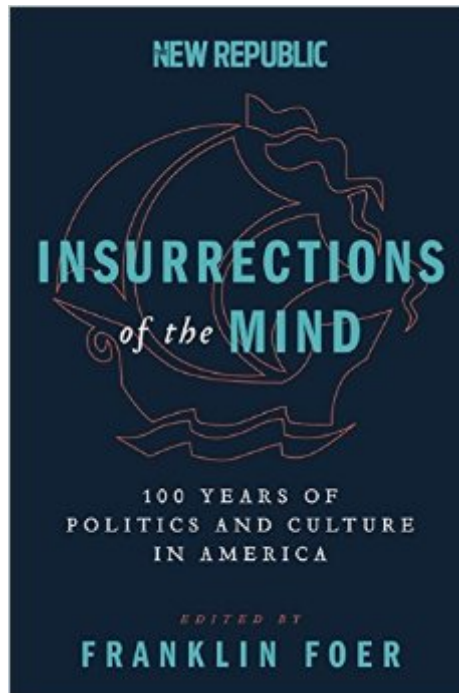


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# Insurrections Of The Mind: 100 Years Of Politics And Culture In America



## Synopsis

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of The New Republic, an extraordinary anthology of essays culled from the archives of the acclaimed and influential magazine. Founded by Herbert Croly and Walter Lippmann in 1914 to give voice to the growing progressive movement, The New Republic has charted and shaped the state of American liberalism, publishing many of the twentieth century's most important thinkers. *Insurrections of the Mind* is an intellectual biography of this great American political tradition. In seventy essays, organized chronologically by decade, a stunning collection of writers explore the pivotal issues of modern America. Weighing in on the New Deal; America's role in war; the rise and fall of communism; religion, race, and civil rights; the economy, terrorism, technology; and the women's movement and gay rights, the essays in this outstanding volume speak to The New Republic's breathtaking ambition and reach. Introducing each article, editor Franklin Foer provides colorful biographical sketches and amusing anecdotes from the magazine's history. Bold and brilliant, *Insurrections of the Mind* is a celebration of a cultural, political, and intellectual institution that has stood the test of time. Contributors include: Virginia Woolf, Vladimir Nabokov, George Orwell, Graham Greene, Philip Roth, Pauline Kael, Michael Lewis, Zadie Smith, William Faulkner, Ralph Ellison, James Wolcott, D. H. Lawrence, John Maynard Keynes, Langston Hughes, John Updike, and Margaret Talbot.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

What an entertaining potpourri of punditry. These essays are richly varied little snapshots of a

present now long past, portraits of news cycles frozen in time. Having lived through many of the decades covered by this collection I found many of my own memories of those days shocked back to life and illuminated by articles from those times. Those that were written before my time are like vivid mini travelogues into the past, filtered through each writer's experience and wit. This is one of those books you can keep on your nightstand, reading an article or two before retreating into sleep. You may find your dreams seasoned by some of these writings, some sweetly and some pungently, but nearly all interestingly.

This anthology of material from THE NEW REPUBLIC is uneven. It includes essays not readily available elsewhere such as Stanley Kaufmann's overview of Fellini's films alongside essays such as George Orwell's "Politics and the English Language" that have appeared in almost every freshman English anthology. THE NEW REPUBLIC has been an important if inconsistent voice of American liberalism and for a while neo-conservatism. This centennial collection has commentaries on most of the essays by current editor Franklin Foer. I wish he'd been more forthcoming about the magazine's intellectual shifts and inconsistencies. I returned my copy of the hardcover edition because it was missing almost thirty pages at the end.

With the uncertain future of the New Republic after the mass exodus of staff, including this book's editor, Franklin Foer, I found this anthology quite enjoyable. The forward to the book was actually republished in the 100 year anniversary edition of the New Republic magazine. Franklin Foer eloquently describes his personal relationship to the journal as well as its place in society and History. Foer's provides some reflection and context for each of the essays selected in the commentary which does aid the unfamiliar reader. In terms of selection the essays are a bit broad. Some will criticize the lack of central theme connecting the essays which may seem random, which I understand. However, this is not really the kind of book you need to read in one sitting. This is more of a book that you will keep on the coffee table or night stand to pick up every week or two. The essays are snapshots that can be viewed and read in isolation. Some essays are drier than others, but there will be something in here to interest most liberals. Despite this lack of coherence as a volume, this is a great collection of essays that span the 100 year existence of TNR. Given that there hasn't been a new issue in over month, this will give a regular TNR reader a lot to mull over. This may in fact be one of the last printed pieces the New Republic distributes.

I am only half way through. I have read slowly, trying to prolong the enjoyment. I particularly like

George Orwell's essay. I have read 1984, which I didn't like. If it is not for political reasons, 1984 can never be categorized as a classic. I have also read Animal Farm. It is funny, but too short as a novel. Anyway, I didn't know George Orwell wrote essays and wrote so well. I have so far read it twice, but I want to read it several times more. I add it to my "repeat read list" which includes Jane Austen, Paul Krugman, Nora Ephron, Evelyn Waugh, Cao Xueqin and Luo Guanzhong. If it were not for this book, I would never have known that George Orwell belongs to this list.

From Rebecca West to Zadie Smith this essay collection offers critical thinking that ignites the mind and piques the imagination. Franklin Foer's well-edited, well-chosen compendium offers a crash course in 20th century American intellectual history as well as some richly amusing reflections by distinguished writers on other distinguished writers. Kafka's failure as a novelist? H.G. Wells' inchoateness? Who said it and why? Find out in *Insurrections of the Mind* and experience your own insurrection as you read.

As expressed in the "Afterward", these essays from "The New Republic" exposed me to some ideas that I hadn't thought of. That is its "mission". Even if I disagree, it's important to not be "locked in the echo chamber" of investigation or thought for that matter. This book does that well. A couple of the essays were "over my head", but I don't blame that on the writer, I find the fault in the reader...

Fine selections that give an excellent view of the writing that characterized The New Republic. I'd say get it while you can; for as readers surely know, the new owner of TNR fired the two top people and was met by the resignation of many staffers. What TNR will become is anyone's guess. Certainly it won't be what it has been for the last decade or so. More's the pity.

An excellent collective of essays from some of the past century's greatest minds; offers an in-depth, and often personal, perspective into 19th century issues, without the weight of hindsight. I suggest reading this collection if you've got any interest in American history (and its place in global history) and literary talent.

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