

REVOLUTIONS

INVENTIONS, IDEAS & UPROARS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD



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COMING SOON!

GAY LIBERATION MOVEMENT

MARCHING WITH PRIDE

The Stonewall Inn was a popular bar in Greenwich Village, in New York City, US. It wasn't fancy but it was a place where gay, lesbian and transgender people could meet and socialise safely. Then, in the small hours of 8 June 1969, it became the centre of a series of explosive riots between the LGBTQ community and police that marked a turning point - the beginning of a revolution.

GAY REVOLUTION DICTIONARY

Homosexual - a person attracted to people of the same gender.

Heterosexual - a person attracted to people of the opposite gender, also known as straight.

Sexual orientation - who you're attracted to.

Gay - men who are attracted to men. In the 20th century, 'gay' also described the whole LGBTQ community.

Lesbian - women who are attracted to women.

Bisexual - people who are attracted to more than one gender or sex.

Transgender - people who are a different gender to the one assigned to them at birth.

LGBTQ - an acronym meaning lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning. Questioning means exploring what your sexual orientation might be.



THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION

The first half of the 20th century was a difficult time for LGBTQ people in many parts of the world. Many societies had decided that anyone who wasn't straight was wrong, and acting on any other sexual orientation made you a criminal. The Nazis, for example, sent anyone suspected of being LGBTQ to concentration camps.

In the US, being gay was illegal and if found out, you could lose your job, be rejected by your family, be sent to jail or even be beaten up in public. 'Queer' and 'gay' were also widely used as insults. Keeping your sexual orientation secret out of fear was known as being 'in the closet'. But in the second half of the century, people began to ask if it was time to come out.

FEAR & PROGRESS

In the 1950s and 60s in the US, many people fiercely disapproved of homosexuality, while others were looking for ways to change their minds. Sometimes it felt as if the march towards progress was one step forwards and one step back.

1950 - The Mattachine Society was formed to support gay men and raise awareness of the discrimination they suffered. They wanted to convince the public that homosexuals weren't a threat.



1952 - Homosexuality was classified as a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association.



1953 - President Eisenhower banned homosexuals from working for the federal government. Thousands of workers lost their jobs.



1955 - The Daughters of Bilitis was formed. Starting as a safe place for lesbians to meet and dance, it went on to become the first lesbian rights group in the US.



1961 - *The Rejected* was the first TV documentary about homosexuality to air in the US. Even though some of the experts interviewed stated that homosexuality was not criminal, the programme promoted the message that it was a deeply troubling problem.



RADICAL RESTLESSNESS

As the 1960s continued, restlessness grew. Waves of protests against discrimination of all kinds swept across the US. In the fight for gay rights, different groups of LGBTQ people focused on different aspects of their struggle. That wasn't surprising - a young black working-class lesbian from the countryside experienced discrimination differently to a middle-aged white gay man from the city. Each individual person is a combination of many things, not just sexual identity. They are different ages, genders and ethnicities; have different levels of schooling and money; come from different cultures and religions - so their experiences aren't all the same. The overarching name for these LGBTQ rights groups was the Gay Liberation Movement, and together, they were ready for change.

THE TIPPING POINT

There were riots before and after 1969, but the Stonewall Rebellion holds a special place in the history of the Gay Liberation Movement. It lasted on and off for six days, involving fights with the police, arrests and even setting the Inn on fire. The Rebellion felt different to any protest that came before – it was seen by many as the first time LGBTQ people's anger was really heard. Immediately after, thousands of people joined the movement, and many new groups were formed to speak to their frustrations and hopes. Across the country, revolution – as well as backlash to it – was in the air.



The Gay Liberation Movement in the US was a revolution made up of many different battles. There were victories and there were defeats. But from the moment the customers of the Stonewall Inn were inspired to stand up and fight back, the story of LGBTQ rights has never been the same again.

1970 – One year after Stonewall, the first Gay Pride March happened in New York City. Now they take place every year, all over the world.



1977 – Pop singer Anita Bryant launched an anti-gay campaign called 'Save Our Children'. She gave a voice to many who felt threatened by the LGBTQ movement, but her campaign also encouraged people who disagreed with her to become more active in protesting.



