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Sexual politics

# Tearing Down the Walls

- Features - Sexual politics -

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**Forty-six years ago patrons at the Stonewall Inn, a popular New York City gay bar, [fought back](#) against abusive police, and in doing so launched the modern lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender movement.**

With the historic Supreme Court ruling in June declaring gay marriage the law of the land in all fifty states, it's undeniable that we've come a long way from a time when cops routinely raided gay bars, and being outed virtually guaranteed a person would be labeled a sexual psychopath, blacklisted, and legally barred from employment in most occupations. It's no exaggeration that many of the freedoms experienced by queer people today would have been inconceivable just a generation or two ago.

However, LGBTQ people still face oppression: a lack of protection in employment and housing, youth homelessness, bullying and high suicide rates, violence against trans women (disproportionally trans women of color), incarceration, police brutality, and poverty. Mainstream LGBTQ organizations (what some radicals refer to as Gay Inc.) are tied to corporate America and prefer to cozy up to the political establishment rather than confront it.

In this context studying the Stonewall Rebellion and the gay liberation movement is more than just an interesting history lesson – it provides activists and radicals with lessons for confronting the political challenges we face today and rebuilding a movement that can win sexual liberation for everyone.

## The Formation of a Movement

While people have been sexually intimate with others of the same sex since the beginning of time, the social construction of a gay identity is a new phenomenon. It was only through the development of capitalist industrialization and the accompanying emergence of large urban centers, and the transformative effect this process had on social life, that the material conditions for the development of an LGBTQ identity and community became possible.

The personal autonomy and privacy afforded by city life [allowed for](#) the exploration of non-heterosexual desires and greater gender expression, as well as the development of a community based on those shared interests in a way that was generally not possible under previous modes of production.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, an extensive underground gay world began to develop in major US cities. However it was not until World War II – what many gay historians refer to as a national coming out experience – that LGBTQ history would undergo a qualitative turning point.

Both at home and abroad, World War II rearranged American society, including gender relations and sexual behavior, in order to meet the country's military needs. Millions of men and women were called away from their homes and placed into overwhelmingly homosocial environments like military bases, hospitals, industrial factories, governmental offices, and urban centers.

These new material conditions – coupled with the emotionally intensive circumstances of war – encouraged millions of men and women to explore and pursue homosexual desires and to form intimate and meaningful same-sex relationships on a scale that was previously inconceivable.

## Tearing Down the Walls

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Correspondingly, after returning from combat abroad or military production at home, many gay men and lesbians [opted for](#) the independence offered by America's urban centers. A community with shared social structures began to firmly take root and grow in cities across the country, entrenching and solidifying an emergent LGBTQ political identity.

The 1950s ushered in a period of conservatism along with growing cultural attention to homosexuality. On the one hand, McCarthyism unleashed a government-sponsored witch hunt against communists and leftists and a widespread campaign known as the [Lavender Scare](#) to remove gays and lesbians from government occupations.

Police surveillance and repression against gay bars and cruising spots intensified, creating devastating consequences for those who were caught. Gay men who were arrested would have their name and picture published in the newspaper, which would more often than not lead to them being fired from their job and ostracized by their friends and family.

On the other hand, American society was more concerned with homosexuality than ever before. This began in 1948 with the publication of Alfred Kinsey's [Sexual Behavior in the Human Male](#), which fundamentally transformed the way society understood sexuality and quickly became a media sensation. The [Kinsey reports](#) showed that homosexual acts were far more widespread among men than previously assumed and concluded that such behavior was perfectly normal and would be more openly practiced if it weren't for societal restrictions and prejudice.

During the 1950s and early '60s, there was an unparalleled outpouring of representation and discussion of gay people in literature and the media. Mainstream newspapers and magazines carried exposés on the underground gay world, and there was a proliferation of pulp novels with gay characters and themes.

Although media representation was negative, associating homosexuality and gender transgression with criminality and mental illness, this growing visibility showed socially isolated LGBTQ people that there were others like them, and even where to find them. Far from shrinking, the LGBTQ world continued to expand and become more visible in an era of growing repression — a contradiction that would inevitably give way.

The first gay political organization in the United States was the [Mattachine Society](#). Founded in 1951 by [Harry Hay](#), a former Communist Party militant, Mattachine considered itself a homophile organization. It argued that homosexuality was a natural sexual preference and that homosexuals were an oppressed minority who deserved full political and legal equality.

