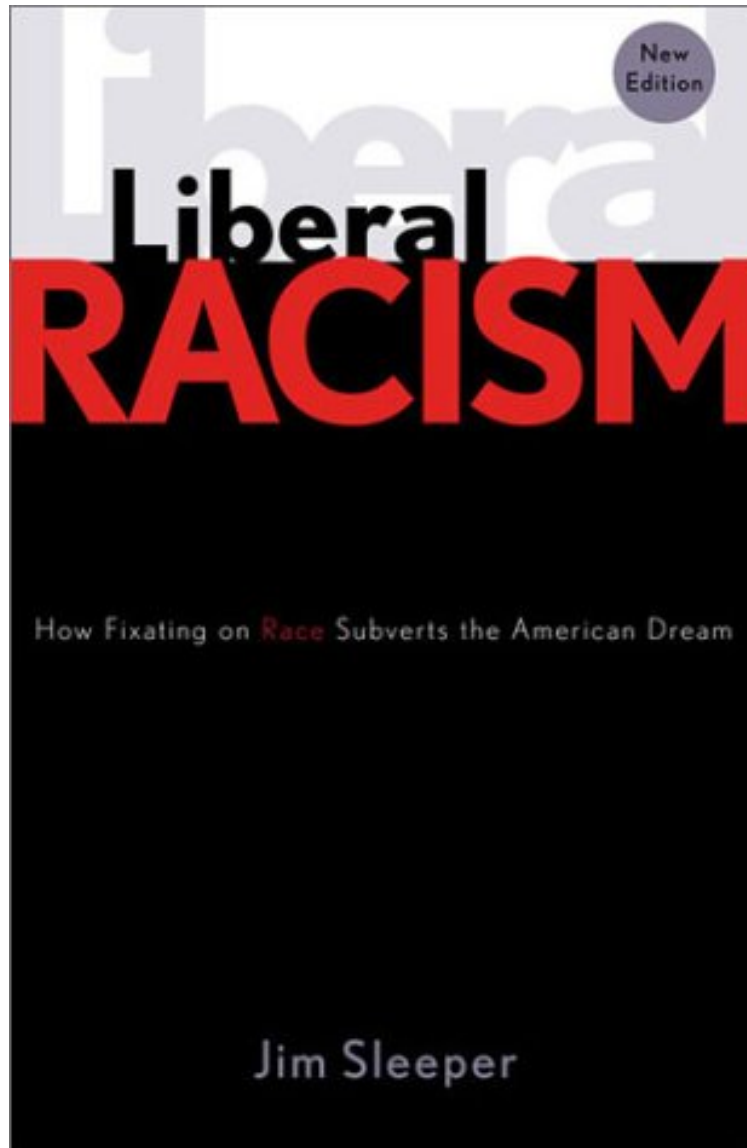


[Read and download] Liberal Racism: How Fixating on Race Subverts the American Dream

Liberal Racism: How Fixating on Race Subverts the American Dream

Jim Sleeper

**Download PDF | ePub | DOC | audiobook | ebooks*



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#3244433 in Books Rowman n Littlefield Publishers 2002-11-06Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.46 x .52 x 5.44l, .59 #File Name: 0742522016232 pages | File size: 65.Mb

Jim Sleeper : Liberal Racism: How Fixating on Race Subverts the American Dream before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Liberal Racism: How Fixating on Race Subverts the American Dream:

14 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Interesting issues about race and societyBy Jill MalterLiberals are

