



Intellectuals and Race

By Thomas Sowell



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Intellectuals and Race is a radical book in the original sense of one that goes to the root of the problem. The role of intellectuals in racial strife is explored in an international context that puts the American experience in a wholly new light.

The views of individual intellectuals have spanned the spectrum, but the views of intellectuals as a whole have tended to cluster. Indeed, these views have clustered at one end of the spectrum in the early twentieth century and then clustered at the opposite end of the spectrum in the late twentieth century. Moreover, these radically different views of race in these two eras were held by intellectuals whose views on other issues were very similar in both eras.

Intellectuals and Race is not, however, a book about history, even though it has much historical evidence, as well as demographic, geographic, economic and statistical evidence-- all of it directed toward testing the underlying assumptions about race that have prevailed at times among intellectuals in general, and especially intellectuals at the highest levels. Nor is this simply a theoretical exercise. The impact of intellectuals' ideas and crusades on the larger society, both past and present, is the ultimate concern. These ideas and crusades have ranged widely from racial theories of intelligence to eugenics to "social justice" and multiculturalism.

In addition to in-depth examinations of these and other issues, *Intellectuals and Race* explores the incentives, the visions and the rationales that drive intellectuals at the highest levels to conclusions that have often turned out to be counterproductive and even disastrous, not only for particular racial or ethnic groups, but for societies as a whole.

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Editorial Review

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Lamenting the tendency toward one-dimensional analysis of race status in the U.S., Sowell explores the various perspectives that intellectuals have brought to race on how racial groups have affected and been effected by the sociopolitics of their era. He analyzes the early twentieth-century notions of genetic determination, or biology as destiny, which evolved into the eugenics movement and the foundation of Nazism, and he juxtaposes this with the late twentieth-century intellectual assessment of discrimination as the dominant cause of race status. Sowell digs beneath the intellectual arguments to offer more nuanced and complex consideration of attitudes on race and racism. For example, he notes that white project dwellers in Britain “act out” in ways similar to those of black American ghetto dwellers and that, at the turn of the twentieth century, black northerners were not segregated until the arrival of southern black migrants, whom they criticized nearly as much as whites did. Through myriad other observations, Sowell analyzes the significance of class in perspectives on race and considers how intellectuals themselves are driven to their positions. --Vernon Ford

Review

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review

“Sowell brings an all-too-rare perspective to whatever he writes about — that of a conservative black intellectual, especially valuable for this book's topic.”

New American

“After reading Dr. Thomas Sowell's latest book, *Intellectuals and Race*, one cannot emerge with much respect for the reasoning powers of intellectuals, particularly academics, on matters of race. There's so much faulty logic and downright dishonesty.”

Mona Charen, *Creator's Syndicate*

“I plunged into Thomas Sowell's latest book, *Intellectuals and Race*, immediately upon its arrival, but soon realized that I needed to slow down. Many writers express a few ideas with a great cataract of words. Sowell is the opposite. Every sentence contains at least one insight or fascinating statistic — frequently more than one.”

About the Author

Thomas Sowell is the Rose and Milton Friedman Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, and has taught economics at Cornell, UCLA, Amherst, and other academic institutions. He is the author of *Intellectuals and Society*, *Dismantling America*, *Economic Facts and Fallacies*, and the classic *Basic Economics*, which has been translated into six languages. Sowell has published in both academic journals and in such popular media as the *Wall Street Journal*, *Forbes* magazine, and *Fortune*, and he writes a syndicated column that appears in newspapers across the country. He lives in Stanford, California.

Users Review

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