In its early years, Mattachine organized an impressive campaign against police entrapment and the harassment of gay men in Southern California. Mattachine created ONE, the first nationwide gay magazine (which remained in publication until 1972), and established chapters around the country with thousands of cumulative members.

But Mattachine remained underground and never became a mass movement. Hay and other radicals were pushed out of the organization in 1953 as the group shifted to the right under the pressures of McCarthyism, and shortly thereafter retreated from its initial plank. The organization now held that homosexuality was a mental condition, encouraged its members to seek treatment, and abandoned political agitation.

Two years later, the first lesbian organization, the [Daughters of Bilitis](#), was formed by Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin. The group also put out the first lesbian magazine,

But in the mid-1960s, things started to change in the [homophile movement->[http://rnc.library.cornell.edu/HRC/exhibition/stage/stage\\_3.html](http://rnc.library.cornell.edu/HRC/exhibition/stage/stage_3.html)]->The Ladder . The Civil Rights

## Tearing Down the Walls

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Movement had transformed American society and overturned Jim Crow. Inspired by African Americans who defied racist oppression and terror, young homophile activists who had not been politically active during McCarthyism began to push for Mattachine to take a more militant, combative stance.

In a New York City speech [Frank Kameny](#) argued, “not only is homosexuality not immoral, but homosexual acts engaged in by consenting adults are moral, right, good, and desirable, both for individual participants and society.” This was a sharp break from Mattachine’s official position that members should seek out medical treatment. The New York City chapter elected a slate of young militants who convinced the group to do something previously unheard of “organize public demonstrations advocating gay rights and challenge the psychiatric establishment’s position on homosexuality.

The first two protests were pickets at the White House and the United Nations, followed by a yearly demonstration called the “Annual Reminder” outside Philadelphia’s Independence Hall where picketers were required to dress respectably in shirts, ties, and dresses. The goal was to demand equal treatment under the law while showing Americans that homosexuals were just as patriotic and respectable as everyone else.

Then in 1966, Mattachine organized sip-ins at gay bars throughout New York City to protest the city’s practice of revoking liquor licenses to establishments that sold to homosexuals. They won.

In San Francisco important homophile activism had begun in the early 1960s. In 1961 bar owners and patrons formed the Tavern Guild to organize against police crackdowns on gay bars, and by 1964 progressive religious leaders and homophile activists had banded together to create the Council on Religion and the Homosexual to provide services to gay street youth and helped create Vanguard, the first LGBTQ youth organization.

The most important and largest homophile organization was the Society for Individual Rights, which organized impressive campaigns against police entrapment, pushed for anti-discrimination laws, and won the building of a gay community center, making it a force to be reckoned with in city politics.

In 1966 San Francisco saw its own precursor to the Stonewall confrontation, the Compton Cafeteria Riots. Compton Cafeteria was a regular hangout spot for gay and trans street youth and drag queens. One July summer night police were called in to raid the restaurant, and a police officer grabbed a drag queen by the arm, provoking her to throw a cup of coffee in his face. This spurred other gay customers to resist “they turned over tables, threw their dishes, kicked out the windows, and began fighting with the police.

As the decade came to a close, the United States was experiencing the largest social upheaval and political radicalization since the mass movements of the 1930s. It was only a matter of time before the gay movement would be affected.

In May 1969 a young gay leftist in San Francisco named Carl Wittman penned [“A Gay Manifesto,”](#) an essay that would soon become a defining document in the gay liberation movement. Wittman’s words illustrate the radicalization taking place among young, gay militants and was a harbinger of things to come:

Straight cops patrol us, straight legislators govern us, straight employers keep us in line, straight money exploits us. We have pretended that everything is OK, because we haven’t been able to see how change it “we’ve been afraid.

In the past year there has been an awakening of gay liberation. How it began we don’t know; maybe we were

inspired by black people and their freedom movement . . .

Where once there was frustration, alienation, and cynicism, there are new characteristics among us. And as we recall all the self-censorship and repression for so many years, a reservoir of tears pours out of our eyes. We are full of love for each other and are showing it; we are full of anger at what has been done to us. And we are euphoric, high, with the initial flourish of a movement.

