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| http://www.uky.edu/~lbarr2/gws250spring11_files/image11941.gifhttp://www.uky.edu/~lbarr2/gws250spring11_files/image1196.jpg**Brief History of the Gay and Lesbian Rights Movement** **in the U.S.**    **THE HOMOPHILE YEARS (1940s-60s  –**WWII, Cold War, McCarthyism**):**  **1940s**   **Growth in the urban subculture** of gay men and lesbians.   Government and police harassment, persecution, and investigation of gays.    **1950s-1960s**   The homophile movement remained small and relatively marginalized.    **End of 1960s**   Rise of activism + **“Gay is good”**   **Reformist goals**:   decriminalization of homosexual acts,   equal treatment and equal rights under the law,   dissemination of accurate,   “unbiased” information about homosexuality.   **Achievements**:   right to publish gay and lesbian magazines,   first employment discrimination cases won,   constraints on police harassment,   dialogue opened in the scientific and religious communities,   media visibility,   organizational impulse,   denunciation of how gays and lesbians are a mistreated, persecuted minority.   **Problems**: Society’s hostility against homosexuals and the penalties attached to exposure.      **STONEWALL AND THE EMERGENCE OF RADICAL GAY LIBERATION**  **(1969-e1970s):**  **June 1969**   Stonewall Riot  Symbol of a new militance.  Result: a radical mass movement.    **Early 1970s**   Gay Liberation Front (GLF): **Radical gay and lesbian activism**.   **Influences**: civil rights movement, Black Power movement, white student movement, antiwar movement, and feminism.   **Goals**:   Attack of the systemic oppression of gays and lesbians.   Analysis of gay oppression and sexism.   Making common cause with “all the oppressed” and commitment to a larger project of political change.   Public demonstrations and emphasis on visibility.   **Achievements**:   New rhetoric of pride and affirmation.   Political, social, and cultural organizations that helped build a movement and a community.   Public affirmation of homosexual identity (coming out in public).   **Problems**: Employment discrimination, arrests, political conservatism, economic entrenchment, and lack of attention to sexism and racism.  **A GAY RIGHTS MOVEMENT (1970s):**   **Reformative politics**: Rather than try to destroy the old in order to build something new, they sought recognition and inclusion in American society.   Gay Activist Alliance (GAA).   From liberation to **activism**.   Emphasis on **coming out and gay rights**.  They expected and demanded acceptance for who they were.   Militant and angry **protests**.   Language of **pride and self-affirmation**; rejection of mainstream cultural views of homosexuality.   **Single-issue organizations, completely gay-focused**, with clearly specified structures and processes.   **Goals**: ending job discrimination, media invisibility, church and military discrimination.   **Achievements**:   1973  the American Psychiatric Association eliminates homosexuality from its list of mental disorders.   less discrimination and harassment,   greater visibility,   new economic opportunities for gay-oriented businesses (bars, bathhouses, discos, restaurants, etc.)   a much larger and congenial gay world.    **LESBIAN-FEMINISM (1970s):**   Most gay men’s lack of understanding of institutionalized sexism forced lesbians to fight for political and action agendas that recognized their needs.  Thus, they formed their own **autonomous lesbian groups**, developing a separate lesbian-feminist movement where lesbians with experience in women’s liberation and women with experience in gay liberation converged.   **Goals**:   Developing an ideology of lesbianism that challenged the invisibility of lesbianism, the new rhetoric of gay liberation, mainstream feminism, and heterosexuality.   Building institutions and creating lesbian-only spaces where a culture and a community could flourish.   **Achievements**:   a self-sufficient lesbian community   crisis lines and community centers,   magazines, newspapers, publishing companies, bookstores, film collectives,   food co-ops, restaurants, etc.   self-defense schools and shelters for battered women.    **CHALLENGES (late 1970s):**   Religious fundamentalism and new conservatism: The New Right’s crusade against homosexuality.  The movement lacked the financial resources, the numbers, the influence, and the political sophistication to counter the threat.   Internal tensions in the movement.   Collapse of the lesbian-separatist utopia because of economic recession.   Autonomous organizing efforts of lesbians and gays of color, who demanded inclusion in both representation and setting of agendas.    Source: D’Emilio, John.  “After Stonewall.”  *Queer Cultures*.  Eds. Deborah Carlin and Jennifer DiGrazia.  Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2004.  3-35. |