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**Bachelor's Thesis**

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**Social, Legal and Political Changes in the United  
States in the Question of LGBT Community  
between 1969 and 1981**

Bachelor's Thesis

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Study program: Mezinárodní teritoriální studia

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Year of the defense: 2020

## **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on June 31, 2020

Filip Šourek

## **References**

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## **Annotation**

This Bachelor's Thesis deals with the question of LGBT community in the United States between 1969 and 1981. It focuses on LGBT activism in the 1970s and its achievements. The Thesis also puts the 1970s situation in the context of Stonewall riots of 1969 and the beginning of HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States in 1981. The thesis analyses the LGBT question in three main directions – social, legal and political. Main aims of the thesis are to introduce the possibly most important era of LGBT history and activism, to analyze the achievements of the fight for LGBT rights in this time period and to explain the connection of the 1970s and the Stonewall riots.

## **Anotace**

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá otázkou LGBT komunity ve Spojených státech amerických mezi lety 1969 a 1981. Práce se zaměřuje na aktivismus a úspěchy LGBT komunity v 70. letech 20. století. Zároveň práce pokládá 70. léta do kontextu Stonewallských nepokojů roku 1969 a počátku epidemie HIV/AIDS ve Spojených Státech v roce 1981. Analýza je provedena ve třech základních směrech – společenském, právním a politickém. Hlavními cíli práce je představit pravděpodobně nejvýznamnější éru LGBT historie a aktivismu, analyzovat úspěchy boje za práva LGBT lidí v tomto časovém období a vysvětlit spojitost 70. let se Stonewallskými nepokoji.

## **Keywords**

LGBT community, homosexuality, American law, Stonewall riots, HIV/AIDS epidemic, the 1970s, human rights

## **Klíčová slova**

LGBT komunita, homosexualita, americké právo, Stonewallské nepokoje, epidemie HIV/AIDS, sedmdesátá léta, lidská práva

## **Title**

Social, Legal and Political Changes in the United States in the Question of LGBT Community between 1969 and 1981

## **Název práce**

Sociální, právní a politické změny ve Spojených Státech v otázce LGBT komunity mezi lety 1969 a 1981

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## **Introduction**

This thesis, entitled “Social, Legal and Political Changes in the United States in the Question of LGBT Community between 1969 and 1981”, examines the possibly most important era of the LGBT community’s history. The 1970s represent a turning point in gay and lesbian people’s lives in the United States and the events and developments that took place have influenced the LGBT community until this day. The two crucial events, which the paper discusses, are the Stonewall riots of 1969 and the official beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States in 1981. These two moments are used as a time demarcation of the paper. The Stonewall riots are widely considered the most important event in the modern history of the LGBT community and they engendered an era of liberation and fight for the rights of LGBT people in the United States in the 1970s. It was the moment, when gay, lesbian and transgender people changed their approach to the fight for their rights and crossed from passivity to direct action to change their social, legal and political status. The 1981 epidemic, on the other hand, slowed down the process of LGBT liberation, as, at that time, the opposition to LGBT liberation used the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a weapon against LGBT people (especially gay men), who were directly labeled as the cause of the epidemic. The paper analyses the time in between 1969 and 1981 and works in three interconnected spheres – social, legal and political – evaluating the main achievements of the 1970s LGBT fight for rights.

The thesis argues that the 1970s were crucial for the LGBT community and LGBT rights in the United States. It was at this time, when the change in the approach of LGBT activism occurred and resulted in detabuization of the topic of homosexuality in the society and made the LGBT issues a subject of political and legal discussion in the United States. The second main argument of the thesis is that the Stonewall riots had an enormous impact on the formation of organized LGBT activism, which became essential for the social, legal and political changes of the 1970s.

Methodologically the thesis works on the basis of compilation of primary and secondary sources of various genres. The author uses sources from authors of different places on the opinion spectrum to secure objectivity of the paper. That also represents the main aim of the paper, which is to objectively introduce an epoch of LGBT history and the history of LGBT rights in the United States of America. This introduction of historical events and

connections is enriched by multiple analysis of causes and consequences of these moments. The analysis is conducted based on primary sources, which are critically evaluated and compared to secondary, mainly academic, literature. This approach to the analysis leads to maximal information value exempt of potential subjectivity of sources. The history of LGBT community in the United States in general is widely documented, but there's a noticeable gap in knowledge when it comes to connections of the Stonewall riots, the 1970s activism and the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The paper fills this gap and puts multiple narrowly focused secondary sources in this narrative.

The first chapter focuses on the Stonewall riots and argues that this event had an enormous impact on future LGBT activism and the situation of the LGBT community in the United States. Besides describing the riots, the chapter analyses the conditions under which the Stonewall riots occurred. This analysis is conducted from two main directions – geographical and socio-political. The main geographical and geopolitical conditions are introduced in order to explain why the event took place in New York City and not in any other part of the United States. The socio-political analysis then answers the question of why did the Stonewall riots happen at the end of the 1960s, specifically in 1969. The second chapter then proceeds to the years immediately after the Stonewall riots and explains the changes, which LGBT activism underwent under the influence of the 1969 events. This analysis is crucial, as the change of approach from “passive activism” to “active fight for LGBT rights” is, by scholars and historians, often used to explain the 1970s social, legal and political changes. These changes are then introduced in the third chapter. The paper works with some of the main moments in the LGBT community's history on creating a complex image of what changed in the 1970s and what it meant for the future generations of LGBT people in the United States. The fourth, and the last, chapter then explains what changed in 1981, when the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States started and what impact it had on the LGBT community and the fight for the rights of LGBT people at the time.



# 1 Stonewall Riots of 1969

To understand Stonewall riots, it is necessary to understand their background. Two main questions to be answered are: Why did it happen in Greenwich Village in New York City? And why did it happen at the end of the 1960s? Both of these questions can be answered by looking back in time, at the situation of LGBT community and the social climate towards queer people since the beginning of the 1960s.

There are multiple geographical aspects playing role in why Stonewall riots took place in New York and not any other state of the United States. The fact that New York City, the capital of New York, is situated on Hudson river caused historically for it to become a center of commerce, manufacturing and immigration. Based on a large population stemming from that, New York City became a popular place among LGBT people. It was simply easier to avoid many struggles of living “differently,” out of the spectrum of strict sexual and gender expectations of the post-World War II era. As the city became overpopulated and the affordable housing was limited, it was not unusual for man and man or woman and woman to share an apartment, which made it easier for gay and lesbian couples to live together, at the time when it would be automatically judged elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> The fact that on the exact day of the Stonewall riots a funeral of a gay icon, Judy Garland, took place in New York City might also have a value while analyzing the reasons standing behind why New York City and not some other part of the United States.<sup>2</sup> It is also no surprise that the Stonewall riots took place in Greenwich Village, particularly in the Stonewall Inn night club on Christopher Street. This part of New York City was at that time one of the most significant places of clustering of LGBT people. The neighborhood on the West side of Manhattan is still today directly connected to the LGBT movement, Beat generation artists of the 1960s and the 1970s and the counterculture of various types in general.<sup>3</sup>

The weekend days of the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of June 1969 are essential for the situation of the LGBT community in the United States and became a very important part of the

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<sup>1</sup> VARGA, Bretton A., BECK, Terence A. and THORTON, Stephan J. „Celebrating Stonewall at 50: A Culturally Geographic Approach to Introducing LGBT Themes“, *The Social Studies* (2019), Vol. 110 (1), 35.

<sup>2</sup> FRANK, Walter. “Law and the gay rights story: the long search for equal justice in a divided democracy”, *Rutgers University Press* (2014), 22.

<sup>3</sup> MATTHEWS, Karen. “NYC grants landmark status to gay rights movement building”, *North Jersey Media Group. Associated Press* (June 23, 2015).

communities and wide society's collective memory.<sup>45</sup> The 1960s are in general connected to the rise of radicalization of gay and lesbian movements around the United States and especially in New York City, where one of the most radical activist groups formed at the turn of 1968 and 1969. This radicalization process of the late 1960s was, according to Michael Bronski<sup>6</sup>, reinforced by factors such as the Vietnam war, development of feminist movement and escalation of the fight for rights of ethnic minorities.<sup>7</sup> What helped the activists to get to the point, where something like the Stonewall riots could happen and successfully make it into mainstream media, was the creation of a network of media contacts among LGBT community. Queer culture and LGBT people in general became a news theme for such media as *The New York Times*, *New York Post* or *Harper's*.<sup>8</sup> That is a crucial factor, as no sooner than in the 1960s the LGBT question slowly started getting dedemonized and so, it became not only a question of gay and lesbian citizens, but a question of all citizens of the United States as a part of evolving fight for human rights.

The social climate towards minorities in New York City was influenced by the switch of the city's mayor in 1966. Robert F. Wagner Jr., in office since 1954, publicly stood against the rights of LGBT people and one of his biggest efforts in this matter, was to eliminate gay bars in New York City. His endeavor even strengthened in connection to the 1964 World's Fair construction, which was supposed to be the peak of modernity and the symbol of progressiveness, when he expressed his desire to "clean up the city", among other things, from gay and lesbian people. It seemed that the situation would change for better after the switch in office in 1966, when John Lindsay became the mayor of New York City. Soon enough it was obvious that it was not in Lindsay's power to loosen up the anti-LGBT atmosphere in the city.<sup>9</sup> The social mindset towards gay and lesbian people is well illustrated by an affair that took place in a bar named Julius in 1966 and is nowadays known as "the

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<sup>4</sup> ARMSTRONG, Elizabeth A., "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth", *American Sociological Review* (October 2006), Vol. 71, 725-727.

<sup>5</sup> Theory of collective memory is in this case understood as a phenomenon which combines a) sufficient value of an event, b) enough effort to make the event well-known and so make it a part of collective memory, and c) a present goal of inserting the event on the spectrum of collective memory.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Bronski is an American academic and writer, best known for his 2011 book *A Queer History of the United States*. He has been involved in LGBT politics since 1969. In the 1970s, his essays and comments have been published in a wide array of venues, such as *The Village Voice*, *TIME* and *The Boston Globe*. He was also a founding member of *Boston Gay Review* and *Fag Rag Collective*. In 1995, he was awarded the AIDS Action Community Recognition Award for 20 years of journalism on gay and AIDS-related topics. Bronski is currently Professor of the Practice in Media and Activism at Harvard University, in the women, gender and sexuality program.

