

# Empowering Progress: How American Businesses Championed Civil Rights

The fight for civil rights in the United States has been a long and arduous one. But throughout history, American businesses have played a pivotal role in advancing the cause of equality. From providing financial support to organizations fighting for social justice to implementing groundbreaking policies that promote diversity and inclusion, businesses have been at the forefront of the movement for a more just and equitable society.



## We the Corporations: How American Businesses Won Their Civil Rights by Adam Winkler

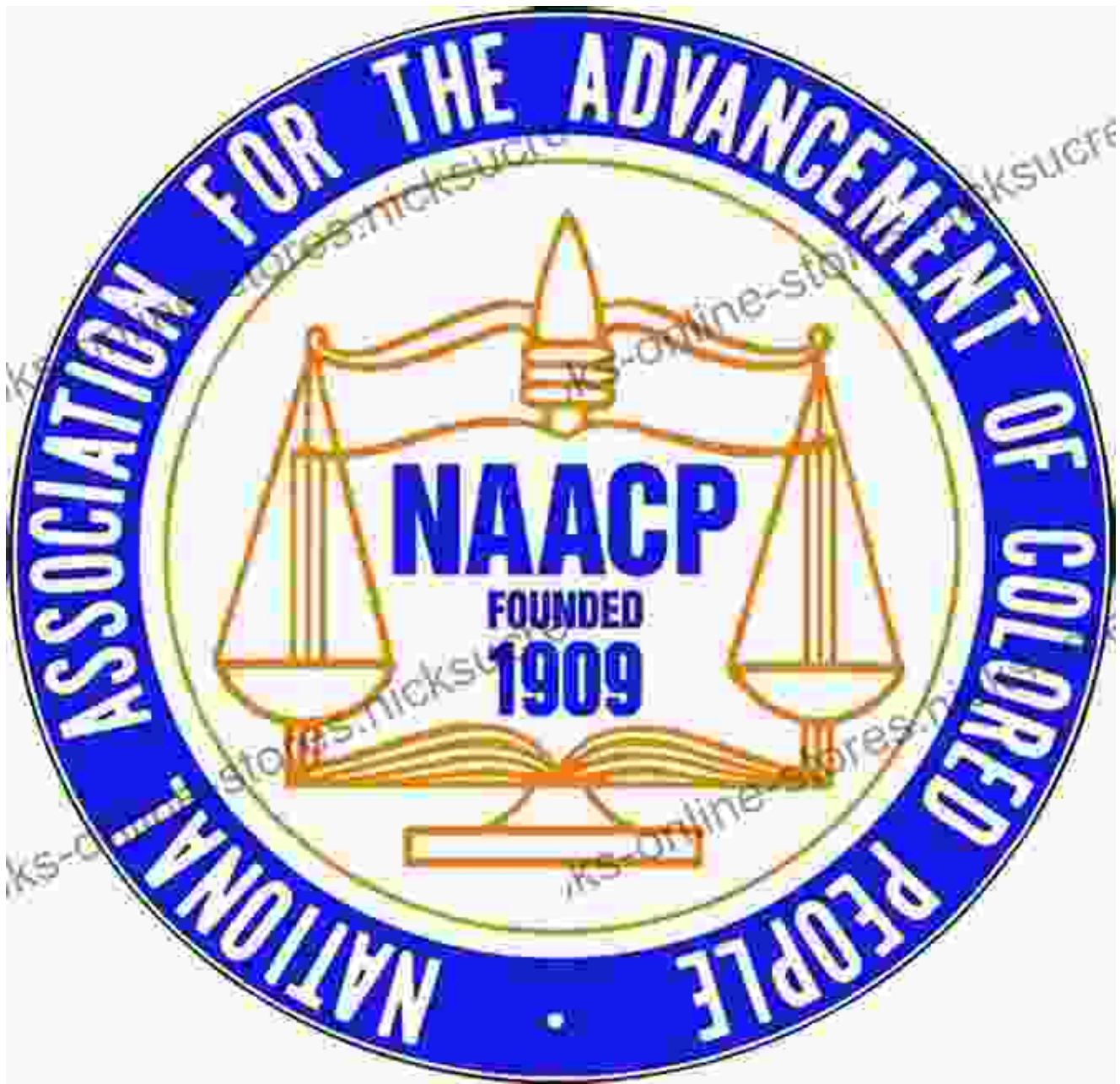
★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

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## The Early Years

The involvement of American businesses in the Civil Rights Movement can be traced back to the early 1900s. Companies like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Urban League provided critical support to the movement, lobbying for legislation and providing legal assistance to victims of discrimination.



During the 1950s and 1960s, as the Civil Rights Movement gained momentum, businesses began to take a more active role in promoting equality. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act, which outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. This landmark legislation had a profound impact on American society, and businesses were quick to respond.

## **Corporate Social Responsibility**

In the aftermath of the Civil Rights Act, many businesses began to adopt policies that promoted diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This was not simply a matter of altruism; businesses recognized that a diverse workforce could lead to increased innovation, productivity, and profitability.



One of the most notable examples of corporate social responsibility in the area of civil rights is the work of Xerox Corporation. In 1968, Xerox launched a groundbreaking affirmative action program that aimed to increase the number of minority employees in the company. The program was a success, and Xerox became a model for other businesses that were looking to create more inclusive workplaces.

## **The Role of Business Leaders**

In addition to implementing policies that promote diversity and inclusion, American business leaders have also been vocal advocates for civil rights. Many CEOs have spoken out against discrimination and have used their platforms to call for change.



One of the most influential business leaders in the fight for civil rights was Reginald Lewis. Lewis was the founder and CEO of TLC Beatrice International Holdings, a food and beverage company. He was also a vocal advocate for minority businesses and played a key role in the development of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation.

### **The Impact of Business**

The impact of American businesses on the Civil Rights Movement has been profound. Businesses have provided financial support to

organizations fighting for social justice, implemented policies that promote diversity and inclusion, and spoken out against discrimination. These actions have helped to create a more just and equitable society for all Americans.

Here are some specific examples of the impact that businesses have had on the Civil Rights Movement:

- Businesses have helped to fund organizations like the NAACP and the Urban League, which have been at the forefront of the fight for civil rights.
- Businesses have implemented policies that promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace, which has helped to create a more level playing field for all employees.
- Business leaders have spoken out against discrimination, which has helped to raise awareness of the issue and create a more tolerant society.

The fight for civil rights is not over. But the progress that has been made would not have been possible without the support of American businesses. Businesses have played a vital role in promoting equality and inclusion, and they continue to be a force for good in the fight for social justice.

### **Call to Action**

If you are a business leader, I urge you to get involved in the fight for civil rights. There are many ways that you can make a difference, such as:

- Providing financial support to organizations fighting for social justice.

- Implementing policies that promote diversity and inclusion in your workplace.
- Speaking out against discrimination.

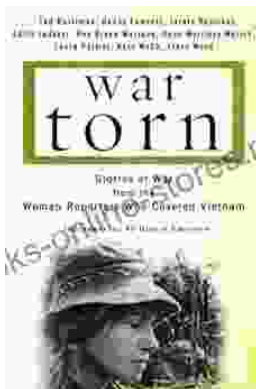
Together, we can create a more just and equitable society for all.



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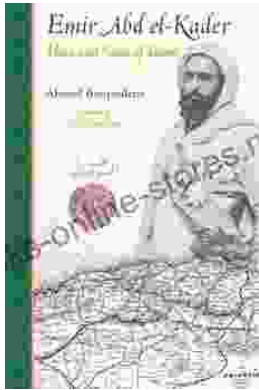
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