## The Stonewall Rebellion

The Stonewall Inn was one of New York City's most popular gay bars in the 1960s. Sitting at the crossroads of Christopher Street and Seventh Avenue in Greenwich Village, a neighborhood known for its bohemian lifestyle, and just steps away from the the Village Voice office, the Stonewall was dark and had two bars, a jukebox, and the only floor for dancing in the whole city. The Stonewall became an epicenter for the gay world of New York, especially its most marginal members, and regularly drew an electric crowd of cruising gay men, drag queens, street kids, and some lesbians.

Due to the illegality of running a gay establishment, gay bars in New York, including the Stonewall, were owned by the mafia. The mob was certainly no friend to the community " who they viewed with contempt and disgust " but they paid off the police at the local Sixth Precinct to stave off raids on the Stonewall. When the police did go after the bar, they did it early in the night to cause minimal disruption.

For gay people in the 1960s, the contradiction was that at the same time freedom, openness, and a demand for change were increasing throughout society, New York was simultaneously increasing its enforcement of anti-homosexual laws to such an extent that it was a near police state for gays and lesbians.

At the beginning of the decade, laws across the US were more repressive against homosexuals than any of the Soviet regimes the US criticized. A consenting adult who was caught having sex with another person of the same sex could face decades or even life in prison, or could be confined to an insane asylum and given electroshock therapy, castrated, or lobotomized. Adults who were charged with a sex offense could lose their professional license and were often terminated from their jobs and barred from future employment.

While bars provided a place for gay people to meet one another and socialize in a repressive society, it also made them a target for police. Late on a Friday night in June 1969, police busted into the Stonewall, demanding that all patrons line up and show their IDs and planning to arrest bar employees, cross-dressers, and those without proper identification.

That night the police were more aggressive than normal. They tore apart the bar, smashed the furniture, and were physically aggressive with patrons who talked back and mouthed off. Unlike previous raids that came early in the night, police shut the Stonewall during peak hours. Whereas normally patrons would disperse after being kicked out, knowing they could return later, this time they began to gather outside the bar. The crowd of a few dozen eventually swelled to hundreds. Thousands of gay residents poured into the streets.

The uprising was multiracial, diverse, and reflected a broad spectrum of the LGBTQ community. Many eyewitnesses commented specifically on the important role played that night by the most marginalized sections of the community " street kids, trans women, and queer youth of color.

## Tearing Down the Walls

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The Village Voice [published](#) an article the following day [describing](#) the riots:

As the patrons trapped inside were released one by one, a crowd started to gather on the street . . . initially a festive gathering, composed mostly of Stonewall boys who were waiting around for friends still inside or to see what was going to happen . . . Cheers would go up as favorites would emerge from the door, strike a pose, and swish by the detective with a “Hello there, fella.”

But when the paddy wagons arrived, the mood changed. Angry onlookers began throwing coins at police, and then moved on to bottles, cobblestones, and trash cans. A full-fledged riot soon broke out.

Later that night the riot squad arrived, and a night-long chase between gay protesters and police ensued. Expecting to easily disperse the crowd of people society had labeled “sissies” and “faggots” and stereotypically viewed as weak, the police were completely caught off guard when the protesters fought back. Pioneering transgender activist [Sylvia Rivera](#) was a part of Friday night’s uprising, which she would later describe as a turning point in her life. When a friend tried to convince her to leave, [she said](#) , “Are you nuts?! I’m not missing a minute of this â€” it’s the revolution!”

### What Came After Stonewall

Stonewall marked a sharp break from the past and a qualitative turning point in the gay movement â€” not only because of the continuous rioting in the streets against police, but because activists were able to seize the moment and give an organized expression to the spontaneous uprising that encapsulated the militancy of the era. While the homophile movement made steady, if limited, progress throughout the 1950s and ’60s and laid the basis for the gay liberation movement, Stonewall broke the dam of political and social isolation and catapulted the gay movement out from the margins and into the open.

Activists didn’t waste a minute. Before the riots even finished, homophile militants Charles Pitts and Bill Katzenberg created a flyer and distributed it to thousands of Village residents. It read, “Do you think homosexuals are revolting? You bet your sweet ass we are!” and described the Stonewall Rebellion as the “The hairpin drop heard around the world.”

Michael Brown, a gay socialist involved in the New Left who was at Stonewall and helped Pitts and Katzenberg pass out their flyers, reached out to the Mattachine Society after the first night of rioting in the hopes of calling for an organizing meeting to tap into the new momentum.