<sup>7</sup> BRONSKI, Michael. *A Queer History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011), 205.

<sup>8</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011), 207-209.

<sup>9</sup> The Stonewall Riots Explained. In: Youtube (online). July 3, 2015 (accessed June 18, 2019). Available at: <https://youtu.be/7ZrQeNBMqOk>. Youtube channel of Hip Hughes.

Julius' sip-in.”<sup>10</sup> On April 21, 1966, three gay activists entered the bar in Manhattan and declared that they were gay and wanted to order drinks. The bartender initially started preparing their drinks but then he put his hand over the glass as a gesture of not wanting to serve them based on their sexuality, which was photographed (Figure 1).<sup>11</sup> The next day, *The New York Times* featured an article about the event with the headline “3 Deviates Invite Exclusion by Bars.” New Jersey’s gay activists, inspired by the “sip-in”, sued bars which refused to provide service to gay people. In 1967, the New York Supreme Court ruled that “well-behaved homosexuals” could not be denied service. The ruling even added: “In our culture, homosexuals are indeed unfortunates (...) but their status does not make them criminals or outlaws.”<sup>12</sup> For “Julius’ sip-in” to take place in the center of New York City and being in the attention of mainstream media can be without a doubt considered one of the many aspects, by which it’s possible to explain why Stonewall riots took place in New York and not elsewhere.



Figure 1: Bartender refusing to serve member of the Mattachine Society customers during “Julius’ sip-in” in New York City, April 21, 1966 (Photo by Fred W. McDarrah / Getty Images)

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<sup>10</sup> The word “sip-in” is directly inspired by “sit-in” or “sit-down”, a form of direct action that involves one or more people occupying an area for a protest, often to promote political, social, or economic opinion. Protestors refuse to move unless their demands are met. This form of protest has its origins in Afro-American fight for civil rights. One of the earliest sit-ins took place in 1955, Baltimore, where university students refused to leave with a goal to desegregate Read’s drug stores. As a result, 37 Baltimore-area lunch counters became desegregated.

<sup>11</sup> SIMON, Scott. „Remembering a 1966 ‘Sip-In’ for Gay Rights“, *NPR* (June 28, 2008), <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=91993823&t=1566902795461> (accessed January 19, 2020).

<sup>12</sup> FARBER, Jim. „Before the Stonewall Uprising, There Was the ‘Sip-In’“, *New York Times* (April 20, 2016), <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/21/nyregion/before-the-stonewall-riots-there-was-the-sip-in.html> (accessed January 19, 2020).

### ***1.1 The Course of the Stonewall Riots***

A lot has happened during the two nights of June 1969 in the center of New York City. The Stonewall Inn club, opened for the first time in 1967, was not only well-known as a meeting spot of LGBT people, but also as a spot of multiple police raids a month. These raids mostly went without further complications, which has changed that night, when the guests and the staff decided to fight back on the night of June 28th.<sup>13</sup> At 1:20 a.m., four plainclothes policemen in dark suits, two police officers in uniforms, and Detective Charles Smythe and Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine, entered the Stonewall Inn and announced “Police! We’re taking over the place!” The raid did not go as planned though. The club’s customers refused to line up and hand in their identification documents. The situation became even more tense, when police officers started to assault some of the present lesbians and even touching them inappropriately. Testimonies differ regarding the level of resistance. Some describe a simple revolt against handing in the guests’ identification documents, others complement this symbolical act of resistance by confessions of violent acts towards the police. However, most of them agree on the fact, that this particular raid was accompanied by, in comparison to other raids, extreme violence coming from the police.<sup>14</sup>

The whole situation escalated due to wave of arrests. The particular event that rode the rioting to extreme was the arrest of a lesbian activist Storme de Lavarine, who was physically and verbally abused while being transported to a police car.<sup>15</sup> According to one of the eyewitnesses: “It was at that moment the scene became explosive.”<sup>16</sup> The crowd in front of the Stonewall Inn had grown to at least ten times the number of people who were arrested.<sup>17</sup> As the rumor, that the people still held in the bar were beaten, spread, pennies and then bottles started to be thrown at the police wagon. Ten police officers and several handcuffed detainees barricaded themselves in the Stonewall Inn for their own safety.<sup>18</sup> Michael Fader, one of the protesters of the Stonewall riots, explained the aggression towards police by saying:

We all had a collective feeling like we'd had enough of this kind of shit. It wasn't anything tangible anybody said to anyone else, it was just kind of like everything over the years had come to a head on that one particular night in the one particular place, and it was not an organized demonstration... (...)

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<sup>13</sup> ARMSTRONG, “Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth”, 736-737.

<sup>14</sup> CARTER, David. *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2004), 137-148.

<sup>15</sup> DUBERMAN, Martin. *Stonewall* (New York: Penguin Random House, 1993), 196.

<sup>16</sup> CARTER. *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*, 148.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 147-151.

<sup>18</sup> TRUSCOTT, Lucian. “Gay Power Comes to Sheridan Square”, *The Village Voice* (July 3, 1969), available at: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/exhibitions/sw25/voice1.html> (accessed February 3, 2020).

And we felt that we had freedom at last, or freedom to at least show that we demanded freedom. (...) the bottom line was, we weren't going to go away. And we didn't.<sup>19</sup>

Very similarly was the situation described by, a self-identified street queen, Sylvia Rivera, who noted: „You've been treating us like shit all these years? Uh-uh. Now it's our turn!... It was one of the greatest moments in my life.“<sup>20</sup> Thirteen people were transported to the police station and an unknown number of people were taken to a hospital with minor injuries that night.<sup>21</sup>

Similar fall of events stroke up the following day, this time more peaceful and organized. The second night was carried by a rhythm of phrases, very much present in the 21<sup>st</sup> century LGBT activism, such as *We Want Freedom Now* and *Equality for Homosexuals*. These in the future notoriously known and frequently used phrases were coined during that night, which only adds on the significance the events. It was not only about creation of slogans, which were to become an important part of the LGBT activism for decades to come, the real importance was in the formulation of demands (clearly transformed into these slogans). These demands – freedom for homosexuals and equality of people no matter sexual orientation or gender identity – have not been fulfilled completely until today, which underlines the importance of the Stonewall riots for the LGBT community.<sup>22</sup> In words of a famous Beat generation poet and writer, Allen Ginsberg, present during the second night of rioting, “(...) you know, the guys there were so beautiful—they've lost that wounded look that all fags had 10 years ago.“<sup>23</sup>

After the first night of riots, the events that took place in Greenwich Village got a large media coverage, the *New York Sunday News* even put the story of Stonewall riots on its front page (Figure 2). The media coverage of the Stonewall riots helped spreading information about the riots and make the question of LGBT rights an important part of the public discourse.<sup>24</sup> Thousands of people, gay and straight, gathered in front of the Stonewall Inn club and, at first calmly, demonstrated for LGBT rights. The situation escalated around 2 a.m., but the street battling didn't take longer than 2 hours. For the next couple days, there

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<sup>19</sup> CARTER. *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*, 160.

<sup>20</sup> DEITCHER, David. *The question of equality: lesbian and gay politics in America since Stonewall* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 67.

<sup>21</sup> DUBERMAN. *Stonewall*, 202.

<sup>22</sup> LEITSCH, Dick. “Hairpin Drop Heard Around the World”, *Stonewall: Riot, Rebellion, Activism and Identity*, <https://stonewallhistory.omeka.net/items/show/31> (accessed: July 10, 2019).

<sup>23</sup> TEAL, Donn. *The Gay Militants* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1971), 7.

<sup>24</sup> TEAL. *The Gay Militants*, 4-8.

were sporadic protests in Greenwich village, but most of the activists moved their efforts to the work, that was necessarily to follow – organized activist activity.<sup>25</sup>

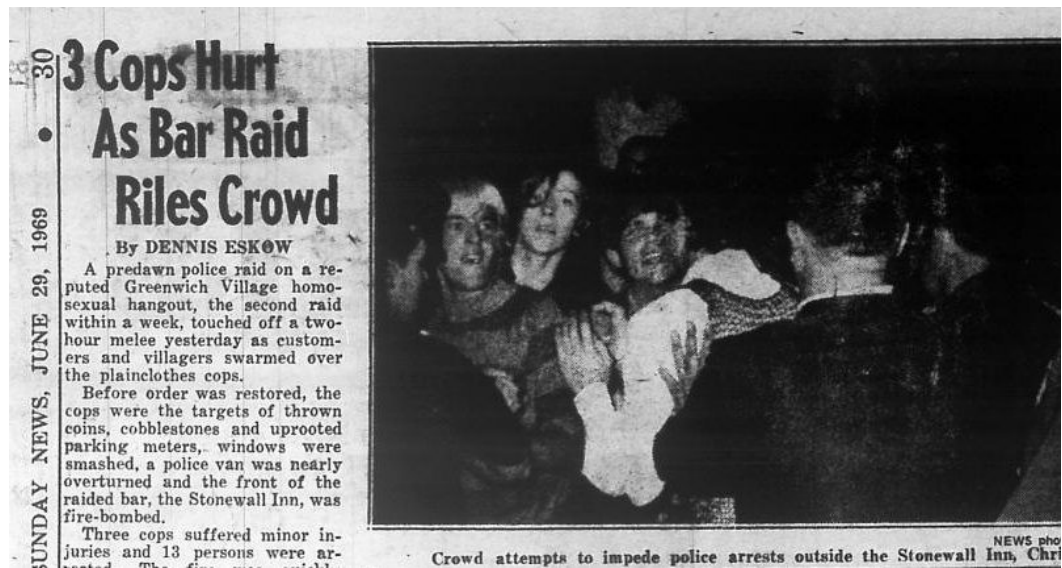


Figure 2: The *New York Sunday News* article titled "3 Cops Hurt As Bar Raid Riles Crowd" reporting about Stonewall riots, June 29, 1969 (*New York Sunday News* front page from June 29, 1969)

## 2.2 Chapter 1 - Conclusion

Stonewall riots are considered a crucial milestone in the LGBT history and they are of a great value for gay and lesbian activism in the United States and for the human rights movement in general. The background of the riots is almost as important as the riots themselves. It was no coincidence that the event took place during the late 1960s. The timing is directly connected to the peeking radicalization of LGBT community and changes of the social climate in the United States at that time. The society started to get involved in earlier fully tabuized matters, such as sexuality and sexual orientation, cultural scene became more open to things which would be harshly criticized for being inappropriate or even immoral (and in some cases criminalized) just a decade ago and the media began to report openly on rather intimate affairs. The changes which were to follow are spread from cultural approach towards queer people to legislative changes, which influenced lives of millions of people and formed the situation of the LGBT community of today. The creation of the organized LGBT activism in the 1970s and the 1980s that made these changes happen would not be possible without the symbolical beginning of the revolt such as Stonewall riots.

