

The Other Side of the Pink Triangle: Still a Pink Triangle

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In the SS, today, we still have about one case of homosexuality a month. In a whole year, about eight to ten cases occur in the entire SS. I have now decided upon the following: In each case, these people will naturally be publicly degraded, expelled, and handed over to the courts. Following completion of the punishment imposed by the courts, they will be sent, by my order, to a concentration camp, and they will be shot in the concentration camp, while attempting to escape.

-Heinrich Himmler, 18 February 1937 (1)

Thus Heinrich Himmler, the man most likely to succeed Adolf Hitler as Fuehrer in 1945, once again escalated the war on sexual behavior that did not conform to male heterosexual supremacy, an ideal he linked to winning the world race war of survival. "A people of good race which has many children has the candidature for world power and world domination. A people of good race which has too few children has a one-way ticket to the grave . . ." he admonished the SS in one of his four-hour lectures. (2) Two years earlier, on the anniversary of his successful ambush and murder of Ernst Roehm, SA chief and Himmler's former, deeply hated commanding officer, Himmler had secured Hitler's approval of a revision of the law, unchanged since the founding of a united Germany in 1871, that set prison terms for homosexual acts. Paragraph 175a, as it was called until it was repealed in 1968/69 (3), now additionally criminalized eight new acts, attitudes, intentions, and reveries, apart from sex itself, and punished them with draconian sentences of three to ten years' incarceration. (4)

Despite the fact that Himmler often personally protected Nazi homosexuals and kept their "crime" secret, (5) in that year, 1935, the actual arrests under the Criminal Code almost quadrupled, from 948 to about 3700. Recorded arrests reached an annual high of 8115 in 1939 and fluctuated at 1935 levels until the records break off in 1944. (6) Unrecorded arrests, which included homosexuals from European countries occupied by the Third Reich, and ad hoc killings may have reached 220,000, according to estimates of the Protestant Church in Austria. (7) This wide variation in figures of casualties is due to the state of the records, and to the fact that homosexuals continued to be treated as criminals after the war. Their imprisonment remained part of their police record, and they received no compensation for concentration camp sentences. "Unlike other survivors, the gay prisoners soon discovered that their persecution had not ended. . . Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, German courts convicted homosexual men at a rate as high as that of the Nazi regime." (8) The dangers of publicity muted homosexual voices, and therefore only a few memoirs and known survivors exist.

Uncertainty about the numbers of homosexuals who disappeared under the Nazi regime is also the direct result of the high mortality of such prisoners in Nazi camps. When the SS newspaper *Das Schwarze Korps* published the view that "unnatural acts deserve the death penalty," (9) this merely represented the logic of Himmler's "guiding Nordic principle: extermination of degenerates." (10) Though the law prescribed only prison terms of various lengths, thousands of

homosexuals either went to prison first and then were re-arrested by the Gestapo and sent to a "Class III" concentration camp; or they were arrested by the Gestapo in the first place and sent directly to a "Class III" concentration camp. "Class III," writes Eugen Kogon, "stood for the 'mills of death' which prisoners seldom left alive." Because Nazi doctrine classed homosexuals with criminals, Jews, and "political prisoners deemed especially dangerous," (11) homosexuals found themselves in Class III camps. Obviously, incarceration in any concentration camp "posed a threat to a prisoner's life," (12) but the classification of homosexuals as particularly dangerous was telling: "The closer a prisoner's category was to the heart of Nazi ideology, the more dangerous his circumstances in the camp." (13) From surviving prisoners to Rudolf Hoess, commandant at Auschwitz, witnesses nearly unanimously report that homosexuals were exposed in all camps to the greatest brutality. John Steakley summarizes the evidence:

The chances for survival in a Level 3 camp were low indeed. Homosexuals were distinguished from other prisoners by a pink triangle about three-and-one-half inches high, worn on the left side of the jacket and on the right trouser leg. To make homosexuals more readily distinguishable, pink triangles were about an inch larger than the yellow triangles worn by Jews or red triangles worn by political prisoners. There was no possibility of 'passing' as a heterosexual, and the presence of 'marked men' in the all-male camp population evoked the same reaction as in modern prisons: homosexuals were brutally assaulted and sexually abused. (14)

SS tortured homosexuals to death (15), worked them to death, shot, raped, beat, and starved them, and performed medical experiments on them. The latter included hormonal injections intended to correct their homosexuality and save them for the propagation of the race. They killed them for sport and target practice (16). Many prisoners also abused them. Sharing Nazi opinions of them, they kept them at the bottom of the prisoner hierarchies that distributed protection and assistance. Indeed, they were only marginally higher than Jews. (17) Homosexuals were designated by their fellow prisoners as the fodder for quotas – for special details, deportation, or reduction of the prisoner population through execution. (18) Accepting castration might or might not lead to release: release after castration could lead directly to duty at the front in a feared SS penal battalion. (19) In this situation, Hoss recalled, "two friends on several occasions committed suicide together." (20)

