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**Legitimacy of the Stonewall Riots**

Contemporary society has changed its view of the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) community immensely compared to a few decades ago. The recognition of people with different sexual orientations from the norms set by society came with great struggle. Currently, LGBTQ+ clubs, bars, and restaurants operate freely. On the same note, there are efforts in place to have public toilets that recognize transgender people in our society. All this progress is hugely contributed by the stonewall riots of 1969.Stonewall riots mark an important point of revolution against discrimination based on the sexual orientations. This paper seeks to illuminate whether the actions by NYPD against attendants of the stonewall inn were necessary and discuss the legitimacy of the riots that ensued.

Argument for the NYPD

According to Ng and Nick, the stonewall inn was in direct control of a crime syndicate, and this gave police officers leeway to conduct their professional duty and ensure that its operations were controlled (113). The mafia saw a lucrative business niche of selling alcoholic drinks to people interested in same-sex relationships because a significant section of United States population was interested in such sexual orientations but lacked somewhere to express their concealed feelings. Being a crime syndicate, the illegality of such an operation was not a big deal for the mafia, and so the stonewall inn was established (Jones). The mafia bought the stonewall inn from its previous owners and turned from a regular bar and restaurant to a gay bar and restaurant (Matzner 1). After a while, more and more people became aware of the venue and transitioned into loyal customers of the venue. It was relatively cheap to enter the stonewall inn and be served, and this lured many gay, lesbians, transgender, and cross-dresses to the venue because they could afford to be free without judgment at inexpensive monetary incurrences.

Since the stonewall inn was owned by the mafia, it seemed like a rational idea for the New York Police Department to keep raiding the venue. After all, the place was owned by people who seldom abided by the law and took part in all manner of criminal activities that disrupt the peace in the United States. Moreover, the New York Police Department acted in their legal capacity by seeking to end the operation of gay bars because they were considered illegal spots. Therefore, the New York Police Department was performing in accordance with their delegated constitutional duty to the United States of America by ensuring that all illegal operations in the city were put to a halt.

Moreover, the stonewall inn had other issues apart from hosting a drinking spot that supported same-sex relationships. The spot was registered as a form of “bottle bar,” which meant that expected attendants to carry their own liquor, and this was a sly technique used to avoid the need for a liquor license. This venue remained a secret because all the people who attended were obligated to sign in a book before entry to create a false sense of exclusivity. A significant section of the New York Police Department were bought with hefty bribes to facilitate continuity of operations in the venue. Since there was no regard for legality, the mafia used all techniques at their disposal to ensure that operational expenses were minimized as much as possible (River 89). There were no safety protocols like a fire exit or fire extinguishers meaning that a fire outbreak was likely to cause immense damage to the bar’s occupants. There was no running water at the back of the bar for attendants to clean their glasses; the toilets were dirty and lacked a proper flow of water. To make matters worse, the mafia used to blackmail the wealthy attendants at the bar who were desperate for their clandestine sexual orientations to remain secret and protect their reputation in society. As a consequence of such extremities of legal infringements, the NYPD made the right call to intervene, but they should have done so with a better approach. Raids were a regular ordeal at this shop, but fortunately, the corrupt police officers often warned the mafia about impending raids so that liquor could be hidden because there was no liquor license.

However, people who supported the actions by the New York Police Department to raid this venue forgot an imperative point; that the NYPD was intrinsically flawed. A significant portion of NYPD’s force had been condoning the operations in this place for self-gratification. As long as the bribes came in handy, then there was no need to halt the operations that took place in the stonewall inn. Perhaps the administration of the New York Police Department would no longer support unconventional sexual preferences that were considered purely as “queer” by society at that point in time. Likewise, the regular raids at the stonewall inn were always rough for the attendants at the bar, but they bottled up their feelings of anger and frustrations at the NYPD (Walsh).

Evidently, it was simply a show of contempt that the NYPD needed to pop in the place regularly, while the LGBTQ+ members present did not harm anyone. Individuals that attended the stonewall inn did not mind the deplorable conditions because they were more interested in the freedom that this place had to offer. It was a place where they would meet fellow “outcasts” and have fun without rejection and contempt from fellow countrymen (Matzner 2). Stonewall inn was a home for many of the attendants. Then, despite the rational arguments that the New York Police Department may raise to justify halting the operations that were going on in the restaurant, it was not necessary to treat the attendants of the inn in an unjust manner.

One of the primary objectives of the police is to maintain law and order in a country. Thus, the New York Police Department had the mandate to protect the people who sought refuge in the stonewall inn rather than make them feel like lesser beings due to their natural sexual orientations (Kuhn 17). There are some people who try out being gay, lesbian or bisexual because they are naturally adventurous, but there was a vast section in the LGBTQ+ community that were born that way and cannot alter their biological makeup. For instance, it is completely irrational to judge people born as gay because they did not create themselves. Secondly, it is unreasonable to coerce such people to fit into the strict genders roles prevalent in society and be purely masculine or feminine. Doing is like asking them to deny who they are.

