the struggle continues.
the future is unwritten.

Militant
Flamboyance
a brief history of the Stonewall riots
and other queer happenings

Militant Flamboyance Written By
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In July 1989, following Stonewall, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was formed in New York City. The GLF took its name from the Gay Liberation Front, which had been active in the 1960s and 1970s. The new GLF was founded by a group of activists who were influenced by the radical politics of the 1960s. The GLF was one of the first organizations to support gay rights and to challenge the societal norms that had oppressed gay people for centuries. The GLF's activities included protests, rallies, and public demonstrations to raise awareness about gay rights and to challenge the discrimination and violence that gay people faced.

The GLF's most famous action was the Stonewall Riots, which took place in June 1969. The riots began as a protest against the police raid of the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City. The GLF and other gay activists were deeply involved in the rioting, which lasted for several days and helped to galvanize the gay rights movement.

Since the Stonewall Riots, the GLF has worked to create a safer and more inclusive society for all gay people. The GLF has continued to organize protests and rallies to support gay rights and to challenge discrimination and violence. The GLF's work has helped to create a more open and accepting society for gay people, and it continues to be a leader in the fight for gay rights today.
In the late 1860s, Prussia drafts new penal codes criminalizing homosexuality (later accepted by Germany) known as Paragraph 175. KARL-HARALD BENKERT, Hungarian doctor, drafts a statement to government stating that paragraph 175 violates the “rights of man” and calling upon authorities to reject the proposal. The code is instated, instigating a new wave of homosexual repression. Paragraph 175 is later adopted by Hitler’s Germany and utilized in the execution of thousands upon thousands of homosexuals.

OSCAR WILDE is tried for his homosexual lifestyle, or more specifically “acts of gross indecency with men”. Forcing many people to confront with same-sex relations for the first time.

MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD, a German radical sexologist, starts the SCIENTIFIC HUMANITARIAN COMMITTEE with goals to “win legislation to the position of abolishing the anti-gay paragraph 175; enlightening public opinion on homosexuality; and ‘affirming the homosexual himself in the struggle for his rights.” The SHC becomes most active gay advocate organization in Europe, enduring until around 1923.

JOHN WILLIAM LLOYD publishes the first issue of The Free Convisibility, a politically and sexually radical journal dedicated to creating a world where sexual diversity was valued.

In the early 1920s, MAGNUS HIRSCHFELD goes on speaking tour, and the action committee of the SHC issues an appeal to the homosexuals of Germany. “Homosexuals, you (…) must carry on the fight yourselves. (…) Justice for you will be in the fruit only of your efforts. The liberation of homosexuals can only be the work on homosexuals themselves.”

Modeled after the Hirschfeld’s SHC in Germany, activists in Chicago form the SOCIETY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. They would go on to publish two issues of FRIENDSHIP FOR FREEDOM and despite their defense of “law and order” and their pledge not to threaten the “public wefare,” their identities were exposed by the media—leading to several arrests and losses of jobs for members.

EMMA GOLDMAN publicly denounces WALLA WHITMAN. In a letter, she states: “The facts do not seem to realize that Walt Whitman’s greatness as a rebel and poet may have been conditioned in his sexual differentiation, and that he could not be otherwise than what he was” and states publicly that “I regard it as a tragedy that people of differing sexual orientation find themselves proscribed in a world that has such little understanding of homosexuals.”

During the rise of Nazism and between the two World Wars, same-sex rights organizations begin to fade under political repression and pressure, especially in Europe. Here in the US politics also shift, stifling most attempts at continuing a movement. This is largely due to the Red Scare—which results in a larger intolerance for difference of lifestyle and opinion.

The first re-emergence of a gay rights group after the war, MATTACHINE forms in 1950—a gay men’s group, beginning what becomes known as the “homophile” movement. They publish the Mattachine Review—a politically moderate gay men’s publication.

Splintering from Mattachine, ONE, Inc. is formed, accepting both women and men and the first lesbian rights group, the DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, is formed.

In 1965, Miss Showers, a member of the Chicago Chapter of DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, appears on a two-hour televised debate about homosexuality on Chicago’s WBBM. The program is one of the first times self-identified homosexuals appear on television, and Miss Showers is the only woman featured.