1977 – The legislature in Dade County, Miami, made it illegal to discriminate against someone based on their sexual orientation, but Bryant's campaign got the law overturned. Across the country, a wave of gay rights defeats followed.



1977 – Gay politician Harvey Milk was elected to the San Francisco legislature. In 1978, he introduced a bill to make it illegal to discriminate against gay people in access to jobs and housing. The bill was passed with only a single vote against it.



1978 – Gilbert Baker created a symbol of gay pride – the rainbow flag. It is now recognised all over the world as a celebration of sexual diversity.



1978 – Milk was assassinated by Dan White. In 1979, when White's verdict was reduced from murder to manslaughter, tension between police and the gay community exploded into the White Night riots. Police attacked with batons and tear gas, while protestors broke windows of the courthouse and set police cars on fire.



1981 – The AIDS epidemic began. Like Covid, the virus HIV first came from animals. Although it can be spread to anyone through needles and blood transfusions, most sufferers were homosexual men. Many died because of lack of support from the government and fear of gay people grew in society.



Late 1980s – The word 'queer' began to be reclaimed by the gay community as a badge of pride.

1978 – Proposition 6 was put forward in California, banning gay people or anyone who supported their rights from teaching in schools. It attracted a lot of attention in the US and worldwide. Ultimately, Proposition 6 was defeated.



ALL THESE YEARS AFTER THE FIRST GAY PRIDE MARCH COMMEMORATING STONEWALL, WHY ARE PEOPLE STILL MARCHING?

The Gay Liberation Movement in the US petered out in the 1980s, though battles for equal rights continue to be fought, lost and won. Gay Pride marches and parades remind us of the losses and celebrate the wins, but they are also about simply being visible. Around the world there are still over 60 countries where LGBTQ people need to hide – where it is illegal to love who they love – and in many more, coming out is still a dangerous act. Gay Pride marches are festivals of music, dancing, dressing up and being seen. The world still needs reminding that our human diversity is something worth celebrating.

SWARAJ

SELF RULE FOR INDIA

India is huge – so huge that it is often referred to as a subcontinent. The story of this vast and varied part of the world has been one of invasion, conquest and the fight for freedom. During the 20th century, this struggle reached a boiling point, and the nation would turn a corner from which it could never go back.

HOW A NATION CAME TO BE

1. India was formed about 50 million years ago when a large land mass moving north hit Eurasia, pushing up the Himalayas.
2. Different waves of early humans came and flourished here.
3. Over 4,000 years ago, great cities appeared in the Indus Valley, in present-day Pakistan.
4. Centuries passed and more people and cultures arrived, interacting with each other sometimes peacefully, other times in conflict.

5. India became a home to many faiths and was the birthplace of four major religions.



Hinduism
(around 2000 BCE)



Buddhism
(around 500 BCE)



Islam also arrived
around 700 CE



Sikhism
(around 1500 CE)



Jainism
(around 500 BCE)



Christianity arrived
as early as 52 CE



6. Between the 1st and 17th centuries, India was extremely wealthy. It was a land of many different princely states, often at war with each other.



7. During this time, in the 1500s, the Mughals became powerful rulers in the subcontinent, creating an extremely prosperous Muslim empire. But things were about to change...

EAST INDIA COMPANY

In 1600, the British East India Company was formed to trade for goods from India and Southeast Asia, but it was more than a business. Over the next 200 years, it seized control of vast areas of the subcontinent. As the Mughals lost power, the company used bribes and threats to influence the situation, pitting one state against another. Private armies enforced its control. India was changed from a maker of high-quality goods to a producer of things to suit the British.



STRUGGLES WITHIN INDIA

Meanwhile, thousands of workers died building railroads and canals in the subcontinent, which would allow the British to move troops around quickly and get goods to ports to be exported. Indians were forced to grow crops like tea instead of food. Devastating famines followed and continued throughout Britain's rule. The 1770 Bengal famine is thought to have caused 10 million people to starve to death – one quarter of the Bengal population.