<sup>25</sup> DUBERMAN. *Stonewall*, 202-205.

## 2 The Development of LGBT Activism until the Post-Stonewall Era

It is necessary to first introduce the activism of the 1950s and 1960s, and of course, the impact of the Stonewall riots, to properly explain the process connected to the formation of the activist scene of the 1970s. Even though the post-Stonewall activist generation was the one that made the biggest steps to political, legislative and social change for the LGBT community, they built on the work of their predecessors. The pre-Stonewall fight for gay and lesbian rights is mainly represented by one movement, that prepared the climate for the Stonewall riots to happen – the Mattachine Society.

### 2.1 Cornerstone of the Post-War LGBT Activism

Formed in 1950, under the leadership of Harry Hay<sup>26</sup>, the Mattachine Society was the first homophile society actively working on integrating gay and lesbian people into the wider society after the Second World War. The movement was inspired by early labor organizations and by the Communist Party. Even though Harry Hay himself resigned from the Communist Party of the United States of America (CPUSA) due to its anti-homosexuality stance, the roots in communist ideology were still present in the Mattachine Society's approach. The group was not only interested in fighting for the rights of LGBT people, but it was also involved in “the Negro, Mexican and Jewish peoples” activist work, as the Society believed that “homosexuals can lead well-adjusted lives once ignorance and prejudice against them is successfully combated”<sup>27</sup> while this “ignorance and prejudice” could only be combated through a complete social and political change towards all minorities.<sup>28</sup>

The Mattachine Society intensively focused, next to educating and raising awareness, on the gathering of members. They organized lectures, socials and discussion groups to attract new members and by 1953 the Society consisted of more than 2000 people. The organization also produced a gay and lesbian targeting magazine called *ONE*, which was being distributed, first through subscription and later on newsstands, from 1953 until 1972, when the Mattachine Society underwent a major ideological split. At the beginning of the 1970s, some members disagreed with Hay's approach. He wanted to create a somewhat autonomous community co-existing with the wide society – which was against some of the members' philosophy of integrating LGBT people into the wide society. What is extraordinary about the Mattachine

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<sup>26</sup> Henry “Harry” Hay, Jr. was not only the founder of the Mattachine Society, but a life-long gay rights activist, described as “the father of gay liberation”. In June 2019, he was one of fifty American “pioneers, trailblazers and heroes” inducted into the National LGBTQ Wall of Honor within the Stonewall National Monument, the first U.S. national monument dedicated to LGBTQ rights and history.

<sup>27</sup> HAY, Harry. *Radically Gay: Gay Liberation in the Words of Its Founder* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 131.

<sup>28</sup> BRONSKI, Michael. *A Queer History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011), 94-180.

Society is the fact, that the group directly opposed the Stonewall riots of 1969 and even cooperated with the police to stop further protests. They asked: “We homosexuals plead with our people to please help maintain peaceful and quiet conduct on the streets of the village.”<sup>29</sup> This accommodationist attitude led to the replacement of the Mattachine Society by newly formed gay and lesbian activist organizations, such as Gay Liberation Front and Gay Activist Alliance, during the 1970s. The Stonewall riots and the turn of the 1960s to the 1970s meant a complete switch in the attitude of the leading LGBT activist groups, and so of the LGBT movement in general – from the conservative attitude of the Mattachine Society, to the combative and explicit approach of the following organizations.<sup>30</sup> Despite that, the Mattachine Society built the foundation for the post-war LGBT activism and is until today celebrated among queer community all around the world.

## ***2.2 The Creation and Activity of the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activist Alliance***

The Stonewall riots and the reaction to the event in media and wide society caused a serious change in the rhetoric of gay and lesbian rights movement. LGBT activists no longer asked for toleration, but they were ready to fight for their rights and for their freedom. During the second half of 1969, Gay Liberation Front (GLF) formed in New York City. GLF had a broad political platform, aside from fighting for gay rights, it denounced racism and declared support for various “Third World problems”.<sup>31</sup>

In 2019, on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stonewall riots, John Lauritsen<sup>32</sup> wrote an article, in which he presented his own experience with the very beginnings of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF). His words perfectly represent both, the rise and the fall of one of the most significant LGBT activist group in the history of the United States. Lauritsen wrote:

Fifty years ago, a meeting changed my life. It was in early July 1969, shortly after Stonewall. I don't remember the exact date or where it was held, only that a heated debate was taking place over whether the newly forming group, still nameless, should ally with the antiwar movement. Since I'd been involved in the movement against Vietnam War since 1965, I jumped on the side of the radicals and we

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<sup>29</sup> FITZSIMONS, Tim. “LGBT History Month: The road to America’s first gay pride march”, *NBC News* (October 5, 2018), <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/lgbtq-history-month-road-america-s-first-gay-pride-march-n917096> (accessed February 12, 2020).

<sup>30</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 179-210.

<sup>31</sup> LAURITSEN, John. “The Rise and Fall of the GLF”, *The Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide* (May-June 2019), Vol. 26 (3), 21, <http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=6aa29101-d025-4f88-b578-bed626874432%40pdc-v-sessmgr03> (accessed January 6, 2020).

<sup>32</sup> John Lauritsen, a Harvard University graduate, born in 1939, is one of the still living witnesses of not only the creating of GLF, but also of the Stonewall riots and the following changes in the LGBT community in the 1970s.



prevailed. The new group would be named the Gay Liberation Front, deliberately echoing the National Liberation Front<sup>33</sup> of Vietnam.<sup>34</sup>

The clash over whether to join forces with the antiwar movement or to focus on gay and lesbian activism only may have seemed minor at the time, but the final decision to make the GLF's platform wider let the organization to an end in a few years of its existence.

The first GLF's major demonstration went on in opposition to *The Village Voice*, which had recently published an anti-gay article and refused ads for a planned GLF dance. After the demonstration, *The Village Voice* agreed to all GLF's demands.<sup>35</sup> This success is just one of many illustrating the successful activity of the newly created activist group. GLF also published *Come Out!*, the New York based gay-themed newspaper, which was quickly followed by other regional LGBT community magazines and newspapers, such as Michigan's *Gay Liberation*, San Francisco's *Gay Sunshine* or Boston's *Fag Rag* and *Gay Community News*.<sup>36</sup> That was a huge step forward for the community, as not only did the gays and lesbians get public recognition, which they needed to fight for their rights, but also because every step forward of the GLF inspired more people to "come out of the closet."<sup>37</sup>

The GLF collapsed in 1972 based on a factor which is very well illustrated in John Lauritsen's quotation at the beginning of the chapter – the GLF was from the beginning supposed to "ally with the antiwar movement."<sup>38</sup> Not only did they engage in antiwar activism, but they also supported various feminist and antiracist activist groups. Many members of the GLF opposed this strategy and when they weren't able to agree on focusing on LGBT rights only, they started leaving the movement. Some of the ex-members then started forming new groups. The most significant of these newly formed organizations are Gay Activist Alliance (GAA) and Street Transvestite Action Revolution (STAR). The GAA only focused on the question of gay and lesbian rights, based on its constitution and STAR became a foundational group for today's transgender activism.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> In question of what inspired the name of the activist group, the scholars differ. While John Lauritsen connects the name, Gay Liberation Front, to National Liberation Front, Michael Bronski, one of the world's leading historians, inclines to an idea, that what inspired the name was at that time already existing Women Liberation Front. Other sources even mention GLF's connection to Algerian National Liberation Front or Vietnamese National Front, as conflicts in Algeria and Vietnam were a crucial point in the GLF's philosophy.

<sup>34</sup> LAURITSEN. "The Rise and Fall of the GLF", 21.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>36</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 210-215.

<sup>37</sup> To "come out of the closet" is a phrase used to portray the act of admitting a person's homosexuality to others.

<sup>38</sup> LAURITSEN. "The Rise and Fall of the GLF", 21.

<sup>39</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 211-212.

The GAA tried to distance itself from the GLF as much as possible. Its philosophy can be summarized as “single issue” organization, with a goal to secure “basic human rights, dignity and freedom for all gay people.”<sup>40</sup> One of GAA’s activist methods were, so called, “zaps”, public demonstrations designed to straight-forward publicly confront politicians and celebrities, by coming up to them and demanding reactions to questions about their attitude to or opinions on LGBT community (Figure 3). These “zaps” took various forms, from public confrontation of New York City mayor, John Lindsay, to zaps against Marriage License Bureau or *The New York Daily News*, when it printed an article attacking “queers, lezzies, pansies, call them what you will.”<sup>41</sup> Beside these “zaps”, the GAA also published *Gay Activist* newspaper, founded a student club “Gay people” at Columbia University and created the Firehouse at 99 Wooster Street in Soho, which served as the GAA headquarters, but also as a community center and a meeting spot for LGBT people in general during the first half of the 1970s.<sup>42</sup> In October 1974, a fire destroyed the Firehouse, the GAA was evicted and had to move to new headquarters. The situation forced the GAA to cut back on its activities for some time. During the investigation it was confirmed that the destruction of the building was a product of an arsonist. The president of the organization, Morty Manford, stated that the fire was “part of a wave of harassment against gays.”<sup>43</sup>

Although GAA ceased to exist in 1981, when it was replaced by new and fresh organizations, its impact, just as the GLF’s impact, is undoubtable. These two activist organizations stood at the very beginning of the crucial change, which the 1970s meant for the lives of LGBT people’s lives in the United States. John Lauritsen even compared these activist groups to those of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in his 2019 article, saying that “(...) in none of the mainstream ‘LGBTQ’ organizations [does he] see any of the spirit and vision of GLF or GAA“.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> MAROTTA, Toby. *The Politics of Homosexuality* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), 22.

