

ABSTRACT

This study sets out, first, to evaluate some of the various attempts to define intellectuals and discuss their role in politics. The inadequacies of these attempts are critically discussed and an alternative formulation is advanced.

Secondly, a case study examines in particular the position of an intellectual in the "colonial situation", revealing the extent to which the dominant culture, "colour" and "class" influences combine to determine the response to that situation.

The metropolitan experience is described, to show how and why the initial radicalism generated in the colonies becomes reinforced in the metropolis and also how it fashions the ideologies with which the intellectual returning home attempts to reconstruct local society. Thirdly, the intellectual's entry into politics is discussed, showing the impact of the metropolitan experience; the distinctive styles of the intellectual; and the relations, with all its complications, that develop between "men of ideas" and "men of power".

Finally, the attempt by the intellectual to seek formal political power is described and evaluated to show the

"utopianism" of the intellectual and the excessive reliance on ideological categories. The concluding hypotheses cast doubt on conventional distinctions, like that between "men of ideas" and "men of power", and assert that despite the shortcomings of an analysis in terms of "the intellectual" - which it shares with so many other concepts in political science - the problem is an urgent one and requires not its abandonment, but greater theoretical tidiness.