supposed to believe in an inclusive society, where we take advantage of the contributions from everyone in it. And where each person has equal rights. That surely does not mean lowering standards. A doctor still has to meet standards to practice. A university student still has to pass exams to qualify for a profession. But it does mean letting people into that university independent of their race, religion, gender, sexual preference, creed, and so on. Maybe age discrimination would be an interesting question, but discrimination in favor of or against people of a specific skin color? That's supposed to be illiberal. A century ago, the bar was set higher for non-whites than for whites. That was racist and counterproductive. Jim Sleeper asks if we are setting the bar so low for non-whites today that we are denying non-whites the satisfaction of equal accomplishment and opportunity. Given my Asian background, I find this question interesting. Sleeper asks if, not out of malice but out of folly, many liberals have overemphasized black identity and thus behaved in a racist manner themselves. The author explains that conservatives still have some of the same exclusionary problems they've always had. This is not an apology for conservatism. It is a plea for genuine liberalism. As Sleeper explains, blacks have much to profit from a truly color-blind society. The first main topic Sleeper deals with is individual responsibility, as seen in court cases. In the past, blacks simply did not get treated justly in white courts. But there is still a threat of some of the same problems if we keep looking carefully at skin color in court cases. What is legal for whites must be legal for blacks and what is illegal for whites has to be illegal for blacks. The author gives some examples in which many liberals have strayed from this idea. The next issue is voting rights, where the threat by those who simply will not be color-blind is racial districting. After that, Sleeper discusses the media. He tells us that "good journalists are not crusaders or missionaries. Their job is to uncover the truth, even when it hurts." He contrasts the coverage of a 35,000 person Promise Keepers rally to the 400,000 person Farrakhan "March." Both of these events could have been treated sympathetically, fairly, or critically. But they were treated very differently. I wanted to see a more thorough discussion of affirmative action. I think there ought to be a clear and beneficial policy here. Namely this: everyone needs to meet the same standards to serve the community, independent of race. But those who are having trouble meeting standards should get some extra support. That is help so that they can meet standards, not a lowering of standards that renders those with credentials suspect. Giving some students extra help in high school makes sense. Kids are required to go to high school by law. Letting people into college who do not actually qualify seems counterproductive to me. But this is not a major criticism of the book. The author has shown that some of us have been lowering standards on the basis of race, and that's the main issue here. I think Sleeper has made some valuable points. Liberal racism may be more patronizing than malicious, but it is part of a problem in our society. We'll all be more prosperous and happier if we can have a colorblind attitude and reduce racial divisions rather than enhance them. 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. An honest and objective portrayal of racial issues. By Willy Cowles Sleeper's book Liberal Racism portrays his ideas about modern American racial tensions in a brutally honest and clear manner. The book deals with liberal's failings in their ideas about race, but Sleeper is careful not to make it an attack of the left, nor a support of the right, but rather an encouragement and constructive criticism of liberal ideologies about race. In doing this he maintains objectivity by brilliantly refusing to take sides with any political entity, supporting equally the ideas of people as disparate as race radicals of the 1960's to Newt Gingrich. In addition to Sleeper's careful structuring of his stance, he argues the book with sharp and clear logic, his language and structure flowing beautifully not only within chapters and subjects, but throughout the whole text, as he categorically examines ideas relating to crime, voting, the media, and culture, among others. This book is a valuable text in today's modern racial context because it is not only enlightening, it offers a fresh and concise viewpoint on an often less than clear topic. 22 of 32 people found the following review helpful. In the end lacking... By John Sleeper's criticism of the corrosiveness of (generally) well-intended white liberal political interventions is astute, but his proposed solution - the (re-)adoption by all Americans of New England Puritan values (capitalist vigour + personal thrift + rigid church-based moral codes), while sounding 'tough talking', is simply naive. He assumes that vigorous free-market consumer capitalism is compatible with such traditional values, whereas the reality world-wide would seem to be the opposite: Traditional and local values get lost in a blur of glossy consumer indulgence and hedonism. What does he propose replacing this money-making, money-spending search for pleasure with? Thrift as a good in itself? But if we don't spend then the system comes crashing down, especially in post-industrial, service-oriented economies. Moreover high personal moral values of the sort he praises in the last section of the book have always been compatible with beliefs that we now see are terribly immoral - slavery, for instance. The men who wrote that it was self-evidently true that all men are created equal owned slaves. If it seems banal to restate that, it's a reminder that one can't just step into the values of a time gone by, cherry-pick the ones one likes, and then try to browbeat the poorer members of society into adopting them: they come with historical baggage. Hence they may be impulsively resented and deserve to be seriously interrogated. Mr Sleeper believes that the 'true' American values on which the communal spirit should be rebuilt are New England Puritan ones, but weren't the values of the Southern slave-owners equally 'truly American'? To step outside the reality of history is to step away from reality in all its cluttered complexity, and engagement with reality is what is so often lacking in the discussion of race issues. In the end Sleeper's proposal that if everyone knuckled down - especially the poor - and conformed to a single vision of the life well-lived then society would be more harmonious, is little more than a conservative platitude. It has the added bonus of letting white people and those

in power off the hook as regards racism and racial disadvantage, hence its appeal to comfortably-off right-wingers, who feel themselves terribly put upon by the notion that their skin-colour still gives them privileges in 21st Century America.

