



## GENDER EQUALITY

## “GAY IS GOOD”:

Civil Rights for Gays and Lesbians 1969-2011

**OVERVIEW**

Through viewing flyers created by groups following the Stonewall uprising, students will learn about different LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) rights organizations and the varying goals and strategies they used to bring about change.

**STUDENT GOALS**

- Students will learn about the history of discrimination that impacted the LGBT community in NYC, and thus why the Stonewall uprising was such a monumental event.
- Students will examine flyers produced by two organizations that formed shortly after Stonewall to learn about the diversity within LGBT activism with regard to organizations and their goals and tactics.
- Students will consider issues that concern the LGBT community in 2015 and create their own flyers to raise awareness and organize public action.

**COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS****Grade 5:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.2

Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details; summarize the text.

**Grades 6-8:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6

Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

**Grades 11-12:**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

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**KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY**

- LGBT
  - Homophobic
  - “In the closet”
  - Raid
  - Uprising
  - Coalition
  - Radical
  - Liberation
  - Oppression
  - Alliance
  - Tactic
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**ACTIVISTS**

- Marty Robinson
  - Del Martin
  - Arthur Evans
  - Jim Owles
  - Phyllis Lyon
  - Larry Kramer
  - Edith Windsor
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**ORGANIZATIONS**

- Mattachine Society
  - Daughters of Bilitis
  - Gay Liberation Front
  - Gay Activists Alliance
  - Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation
  - ACT UP
  - Gran Fury
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**INTRODUCING RESOURCES 1 AND 2**

**Resource 1: Gay Liberation Front, *What is Gay Liberation Front?*, ca. 1970. Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.**

**Resource 2: Gay Activists Alliance, *If you're gay you have no civil rights protections!*, 1971. Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.**

In the postwar period, being openly gay was treated as a crime and a mental disorder. While earlier periods had been more open, in the 1950s and '60s many gay men and women remained “in the closet” regarding their sexual identity and gender expression for fear of being arrested, forced into hospitalization, losing their jobs or homes, or rejected by their family members and friends. Because of laws prohibiting the assembly of and serving of alcohol to gay men and women in many establishments, members of the LGBT community gathered at places such as the Stonewall Inn that were controlled by the mafia and paid off the police who often harassed them. Police raids continued, however, and when the Stonewall Inn was raided by the police on June 27, 1969, the diverse range of patrons and people passing by spontaneously fought back, sparking three days of protests on the streets of Greenwich Village.

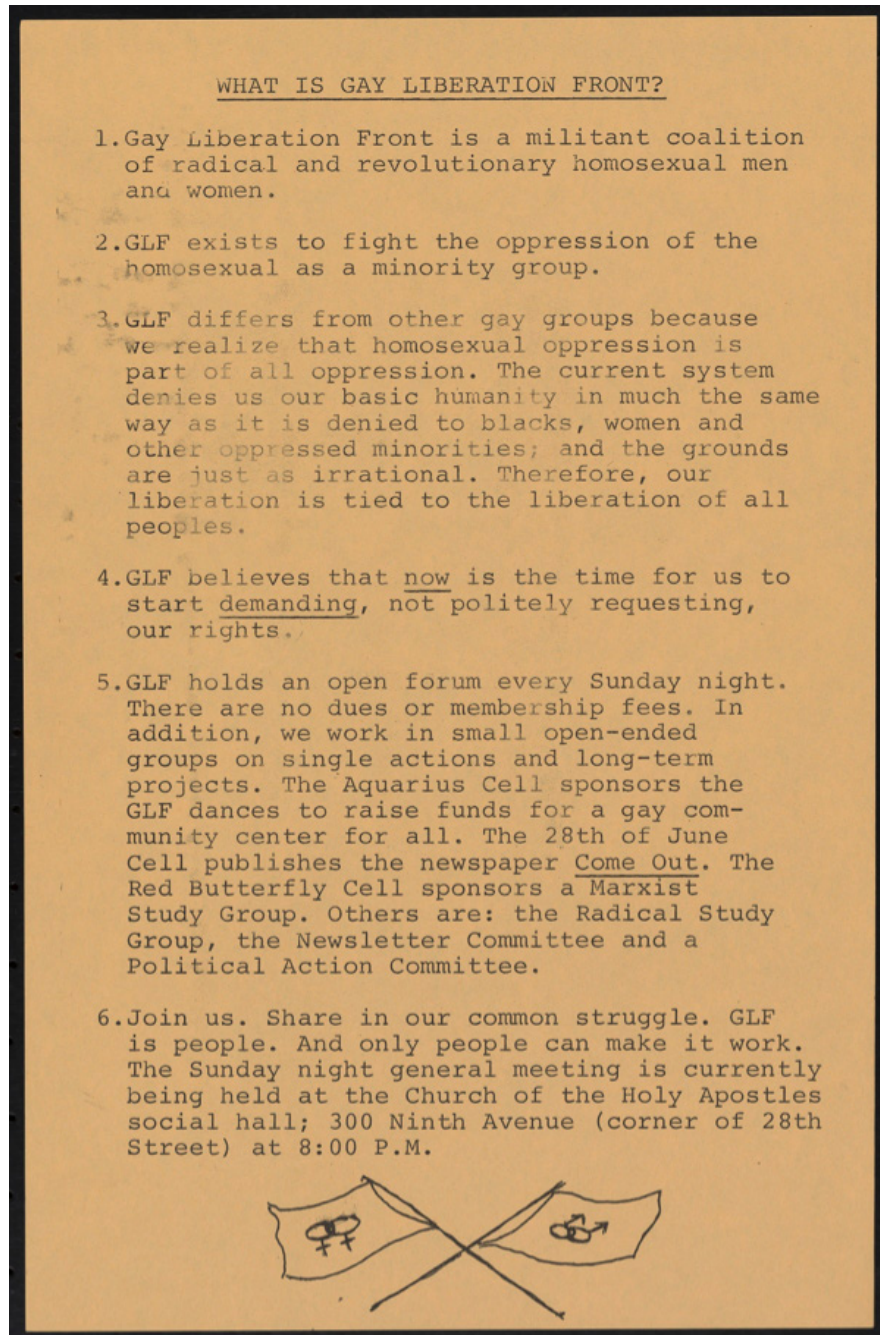
“Stonewall” became the founding moment of the modern LGBT rights movement. Following Stonewall, a new generation of activists in the city created their own newspapers, social services, and cultural institutions, and mobilized against a growing national anti-gay counter-movement tied to the religious right. In 1969 there were 50 “homophile” organizations in the United States; five years later, there were over 1,000 gay rights organizations.

