

Mohammed Ali at WSU

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

“The solution to the race problem is separation. White and black should be separate. Their natures are opposite. This is the source of all our problems today. White and black are trying to force something (integration) that even God himself didn’t intend.”

Speaking before well over 300 people on the mall of Wayne State University, Muhammed Ali, former Heavy-weight Boxing Champion of the World, ran down his views on racism, the black struggle, and women on May 14.

The appearance, sponsored by the Wayne Inter-Fraternity Council (IFC), and the Student-Faculty Council (SFC), was part of a nation-wide series of speeches by Ali on college campuses.

Although Ali was well-known for his audacity and self-confidence when he was in the ring (“I’m the Greatest!”), his appearance on the WSU campus was for the most part subdued. After seriously running down a short history of the black man in America, Ali discussed some of the elements of a solution to the race problem.

“Before black people can be free, we need unity behind one leader, respect for ourselves and our women, and demands to be repaid for 316 years of slavery.”

The one leader is, of course, Elijah Muhammed, head of the Nation of Islam, the group which Muhammed Ali has belonged to for several years.

Although Ali demanded freedom for the black man, he continued to place women, black and white, in a subordinate position. “Before black people can be free, they must respect and protect their women. The nation is only as strong as its women. A man’s woman is the field which produces his sons and daughters. A man has to protect his fields.”

Later he started rapping on women in mini-skirts saying “I don’t want nobody to see my privacy. When my woman bends over, nobody has to know what she’s got.”

Getting into the repayment part of his solution, Ali stated, “We must have land. No people can be free without land.”

It was only in the question and answer section that Ali began to get into the rapid-fire exchange which used to characterize him.

At one point, recalling that Ali is facing five years in prison for draft refusal, someone asked, “What about the draft?” Ali evaded, saying, “What draft? I’m not cold. Are you cool?”

fifth Estate

Fifth Estate Collective
Mohammed Ali at WSU
1969

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/80-may-29-june-11-1969/mohammed-ali-at-wsu>
Fifth Estate #80, May 29-June 11, 1969

[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fifthestate.org)