PRIDE is an annual GLBTQ celebration that originated 39 years ago as the Christopher Street Liberation Day on the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots. This pamphlet was produced to be distributed at Chicago PRIDE 2009, which marks the 40th Anniversary of Stonewall. There is a rich history to celebrate and take pride in—this zine is meant to be a reminder of those moments and individuals that made that history a reality. There is a lot to celebrate, and there is still a lot more to struggle for (and against).

Note: throughout this zine we use various terms when discussing the GLBTQ community. We've done our best choose terms specifically and carefully. In choosing differing terminology, we've attempted to re-articulate how specific groups and individuals have chosen to identify themselves throughout history. All these terms have significant histories and no single label can adequately define all the identities and communities that have struggled and continue to struggle for sexual and gender freedom.
In the late 1960s and the years prior, gay bars
served as one of the few places that gay, lesbian, or trans people could
gather as one another. However, even these spaces were often occupied by
police who would use them as a means to surveil and harass the patrons.

In 1979, Stonewall was formed as the first gay rights organization to
provide a safe space for homosexuals. Initially, it was a small group of
people who met in bars and clubs to discuss their struggles and
 exploitation. However, as the movement gained momentum, more people
began to join, and the organization expanded its reach. Stonewall
became a focal point for activism and advocacy, and its members began to
lobby for changes in the law and policies that would protect gay,
lesbian, and transgender individuals.

In addition to providing a safe space and advocating for legal changes,
Stonewall also played a crucial role in organizing protests and rallies to
raise awareness about the rights of gay, lesbian, and transgender people.
The organization's first major event was the Stonewall riots, which
occurred in 1969 in New York City. The riots were a response to a
police raid on a gay bar, and they became a catalyst for the gay rights
movement.

Stonewall's legacy is a testament to the power of collective action and
the importance of creating safe spaces for marginalized communities.
Today, the organization continues to work towards equality and
 acceptance for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or
 gender identity.
stockings and the men would wear suits. Public displays of affection at homophile actions were typically condemned for "hurting the movement." This approach to a politics of difference often distanced the movement from more radical politics to avoid being further marginalized by the mainstream. This was the prominent, though challenged, climate of the pre-Stonewall activist movement.

In discussions of gay history, Stonewall has often been treated as a spontaneous combustion of frustration, anger, and joy with a particularly rebellious attitude. While this is all true, the rebellion at Stonewall was also a development of and reaction to the previous movements for gay rights. It is also important to view Stonewall in the context of the era, as resistance movements were developing internationally and uprisings, rebellions and riots were occurring with regularity.

So, with all this talk about Stonewall as a rupture that permanently impacted the struggles around gender and sexual identity, it is important to discuss what actually took place at Stonewall Inn and how it helped to push a movement forward...

Almost immediately following the Stonewall rebellion, organizations began to develop to fight for gay liberation. Just weeks after the riots, in July 1969, queer activists met in New York City and formed the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), a radical organization that connected the struggle against gay oppression to other social movements active at the time. They identified the movement as connected to the women's liberation movement, the anti-war movement, Black Power groups and stood in solidarity with international resistance movements.

A few months later, a group of activists split off from GLF to form the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), which was more of a single-issue organization focused on gay and lesbian rights. Although GAA didn't associate themselves with the radical politics of the other social movements of the time, they did incorporate many of the direct-action and civil disobedience tactics. They often utilized sit-ins as part of their campaigns to end anti-gay policies of politicians, government institutions and media outlets.

Unfortunately, many of the gay organizations failed to adequately deal with gender issues and individuals founded their own groups to address their specific needs. Radicalesbians was a lesbian caucus of GLF that split off and became its own organization and similarly, female activists left GAA to found Lesbian Feminist Liberation. There was also a group named Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) that was founded to provide necessary services (like clothing, food and housing) to homeless trans and gender-variant young people living on the street, many of whom were involved in sex work. STAR also pushed existing gay groups to include transvestite and drag issues in their campaigns, as the gay organizations would often exclude them to appeal to politicians and straight citizens.
Street in Greenwich Village.

Gritty bar on Christopher

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