LGBTQ Struggles and Equality in the United States

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The history of the United States and worldwide has witnessed a long record of struggles and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people. As I was researching the Lavendar Scare, as part of the Red Scare, it struck me the amount of fear and injustices that homosexuals had to face in the United States. From the 1950s to 1970s, homosexuals became associated with Communism for no obvious reason except the fear that they were susceptible to blackmail due to their sexual orientation. President Eisenhower's 1953 Executive Order #10450, "Security Requirements for Government Employment," resulted in the dismissal of five thousand homosexual federal employees in the civil or military workforces.

My comments/discoveries on the Lavendar Scare are the following: First, the president and the Senate acted upon the fear that were fueled by the Cold War anxieties, so they exhibited intolerance and bigotry by prying into the personal lives of their government employees and associated them with Communism. They considered them mentally disturbed, and therefore, they posed a security risk. Second, the fear of exposure and job loss forced many LGBTQ to live in secrecy and shame. Third, as things got worse, the Lavender Scare spread to other sectors, including education. Some teachers who were suspected of being gay or lesbian were fired, which in turn created an unsafe environment for both homosexual teachers and students. Fourth, every single gay or lesbian contributions were no longer acknowledged as if erased from history. Instead, they were ostracized and fired. Fifth, even when matters seem to have improved in comparison of the 70s, as I am writing this paper now, I read that the LGBTQ+ Pride flag after will no longer be displayed in Huntington Beach and Downey after having it for three years. Homophobia still exists in our society.

The Lavender Scare serves as a reminder of the consequences of exclusion. Therefore, what we can do as educators is create a safe space where students can express themselves openly and authentically. As our classrooms are likely to have students from same-sex parents or homosexual friends, we have to ensure that our classroom celebrates and affirms all family structures. In addition, we should challenge prejudices and discrimination by promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion in the curriculum and classroom activities. Gollnick and Chinn highlighted the importance of having a “curriculum that is sensitive to these issues promotes a greater understanding of homosexuality among all students, and the healthy development of self-identified homosexual students.”

We must ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated by starting in our classroom because inclusive education is powerful. By challenging biases against LGBTQ+ or any other group and celebrating our cultural diversity, justice and equity in the classroom are achieved.

References

Donna M. Gollnick and Philip C. Chinn, *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society*, 11th edition, Prentice Hall, 2021.