Brown’s proposal wasn’t viewed warmly by everyone in Mattachine. Older activists like Dick Leitsch were critical of the riots and didn’t want to disrupt the group’s relationship with the political establishment. After talking with the mayor’s office, some members of Mattachine went so far as to put up a sign at Stonewall [that read](#):

WE HOMOSEXUALS PLEAD WITH  
OUR PEOPLE TO PLEASE HELP  
MAINTAIN PEACFUL AND QUIET  
CONDUCT ON THE STREETS OF  
THE VILLAGE â€” MATTACHINE

But younger militants like Jack O’Brien, an antiwar activist and former Socialist Worker Party member, were ecstatic. After some debate Mattachine finally agreed to form an Action Committee and called for an open organizing meeting.

## Tearing Down the Walls

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Brown put together a flyer with the heading “GAY POWER” that called for a “Homosexual Liberation Meeting” and concluded by saying “No one is free until everyone is free!” The first meeting was held two weeks after the riots and drew forty people. It was here that activists first chose the name the Gay Liberation Front (GLF), modeled on Vietnam’s National Liberation Front, the guerrilla communist movement fighting against the United States.

The GLF, however, was still a committee under the thumb of Mattachine. After a couple organizing meetings, a one-month commemoration march (the city’s first gay rights protest), and a lot of sharp political debate, the differences between gay militants and old guard homophile activists finally came to a head. The group split, and militants established the GLF as an independent organization.

Looking back years later, one prominent militant, Jim Fournat, summarized the tensions this way:

We wanted to end the homophile movement. We wanted them to join us in making the gay revolution. We were a nightmare to them. They were committed to being nice, acceptable status quo Americans, and we were not: we had no interest at all in being acceptable.

In a statement for a radical newspaper called *The Rat*, GLF defined their mission this way:

We are a revolutionary homosexual group of men and women formed with the realization that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about unless existing social institutions are abolished. We reject society’s attempt to impose sexual roles and definitions of our nature . . . Babylon has forced us to commit ourselves to one thing . . . revolution.

When asked what made them revolutionaries, they replied: “We identify ourselves with all the oppressed: the Vietnamese struggle, the third world, the blacks, the workers . . . all those oppressed by this rotten, dirty, vile, fucked up capitalist conspiracy.”

The GLF got to work. One of the first protests the GLF organized was at the offices of the *Village Voice*, demanding that the paper stop using the terms “dyke” and “faggot” and start referring to homosexuals as “gays” and “lesbians.” They won.

GLF chapters quickly spread across the country, organizing dances to raise money and create spaces for gay people to meet one another outside of mafia-controlled bars. In the fall of 1969, the GLF created its own newspaper, *Come Out!*, which became a key way to disseminate ideas and movement information. *Gay Power* and *Gay* also premiered that year and each sold over 25,000 copies per issue.

The GLF organized protests and direct actions to pressure politicians to support gay rights and established community service programs to provide food and social services to LGBTQ street youth. GLF members took their political education seriously and sought to develop a Marxist analysis of gay oppression. Arthur Evens, a student activist who threw himself into the gay liberation movement, formed the Radical Study Group within GLF. The first book they studied and discussed was Frederick Engels’ [Origins of the Family, Private Property, and the State](#).

From the beginning GLF members debated whether the group should focus exclusively on gay issues or connect itself with other struggles on the Left. This led to a split, with some activists leaving to establish a single-issue organization called the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA), which defined itself as a group “exclusively devoted to the liberation of homosexuals and avoids involvement in any program of action not obviously relevant to homosexuals.”

## Tearing Down the Walls

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The GAA began to organize public protests, referred to as “zaps.” It disrupted meetings with the mayor and city council representatives in an attempt to pressure them to end job discrimination and police harassment against gays and lesbians.

This statement from Arthur Evans, a prominent member of GAA, sums up the group’s approach “and contrasts sharply with the “don’t rock the boat” strategy pursued by established LGBTQ organizations today. Evans said:

We decided that people on the other side of the power structure were going to have the same thing happen to them. The wall that they had built protecting themselves from the personal consequences of their political decisions was going to be torn down . . . That meant in effect that we were going to disrupt Mayor Lindsey’s personal life . . . as a result of the political consequences of his administration.

The GLF and GAA collaborated on many projects, including the first annual march commemorating the Stonewall Rebellion, which took place in New York City and drew ten thousand people. The march quickly expanded to dozens of cities across the country and involved over five hundred thousand people.

