

# Civil Rights Liberalism and Integration in Postwar Philadelphia: A Historical Examination

The postwar era in the United States was a time of great social and political change. The civil rights movement, which had been gaining momentum for decades, reached its peak in the 1950s and 1960s. During this time, civil rights activists, white liberals, and city officials grappled with the issue of racial inequality and discrimination in postwar Philadelphia.



## Making Good Neighbors: Civil Rights, Liberalism, and Integration in Postwar Philadelphia by Abigail Perkiss

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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## Civil Rights Activism in Postwar Philadelphia

The civil rights movement in Philadelphia was led by a diverse group of activists, including prominent figures such as Cecil B. Moore, Anna Arnold Hedgeman, and Octavius Catto. These activists organized protests, lobbied

politicians, and launched legal challenges to fight for racial equality and integration.



One of the most important civil rights campaigns in Philadelphia was the fight for school desegregation. In 1954, the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that racial segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. However, many school districts across the country, including Philadelphia, resisted desegregation. In Philadelphia, civil rights activists launched a series of protests and lawsuits to force the city to desegregate its schools.

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed, which banned discrimination in employment, public accommodations, and federally funded programs. This

law was a major victory for the civil rights movement, and it helped to pave the way for integration in Philadelphia and other cities across the country.

### **White Liberalism and Integration in Postwar Philadelphia**

White liberals played a significant role in the civil rights movement in Philadelphia. Many white liberals were motivated by a sense of moral obligation to fight for racial equality. They believed that all Americans, regardless of their race, deserved to enjoy the same rights and opportunities.

White liberals supported civil rights legislation, funded civil rights organizations, and participated in protests and demonstrations. They also worked to create more inclusive workplaces and neighborhoods.

However, some white liberals were criticized for their paternalistic attitudes towards African Americans. They often believed that they knew what was best for African Americans, and they sometimes tried to impose their own solutions on the black community.

### **City Officials and Integration in Postwar Philadelphia**

City officials in Philadelphia played a complex role in the integration of the city. Some officials were supportive of integration, while others were more

resistant.



Mayor Richardson Dilworth, who served from 1956 to 1962, was a strong advocate for integration. He appointed African Americans to high-level positions in his administration, and he supported the desegregation of public schools and public accommodations.

However, other city officials were less supportive of integration. Police Commissioner Thomas Gibbons, who served from 1958 to 1966, was accused of using excessive force against civil rights demonstrators. And many members of the city council opposed fair housing legislation.

## **The Legacy of Civil Rights Liberalism and Integration in Postwar Philadelphia**

The civil rights movement in Philadelphia, and the efforts of civil rights activists, white liberals, and city officials, helped to make the city a more integrated and just place. However, racial inequality and discrimination persist in Philadelphia to this day.

The legacy of civil rights liberalism and integration in postwar Philadelphia is complex and contested. Some people argue that the civil rights movement was a success, and that Philadelphia is now a more just and equitable city. Others argue that the civil rights movement did not go far enough, and that Philadelphia remains a deeply segregated city.

The debate over the legacy of civil rights liberalism and integration in postwar Philadelphia is likely to continue for many years to come. However, there is no doubt that the civil rights movement made a significant impact on the city, and that its legacy will continue to shape Philadelphia for generations to come.

The civil rights movement in postwar Philadelphia was a complex and multifaceted struggle for racial equality and integration. Civil rights activists, white liberals, and city officials all played a role in this struggle, and their efforts helped to make Philadelphia a more just and equitable city. However, racial inequality and discrimination persist in Philadelphia to this day, and the legacy of civil rights liberalism and integration remains a subject of debate.

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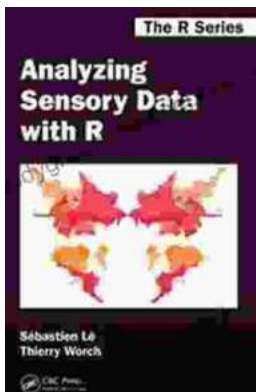
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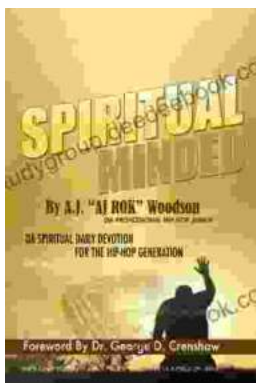


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