<sup>41</sup> KENNEDY, Joseph, “Joseph J. Kennedy, The Summer of 77: The Last Hurrah of the Gay Activists Alliance” (1994), <http://www.gaynewsandviews.com/summerof77.htm> (accessed January 8, 2020).

<sup>42</sup> EISENBACH, David. *Gay Power: An American Revolution*. (Boston: Da Capo Press, 2007), 183–194.

<sup>43</sup> MOROWITZ, Matthew. “Gay Activist Alliance Headquarters Bombed”, *Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation* (October 15, 2018), available at: <https://gvshp.org/blog/2018/10/15/gay-activist-alliance-headquarters-bombed/> (accessed January 6, 2020).

<sup>44</sup> LAURITSEN. “The Rise and Fall of the GLF”, 21.



Figure 3: Gay Activist Alliance members “zap” New York Council speaker in front of the City Hall, 1971  
(Photo by Richard C. Wandel, Collection #60)

### ***2.3 Gay Pride, a Heritage of the Stonewall Riots***

Gay Pride parades are a crucial part of the modern gay activism. According to gay historian Toby Marotta it is a form of “cultural activism” of the LGBT community. The first annual celebration of Gay Pride was a direct reaction to the Stonewall riots of 1969. “Christopher Street Liberation Day Parade” was set on June 28, 1970, as a commemoration of what happened on the exact same day, in the same place, one year prior (Figure 4). Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee (CSLDC), led by a movement pioneer Craig Rodwell, planned a weekend festival with various entertainment alternatives, such as dances, college mixers, poetry readings, theater and discussion groups. The CSLDC also came up with the new name of the parade, “Gay Pride”, which had the potential to spread through the United States. First Rodwell’s idea was to call the weekend of activities the “Gay Power Weekend”. Craig Schoonmaker, another member of the CSLDC suggested the “Gay Pride Weekend”, which was unanimously agreed on.<sup>45</sup> The Schoonmaker’s catch phrase is directly connected to James Brown’s single “Say It Loud! I’m Black and I’m Proud”, which after its

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<sup>45</sup> GORTON, Don. “On the Origins of ‘Gay Pride’”, *Gay and Lesbian Review Worldwide* (July-August 2010), Vol. 17 (4), 5, <http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=2&sid=71451e64-9b75-4d9a-9ef2-ecb146c79aca%40sessionmgr4006&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLHNoaWImbGFuZz1jcyZzaXRIPWVvcy1saXZlJnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#AN=edsgcl.232889529&db=edsglr> (accessed January 6, 2020).

release in 1968, became one of the anthems of the Afro-American movement in the United States.<sup>4647</sup>



Figure 4: People march into New York’s Central Park during the nation’s first gay pride parade on June 28, 1970 (Photo by Michael Lien for *The New York Times*)

The outreach of the reminder of the Stonewall riots was enormous. In 1970, aside from New York City, the Gay Pride parades took place in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Dallas and Milwaukee, and one year later they spread all around the United States to Atlanta, Buffalo, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Miami, Minneapolis and Philadelphia, as well as San Francisco, as a direct commemoration of the Stonewall riots. The tradition also found its way to other parts of the world, especially Europe. Parades took place in London, Paris, West Berlin and Stockholm in 1971.<sup>48</sup> Mainstream media gave the events a lot of attention – *The New York Times* published an article on its front page<sup>49</sup> and *The Village Voice* described the celebrations as “the out-front resistance that grew out of the police raid on the Stonewall Inn one year ago.”<sup>50</sup> Gay Pride parades had a great impact on the creation of homosexual and homophile movement all over the United States. Frank Kameny, an organizer of gay activism in the 1950s said that “by the time of Stonewall, we had fifty to sixty gay groups in the

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<sup>46</sup> Although some historians and scholars dispute the link between James Brown’s song and the Gay Pride, it strongly suggests that gay and lesbian activists drew on the experience of the black civil rights movements once again.

<sup>47</sup> Bay Area News Group. “Pitts: Pride Month: It is god that LGBTQ people are ‘proud’” (June 22, 2019), <https://www.record-bee.com/2019/06/22/pitts-pride-month-it-is-good-that-lgbtq-people-are-proud/> (accessed February 20, 2020).

<sup>48</sup> LAFRANK, Kathleen. “National Historic Landmark Nomination: Stonewall”, *U.S. department of the Interior* (January 1999), 16-22.

<sup>49</sup> FOSBURGH, Lacey. “Thousands of Homosexuals Hold a Protest Rally in Central Park”, *The New York Times* (June 29, 1970), <https://www.nytimes.com/1970/06/29/archives/thousands-of-homosexuals-hold-a-protest-rally-in-central-park.html> (accessed March 1, 2020).

<sup>50</sup> LAFRANK. “National Historic Landmark Nomination: Stonewall”, 20.

country. A year later [after Stonewall riots] there was at least fifteen hundred. By two years later, to the extent that a count could be made, it was twenty-five hundred.” These Kameny’s words underline the pivotal place the Stonewall riots hold in the spread of LGBT activism.<sup>51</sup>

Gay Pride Parades, and also gay pride as a newly developed ideology, meant, aside from the medialization of the fight for gay rights, the spread of the LGBT movement throughout the United States and the beginning of the biggest symbol of gay activism until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, was a large-scale politicization of the LGBT question. The members of the community realized that “voting for pro-equality candidates is a start,” but “actively helping to get them elected” is the real step forward and that the LGBT people have to “pressure elected officials to take specific actions with letter-writing campaigns, lobbying efforts, media outreach, and street protests” and that they need “political equality, not just social equality”.<sup>52</sup> The politicization of the LGBT movement is absolutely indispensable for the fight for legislative changes, which was about to come in the 1970s and 1980s.

## ***2.4 Chapter 2 - Conclusion***

The post-War LGBT activism needs to be understood as a complex phenomenon. All activist groups of this period have been directly influenced by one another, just like the 21<sup>st</sup> century LGBT activism is influenced by those organizations mentioned in this chapter. The Mattachine Society, formed in 1950, can be perceived as a direction indicator for the LGBT activism of the 1960s and the Gay Liberation Front, as well as the Gay Activist Alliance can be perceived as that for the activism of 1970s and 1980s. What divides these two categories of organizations is the strategy, which they used to achieve their goals – achieving LGBT rights and over-all making lives of gays and lesbians easier. While the Mattachine Society took the approach of complete integration of LGBT people into major society, the GLF and the GAA decided to highlight the difference between heterosexuals and homosexuals and celebrate these differences in order to inform that they do not make gay and lesbian people any less valuable than heterosexuals. These two approaches follow up logically, to a large degree influencing each other, and lead to the period of the 1970s and 1980s that was to change the lives of LGBT people for better, as a period when multiple legislative and political changes have been made and gays and lesbians got public attention.

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<sup>51</sup> CARTER. *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*, 251.

<sup>52</sup> GORTON. “On the Origins of ‘Gay Pride’”, 5.

### 3 LGBT Politics and Legislation in the Post-Stonewall Era

The Stonewall riots were undoubtedly a crucial milestone in the history of the LGBT community and the post-Stonewall era, meaning the time period between the Stonewall riots and the beginning of HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States in 1981 meant possibly the most radical headway in fighting for gay and lesbian rights until today. It is necessary to refine this thesis – the biggest amount of the most important changes in the LGBT legislation and politics occurred in the late 1990s and 2000s, but many historians and scholars agree on the fact, that these changes may not have been possible without the struggle for equality on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity of the post-Stonewall era. Fight for the legislative changes was at the time mainly aimed against two types of applicable laws – sodomy and discriminatory laws.<sup>53</sup>

Sodomy laws were originally a part of a larger body of law designed to prevent nonprocreative sexual activity and sexuality out of marriage. That is rather logical from a historical viewpoint as sodomy laws were inherited from colonial laws of the 1600s, when the approach towards sexuality in general was very conservative. Throughout most of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, these laws were mainly used as secondary charges in cases of public sex, sexual activity with children or animals and sexual assault.<sup>54</sup> That usage of sodomy laws has changed during the late 1960s. As the gay rights movement began to grow stronger, the conservatives began to invoke sodomy laws as a justification of discrimination of sexual minorities. The laws were rewritten to be applied only to gay people in nine states during that period – Kansas, Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Tennessee, and Texas. The sodomy laws were used against gay people in three ways: 1) to limit the ability of gays and lesbians to raise children, 2) to justify employment discrimination towards members of the LGBT community and 3) they were used in public debate to discredit LGBT voices.<sup>55</sup> The U.S. Supreme Court case *Lawrence v. Texas*, which was decided on June 26, 2003, ruled that American laws prohibiting private homosexual activity between consenting adults are unconstitutional and the sodomy laws ceased to be valid on a federal level.<sup>56</sup> Even though the Supreme Court provided a “personal autonomy to define one’s own relationship,” this decision did not end discrimination targeting against LGBT people. That is mainly due to

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<sup>53</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 205-234.

<sup>54</sup> ESKRIDGE, William N. *Gaylaw: Challenging the Apartheid of the Closet* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 161-168.

<sup>55</sup> American Civil Liberties Union. „Why Sodomy Laws Matter“, *ACLU*, available at: <https://www.aclu.org/other/why-sodomy-laws-matter> (accessed May 22, 2020).

