his highest aspirations realized in a field of the dead, as the totalitarians of the twentieth century have done, and are still doing. . . .

But neither did he avert his eyes from death. He spoke about death as "the last full measure of devotion," which Union soldiers had given. . . . Death was not their goal; but death was the measure of their commitment. "From these honored dead we take increased devotion," he said. He was explaining that a liberal society must be, when challenged, a warlike society; or it will not endure.

Paul Berman¹

¹ Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (Norton, 2003), pp. 169–70.

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Acknowledgments

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indebted to his insights even on those occasions when our views on certain matters and his part ways. Jim granted us very useful interviews and on-the-spot information as the ROTC movement progressed, including his own penetrating insights into the labyrinthine nature of the Columbia University political process and the rationales for ROTC. Our numerous interactions with Allan and Jim have been invaluable and inspiring, and we are honored to list them among our colleagues from “abroad,” so to speak.

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studies, ROTC, and American universities that we had not fully considered. The conference also provided a forum that brought us in contact with many other students with military experience at the University of Pittsburgh. One of these student-soldiers in particular, Lieutenant Christopher Zenk, now a newly commissioned officer in flight school, was always willing to take time from his demanding schedule to offer insight into the themes presented in this book. This book would not have been possible without the insight offered by the many experts in military affairs with whom we were fortunate to talk.

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