Liberalism seems poised for a renewal, but its chances for creating a visionary program for the next century are jeopardized by racial contradictions and confusions that continue to appear in its social policy. Instead of the colorblind society once promised by the left, we inhabit a country seething with racial resentments. With uncompromising clarity, Jim Sleeper discusses what liberals need to do to return their political movement to the vital center. Along the way, Sleeper punctures liberal pieties to reveal politicians and journalists still stymied by race, impotent in the face of conservative racism, and paralyzed by a guilt that neither advances social justice nor helps fashion a common American identity. Jim Sleeper challenges us to transcend race, to reject the foolish policies and attitudes that have only reinforced racial divisions, and to weave a social fabric sturdy enough to sustain the values upon which this country was founded. Now available in paperback with a substantial new introduction, *Liberal Racism: How Fixating on Race Subverts the American Dream* is sure to reawaken and re-energize the debate surrounding race and ethnicity.

.com A kind of sequel to Jim Sleeper's earlier *The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York*, this is a tough-minded, provocative indictment of the failure of liberalism in the post-Civil Rights era. As Sleeper sees it, liberals once held the moral high ground because they "fought nobly to help this country rise above color." Now, however, liberals have become blinded by race and have abandoned the fight to create what Sleeper calls the "transracial belonging and civic faith for which Americans of all colors so obviously yearn." Much of what Sleeper has to say here flies in the face of politically correct received wisdom about race, but as an effort to remind Americans that all of us are fundamentally responsible for our fates, this is a much-needed corrective to race-based thinking that has proven unproductive. From Booklist Sleeper argues that liberals who once pushed America to think beyond color have of late gravitated toward ideas and policies that are essentially racist. Sleeper maintains that liberals make many destructive racial assumptions, including the notion that color itself determines an individual's destiny. Similarly, they frequently have lower expectations for people of color, notably in the area of crime, where they like to see African American criminals as victims. Such thinking, he believes, diverts us from the reality of crime and its causes. The media also come under Sleeper's keen eye, including the *New York Times*, which, in his view, regularly "gets race wrong" by accepting the above myths. Sleeper's analysis is hard nosed and penetrating, but his aim isn't to tear down. Just the opposite, as he hopes to direct progressive ideology and its practitioners back toward truly liberating traditions. Brian McCombie From Kirkus s Anyone who can resist the temptation to dismiss this book as another conservative-in-liberal's-clothing attack on the legacy of the civil rights movement will find it disturbing and well worth reading. Veteran journalist Sleeper (*The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York*, 1990) argues that liberals have shifted from the laudable goal of a race-blind society to a "racialist" mindset that segments society along racial lines. In their "puzzling" attachment to race, they defer to "race hustlers, ideologues, and opportunists" (read figures like William Kunstler and Al Sharpton) in "the name of 'diversity'" instead of welcoming the prospect of a society that transcends race. But Sleeper is not an apologist for past and present racism. He shrilly condemns liberals who have lost sight of the importance of individualism and universal values, yet sets himself apart from conservative critics by recognizing the reality of discrimination and genuinely seeking a society in which race does not matter. This not only places him directly at odds with proponents of identity politics, it imposes a burden that he does not directly confront: If your goal is racelessness but you refuse to pretend that it already exists, some method of achieving that goal is required. Avoiding this tricky problem is excusable--public policy is not the focus here--but there is a more troubling matter to consider. Although Sleeper proceeds in a journalistic style by introducing us to a series of people, throughout he tends to lump "liberals" into a monolithic bloc and attack them as one. This not only suggests the presence of a straw man, it seems to be the kind of arbitrary grouping that Sleeper objects to when the commonality is race. Nevertheless, anyone with the courage to address such a loaded issue and to raise uncomfortable but undeniable concerns in an honest manner must be applauded. (Author tour) -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.