<sup>56</sup> *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003).

the lack of federal level laws and restrictions, which would preclude discrimination of people on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. That is in employment, housing or even when it comes to hate crimes committed towards LGBT people.<sup>57</sup>

### ***3.1 The Legal Discrimination towards LGBT People after the World War II***

When analyzing the discrimination of gay and lesbian people in the United States after 1945, it is crucial to put the situation of the LGBT community in the context of the beginning of the Cold War and so in the context of the “Red Scare” phenomenon. The anti-communist efforts provided a setting in which a sustained attack upon gay men and lesbians took place. This panic about homosexuals in the United States government and society is in American history referred to as “Lavender Scare”. This phenomenon was extensively documented by David Johnson, an American historian, who explains that:

*The Lavender Scare helped fan the flames of the Red Scare. In popular discourse, communists and homosexuals were often conflated. Both groups were perceived as hidden subcultures with their own meeting places, literature, cultural codes, and bonds of loyalty. Both groups were thought to recruit to their ranks the psychologically weak or disturbed. And both groups were considered immoral and godless. Many people believed that the two groups were working together to undermine the government.*<sup>58</sup>

Based on that, LGBT people were, mainly in the 1940s and 1950s, treated as a real national security thread, demanding the attention of Congress, the courts and the media.<sup>59</sup> The “Lavender scare” is directly connected with a “witch hunt” for LGBT public employees. In 1950, the United States Senate even created a subcommittee, to evaluate the threat of homosexuals present in public civil service for national security. In the first year of its existence, the subcommittee issued a report entitled *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*<sup>60</sup>, which concluded that “those who engage in acts of homosexuality and other perverted sex activities are unsuitable for employment in the Federal

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<sup>57</sup> ESKRIDGE. *Gaylaw*, 162.

<sup>58</sup> JOHNSON, David K. “An interview with David K. Johnson, author of *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government*”, Interview by *The University of Chicago Press* (2004), <https://press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/404811in.html> (accessed February 22, 2020).

<sup>59</sup> Williams Institute. „Chapter 5: The Legacy of State Laws, Policies, and Practices, 1945-Present“, available at [https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/5\\_History.pdf](https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/5_History.pdf) (accessed February 22, 2020).

<sup>60</sup> United States Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on Investigation. “Employment of homosexuals and other sex perverts in government”, report submitted to the Committee on Expenditures (1950), available at: <https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/10505561> (accessed June 13, 2020).

Government.”<sup>61</sup> From 1947 to 1961, more than 5 000 allegedly homosexual federal civil servants lost their jobs for no other reason than their sexual orientation.<sup>62</sup>

The purges of LGBT employees didn't only appear on the federal level. By the mid-1950s, loyalty and security oaths similar to those on the federal level had been put into effect by many state and local governments. That extended the prohibitions of employment of homosexuals to state and local workers, employees of state-funded schools and colleges and all private individuals requiring state licenses for their professions. William Eskridge, an American scholar and historian, explains the struggle which that posed for LGBT people in the United States on an example of the purge of public employees in Florida in 1957, carried out by the committee led by the state senator Charley Johns. The committee discovered almost 60 homosexual teachers, most of whom resigned on their posts, just by the end of the first year of Johns' Committee's function, after which the senator and his committee engaged in six-year campaign designed to remove homosexuals from state schools. The Johns' Committee also provided information to professional licensing boards, causing doctors, lawyers and other gay men and women to lose their licenses and jobs.<sup>63</sup>

The presence of the Lavender Scare on the federal and state levels had logically an inevitable impact on everyday lives of gays and lesbians in the United States. Sexual relations between two people of the same sex were at the time still criminalized in all states of the United States and LGBT people were facing discrimination and even violent homophobic acts without any regulation.<sup>64</sup> In detailed interviews with 458 white gay men, conducted in Chicago in 1967 by researchers from Indiana University, about half of them reported that they “often” or “sometimes” worried about “being caught by the police” while seeking sexual partners and 101, or 22 % of the interviewees reported that they had been “arrested by the police for a reason ‘related to homosexuality’ in their lifetimes.”<sup>65</sup> In addition to political suspicions, homosexuality was also viewed as a mental disorder according to the American Psychiatric Association and in minds of politicians and a large percentage of American

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<sup>61</sup> CORY, Donald Webster. *The Homosexual in America: A Subjective Approach* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 270-277.

<sup>62</sup> JOHNSON David K. *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 101-166.

<sup>63</sup> ESKIDGE, William. *Dishonorable Passions: Sodomy Laws in America, 1861-2003* (New York: Viking Penguin Group, 2008), 103.

<sup>64</sup> JOHNSON. *The Lavender Scare*, 117-118.

<sup>65</sup> STEWART-WINTER, Timothy. “Queer Law and Order: Sex, Criminality, and Policing in the Late Twentieth-Century United States”, *The Oxford University Press – The Journal of American History* (June 2015), 65-67.



citizens. For young flamboyant gay men, that meant spending time in and out of mental institutions with a purpose to cure their homosexuality during their adolescent years.<sup>66</sup>

### **3.2 Achievements of the Post-Stonewall Era Gay Rights Activism**

After the Stonewall riots of 1969, the first significant changes in the approach towards LGBT people occurred in two areas – in media and art industry. In October 1969, just four months after the Stonewall conflict, *The Time Magazine* had a cover story called “The Homosexual in America,” which featured many photos and quotations of gay liberationists and a discussion among “experts on the LGBT lifestyle”, including psychiatrists, liberals, clergy and gay activists. “Though they still seem fairly bizarre to most Americans, homosexuals have never been so visible, vocal or closely scrutinized by research,” the article stated. Articles such as this one meant a significant increase of visibility of LGBT community as mainstream media (such as *The Time Magazine*) had a direct impact on nationwide discussion.<sup>67</sup> The December 31, 1971, issue of *Life* magazine included an eleven-page spread titled “Homosexuals in Revolt,” which was decidedly affirmative of homosexuals fighting for their rights.<sup>68</sup> At the same time dozens of fiction and non-fiction books presenting gay and lesbian material were published, among them the 1972 book *Sappho Was a Right-On Woman: A Liberated View of Lesbianism*, in which its authors Sidney Abbott and Barbara Love argued that the society needed to be immediately cured from their negative attitudes towards sexuality, or the 1973 book *The Gay Mystique: The Myth and Reality of Male Homosexuality*, written by a GAA member, Peter Fisher, presenting an idea that all young people over the age of sixteen have a right to freely act on their sexuality. As LGBT themes injected the public sphere through media and art, it became inevitable for it to move into political circles, which it quickly did, and the discussion took a turn from “the discussion on ethics” to “the discussion on gay rights and policy.”<sup>69</sup>

The post-Stonewall liberation also led to a crucial demographical change – between 1969 and 1979, more than 30 000 gay people (mainly gay men) moved to San Francisco. Next to San Francisco, there were multiple other clusters of LGBT people, such as, of course, New York or Miami. That explains, why both, the public and political debate about LGBT rights and lives almost exclusively took place in the big cities. As the social changes, unfolding

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<sup>66</sup> STEWART-WINTER. „Queer Law and Order“, 62.

<sup>67</sup> BADASH, David. “Time Magazine Cover Story 1969: The Homosexual in America”, *Ambassadors and Bridge Builders International* (October 31, 2011), available at: <https://www.abbi.org.au/2016/10/time-magazine-cover-story-42-years-ago/> (accessed May 25, 2020).

<sup>68</sup> LIFE Magazine. “Homosexuals in Revolt”, *LIFE* (December 31, 1971), Vol. 71 (26), 62-74.

<sup>69</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 212-216.

since World War II, were speeding up, the opposition to this process grew stronger. This opposition has logically consisted of conservative and religious segments of the society and political representation. Religion played a great role in slowing down the process of liberation of American approach towards the LGBT community. Some historians even describe the late 1970s in the United States as a “Fourth Great Awakening,” starting not only as a reaction to the new visibility and acceptance of gay movement, but also the push for equality of African Americans, the rise of feminism, the vocal demonstrations against the Vietnam war or the sexualization of popular culture. This development had its impact on how conservatives perceived the issue. While homosexuality was considered a disease by psychoanalysts of the time, conservatives witnessed the entire body politic being “infected” by it. Opening up to LGBT community led to many heterosexuals, consciously or not, getting inspired by some aspects of gay people’s way of living. For example, the rate of heterosexual cohabitation, meaning partner cohabitation out of marriage, rose quickly, which was explained by heterosexuals getting inspired by gay and lesbian couples, who didn’t have a possibility to get married to their potential same-sex partners at the time.<sup>70</sup>

In December 1973, conservative psychoanalysts had lost their battle for keeping homosexuality on the list of mental diseases, when the American Psychiatric Association (APA) voted to formally drop homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Gay and lesbian activists all around the United States lobbied for this to happen since the 1950s and the new and fresh LGBT organizations of the 1970s finalized this mission.<sup>71</sup> *The New York Times* reported on this matter on December 16, 1973, with an article titled “Psychiatrists, in a Shift, Declare Homosexuality No Mental Illness,” which also mentioned that APA publicly deplored discrimination against homosexuals in the fields of housing, employment and licensing (Figure 5). This article started a highly public discussion, which overlapped to the era of gay liberation during the late 1970s.<sup>72</sup>

Psychoanalyst Irving Bieber, opposing the APA decision, stated that he was “interested in the implications this has for children... I can pick out the entire population at risk in male homosexuality at the age of five, six, seven, and eight. If these children are

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<sup>70</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States.*, 216-224.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>72</sup> LYONS, Richard D. “Psychiatrists, in a Shift, Declare Homosexuality No Mental Illness”, *The New York Times* (December 16, 1973), available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/12/16/archives/psychiatrists-in-a-shift-declare-homosexuality-no-mental-illness.html> (accessed May 25, 2020).

treated, and their parents are treated, they will not become homosexual.”<sup>73</sup> This was the point, when homosexuality started being viewed by a large part of American society as a direct thread to the “traditional” American family, but also the point when legal change started to happen.<sup>74</sup>

## ***Psychiatrists, in a Shift, Declare Homosexuality No Mental Illness***

By **RICHARD D. LYONS**  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15—The American Psychiatric Association, altering a position it has held for nearly a century, decided today that homosexuality is not a mental disorder.

