Gay Liberation in its present form is generally regarded as beginning in New York in June 1969, when the police, acting on a homophobia discouche in Christopher Street, Greenwich Village, arrested some 10,000 marchers, and the London GLP is working towards the day, when it too will be able to make a similar show of strength.

But GLP is merely the latest, if the most vocal and radical, phenomenon in the struggle of the North American homosexual to achieve acceptance by a society which would rather pretend he did not exist, and to win for himself an equal place in that society.

The struggle goes back to the decade following the Second World War. A key event was the publication in 1948 of the Kinsey report, which showed that at least one homosexual experience involving orgasm, 10%, was exclusively homosexual all their lives. Kinsey's findings, which therefore showed on the one hand that homosexuals, men and women, and from this branch of research, were subject to the same laws of natural selection as the rest of humanity, led to a great deal of discussion and in some cases, to open defiance of the Kinsey findings, which therefore showed on the one hand that homosexuals, men and women, and from this branch of research, were subject to the same laws of natural selection as the rest of humanity, led to a great deal of discussion and in some cases, to open defiance of the Kinsey findings.

The first major American homophile organisation was the Mattachine Society, founded in 1950 in Los Angeles. There followed One Inc. (which published the first exclusively homosexual all their lives, Kinsey's findings, which therefore showed on the one hand that homosexuals, men and women, and from this branch of research, were subject to the same laws of natural selection as the rest of humanity, led to a great deal of discussion and in some cases, to open defiance of the Kinsey findings.

GLF was born from New York it has spread to many cities around the United States. Towards the end of 1970 the idea of the Front for Women Homosexuals was conceived in England. This statement contains in essence the philosophy of what later came to be known as Gay Liberation. The old ideas of mental illness and homosexuality are replaced by a new philosophy; the philosophy of what later came to be known as Gay Liberation. The old ideas of mental illness and homosexuality are replaced by a new philosophy; the philosophy of what later came to be known as Gay Liberation.
been challenged to re-examine traditionally harsh religious attitudes and teachings on homosexuality, with regard homosexual acts as always sinful. Public statements to date have not been notably adventurous, calling for tolerance and an end to discrimination rather than the full acceptance to be themselves which alone would satisfy the gay militants. It may be that the church as a whole will find it very hard to say 'right ahead' to homosexuals. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence that attitudes among the clergy and theologians generally are now more favourable than those of rank-and-file church members, and sympathetic studies such as Time for Consent by the Anglican theologian Norman Pittenger can undoubtedly play a major part in educating the public about homosexuality.

In the balance it appears that the greatest handicap for the homosexual in his struggle for equality is not that he is so easily coerced or forced into hiding, but that he cannot be readily identified as such from outward appearance and can readily hide or slip back into pretended heterosexual roles. Because he lacks visible identification he can (borrowing a phrase from another Civil Rights movement) too easily 'pass for white'. For the leaders of GLP and other homophile militant groups, the problem is therefore not only that of confrontation of established law and prejudice, but also the mobilisation of the numbers which are known to exist. Too many homosexuals have no interest in fighting for acceptance by the wider society, provided their own sex life is reasonably undisturbed – an attitude summed up by a middle-aged homosexual interviewed by the Advertiser (12.5.71): 'I think we have the right to rebel quietly, but I'd be the first person to faint dead away if there was anything like a Gay Liberation Front in Adelaide.'

In Australia Gay Liberation has scarcely begun. This is not because of lack of need. Together with the United States it is one of the last major 'western' countries in which homosexual activity is still a criminal offence.

Yet assuming the approximate validity for Australia of Kinsey's figures, there are something like a quarter of a million exclusive male homosexuals in the country, as well as an unknown number of lesbians, which together add up to a substantial minority group. Homosexuality as such is not a legal offence, but certain sexual practices in which homosexuals engage are illegal and are liable to harsh penalties, for 'indecency', 'unnatural offences' or 'sodomy'. Those who support the maintenance of legal sanctions against what they choose to regard as 'unnatural' and 'disgusting' behaviour cannot even claim the virtue of consistency. Female homosexuality is beyond the scope of the law, while the 'abominable crime of buggery' (so described in the NSW Crimes Act) is apparently less abominable in some states than in others, being punishable by 14 years in NSW, Queensland and WA, 15–20 years in Victoria, 21 in Tasmania, and a mere 10 in wowser South Australia.

However, even in Australia's intolerant climate the tide is beginning to turn. As in Britain and the United States, the 1960s saw a youth rebellion against social injustice, traditional political and social institutions and archaic moral codes. In this less inhibited atmosphere of what critics labelled 'the permissive society' homosexuality is at least becoming a topic of almost respectable public discussion.