



Language

AIDS not only had a disastrous impact on the health and lives of gay men, but influenced public attitudes. In Britain a move towards greater acceptance of the gay community from the 1970s to the early 1980s was undermined by fear and prejudice about what was often projected as a gay plague. This was also a period of harassment by the authorities, symbolized by the 1984 raid by Customs and Excise on the Gay's The Word bookshop in London.

In the context of a more hostile public opinion the Conservative government enacted in 1988 Section 28, banning the 'promotion' of homosexuality by local authorities through publications or education (on the assumption that sex education was 'promoting' homosexual lifestyles). This was seen by the LGBT community as discriminatory and an encouragement to prejudice and bullying. In response the LGB lobby group Stonewall was formed in 1989 to overturn Section 28, finally achieved, after numerous attempts, under a Labour government in 2003. Stonewall has gone on to lobby for change on other issues, including repealing the ban on gays serving in the military, protection from discrimination in the provision of goods and services and in the workplace, protection from hate speech and hate crime, and same-sex adoption.

A more radical and controversial campaigning body was OutRage! formed in 1990 at a meeting to commemorate the murder of a gay actor a year earlier. Peter Tatchell, who was vilified for being gay whilst contesting Bermondsey in London for Labour in a 1983 bye-election, and has been a prominent gay activist nationally and internationally, was a founding member and wrote the first draft of its statement of aims. Early actions in 1990 were protests at Hyde Park against Metropolitan Police entrapment of gay men in public toilets, and a 'kiss-in' in Piccadilly Circus to challenge police arrests of gay men kissing in public. OutRage! went on to diversify its campaigning and were active in pressing for the age of consent for gay sex (then 21) to be the same as for heterosexual sex – i.e. 16. When the House of Commons debated the issue in 1994, OutRage! held a prominent demonstration outside parliament, and when news came through that equality had been rejected there was – despite the organizers call for a peaceful presence – a near riot. After the vote OutRage! invaded the Labour Party National Executive Committee meeting to protest about the 35 Labour MPs who had voted against equality. The age of consent was not equalized until the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000.

Police attitudes to and treatment of members of the LGBT community was a major issue in the 1980s and 1990s. The Gay London Policing Group (GALOP) created in 1984 provided moral and legal support to individuals in their dealings with the police, and also liaised with the police to promote more tolerant attitudes among new recruits. In 1991 GALOP was part of a coalition of groups – the London Lesbian and Gay Policing Initiative – who met with Scotland Yard to discuss policing in London. By 2007 police officers in uniform were joining Pride marches.

Stonewall, alongside the 'Equal Love' campaign (formed by Peter Tatchell) campaigned in 2010 for the right to same sex marriage, and were strongly opposed by organizations upholding traditional marriage and by newly formed groups contesting same-sex marriage, such as Scotland for Marriage and the Coalition for Marriage. In response LGBT groups Out4Marriage and the Coalition for Equal Marriage were created. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act was passed in 2013, and same sex couples in England were able to marry from March 2014.

Despite high levels of success by LGBT activists in the UK in the last few decades, transgender rights have lagged behind. The legal right to change gender was introduced in 2005, but the Same Sex Couples Act included a 'spousal veto', requiring that the partner's consent is required for the marriage to continue if a Gender Recognition Certificate is issued to a transgender person. The Coalition for Equal Marriage continued to lobby the government to amend this clause.

For websites covering the history of LGBT campaigning in the UK and the role of various groups, see: <http://lgbthistory.org.uk> [1] and <http://www.gayinthe80s.com> [2]

The Stonewall website also provides historical information, as well as news of current issues and campaigns: <http://www.stonewall.org.uk> [3]



Jeffrey-Poulter, Stephen, [Peers, Queers and Commons: The Struggle for Gay Law Reform from 1950 to the Present](#) [4], London, Routledge, 1991, pp. 320

Detailed account of post-war gay movement using contemporary newspaper reports, articles and letters.

Komhiya, A., [Britain: Section 28](#) [5], In Sears, James Thomas, [Youth, Education, and Sexualities: An International Encyclopedia, Volume I, A-J](#) [6] Westport CT, Greenwood Press, , 2005,

Lucas, Ian, [OutRage! An Oral History](#) [7], London, Continuum, 1998, pp. 256

Terrence Higgins Trust, [Rewriting History: Key Moments and Issues of the Last 50 Years of British LGBT History](#) [8], London, Terrence Higgins Trust, 2010, pp. 22

Divided into sections on 1. Campaigns against homo/transphobia; 2.Law and change; 3. Health and wellbeing; and 4. Community and diversity (covering Pride, representation in the media and LGBT communities and spaces). Includes coverage of policing, Section 28, civil partnerships and HIV/AIDS and mental health issues.

See also:

Alkarim Jivani, [Its Not Unusual: History of Lesbian and Gay Britain in the 20th Century](#) [9], ([G. LGBT: Campaigns for Gay, Lesbian and Transgender Rights](#) [10])

Source URL (retrieved on 25/04/2024 - 10:08):<https://civilresistance.info/section/g-lgbt-campaigns-gay-lesbian-and-transgender-rights/g2-gay-liberation-protest-and-1>

Links

[1] <http://www.lgbthistory.org.uk/> [2] <http://www.gayinthe80s.com/> [3] <http://www.stonewall.org.uk/> [4] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1991/peers-queers-and-commons-struggle-gay-law-reform-1950-present> [5] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2005/britain-section-28> [6] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2005/youth-education-and-sexualities-international-encyclopedia-volume-i-j> [7] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1998/outrage-oral-history> [8] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2010/rewriting-history-key-moments-and-issues-last-50-years-british-lgbt-history> [9] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/1997/its-not-unusual-history-lesbian-and-gay-britain-20th-century> [10] <https://civilresistance.info/taxonomy/term/169>