The board of trustees of the 20,000-member group approved a resolution that said in part, “by itself, homosexuality does not meet the criteria for being a psychiatric disorder.”

Persons who are troubled by their homosexuality, the trustees said, will be classified as having a “sexual orientation disturbance” should they come to a psychiatrist for help. “We will no longer insist on a label of sickness for individuals who insist that they are well and demonstrate no generalized impairment in social effectiveness,” the trustees said.

The trustees defined “sexual orientation disturbance” as a category for “individuals whose sexual interests are directed toward people of their own sex and who are either disturbed by, in conflict with or wish to change their sexual orientation.”

The semantics of the resolution and exactly how it differed from the association’s previous position were challenged by re-

Continued on Page 25, Column 1

Figure 5: “Psychiatrists, in a Shift, Declare Homosexuality No Mental Illness” article by Richard D. Lyons for *The New York Times*, reporting on a formal drop of homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, December 16, 1973 (The Legacy Project)

As mentioned before, the main goal of the 1970s gay movement was to fight the sodomy and discriminatory laws towards LGBT people in the United States. This mission of the liberationist movement was rather successful as by 1979 the number of 20 states of the United States repealed sodomy laws and most states intensively decreased its usage against LGBT people. On the other hand, the struggle for anti-discriminatory laws, which were supposed to be based on the Civil Rights Act of 1964<sup>75</sup>, proved to be more difficult.<sup>76</sup>

The intricacy of the fight for the end of discrimination of gays and lesbians is well represented by two cases with completely different outcomes – the success of the defeat of Proposition 6 in California and the failure to out-law the LGBT targeted discrimination in Dade County, Florida. The California Proposition 6, later known as the Briggs Initiative, after

<sup>73</sup> “The A.P.A. Ruling on Homosexuality”, *The New York Times* (December 23, 1973), available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1973/12/23/archives/the-issue-is-subtle-the-debate-still-on-the-apa-ruling-on.html> (accessed June 18, 2020).

<sup>74</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 218.

<sup>75</sup> The Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law by president Lyndon Johnson on July 2, prohibited discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin. This document was the most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction.

<sup>76</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 217-220

its author, state senator John Briggs, was a ballot initiative put to a referendum in the California state ballot in November 1978. The initiative sought to ban homosexuals from working in California's public schools. The Proposition 6 was defeated by a 58,4 percent to 41,6 percent margin. What makes this case crucial for the history of the LGBT fight for rights is how far-reaching the discussion about it was. Gay and lesbian activists spent months organizing the "No on 6" campaign and managed to get support from various public figures, such as then former California Governor Ronald Reagan and president Jimmy Carter.<sup>77</sup> On the opposite side of the spectrum is the situation in Dade County, Florida. The county which includes Miami passed, by a 5 to 3 vote, an ordinance making discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation illegal in January 1977. Conservative and religious groups of the area immediately started rallying for a repeal of the law and created a Christian group called "Save Our Children," led by an American singer Anita Bryant. In February, Bryant publicly announced that she had a proof that gays were "trying to recruit our children to homosexuality." In reaction to this ideology and over-all activity of "Save Our Children" the ordinance was repealed in a special referendum in June 1977. Bryant then started a national campaign against gay rights and was in many cases successful.<sup>78</sup> These two cases demonstrate that even though the situation of LGBT community was getting better in the 1970s, such as in the case of the defeat of the Proposition 6, the opposition was strong and in multiple cases successful in ruining the work of activists and supporters of the LGBT community.

Next to the activity of liberationists with a target to repeal sodomy and discriminatory laws in the United States, what made a great change for the lives of LGBT people were rulings of courts around the nation. Multiple Supreme Court and state courts decisions in the post-Stonewall era had an impact on the situation of LGBT community in the United States, as in some cases the precedents set by them had a similar value as the passed anti-discriminatory laws of the time. The Supreme Court of California case *Morrison v. State Board of Education* decided on December 20, 1969, dealt with the question of homosexuality in education. In 1965, a procedure was initiated through the State Board of Education to revoke Marc S. Morrison's two teaching diplomas for a reported same-sex relationship between himself and another male teacher. The diplomas were revoked one year after and this revocation rendered the petitioner ineligible for employment as a teacher in any public school

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<sup>77</sup> RIMMERMAN, Craig. *From Identity to Politics: The Lesbian and Gay Movements in the United States* (Temple: Temple University Press, 2001).

<sup>78</sup> FEJES, Fred. *Gay Rights and Moral Panic: The Origins of America's Debate on Homosexuality* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

in the state. His actions were classified as “immoral conduct”, “unprofessional conduct” and “moral turpitude.”<sup>79</sup> In 1969, the revocation was withdrawn, and the Supreme Court of California stated that “the board failed to show that petitioner’s conduct in any manner affected his performance as a teacher.”<sup>80</sup>

On October 28, 1976, the Virginia district court ruled in favor of Gay Alliance of Students in the *Gay Alliance of Students v. Matthews*. The issue of the court was “whether the University’s denial of registration to an LGBT student group was a violation of the right to freedom of expression under the Constitution.”<sup>81</sup> The Gay Alliance of Students at the University of Virginia requested to be certified as an official student organization at the university, which would give them access to, for example, financial support from the university or access to the university premises for the organization’s activities.<sup>82</sup> This request was rejected by the universities officials in 1974. After the ruling two years later, the Gay Alliance of Students became an official student organization of the University of Virginia and this particular decision of the court became a precedent for similar future disputes which other state-institutions faced in the future.<sup>83</sup>

Another significant court ruling, under the Supreme Court of Illinois, influenced the lives of transgender people in the United States to a very high degree. The *City of Chicago v. Wilson* dealt with the question of “cross-dressing”, as in dressing as an opposite sex based on a stereotype, which was at the time illegal in the United States. The issue of the court was whether is cross-dressing in case of people who are currently going through a sex change procedure against the law or not. Two women, undergoing a male to female sex change procedure, were charged under the Court of the city of Chicago for cross-dressing. The case was then moved to the Supreme Court of the United States of America and the women were acquitted in 1978.<sup>84</sup> What helped the defense during the ruling of the Supreme Court was a precedence stemming from the 1976 Supreme Court case *MT v. JT*, which legalized marriage

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<sup>79</sup> International Commission of Jurists. *Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Justice: A Comparative Law Casebook* (Geneva: International Commission of Jurists, 2011), 73-76.

<sup>80</sup> *Morrison v. State Board of Education*, 1 Cal.3d 214 (1969).

<sup>81</sup> *Gay Alliance of Students v. Matthews*, 544 F.2d 162 (1976)

<sup>82</sup> International Commission of Jurists. „Gay Alliance of Students v. Matthews, United States Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit (28 October 1976)“, *ICJ, Advocates for Justice and Human Rights*, available at: <https://www.icj.org/sogicasebook/gay-alliance-of-students-v-matthews-united-states-court-of-appeals-for-the-4th-circuit-28-october-1976/> (accessed June 16, 2020).

<sup>83</sup> *Gay Alliance of Students v. Matthews*, 544 F.2d 162 (1976)

<sup>84</sup> *City of Chicago v. Wilson*, 75 Ill. 2d 525 (1978).

between two partners of opposite sex where one of the partners underwent a sex change in the past.<sup>85</sup>



Figure 6: National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, 1979  
(photo by Bettye Lane, courtesy of Schlesinger Library, Harvard University)

The legal wars of the late 1970s in the United States brought LGBT communities and movements together across the nation. At some points, when the opposition felt the most intimidated, the repression took a violent turn. One example for all would be the assassination of Harvey Milk, the first openly gay politician to be elected in the history of the United States. Milk belonged to the migration wave of LGBT people to San Francisco after the Stonewall riots and shortly became a leading activist for the LGBT rights. In 1977, he was elected into the City Council of San Francisco. He spent 11 months in office, before he was, together with the city mayor, George Mascon, killed on October 27, 1978. The murder of these two politicians was committed by Dan White, an ex-representative of the city, who previously resigned from his post in opposition to liberation of San Francisco towards gays and lesbians. Harvey Milk became a “martyr of gay rights.”<sup>86</sup> In reaction to his assassination, the first National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights took place on October 14, 1979

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<sup>85</sup> BERCLAY, Scott, BERNSTEIN, Mary, MARSHALL, Anna-Maria. *Queer Mobilization: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Activists Confront the Law* (New York. NYU Press, 2009), 200.; *M.T. v J.T.*, 355 A.2d 204 (1976).

<sup>86</sup> NOLTE, Carl. "City Hall Slayings: 25 Years Later", *The San Francisco Chronicle* (October 26, 2003), available at: <https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/CITY-HALL-SLAYINGS-25-Years-Later-Revisiting-2510798.php> (accessed June 16, 2020).

(Figure 6). This is considered the moment, when the diverse LGBT community was able to put aside its internal differences to fight a common enemy.<sup>87</sup>

### **3.3 The LGBT Struggle for Rights during the Nixon, Ford and Carter Presidencies**

Just like in the case of any domestic policy, presidents of the United States had their undoubtable impact on the situation of LGBT community in the 1970s. Evaluation of whether the administrations of Richard Nixon (in office 1969-1974), Gerald Ford (in office 1974-1977) and Jimmy Carter (in office 1977-1981) had a positive or negative effect on legislative, social and political changes towards the community is very difficult. What can be said for sure though, is that in comparison to other presidents of the United States in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this “1970s trio” consisted of politicians who tried to deal with the new public discussion about LGBT rights without applying their own personal views in order to stop the development. President Ford became later known as the highest-ranking Republican to embrace full equality for gays and lesbians<sup>88</sup> and presidents Nixon and Carter were both put on a list of “The 11 Most Significant Presidents for LGBT Americans” by *The Advocate*.<sup>89</sup>

Richard Nixon’s presidency is filled with controversy, peaking during the Watergate scandal in 1974. His views on the question of the LGBT community were also controversial. On one hand, he claimed that “homosexuality is what destroyed Greece and Rome” in one of the recorded conversations between himself and his advisors<sup>90</sup>, on the other he can be heard saying: “Let me say something before we get off the gay thing. I don’t want my views misunderstood. I am the most tolerant person on that of anybody in this shop. They have a problem. They’re born that way. You know that. That’s all. I think they are.” The second of his quotations can be in a way considered progressive in context of the beginning of the 1970s. The discussion about the LGBT people and their lives was at its initial phase and was still considered controversial. Yet, he from a position of the president of the United States supported the idea of sexual orientation not being one’s choice.<sup>91</sup> When it comes to tangible

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<sup>87</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 224.