 As a matter of fact, verbally harassing attendants of the stonewall inn illustrated how the New York Police Department was going against the duty granted to it by the United States constitution (History.com Editors). The duty of police officers is to serve and protect, but the New York Police Department did the contrary, especially considering that attendants of this venue were not harming other citizens but were the ones who faced regular harassment and rejection in all other entertainment venues. People in the stonewall inn were victims of bullying by many US civilians who alienated them. Hence, the New York Police Department's decision to seek them in their safe haven to make things even harder was a vivid show of contempt for their sexual preferences. At least the stonewall inn was the only place that LGBTQ+ members were allowed to dance, and one would not be judged for desiring to enjoy dancing with people who understood and accepted them. Wanting to belong is not a legal infringement but a natural part of being human, but LGBTQ+ members present in the stonewall inn had to suffer for this.

On the night that initiated the stonewall inn riots, the NYPD had raided the gay bar; it was an impromptu raid, so the mafia was not tipped this time round. The police showed up with a legal search warrant and confiscated the alcohol that was being sold illegally. They also arrested 13 people who were cross-dresses on legal grounds of violating the United States gender-appropriate clothing statute. The issue that inspired feelings of anger among the LGBTQ+ members who were present is how these cross-dresses were taken into the bathrooms and checked for their sex.

The NYPD had a search warrant that gave them permit to legally raid the stonewall inn premises. Nonetheless, some of the actions by NYPD officers during this raid infringed the right to privacy of the inn’s customers as entailed in the United States bill of rights 1998. Without question, the NYPD showed a lack of respect for human dignity by insisting to verify the sex of cross dressers in the bathrooms without their consent. Moreover, people under arrest were handled in such an aggressive manner that the rest could not scatter from the area. Instead, they stood and watched as the ugly turn of events unfolded. Suddenly one of the police officers hit a lesbian in the head with immense brutality that she cried out to the already triggered audience asking for help. People’s bottled anger reached the maximum point, and the crowd began throwing pennies, cobblestones, bottles, and any other objects in proximity.

The next few minutes that ensued were characterized by heated riots involving an infuriated mob with hundreds of people. The situation turned ugly in such a swift manner that the policemen, a journalist writer, and a few prisoners had no choice but to barricade themselves in the restaurant. The angry mob even wanted to start a fire to break the barricade, but they were disrupted by the riot squad and firefighters who put out the fire and dispersed the crowd (Geoghagan). However, this was just the beginning of a revolution as the riots continued for the next five days relentlessly, with thousands of participants protesting for LGBTQ+ rights.

Clearly, LGBTQ+ members faced a great deal of discrimination from the police and this was hurtful. As a consequence, the stonewall inn riots continued for five consecutive days and the actions were justified. The New York Police Department pushed these people to the edge because of their identity, and it became crystal clear to them that the optimal solution was to fight back. The stonewall inn riots was a result of built up anger resulting from resentment from the national government that was practicing institutional racism through the NYPD.

Besides, the bills of rights had to be altered in a manner that accommodated the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer members of society. It has been approximately half a century since the stonewall inn riots that James O’Neill NYPD’s police commissioner gave a public apology to members of the LGBTQ+ community for acts of police brutality that directly contributed to the occurrence of the stonewall riots. His apology reprimanded the manner NYPD behaved and accepted that the unit illustrated regressive behavior that discriminated and oppressed the LGBTQ+ community. James’ apology implies that the stonewall inn riots were legitimate, and necessary to manifest changes in how people treated each other.

Reflection Paper

 The genre of this assignment is an argumentative essay. This type of genre aims to present an argument so prove the validity to what I am trying to say and counter it but show my side is stronger. The exigence of this topic or why I wanted to write about it was because many people are misinformed on it. Members of the LGBTQ+ community should be able to be out and proud of who they are. I also chose this topic because I wanted to celebrate all the changes they have accomplished since the Stonewall Riots happened. My initial audience is my professor. Since I am very passionate about the topic, I could post it online making it available to people in the world who could then use it for evidence in their essay furthering my audience. It can also be seen by people who are advocates for gay rights. These people can then use my work as possible evidence for their essay and show it to their professors and classmates, expanding my audience. This assignment's purpose was to write an argumentative essay and prove to the ready why I thought the Stonewall Riots brought forth change. My stance was presented in an effective manner to show how change was brought after the riots with evidence from credible sources. The media of this assignment is entirely digital. My draft was done online and read over multiple times by me to make sure it met the requirements before final submission, which was on Blackboard.

The assignments follow course learning objective two, three, and six. Course Learning Objective two "develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing." This assignment started by reading information on the topic, writing a draft, then revising it myself to make sure it met the requirements needed. Course Learning three, "Recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations." I wrote my essay so that all rhetorical terms could be inferred while reading my essay. I also used Course Learning Objective six, "locate research sources (including academic journal articles, magazine and newspaper articles) in the library's databases or archives and on the Internet and evaluate them for credibility, accuracy, timeliness, and bias." Throughout the essay, I used different sources to support my thesis.

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