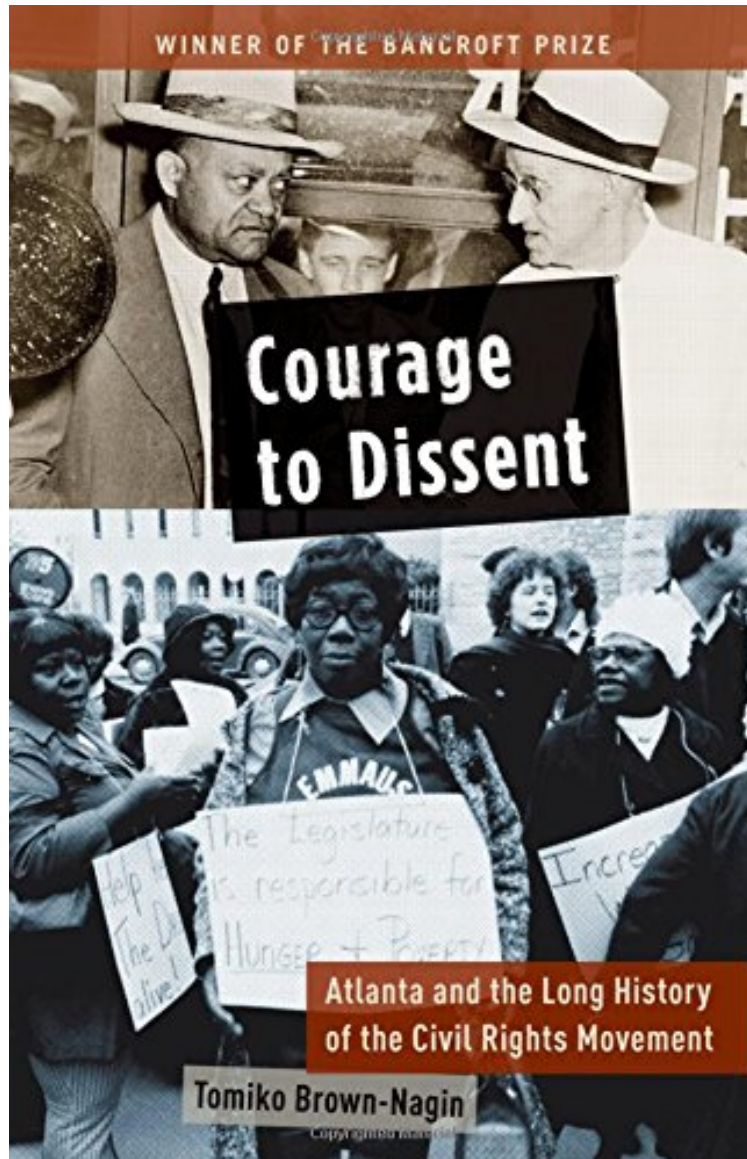


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Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movement

Tomiko Brown-Nagin

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Tomiko Brown-Nagin : Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movement before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Courage to Dissent: Atlanta and the Long History of the Civil Rights Movement:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Not Black or WhiteBy Mark LevineThis elegantly nuanced Bancroft

Award-winning history of the long civil rights movement in Atlanta manages to steer clear of the historical (and historiographical) tendency to see issues of race in America in terms of polar opposites: most obviously, black vs. white, but integration vis-a-vis separatism, pragmatism in relation to community action, "movement" lawyering as distinct from top-down problem-"solving", and so on. Encompassing the big issues of education, voting rights, housing, public accommodations, and poverty, Brown-Nagin deals cogently with issues of class, community involvement, strategic subtleties, and what might be the very particular case of Atlanta (whose slogan as *The City Too Busy to Hate* is shown as, at best, dubious) in a way that raises every pertinent question and provides (as the circumstances didn't either) no easy answers. That is an amazing accomplishment. Moreover, she addresses a literal multitude of complex matters in a straightforward and understandable manner. As would be expected, not everything is crystal-clear; this particular layman was at times confused by some very dense and layered legal history, but for the most part this exceptional study is cogently laid out and argued. It will be unsettling to those who considered, for example, the issues raised by *Brown v. Board of Education*, a decision now nearly 60 years old, to have been settled, or even to have been clear. DuBois himself questioned whether separate education was "inherently" unequal, and so--- after reading this eloquent book--- might any thoughtful reader. 'tain't that simple. By not-quite-coincidence, I have also been reading two recent books with the same title, *Seeing through Race* (respectively by W.J.T. Mitchell and Martin A. Berger). Without either author trying to be "cute", they offer alternative ways of seeing "through" race, by transcending it and by using it as a lens through which to view events. Brown-Nagin manages to do both and she is to be (and has been, rightly) commended for her efforts. Very impressive indeed! 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Nagin-Brown Provides the Nuances of the Post-Movement Period in Atlanta By AvidReader I worked with Austin Ford, Ethel Mathews, Margie Pitts Hames on the Minority to Majority transfer program as well as the early work on *Armour v. Nix*. The early '70s was a time where African-Americans were starting to utilize and expand rights won during the '60s. The more mainline civil rights organizations and leaders like Benjamin Mays were concerned with political control and jobs for black professionals in the Atlanta Public Schools. Mrs. Mathews and some of the other NWRO ladies were more concerned with opportunities for impoverished children. The idea of a metropolitan school district would have cut off avenues for the white flight that ultimately did occur. The interests of well-off and middle class African Americans diverged from the interests of the poor. Then, as now, the black community was not the monolithic entity that many people imagine. Political alliances were very fluid and subject to change. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. MagentaWW By JANISE L. MILLER This book is excellent! I enjoyed reading about Atlanta and the Civil Rights Movement. Although, I was aware of certain facts, the book provided a comprehensive study of the period. "Courage to Dissent" is a 2012 recipient of the Lillian Smith Book Award. I highly recommend this book for anyone with an interest in the Civil Rights Movement.