<sup>88</sup> DEB, Price. “Treat Gay Couples Equally”, *The Detroit News* (January 20, 2013).

<sup>89</sup> RING, Trudy. “The 11 Most Significant Presidents for LGBT Americans”, *Advocate* (October 1, 2019), available at: <https://www.advocate.com/politics/politicians/2015/02/16/11-most-significant-presidents-lgbt-americans?pg=1#article-content> (accessed March 23, 2020).

<sup>90</sup> PHAROS. “Nixon Claims Homosexuality Destroyed Greece, Rome... and America?”, *Pharos* (April 19, 2019), available at: <https://pages.vassar.edu/pharos/2019/04/19/nixon-claims-homosexuality-destroyed-greece-rome-and-america/> (accessed May 22, 2020).

<sup>91</sup> WONG, Curtis M. “Richard Nixon Argues Gays Are ‘Born That Way’ In Newly-Released White House Tapes”, *Huffpost* (November 7, 2014), available at: [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/richard-nixon-gay-rights-\\_n\\_5578277?guccounter=1&guce\\_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce\\_referrer\\_sig=AQA-AAJkHnYlJKynq4GN9EWFsU6wcBmMn1kCbGFu\\_0LhUsGV3Fi-s3ajEO36v-](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/richard-nixon-gay-rights-_n_5578277?guccounter=1&guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQA-AAJkHnYlJKynq4GN9EWFsU6wcBmMn1kCbGFu_0LhUsGV3Fi-s3ajEO36v-)

achievement of Nixon's administration in the interest of LGBT people, he signed into law Title IX of the Education Amendments, which prohibits sex discrimination in educational programs that receive federal funds. Title IX was later used to protect LGBT people and in 2014 the sex discrimination prohibition according to Title IX was extended "to claims of discrimination based on gender identity or failure to conform to stereotypical notions of masculinity or femininity."<sup>92</sup>

On March 5, 1976, when asked about the LGBT issue in the United States, president Gerald Ford said:

I recognize that this is a very new and serious problem in our society. I have always tried to be an understanding person as far as people are concerned who are different than myself. That doesn't mean that I agree with or would concur in what is done by them or their position in society. I think this is a problem we have to face up to, and I can't give you a pat answer tonight. I just would be dishonest to say that there is a pat answer under these very difficult circumstances.<sup>93</sup>

Ford gave this statement in connection to the question of gay rights, with respect to hiring, employment, and housing, which was a crucial point of the fight for gay rights in the United States at the time. What is interesting about the statement, is the fact, that he did not publicly support nor did he oppose fight for the gay rights, yet after the end of his presidency, in 1977 he formally opposed the Briggs Initiative, which sought to ban homosexuals from working as teachers at public schools in California. In 2001, Ford even stated that gay and lesbian couples "ought to be treated equally. Period."<sup>94</sup> In the meantime, he became a member of the Republican Unity Coalition, which was by The New York Times described as "a group of prominent Republicans, including former President Gerard R. Ford, dedicated to making sexual orientation a non-issue in the Republican Party."<sup>95</sup> Ford's case is interesting for the analysis of the place of LGBT issues in high politics of the time, as during his presidency he (just as Nixon) did not publicly express support to the LGBT people and their fight for rights. That shows how controversial the topic still was during the 1970s – the level of controversiality kept politicians who internally may have supported gay rights from publicly owning up to that opinion.

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<sup>92</sup> RING. "The 11 Most Significant Presidents for LGBT Americans."

<sup>93</sup> FORD, Gerald. Q&A at Everett McKinley Dirksen Forum in Peoria (quotation), March 5, 1976, available at: [http://www.issues2000.org/celeb/Gerald\\_Ford\\_Civil\\_Rights.htm](http://www.issues2000.org/celeb/Gerald_Ford_Civil_Rights.htm) (accessed May 23, 2020).

<sup>94</sup> DEB. "Treat Gay Couples Equally".

<sup>95</sup> STOLBERG, Sheryl G. "Vocal Gay Republicans Upsetting Conservatives", *The New York Times* (June 1, 2003), available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/01/us/vocal-gay-republicans-upsetting-conservatives.html> (accessed May 23, 2020).



Just like Gerald Ford, president Jimmy Carter opposed the Briggs Initiative. The difference between the two, is that, Carter did it during his presidency, which is possibly the first time any president of the United States publicly expressed support to the LGBT community. He even publicly urged his voters to defeat the Initiative during his 1978 visit of California. This approach towards LGBT rights resonates completely with his 1976 candidature, when he made it clear that he would sign the gay rights bill if he became the president of the United States. He didn't have an opportunity to do that, as such a measure didn't stand a chance against the conservative Republican politicians in both, the House of Representatives and the Senate, but he still managed to do a lot for the LGBT community during his presidency. Besides opposing Briggs Initiative, he invited the first-ever gay and lesbian delegation to the White House in 1977, to discuss policy issues. After his presidency he continued to be active in supporting many human rights causes, including LGBT rights. What makes his attitude towards homosexuals interesting is that, he identified himself as a "born-again" Christian and was a part of the Southern Baptist Convention for most of his life (until he disassociated from it in 2000, because of its anti-LGBT stances and unequal treatment of women). "I never knew of any word or action of Jesus Christ that discriminated against anyone," Jimmy Carter said in 2014, when publicly endorsing gay marriage.<sup>96</sup>

### **3.4 Chapter 3 - Conclusion**

The time period between 1969 and 1981, which is the year when the AIDS epidemic in the United States officially started, is considered a crucial one for the LGBT community, LGBT rights and LGBT peoples' lives in general. What began with the Stonewall riots of 1969, quickly transformed into a nationwide public discussion under the hands of activists at the beginning of the 1970s and later escalated to the point where LGBT question was a political and social struggle between two sides with opposite goals. This chapter explains the forms of oppression against which the pro-gay rights part of the society fought and introduces the main goal of the decade – struggle against sodomy and discriminatory laws. While evaluating how successful this generation of LGBT activists and supporters of the community were, it has to be taken into account, that no more than 20 years prior, homosexuality was a complete taboo and homosexual people were considered mentally ill and dangerous for the society. These prejudices were then evolved in the post-World War II era, by adding the national security factor within Lavender Scare and later on, in the late 1970s by artificially

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<sup>96</sup> GEOFFROY, Kyler. „Jimmy Carter: 'I Never Knew of Any Word or Action of Jesus Christ That Discriminated Against Anyone' – VIDEO“, *Towelroad* (September 25, 2014), available at: <https://www.towelroad.com/2014/09/carter/> (May 23, 2020).

making homosexuals a danger for traditional families in the country. So, even though one might argue, trying to diminish the legacy of the 1970s fight for gay rights, by pointing out the fact that the movement did not achieve its goals, it has to be acknowledged that it did change the approach of a part of the American society towards the LGBT community and for the first time made gay lives a real social and political question.

## 4 HIV/AIDS Epidemic as a Step Back for the LGBT Community

The breaking moment in the post-Stonewall LGBT activism in the United States occurred at the beginning of the 1980s. In June 1981, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly* informed for the first time about a new type of disease later known as AIDS. This information got into public sphere on July 3, when *The New York Times* published a short article entitled “Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals” (Figure 7).<sup>97</sup> The fear of the new disease spread throughout the United States very quickly and by the end of the year 121 Americans died of AIDS and more than 700 Americans in total were diagnosed.<sup>98</sup> The beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States had an undoubtably negative effect on the situation of LGBT people. Not only did it slow down the process of liberation, which was started during the previous decade, but it gave the anti-LGBT part of society and political representation a strong argument against LGBT community, especially gay men.

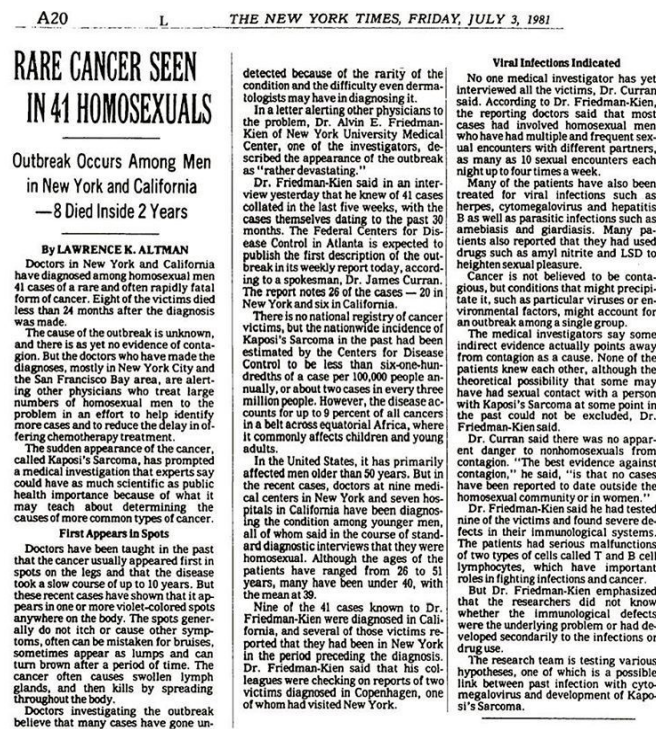


Figure 7: Lawrence K. Altman's article "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals" in *The New York Times*, which reported about the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, July 3, 1981 (*The New York Times*)

What rendered AIDS particularly frightening for the American society was the fact that in the first 2 years of the epidemic, there was literally no information available about the

<sup>97</sup> ALTMAN, Lawrence K. "RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS", *The New York Times* (July 3, 1981), <https://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/03/us/rare-cancer-seen-in-41-homosexuals.html> (accessed August 3, 2019).