This passage from Martin Duberman’s classic [Stonewall](#) conveys the elation organizers felt after their historic accomplishment:

It took only a little more than an hour to reach Central Park. Foster, forty-five years old and overweight, staggered in, huffing and puffing, but elated. Craig was so excited he could hardly stop smiling “at the size of the crowd, the good feeling and courage everywhere manifest. Karla, in LA, let out a whoop when she crossed the finish line, her back killing her, her spirit soaring. Sylvia arrived yelling, Yvonne in exhausted tears. Jim, too, had tears pouring down his face as he stood on a rise in the ground and looked back at the line of people stretching some fifteen blocks into the distance, “I saw what we had done. It was remarkable. There we were in all of our diversity.”

Another significant accomplishment of the gay liberation movement was the protest organized by the GLF and GAA against the American Psychiatric Association’s designation of homosexuality as a mental illness. Gay militants disrupted an annual convention of the association and forced themselves onto a panel, where they discussed the damage psychiatric therapies were doing to the lives of gays and lesbians. One gay therapist even made a plea for an alteration to the body’s policy, but had to hide behind a mask and disguise his voice.

By 1973 the group’s board of trustees gave in to pressure and removed homosexuality from its list of mental illness, and five years later a caucus of gay psychiatrists was formed. As Sherry Wolf [puts it- <http://www.haymarketbooks.org/pb/Sexuality-and-Socialism>], “never again would a gay psychiatrist have to hide from his colleagues behind a grotesque mask.”

One agenda item all gay liberationists shared was the emphasis on coming out publicly. Although coming out carried very real risks, it was also a cathartic experience that shed the shame and humiliation associated with living life in the closet and provided people with a newfound sense of pride and self-confidence.

It also, as gay historian [John D’Emilo](#) points out, “provided gay liberationists with an army of permanent enlistees.” By coming out, the movement gained people who became personally invested in the future of the struggle and served as a pole of attraction to wider layers of people and new recruits. As gays and lesbians came out to friends, family, and coworkers, it made homosexuality seem more like a “normal” part of the social fabric.

Coming out, along with the weakening of police repression, allowed the LGBTQ community and subculture to flourish and expand outward in a way that had never been possible. These developments helped give the movement new leverage in pushing for social change in the following decades.



## Tearing Down the Walls

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However, like all movements gay liberation contained political contradictions and internal problems. Even though transgender people played an important role in the riots and the movement that proceeded it, their treatment in the movement was mixed, ranging from supportive to hostile.

Sylvia Rivera and [Marsha P. Johnson](#), active in both the GAA and GLF, became the movement's most prominent trans activists. They formed a short-lived organization dedicated specifically to providing services to trans people and street youth — Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries

As Rivera described it, she was never going to let anyone prevent her from fighting for her own cause. Even in the face of jeers and insults, she worked to convince her gay comrades of their shared interests with trans people and street youth who were brutalized by the same police and rejected by the same society as gays and lesbians. Although trans people found support from a significant number of activists in the gay movement, it would take another twenty years before gay organizations officially took on the transgender cause.

The GLF attracted many radicals from far-left organizations who brought with them their groups' positions on gay issues. These ranged from the idea that homosexuality was a "bourgeois deviation" to liberatory concepts. A dominant leftist influence in the GLF — as with much of the far left during this period — was Maoism, a current with many organizations that formally barred gays from membership at the time. However, the civil libertarian approach to questions of sexuality taken by Trotskyists and democratic socialists led them to stand in solidarity with the movement and allowed for political evolution on issues.

Further complicating this dynamic was the fact that the countries some socialists uncritically defended and looked to — China, Cuba, and the Soviet Union — opposed homosexuality and criminalized LGBTQ people.

Maoists also argued that the most oppressed in society must lead every struggle, which in the US context they held to be the poorest African Americans. This led to many challenging debates, such as whether the GLF should provide the Black Panthers with bail funds even though some of their most prominent members held anti-gay positions. It was a major step forward, then, when [Huey P. Newton->[https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/workers/black-panthers/" class="spip\\_out" rel="external">\(STAR\)](https://www.marxists.org/history/usa/workers/black-panthers/)

came out in support of gay rights and called for solidarity between black and gay liberation movements — the first prominent New Left figure to do so.

