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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. |