<sup>98</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 224-6.; SHILTS, Randy. *And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 191.

new disease that was killing people by thousands (there had been 7 699 AIDS cases and 3 665 AIDS deaths in the United States by the end of 1984). In 1983, researchers found out that AIDS was caused by a virus, that would later be called HIV, and by 1985 they created the first test that was capable of recognizing the virus in one's body, which enabled doctors to diagnose the disease.<sup>99</sup> The HIV/AIDS is in no way directly connected to the LGBT community, but it was first detected in gay males and it started rapidly spreading through the community. This had two dire consequences for the LGBT community – firstly conservatives used the HIV/AIDS epidemic to deepen the stigmatization of LGBT people and secondly the stigmatization led to multiple legislative changes to the detriment of LGBT community. Some discriminatory laws, defeated during the 1970s, came back into effect and others were newly created.<sup>100</sup>

This strategy of anti-LGBT activists and organizations, such as “Save Our Children” led by Anita Bryant, is typical for the 1980s in the United States and was partially supported by the approach of president Ronald Reagan (in office 1981-1989), who reacted to the HIV/AIDS epidemic by silence.<sup>101</sup> It took Reagan seven whole years of presidency to use the word “AIDS” for the first time in public and the number of reported AIDS cases reached 100 000 by then.<sup>102</sup> The HIV/AIDS epidemic was a perfect tool for the rhetoric of conservative religious groups opposing the LGBT movement and gay rights. Pat Buchanan, a conservative Republican leader, wrote in 1990 in one of his columns: “AIDS is nature's retribution for violating the laws of nature.”<sup>103</sup> Shortly after, a popular televangelist Jerry Falwell stated that “AIDS is not just God's punishment for homosexuals. It is God's punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals.”<sup>104</sup> This ideology is very important for understanding why the AIDS epidemic meant a complete tragedy for the fight for gay rights.

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<sup>99</sup> „The Timeline of HIV and AIDS“, *HIV.org*, available at: <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/history/hiv-and-aids-timeline> (accessed July 3, 2020).

<sup>100</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 224-232.

<sup>101</sup> FITZSIMONS, Tim. “LGBTQ History Month: The early days of America's AIDS crisis“, *NBC News* (October 15, 2018), available at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/nbc-out/lgbtq-history-month-early-days-america-s-aids-crisis-n919701> (accessed July 22, 2020).

<sup>102</sup> LA GANGA, Maria L. “The first lady who looked away: Nancy and Reagan's troubling Aids legacy“, *The Guardian* (March 11, 2016), available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/mar/11/nancy-ronald-reagan-aids-crisis-first-lady-legacy> (accessed July 22, 2020).

<sup>103</sup> “Pat Buchanan in His Own Words“, *FAIR* (February 26, 1996), available at: <https://fair.org/press-release/pat-buchanan-in-his-own-words/> (accessed July 3, 2020).

<sup>104</sup> JOHNSON, Hans and ESKRIDGE, William. „The Legacy of Falwell's Bully Pulpit“, *The Washington Post* (May 19, 2017), <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/18/AR2007051801392.html> (accessed August 3, 2019).

As the LGBT community was under attack because of the AIDS epidemic, they immediately after the first cases occurred started forming health-focused organizations, such as Gay Men's Health Crisis in New York, AIDS Action Committee in Boston, or AIDS Foundation in San Francisco.<sup>105</sup> The most significant and vocal organization formed in March 1987 – AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP). This LGBT political movement fighting AIDS was created under the hands of Larry Kramer and inspired a formation of individual regional offshoots all around the United States.<sup>106</sup> The LGBT activism of the 1980s differed a lot from that of the 1970s, as now, LGBT people and LGBT organizations had a common aim in their work – fight the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In 1983, Larry Kramer asked a NBC's "Today" show host Jane Pauley: "Jane, can you imagine what it must be like if you had lost 20 of your friends in the last 18 months?" Pauley replied with a no, to which Kramer said: "It's a very angry community." This is very important as this anger, at the society marking LGBT community as a cause of the epidemic and at the political representation keeping silent, was what had driven the 1980s activism to take the things into their own hands and fight the disease themselves.<sup>107</sup>

What started in 1981 and followed until the beginning of 2000s was an omnipresent fear of the new disease in the United States. The fact, that the LGBT community was at the very start of the epidemic incriminated of being the cause of this disease, logically influenced their situation in the society. Now, the homophobic part of the society and political representation had one more argument to use against gays and lesbians. And the LGBT community, at the same time, had one more stigma to fight. At this point, all the hard work of the liberationists of the 1970s seemed to be for nothing. On the other hand, some LGBT historians and scholars argue, that it was actually the AIDS epidemic, that later on helped the gay movement to move forward in their work, as "gay cancer", how AIDS was called in the 1980s and 1990s, meant a real connecting factor for LGBT people in the United States. Just like in 1979, after the assassination of Harvey Milk, the LGBT community had once again a common enemy to fight.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> BRONSKI. *A Queer History of the United States*, 226-228.

<sup>106</sup> STEIN, Marc. „Memories of the 1987 March on Washington“, *Out History* (August 11, 2013), <http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/march-on-washington/exhibit/by-marc-stein> (accessed August 3, 2019).

<sup>107</sup> FITZSIMONS. "LGBTQ History Month: The early days of America's AIDS crisis".

<sup>108</sup> How The AIDS Crisis Changed The LGBT Movement | NBC News Now. In: Youtube (online). June 20, 2019 (accessed June 12, 2020). Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zC1e9Zrb7cI>. Youtube channel of NBC News.

## **Conclusion**

This thesis deals with the question of LGBT community between 1969 and 1981 in three interconnected spheres – social, legal and political – in the United States of America. On the basis of compilation and comparison of various sources, it introduces the most important events of this time period, which are connected to the situation of LGBT people and to the fight for LGBT rights. The main aim set for the paper is to explain the importance of the Stonewall riots of 1969 on LGBT activism in the 1970s. Based on the analysis of the first and the second chapter, the paper concludes that the Stonewall riots of 1969 had an enormous impact on the way in which the LGBT fight for rights went in the following decade. It led to a crucial change of the approach of LGBT activism, from passive (trying for integration of LGBT people into the wide society) to active fight for legal liberation and complete equality of people regardless of sexual orientation, sexual preferences and gender identity. The 1970s are then concluded by the paper to be the epoch in which, historically for the first time, the LGBT community made steps forward within this approach. During this period, the LGBT rights question became a source of nationwide public discussion and was, to some extent, detabuized. This factor was absolutely essential for the legal and political changes, which occurred during this period, such as the repeal of sodomy laws in 20 states, creation of multiple anti-discriminatory laws and complete decriminalization of same-sex sexual relations in the United States. The beginning of the 1980s, on the other hand meant a step back for the LGBT community and activism, as the start of the HIV/AIDS epidemic was used by the opposition of LGBT movement as an instrument for reintroduction of stigmatization of homosexuality. Gay men were marked as the cause of the epidemic and under the influence of omnipresent fear of the disease this had a negative impact on LGBT people's position in the society. Despite the 1980s backlash and setbacks, the 1970s ought to be considered an important, if not the most important, time period in the history of LGBT community and LGBT people in the United States owe this period, and the legacy stemming from it in future decades, for the situation they enjoy nowadays.

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## Bachelor's Thesis Summary

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<b>Semester and year of the end of work:</b>	SS 2019/2020
<b>Bachelor's seminar supervisor:</b>	PhDr. Oldřich Tůma, Ph.D.
<b>Bachelor's thesis supervisor:</b>	Lucie Kýrová, M.A., Ph.D.
<b>Title:</b>	Social, Legal and Political Changes in the United States in the Question of LGBT Community between 1969 and 1981
<b>Characteristics of the topic (up to 10 lines):</b>	The thesis analyses the question of LGBT rights in the United States of America in the period of 1969 to 1981. These demarcation years are set on the basis of important events for the LGBT community which took place at the time – the Stonewall riots of 1969 and the beginning of HIV/AIDS epidemic in the United States in 1981. The paper focuses on the legacy of Stonewall riots and on the impact, which this event had on the formation and activity of the 1970s activism. The 1970s are considered to be crucial for the LGBT history and for LGBT rights in the United States in general and the paper aims to introduce the importance of this era.
<b>Reasoning of modifications and changes in the topic since the premier project (up to 10 lines):</b>	The topic was, during the conduction of the research, extended from only focusing on legal aspects of the LGBT question during the period of 1969 to 1981, to also analyzing the social and political development and achievements. This change was made in order to offer a more complex analysis of the topic and also based on a simple fact that the social, legal and political aspects in this case are directly connected to one another.
<b>Structure of the bachelor's thesis:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Stonewall Riots of 199</li><li>2 The Development of LGBT Activism until the Post-Stonewall Era</li><li>3 LGBT Politics and Legislation in the Post-Stonewall Era</li><li>4 HIV/AIDS Epidemic as a Step Back for the LGBT Community</li></ol>
<b>References and literature (selection of main bibliography, up to 30 titles):</b>	ALTMAN, Lawrence K. "RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS", The New York Times (July 3, 1981), <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/03/us/rare-cancer-seen-in-41-homosexuals.html">https://www.nytimes.com/1981/07/03/us/rare-cancer-seen-in-41-homosexuals.html</a> (accessed August 3, 2019).  ARMSTRONG, Elizabeth A., "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth", American Sociological Review (October 2006), Vol. 71.

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<b>Guarantor of the study program:</b>		

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