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# **Black Rednecks & White Liberals: Hope, Mercy, Justice And Autonomy In The American Health Care System**

## **Black Rednecks and White Liberals**

**Thomas Sowell**



## Synopsis

This explosive new book challenges many of the long-prevailing assumptions about blacks, about Jews, about Germans, about slavery, and about education. Plainly written, powerfully reasoned, and backed with a startling array of documented facts, *Black Rednecks and White Liberals* takes on not only the trendy intellectuals of our times but also such historic interpreters of American life as Alexis de Tocqueville and Frederick Law Olmsted. In a series of long essays, this book presents an in-depth look at key beliefs behind many mistaken and dangerous actions, policies, and trends. It presents eye-opening insights into the historical development of the ghetto culture that is today wrongly seen as a unique black identity--a culture cheered on toward self-destruction by white liberals who consider themselves "friends" of blacks. An essay titled "The Real History of Slavery" presents a jolting re-examination of that tragic institution and the narrow and distorted way it is too often seen today. The reasons for the venomous hatred of Jews, and of other groups like them in countries around the world, are explored in an essay that asks, "Are Jews Generic?" Misconceptions of German history in general, and of the Nazi era in particular, are also re-examined. So too are the inspiring achievements and painful tragedies of black education in the United States. "*Black Rednecks and White Liberals*" is the capstone of decades of outstanding research and writing on racial and cultural issues by Thomas Sowell.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

To be sure the title alone should suck you in. I was continuously asked to give an overview of the book from others who read the title, even a 11 year old girl sitting next to me on the plane wanted to know what it was about. This book is a critical indictment of the general trend of "feelings" guiding our future vs. "facts." It is a praiseworthy illustration of how a rational analysis of history is the best way forward for human progress. Sowell challenges many prevailing interpretations of history and current implications with empirical data that leaves the reader with no other choice but to have a greater appreciation for how historical evidence as a tool to redefine our present and shape our future.

I would recommend this book to anyone looking for a critical analysis of some of today's hot button issues such as "privilege" and discrimination. Dr. Sowell presents historical data that highlights the limitations of some current, liberal explanations and analysis of these issues. The author uses multiple examples of different situations on different continents and in different centuries to support his analysis. The description of the success of Dunbar High School and its graduates under challenging circumstances is inspiring and serves as a model of what is possible.

As an Afro-American Mr Thomas Sowell has the authority to examine tough questions about the last two hundred years of social development of the USA, focusing on the contrast in northern and southern Afro-American history. I found it fascinating and well researched. His chapters are wide ranging and fascinating. The chapter on world wide slavery was very interesting and thought provoking. The chapter on the education levels and schooling for Afro-Americans in the last 100 years was also very informative. I enjoyed the entire book and have recommended it to many others who like a good in depth read about our recent history with reasons for why we are where we are today.

It was only recently that I stumbled upon the work of Thomas Sowell. That happy event occurred as a result of reading a book written in similar vein by Mr. Shelby Steele. That said, I just finished reading "Black Rednecks and White Liberals" and was most impressed with both its

thoroughness and Sowell's incisive insights. This book is 1) very well researched/annotated, 2) reasonable in length (ie less than 300 pages in hardback), 3) punctuated with occasional, albeit understated, humor and 4) quite often takes positions that are not currently "politically correct". Attribute number 4 is reason enough to evoke one's curiosity, while attributes 1 through 3 make this book not simply worthy of being read, but given its subject matter, I would go so far as to say it is a book that absolutely should be read by All thinking persons - irrespective of skin color or political inclination.

Thomas Sowell is an iconoclastic student of history and sociology. His incisiveness on issues of race may befuddle those who champion the progressive and liberal viewpoints that have dominated U.S. Government policy-making in pursuit of "fairness toward all" since the 1960s. Sowell argues mightily against using history as a platform for social and political agendas. His final chapter is a plea for historians and "social engineers" to stick to the facts, rather than to read one's own preferences into one's research. He faults policymakers for trying to right past wrongs, instead advocating a realpolitik that concentrates on making people's lives better today. More concretely, Sowell's evidence leads him to conclude that the government programs ostensibly meant to level the playing field between African Americans and the rest of America since LBJ's "Great Society," have been wrong-headed and counterproductive. Exhibit A (for purposes of this review): government's record on education. Sowell shows the late 19th to the early 20th century success of Washington, D.C.'s Dunbar High School in producing black scholars. This was an era when Dunbar students received four years of the same traditional New England-style education that white students received, and when they matched or exceeded the average standardized test scores of white students, graduating highly successful collegians and famous professionals. Dunbar was, at the time, a sort of public magnet school for black kids. Sowell chronicles how the school's character changed rapidly in the wake of Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954, when Dunbar became the "neighborhood high school." He further shows how the educational methods the government has insisted on for minority students, has failed most kids of the last two or three generations. The Dunbar example is one of many that only liberals of the highest courage and open-mindedness will likely read and reflect upon because of the strong challenge they'll encounter. In earlier chapters, Sowell delivers an historian's "minority report" on the origins and historical progression of a certain African-American subculture that devalues educational achievement and glorifies a more emotional, less thoughtful approach to a host of

human endeavors from conflict resolution, to religion, to patterns of speech. Lest anyone smell racism, remember Sowell's own ethnic origins, and the historical facts he cites which destroy any notion of racial inferiority. And, that he traces this "gangsta" culture not to Africa, but to the 15th and 16th century "redneck" Scots and Irish who by and large became the Southern slave owners of later centuries. This is not the history we've been taught in our elementary and high school texts. It undergirds Sowell's argument that any "self-inflicted wounds" arising from this subculture, are not the product of innate racial differences. It was learned from a certain group of white people. While men such as Booker T. Washington and W.E.B DuBois had success, each in their own way, of preparing many blacks to excel through higher education, the poor quality of schools available to most emancipated blacks in the decades following Civil War led to the perpetuation of a black subculture which too often, left blacks to imitate the slave owners they once served. As valuable as it is, Sowell's work is not faultless. The chapter transitions are jarring, and when you're finished, you may wonder if he brought it all together. For example, his study of world racism against "intermediary groups" such as Jews, Lebanese, and Southeast-Asian Chinese, were interesting but not well-integrated into his main thesis. Perhaps Sowell can be forgiven for this. He attempted a very ambitious study of race relations in the United States as seen from the broader context of world history. He's looking at racism as a characteristic of the human condition rather than as an isolated feature of just one nation's history; and perhaps he laid a foundation for future scholars to improve upon a non-standard approach he provided for looking at this most important issue.

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