Open Wound: The Long View Of Race In America - William Mckee Evans

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In this boldly interpretive narrative, William McKee Evans tells the story of America's paradox of democracy entangled with a centuries-old system of racial oppression. _x000B__x000B_Before English colonization, Spanish and Portuguese conquerors enslaved American natives to produce for a European market becoming addicted to sugar, rum, and tobacco. But soon they saw their slaves sicken and die in apocalyptic numbers. They began to import Africans, who survived the killer plantation diseases long enough to allow stable production, and a new kind of slavery was born, both market driven and defined as black. A century later, English planters adopted this slavery. They passed on to future generations a racial system of interacting practices and ideas. Its ideas first justified black slavery, then, after the Civil War, other forms of coerced black labor, and, today, black poverty and unemployment. _x000B__x000B_At three historical moments, a crisis in the larger society opened political space for idealists to challenge the racial system: during the American Revolution, then during the "irrepressible conflict" ending in the Civil War, and, finally, during the Cold War and the colonial liberation movements. Each challenge resulted in a historic advance. But none swept clean. The emancipations of the era of the Revolution left the nation part free, part slave. The Civil War emancipated the slaves but left them half free. In the 1950s and '60s, a convergence of the colonial liberation movements and the Cold War created a crisis that opened space for the Black Freedom Movement to liberate many African Americans from a segregated bottom stratum of American society. Class became more important than color. But never had class, being poor, been a more formidable obstacle for any individual, black or white, to getting ahead. Many African Americans remain segregated in jobless ghettoes with dilapidated schools and dismal prospects in an increasingly polarized class society._x000B__x000B_Evans sees a new crisis looming in a convergence of environmental disaster, endless wars, and economic collapse, which may again open space for a challenge to the racial system. African Americans, with their memory of their centuries-old struggle against oppressors, appear uniquely placed to play a central role. Author: Evans, William McKee Publisher: University of Illinois Press Illustration: N Language: ENG Title: Open Wound:

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