

1791 - Homosexuality is legalised in France.

1917 - The Russian Revolution of 1917 decriminalised homosexuality and recognised same-sex marriage. This step was part of a larger project of freeing sexual relationships and expanding women's rights – including legalising abortion, granting divorce on demand, equal rights for women, and attempts to socialise house-work. <With the era of Stalin, however, Russia reversed all these progressive measures – re-criminalising homosexuality and imprisoning gay men and banning abortion.

1921 – The government in Britain attempts to make lesbianism illegal. It proposed that lesbianism be made an act of 'gross indecency', with the same punishments that gay men received. The proposal is defeated as it was believed that few women could even imagine that such acts existed - the proposal would only draw attention to such acts and therefore open them up to a new 'audience'.

1945 – The Second World War ends and the true horrors of the Holocaust are revealed. Between 10-15'000 gay men were imprisoned in concentration camps during 1939-1945, (figures for lesbians remain hidden, it was felt that they posed little threat to the Nazis) some men being subject to experiments that attempted to turn them straight whilst at the camps. Whilst at the camps homosexuals were made to wear pink triangles to denote their 'crime'.

1951 - Roberta Cowell becomes the first person in Britain to have gender corrective surgery and was legally allowed to change her name and gender.

1967 - Male Homosexuality is legalised in England and Wales.

1969 - USA: Riots break out between police and customers at the Stonewall Inn - a small bar in New York where many LGBT people used to go - after police raided the bar in attempt to arrest people using laws against same sex dancing. (This was a common occurrence in New York at the time.) The following night, thousands filled the streets chanting 'GAY POWER' and publicly defying homophobic laws by kissing and holding hands. The police again attacked violently but the protests continued for many days. This was a defining moment in the fight for LGBT liberation - no longer would LGBT people stand back and take whatever society and authority would dish out.

1969 – The Gay Liberation Front is formed. Following the Stonewall riots, a number of people got together to form the GLF. 'Gay Liberation is a revolutionary group of homosexual women and men formed with

the realization that complete sexual liberation for all people cannot come about until existing social institutions are abolished.' They produced their own newspaper, 'Come Out!', pamphlets and sponsored demonstrations and dances, whilst also being allied with and marching in unison with Women's groups and Black Groups.

1970 – Between 500-1000 people attend the first gay Pride march in London. Although not labelled as such, 28 August saw the first 'Gay Day' in Hyde Park, followed by a march to Trafalgar Square, protesting against the age of consent, which at the time was 16 for heterosexuals and 21 homosexuals.

1970 - Huey Newton, one of the founders the Black Panther Party, gives a speech about the need to unite with the Women's and Gay liberation movements that were active at the time. In the speech he said- '...homosexuals are not given freedom and liberty by anyone in the society. They might be the most oppressed people in the society.'

1971 - The Women's Group of the Gay Liberation Front, after many attempts and rebuffs in trying to join women's liberation, attended The Women's Liberation National Co-ordinating Conference in October '71. The GLF lesbians were told, by the male dominated wing of women's lib, that they were a bourgeois deviation. The GLF women seized the microphone and led a grass roots revolt that transformed the whole conference and finally placed lesbianism on the agenda of feminists.

1978 - The murder of Harvey Milk

Harvey Milk was the first openly gay politician to be elected to office in the U.S.A. He had strong support from the LGBT community in San Francisco as well as from other minority groups and the trade union movement. Throughout his career he fought for the rights of these groups. He was murdered by a right-wing politician called Dan White who stood against most of the things that Milk fought for. White shockingly only received a small sentence for 'manslaughter'.

1979 - Margaret Thatcher becomes Prime Minister

Along with Ronald Reagan (who became President of the US in 1981), Thatcher ushered in a dark period for gay rights. Thatcher always held a hatred of the progressive policies of left wing groups and, along with trade unions, attempted to crush them. At a Tory party conference she criticised the 'fact' that 'children who need to be taught to respect traditional values are being taught that they have an inalienable right to be gay'. This was the reasoning behind the introduction of section 28, a law that would make it illegal for any council or government body to 'intentionally promote homosexuality, or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality.'

This time however, also saw a rise in militancy in the LGBT community which had never been seen before. Massive demonstrations took place against section 28 in London and Manchester, and a group of lesbians invaded the House of Lords and even the BBC Six O'Clock news. LGBT people were angry and determined to fight the power.

1984 – The Lesbian and Gay Miners' Support Group was set up to provide solidarity and support for the miners' strikes. Groups formed across the country and raised thousands of pounds for the cause. At the benefit event, David Donovan, a South Wales miner, said: *"You have worn our badge, "Coal not Dole", and you know what harassment means, as we do. Now we will pin your badge on us, we will support you. It won't change overnight, but now 140,000 miners know that there are other causes and other problems. We know about blacks, and gays, and nuclear disarmament. And we will never be the same."*

1988 - UK: Section 28 becomes law.

Section 28 made it illegal for any council or government body to 'intentionally promote homosexuality, or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality'. It created great problems for teachers: could they continue to teach literature which covered gay issues or even texts written by homosexuals? How would they tackle homophobic bullying? It gave local councils legitimacy to cut funding to LGBT helplines or helpgroups. Police harassment of LGBT people also increased during this time.

1992 - The World Health Organisation (WHO) removes homosexuality from its classification of illness.

1997 - South Africa becomes the first country in the world to introduce legislation to outlaw discrimination based on sexual orientation into its constitution.

2000 - The ban on lesbians and gays serving the UK armed forces is lifted

2000 - The age of consent for gay men is reduced to 16 in the UK.

2002 - Equal rights granted to lesbian and gay couples applying for adoption in the UK.

2004 – Civil partnerships between same sex couples are made legal. Though this gives same sex couples the same legal rights as married couples, it is still not referred to as marriage, as same sex marriages are still illegal in the UK.

2005 – The first ever LGBT history month happens in the UK.