A sociologist's analysis of mortality in the camps concludes:

Reading the many reports and asking the prisoners' committees (which still exist today) about the prisoners with the pink triangles, one repeatedly learns that they were there, but nobody can tell you anything about them. Quantitative analysis offers a sad explanation for the extraordinary lack of visibility: the individual pink-triangle prisoner was likely to live for only a short time in the camp and then to disappear from the scene. After four months, one in four had left: after a year, one in two. It was otherwise for the Jehovah's Witnesses and politicals: after a year, four out of five and two out of three, respectively, were still in the camp. This thinning out is due to deaths: three out of four deaths among the homosexuals occurred within the first year after their committal. (21)

Given such a record, it is churlish indeed to deny homosexuals the status of victims accorded to Jews, gypsies, and the sick, merely because they were not gassed en masse, but found death in other ways; and because a small fraction miraculously survived. (22) Though not direct victims of the Holocaust (except, of course, for Jewish homosexuals), homosexuals were victims of racial cleansing, obviously a corollary of the genocidal ideology of Aryan racial supremacy, and in practice a deadly threat. Jews and gypsies were "enemy races," scheduled for extermination; homosexuals were saboteurs of the race, a problem in reproductive policy. Himmler made such policy in the Reich Central Office for the Combating of Homosexuality and Abortion. As "racially less valuable members of the German population," homosexuals "were subject to a series of negative measures" suited to the relationship of their "problem" to racist values. (23) Some Nazi physicians thought their "disorder" could be cured and instituted forcible medical "treatment" and "rehabilitation." Others thought it a "hereditary pathology" that required quarantine or extermination; others thought it merely a rebellious behavior: "[they build] a state within a state, they are state criminals. They are not 'poor, sick' people to be treated, but enemies of the state to be eliminated!"(24) Despite the fact that "no gay ghettos were sacked, its inhabitants carried off to be gassed," (25) there can be no doubt that homosexuals (and yet other categories of "undesirables" such as persistent failures, alcoholics, the homeless, the retarded, juvenile delinquents, and the mentally ill) were victims of the same regime that killed Jews and gypsies, and for ideologically related reasons. If, as Abrams claims, Judith Reisman wrote that "it is unconscionable for radical homosexuals to wrest 'Nazi victim status' from the bones of millions of exterminated men, women, and children," (26) she is completely wrong. Homosexual victims were victims in their own right.

Before their rise to power, Nazi members of parliament helped quash a proposal to limit Paragraph 175, announcing officially:

Anyone who even thinks of homosexual love is our enemy. We reject anything which emasculates our people and makes it a plaything for our enemies, for we know that life is a fight and it's madness to think that men will ever embrace fraternally. Natural history teaches us the opposite. Might makes right. And the stronger will always win over the weak. Let's see to it that we once again become the strong! But this we can only do in one way -- the German people must once again learn how to exercise discipline. We therefore reject any form of lewdness, especially homosexuality, because it robs us of our last chance to free our people from the bondage which now enslaves it. (27)

Immediately on taking power, Nazis raided and destroyed homosexual clubs, associations, and organizations. They created police inventories of homosexuals to fire them from office and to harass them with interrogations and investigations. (28) "Toughening up" Paragraph 175 and a rising rate of arrests thereafter forced the highly visible but illegal homosexual lifestyle underground. As one survivor put it, "We lived like animals in a wild game park, always sensing the hunters." (29)

Does this record not contradict the evidence that homosexuality was prevalent in Nazi organizations, most saliently in the early SA under the leadership of Ernst Roehm, but also in the SS and the Hitler Youth? At the hands of Kevin Abrams, these well-known facts become revelations of a hidden history, and lead him to propose an "Other Side of the Pink Triangle:"

"The record shows that there was far more brutality, rape, torture and murder committed against innocent people by Nazi deviants and homosexuals, than there was against homosexuals." (30) National Socialist leaders and the SS, Abrams argues, were primarily homosexual, and the qualities we associate with Nazi aggression and genocide are rooted in that homosexuality. Permitted by a "liberal miasma of sexual deviance" to take root, Nazism burst forth, revealing the pathological nature of homosexuality. Therefore, contemporary Americans should be more cautious than German "liberals" were, for gays are like Nazis. Above all the public must reject that propaganda image of gays as victims which serves as a wedge to open the door to power. So certain is Abrams of this startling conclusion, he permits himself to interpret the evidence any way he needs to, with light regard for historical scholarship – or indeed the fundamental rules of logic.