In this Bancroft Prize-winning history of the Civil Rights movement in Atlanta from the end of World War II to 1980, Tomiko Brown-Nagin shows that long before "black power" emerged and gave black dissent from the mainstream civil rights agenda a name, African Americans in Atlanta questioned the meaning of equality and the steps necessary to obtain a share of the American dream. This groundbreaking book uncovers the activism of visionaries--both well-known figures and unsung citizens--from across the ideological spectrum who sought something different from, or more complicated than, "integration." Local activists often played leading roles in carrying out the agenda of the NAACP, but some also pursued goals that differed markedly from those of the venerable civil rights organization. Brown-Nagin documents debates over politics, housing, public accommodations, and schools. Exploring the complex interplay between the local and national, between lawyers and communities, between elites and grassroots, and between middle-class and working-class African Americans, *Courage to Dissent* transforms our understanding of the Civil Rights era.

From Publishers Weekly Starred . In this exhaustively researched account of the civil rights movement, history and law professor Brown-Nagin focuses on the consequential roles of lesser-known lawyers and organizers, litigators and negotiators, elites and the grassroots. The interests and methods of individuals and local groups, where intraracial and class-based conflicts emerge, differ from and, at times, challenge, national groups like the NAACP and the Legal Defense Fund. Brown-Nagin's work recounts the Atlanta experience from the early 1950s, as *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education* moves through the court and community, to the 1970s, as issues of voting rights, housing, education, transportation, and public recreational space are faced locally, where pragmatic civil rights... privileged politics over litigation, placed a high value on economic security, and rejected the idea that integration (or even desegregation) and equality were one and the same. Brown-Nagin's meticulous, densely written account explores both little-known lives and less discussed litigations in a manner both accessible and scholarly. Even if there is a whiff of the dissertation, its from the bottom account adds depth and freshness as well as some controversy to a moment in history about which, the author makes clear, there is much more to know. (Feb.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. Winner of the 2012 Bancroft Prize Winner of the 2012 Liberty Legacy Foundation Award from the Organization of American Historians "Courage to Dissent is quite simply the best legal history of the civil rights movement. Although centered

on Atlanta, it offers the most comprehensive account of movement mobilization and legal change in the civil rights era in the scholarship today. No other legal scholar has gone as far in telling the story of the movement on such a grand scale... This is a compelling and challenging book. Brown-Nagin's book stands as one of the small number of essential texts in the field of modern American legal history. -- Christopher W. Schmidt, Vanderbilt Law "A magnificent achievement, brilliantly analyzing significant tensions within the civil rights movement: between different classes, generations, local and national actors, proponents of direct action and litigation, clients and lawyers. Elegantly written, prodigiously researched, and compellingly argued...an extraordinary contribution."--Michael J. Klarman, Harvard Law School, and winner of the 2005 Bancroft Prize for *From Jim Crow to Civil Rights* "A masterpiece of rigorous scholarship, careful analysis and good old-fashioned story-telling." --Lani Guinier, Professor of Law, Harvard University "An absolutely compelling study of the tangled history of civil rights in Atlanta following World War II... No one interested in the actual operation of our fragmented legal system can ignore it, not to mention anyone interested in finding out more about the remarkable cast of characters who contended with one another in trying to shape the future of the South's most important city." --Sanford Levinson, Professor of Law and Government, University of Texas "An original and convincing approach to the legal history of the civil rights era, a fresh perspective on the Atlanta movement, and a model for integrating the national and local histories of civil rights struggles." -- Journal of American History "Excellent, exhaustively researched... *Courage to Dissent* is a fascinating and fresh look at the legal history of the civil rights movement and should become a standard work in the field." --Journal of Southern History About the Author Tomiko Brown-Nagin is Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. She also is Professor of History, affiliated with Harvard University's Department of History. Brown-Nagin earned a law degree from Yale University, where she was an editor of the *Yale Law Journal*, and a doctorate in history from Duke University.