The two flyers below were created by two organizations that formed shortly after Stonewall: The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) and Gay Activists Alliance (GAA).



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Gay Liberation Front, *What is Gay Liberation Front?*, ca. 1970. Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.



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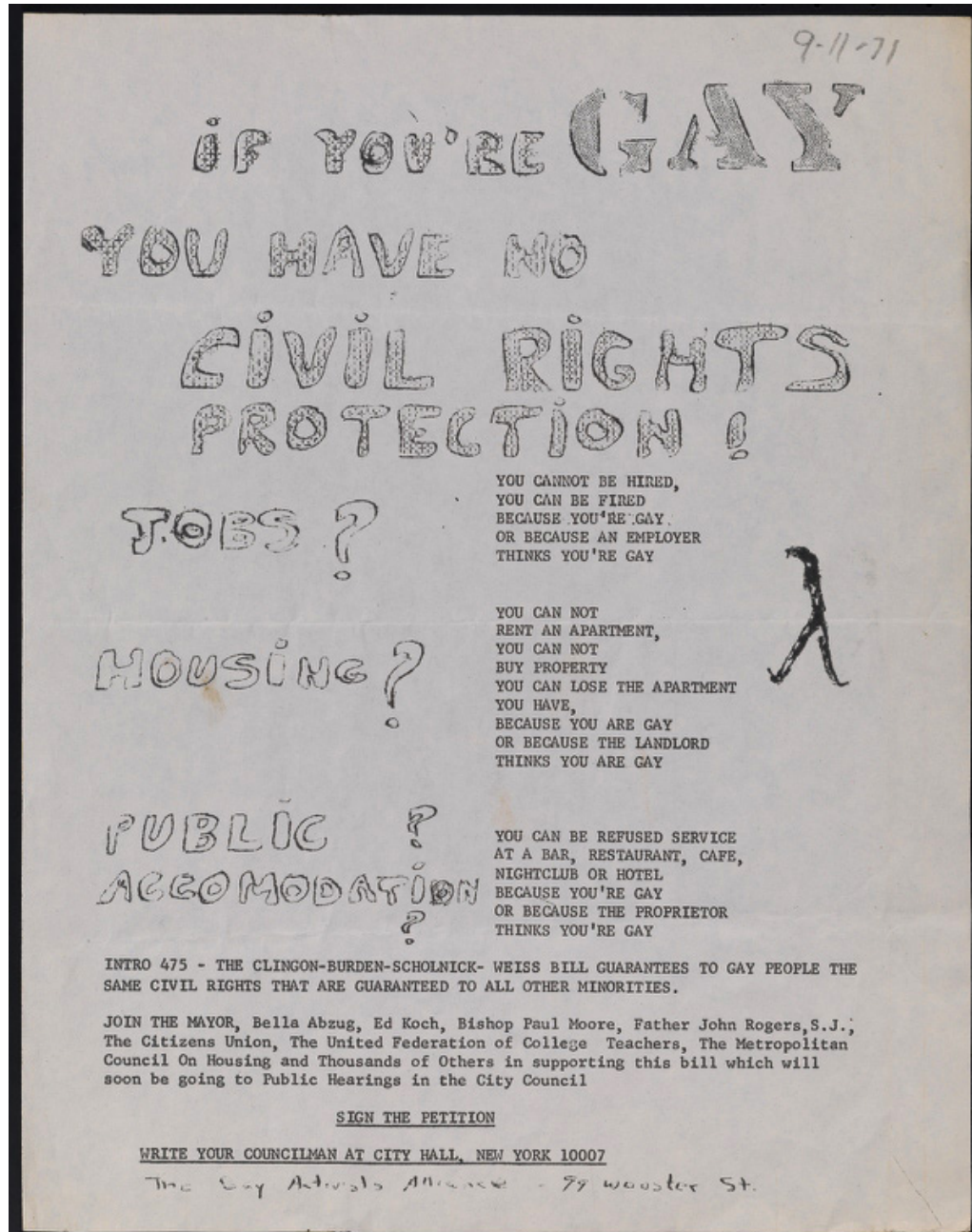
## DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS

- How does the Gay Liberation Front describe its organization?
- What are the goals of the Gay Liberation Front? Why do you think the organization selected this name for the group?
- How is the Gay Liberation Front distinct from other organizations?
- What do you imagine the GLF wanted the reader to do after seeing this flyer?



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## DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS

- Compare the two flyers included in this lesson plan. How are they different?
- What issues concern the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA)? What are their goals?
- What do you imagine the GAA wanted the reader to do after seeing this flyer?
- How do the GLF and GAA differ in their goals and tactics?
- Do you see ways that the goals of each organization help the other?
- Describe the design of each flyer. What symbols does the creator of each flyer use to represent gay rights? (Notice the Lambda symbol)

After the students analyze the documents, the educator can share the following historical context with the students. Many of the leading activists of the GAA, such as Marty Robinson, Arthur Evans, and Jim Owles (the GAA’s first president) split off from the GLF after they became concerned about the groups de-centralized organization and multi-issue focus. In forming the GAA, they sought to:

- End police harassment of the LGBT community
- Get the American Psychiatric Association to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder
- Get a citywide gay civil rights bill passed

Marty Robinson helped develop the “zap” as a new tactic to try and create change. Zaps were confrontational public protests designed to embarrass public officials, especially in front of the press. The GAA led zaps against Mayor John Lindsay at the Metropolitan Opera, at marriage license bureaus demanding marriage licenses for gay couples, and against the president of ABC’s New York’s offices for their portrayal of LGBT characters on their network.



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**ACTIVITY**

Drawing from the GAA flyer, ask students to create a flyer outlining central issues that concern the LGBT community today. Ask students to consider:

- What inequalities still exist?
- What kind of collective action could the public take to rectify the injustice?
- What symbol would you use to represent the LGBT community? (Students should be encouraged to design their own). How would your symbol celebrate diversity within the LGBT community?





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## ADDITIONAL READING

### THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLES

“Police Again Rout ‘Village’ Youths: Outbreak by 400 Follows a Near-Riot Over Raid,” June 30, 1969, describes riots in the village after the police raid of the Stonewall Inn.

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9B04EFDB1E3AEE34BC4850DFB0668382679EDE>

“Thousands of Homosexuals Hold a Protest Rally in Central Park” by Lacey Fosburgh, June 29, 1970, highlights a “gay-in” demonstration in Sheep Meadow.

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9900E4DC1539E63BBC4151DFB066838B669EDE>

“Martin Robinson, 49, Organizer of Demonstrations for Gay Rights” by Bruce Lambert, March 24, 1992, is an obituary for the activist that emphasizes his centrality to the gay rights movement.

<http://www.nytimes.com/1992/03/24/nyregion/martin-robinson-49-organizer-of-demonstrations-for-gay-rights.html>

## CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS

“A Victory for Same-Sex Marriage, With Roots in New York” by Jim Dwyer, June 25, 2015, outlines the legislative changes that led to the national legalization of same sex marriage.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/26/nyregion/fight-for-same-sex-marriage-was-one-that-gained-momentum-in-new-york.html>

“The Price of Gay Marriage” by Timothy Stewart-Winter, June 26, 2015, contextualizes the legalization of same-sex marriage within the history of gay rights activism.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/28/opinion/sunday/the-price-of-gay-marriage.html>

“The Challenges that Remain After Marriage Equality” by The Editorial Board, July 29, 2015, explores how the LGBTQ community still faces discrimination today.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/29/opinion/the-challenges-that-remain-after-marriage-equality.html>



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## SOURCES

Carroll, Tamar. *Mobilizing New York: AIDS, Antipoverty, and Feminist Activism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Carter, David. *Stonewall: The Riots that Sparked the Gay Revolution*. New York: St. Martin's, 2004.

Gay Activists Alliance, *If You're Gay You Have no Civil Rights Protections!*, 1971. Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.

Gay Liberation Front, *What is Gay Liberation Front?*, ca. 1970. Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, New York University.