

The Haverford Discussions: A Black Integrationist Manifesto for Racial Justice



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In the late sixties and early seventies, black separatist movements were sweeping across the United States. This was the era of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Stokely Carmichael's and Charles Hamilton's *Black Power*, and Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice*. In 1969 a group of distinguished African American intellectuals met at Haverford College in order to devise strategies to dissuade young blacks from adopting a separatist political agenda. The participants included some of the most prominent figures of the civil rights era--Ralph Ellison, John Hope Franklin, and J. Saunders Redding, to name only a notable few. Although these discussions were recorded, transcribed, and edited, they were never published because the funding for them was withdrawn. This volume at last makes the historic Haverford discussions available, rescuing for the modern reader some of the most eloquent voices in the intellectual history of black America.

Michael Lackey has edited and annotated the transcript of this lively exchange, and Alfred E. Prettyman has supplied an afterword. While acknowledging the importance of the black power and separatist movements, Lackey's introduction also sheds light on the insights offered by critics of those movements. Despite the frequent characterization of the dissenting integrationists as Uncle Toms or establishment intellectuals, a misrepresentation that has marginalized them in the intervening decades, Lackey argues that they had their own compelling vision for black empowerment and sociopolitical integration.

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