In 1858, the British government took over from the East India Company. Their control of the subcontinent was called the British raj. In Hindi, 'raj' means 'rule' or 'kingdom'. 'Swaraj' on the other hand means 'self-rule' – independence from the British invaders – something Indians longed for.

TAKING FROM INDIA

The British saw themselves as the owners of India and the Indian people as there to serve them. They thought they could take what they wanted, and they did.



Spices – Black pepper, cinnamon, turmeric and cardamom were highly prized for their delicious flavours.

Indigo – In Europe, this powdered dye was often called 'blue gold'. Demand was huge for colouring military uniforms.

Tea – Vast tracts of land were turned over to tea-growing to feed Britain's thirst.

Cotton – Raw Indian cotton was used to make cloth in British factories, which was then traded in Europe for materials needed in the Industrial Revolution. It was also traded with Britain's other colonies, strengthening the Empire's control.

Troops – Soldiers from India were sent to fight Britain's wars all over the world.

Opium – A drug made from poppy plants grown in India, which the British sold in China to increase their influence there.

Workers – Thousands of workers were sent to the Caribbean, East Africa and elsewhere to work on plantations. Conditions were often terrible and many workers died.

BRITISH RAJ VS SWARAJ

India was one of Britain's most profitable colonies, called 'the jewel in the British crown'.

Harsh laws and heavy taxes made Indians' lives hard. Bitterness was growing. There were violent clashes with the British invaders.

A major uprising was launched against the British in northern and central India in 1857. The British saw it as a challenge to their authority and called it 'The Indian Mutiny'.

The Indians called it 'The Great Rebellion'. They saw it as a fight for freedom.

When the British defeated the rebellion, they inflicted heavy punishments in response.

In 1885, a political party called the Indian National Congress was formed. They wanted to work with the British to give Indians more say in their country.

They were mostly ignored.


In 1906, the Indian National Congress first used 'Swaraj' to describe their goal for India. In the same year, the Muslim League was formed to put forward Muslims' concerns.

In 1914, World War I began. Almost 1.5 million Indian soldiers fought for the Allies. Afterwards, instead of recognising what India had done, the British violently imposed new restrictions.


The demands for Swaraj grew louder. In 1930, Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March symbolised the country's determination to be free. Then World War II began.

INFLUENTIAL LEADERS


The British Raj encouraged distrust between Muslims and Hindus. They used this to their advantage in politics, weakening the Swaraj movement by splitting it up. Three leaders emerged, each with a different approach to Swaraj.



Mahatma Gandhi organised non-violent protests across India and formed the Quit India Movement, calling for the British to leave India to decide its own future.



Jawaharlal Nehru president of the Indian National Congress, wanted an independent India to be a secular state where religion and politics were separate, and people were united.



Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League called for a separate Muslim homeland. They worried their voices wouldn't be heard in an independent India where the majority were Hindu.

THE TIPPING POINT

During the upheaval of World War II, attitudes were changing. Colonial empires were being questioned. Gandhi's Quit India Movement gained the support of more and more Indian citizens, and the war left Britain so weak that they could no longer control India. Their time exploiting the subcontinent was nearing its end.

INDEPENDENCE DAY

On 15 August 1947, Nehru, the first Prime Minister of independent India, made an announcement:

'At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.'

It was a day to celebrate – India had achieved Swaraj. But it was also a day many feared.

PARTITION

Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy of India, oversaw India's independence. He doubted that Muslims and Hindus could live peacefully together. Responding to demands from the Muslim League, he decided partition was best way forwards – dividing the subcontinent into the countries of India, Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh).

On both sides of the new borders, people were driven from their homes. Lines of refugees trudged in both directions. Extremists, both Muslim and Hindu, emerged and violence exploded. More than one million people were killed. India's revolution had ended, but not in the way that many hoped for. For others, partition seemed the only way forwards. A new chapter in the subcontinent's story had begun.

MIGHT INDIA, PAKISTAN AND BANGLADESH REUNITE SOME DAY?

Since 1947, the three nations have experienced conflicts over territory, different economic problems and religious tensions. Would it be like this if the British raj had never happened? It's hard to know. But if Partition is just another stage in the subcontinent's long history, it may be that the future will build on the things that unite its people instead of the things that divide.