

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-62220-2 - Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CIVILITY AND SUBVERSION

The book provides a sophisticated alternative to existing accounts of the role of the intellectual in modern democracy. Arguing that society suffers from a systemic deliberation deficit, Jeffrey Goldfarb explores the potential of the intellectual as democratic agent, at once civilizing political contestation and subverting complacent consensus. The sentimental leftist view of the intellectual as guardian of democracy and the demonizing rightist view of the intellectual as obstructor of progress are both shown to be inadequate. Instead, intellectuals are portrayed as special kinds of “strangers” who pay careful attention to their critical faculties, uniquely equipping them to address the most pressing issues of today. Professor Goldfarb deploys classical and contemporary social theory to analyze a diverse set of intellectuals in action, from Socrates in fifth-century Athens to Malcolm X and Toni Morrison in twentieth-century America, and, drawing on personal acquaintance, the political dissidents in communist and post-communist Central Europe.

JEFFREY C. GOLDFARB is Professor of Sociology and Co-Chair of the Committee for Democratic Studies at the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York City. He is the author of numerous essays and scholarly articles as well as six books, including *After the Fall* (1992), *Beyond Glasnost* (1989), and *On Cultural Freedom* (1982). In addition to his scholarly work on cultural and intellectual life, he has been actively involved in democratic movements in Eastern and Central Europe, particularly Poland, since before the fall of communism. He was co-founder, along with Adam Michnik, of an international clandestine network of oppositional intellectuals, the Democracy Seminar. He draws on this first-hand experience in *Civility and Subversion*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-62220-2 - Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-62220-2 - Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CIVILITY AND SUBVERSION

The Intellectual in Democratic Society

JEFFREY C. GOLDFARB



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-62220-2 - Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521622202

© Jeffrey C. Goldfarb 1998

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1998

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-62220-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-62723-8 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in
this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is,
or will remain, accurate or appropriate. Information regarding prices, travel
timetables, and other factual information given in this work is correct at
the time of first printing but Cambridge University Press does not guarantee
the accuracy of such information thereafter.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-62220-2 - Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

*In memory of my father
Benjamin Goldfarb, 1915–1997*

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-62220-2 - Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-62220-2 - Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	Page ix
1 Introduction: the intellectuals at century's end	1
2 Who are the intellectuals?	20
3 The civil intellectual and the public	42
4 The subversive intellectual and the public	56
5 The civil society ideal	78
6 The intellectuals and the politics of culture after communism	103
7 The university	125
8 Race and discursive disruption	146
9 Race and sustained deliberation	161
10 Why is there no feminism after communism?	181
11 Civility and subversion in cynical times	203
<i>Notes</i>	222
<i>Bibliography</i>	240
<i>Index</i>	251

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-62220-2 - Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-62220-2 - Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society

Jeffrey C. Goldfarb

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Acknowledgments

This inquiry is about the importance of serious intellectual discussion. Talk also has been my primary method of investigation. Conversations with Talal Asad, Eugene Halton, Ira Katznelson, Marcin Krol, Elzbieta Matynia, Alberto Melucci, Adam Michnik, David Plotke, Robin Wagner-Pacifici, Terry Williams, Dmitri Shalin, Ann Snitow, Eviatar Zerubavel, and Ari and Vera Zolberg were important in helping me develop this project, as were discussions with students in my classes on intellectuals, media and civil society, and the sociology of culture at the New School for Social Research in New York City, and in seminars on the problems of democratic culture at the Democracy and Diversity Summer Graduate Institute in Cracow, Poland. Further, I would like to acknowledge my debt to my teacher, Donald Levine, whose insights into the work of Georg Simmel have provided me with a way to think about the democratic intellectual with engagement, but, I hope, without ideology.

Some years ago, in the preface to my book *The Cynical Society*, I acknowledged my debt to my father, a private intellectual, for what he taught me about politics. Here, I dedicate this work to his memory, with a sense of loss, and with profound appreciation for what he taught me about living a meaningful life.