The GLF also lacked any formal structure or elected leadership and operated using a [consensus decision-making process](#). This led to long meetings in which moralism and character assassinations often took the place of real political discussions and debates. Decisions that had been voted on one week could be reopened the following meeting, limiting the group's ability to move forward. Many good activists left in frustration.

Despite these limitations, in the context of political, social, and economic upheaval of the sixties and seventies, large numbers of LGBTQ people were drawing radical conclusions about society and being drawn to liberatory politics and struggle. But as the social movements of the period began to wane, so did gay liberation. As Sherry Wolff explains in *Sexuality and Socialism*:

Many groups did not last long in the absence of ongoing mass struggle, a unifying goal, and the political maturity to sort out disagreements in tactics from disagreements in principle. A fractured far left . . . and revolutionary groups that often defended homophobic, pseudo-socialist states abroad could not win leadership. Some gays and lesbians went in different directions — toward separatism, toward rejection of revolution, or toward the pull of bourgeois party politics.

### Progress Through Struggle

So what should activists make of this history?

The first point is simple, but the most important: every inch of progress LGBTQ people have been able to make has been through struggle. Politicians have never been the motor force of social change – it has always been [collective struggle](#) by ordinary people from below that has taken history forward.

Secondly, when people get organized and fight for what they actually want, not what the political establishment tells them is realistic, they can win. Thirdly, our power is in our numbers. What distinguished gay liberation from the homophile movement, and what allowed it to win significant reforms that had been unimaginable just a decade before, was its mass character.

Fourthly, struggle is contagious. Stonewall was a direct result of the radicalization and militancy of the 1960s. As one segment of society began to break free from its chains and challenge the status quo, others became inspired and started to move. Sixties radicals never viewed this as an act of “appropriation,” but as central to how people rejected ruling-class ideas and became politically engaged.

Fifth,

Finally, spontaneity and organization [aren't mutually exclusive -><http://isreview.org/issue/85/spontaneity-and-organization>] – they are two aspects of the same process, existing in a dialectical relationship. Spontaneous uprisings like the Stonewall Rebellion are inevitable under a system where people are beaten down and oppressed. Eventually decades of passivity and conservatism crack and people are transformed as they are flung into activity. They begin to shed old ideas, changing themselves and the world around them in ways that had previously been unthinkable.

Outbursts are best understood not as ends in and of themselves, but as starting points in a process in which large numbers of people become politically conscious and begin to recognize their collective power. The trajectory of these struggles is not linear. Nothing in history is automatic. Movements face political questions about how to move forward, there are debates over ideas, and organized political forces play a critical role in determining what direction they will go in.

While from a distance it can seem like the history of the LGBTQ movement has simply been long periods of calm punctuated by sharp bursts of activity, closer inspection reveals that in between these high points there is constant activity as activists – like those in the homophile movement – win and lose small struggles, build networks, and gradually begin to accumulate cadres with years of political experiences and training that then lay the groundwork for future upheavals.

Some of these organizations and fighters will rise to the occasion, seize the moment, and play important roles in channeling spontaneous upheavals into organized channels that can take the struggle forward, as the best militants from Mattachine and the New Left did. Others, like the old guard of Mattachine, will be unable to shift to the new terrain and are swept aside by history.

Lastly, it's important to understand why the GLF didn't achieve its revolutionary aspirations. Revolutionaries in the sixties, including militants in the GLF, looked to the successful anticolonial guerrilla movements in the Third World as a model for revolutionary change. Militants looked to small bands of the most oppressed and marginalized to fight on behalf of the masses, rather than to the self-activity of the working class (who they viewed as bought off and complacent).

## Tearing Down the Walls

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Ultra-leftism and sectarianism became common characteristics of the Maoist left, including the GLF. Calls for revolution sounded militant, but they were empty slogans without the social force of working people to back them up. Writing off the very class with the power to transform society, radicals set themselves up for eventual isolation.

Stonewall and the gay liberation movement weren't able to win a world free from sexual regulation and social constraints. But activists did change the course of history, transformed social conditions for LGBTQ people, and gave birth to the modern LGBTQ movement. And in doing so, they provided future generations of radicals and revolutionaries with critical lessons for the challenges we face today.

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[Jacobin-><https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/08/lgbtq-stonewall-marriage-equality-mattachine-sylvia-rivera/> class="spip\_out" rel="external">solidarity is key.