His first concern is to show that National Socialism was rooted in earlier organizations founded by homosexuals, and that the combat philosophy they touted was directly a product of homosexuality. Certainly the prevalence of homosexuality in the German Workers' Party, Thule Society and certain Freikorps (veterans' bands) matched their proportions elsewhere in German society -- in liberal parties, for example, the army officer corps, the royal families and aristocracies, the Catholic and Protestant clergies, the universities, the socialist movement, among bureaucrats, industrialists and small shopkeepers, in theater, music and the arts, in small villages and big city slums. To make the open homosexuality in proto-fascist groups appear to be amazing, Abrams suppresses the fact that homosexuality had increasingly -- but only partially -- "come out" in early twentieth-century Germany. It was recognized in every walk of life; in some parts of society it was openly tolerated, in others secretly, and in others it was still repressed. In each walk of life, homosexuality was imbued with the values of its social, political and cultural environment. In the anti-liberal movements, among the youth groups, nudists, sun- and body-worshippers it was associated with health and sex reform and thus with a superior, anti-bourgeois lifestyle. (31) This tradition did find its way into National Socialism and was mixed there with military homoeroticism. Homosexuality was secretly tolerated in the army officer corps, where it was embedded in a homophobic, "traditionalist" culture. (32) Indeed, even conservative bourgeois nationalism in this period centered on the erotic image of the youthful German soldier. (33) No "liberal miasma" was needed to actuate this tradition; nor was there any "liberalization" of Paragraph 175 during the Weimar Republic – this is entirely a figment of Abrams' imagination, needed in his view to "explain" the particularly homosexual elements in Nazi organizations. What the twenties did witness -- not only in Germany -- was a high degree of unofficial toleration of individual emancipation -- but not an inch of collective, legal emancipation.

Little wonder that homosexuals were also to be found in the organizations out of which the NSDAP arose, and that in that culture, homosexuality was associated with combat and ferocity. But far from being an expression of homosexuality, that ethos represented the stamp of an anti-Semitic, anti-capitalist, para-military world-view on both heterosexual and homosexual members. For if homosexuality was present in every political organization (and class, church, and profession) in Germany, it cannot alone account for the specific nature of Nazism. Homosexuality was only one element among others there. One must reverse Abrams' causal account: the outstanding and defining feature of these groups, where toleration of homosexuality by a heterosexual majority was as secondary as their interest in vegetarianism

and demand for whole-grain bread, was their racist patriotism and anti-liberalism. The German Workers' Party, an association of German railroad workers in Bohemia who were fighting off the competition of Czech workers, was "a libertarian national party, which with all its strength was dedicated to fighting reaction, feudal, clerical and capitalist special privileges, and alien national influences." (34) The Thule Society was one splinter of "an underground movement of fervent, militant sects which nurtured a folkish anti-Semitism like a secret science." (35) The Freikorps, armed cohorts of veterans - of which the "homosexual" Rossbach group was only one, - were dedicated to eradicating socialism, liberalism, and Judaism, all of which they perceived to be enemies of the German Nation. Thus they attempted to topple the Weimar Republic by force. In short, the salient features of the legacy of Nazism from its forerunners were violence, racism and a new kind of authoritarian democracy for the little man -- not primarily homosexuality at all.

Abrams' analysis thus has the tail wagging the dog, and he persists in this error in his account of the early Nazi party. Again he links one set of facts -- that the SA (as Shirer aptly put it) was "a motley mob of brawlers," (36) -- to another set of facts -- that numerous SA leaders were homosexual; and he assumes he has established a causal connection. Again he suppresses the context: for example, the fact that the majority of the SA was heterosexual (indeed, if millions of SA men were homosexual, Germany would have had a unbelievable rate of homosexuality!) He fails to mention the levels of political violence in Germany that left hundreds dead on all sides in 1932 (the SA were, after all, physically fighting the equally violent communist and socialist combat units). Additionally it buttresses his case gullibly to accept as fact the smears leveled at the Nazis by socialists and communists. They tried to undermine the appeal Nazi attitudes had for certain sectors of the German public by labeling the Nazis "perverts." (37) Their successful propaganda campaign influenced the homophobic sources Abrams uses, as a recent scholarly work has demonstrated. (38) Abrams has not considered that in taking statements made at the time at face value simply because they stem from contemporaries he turns out to be repeating disinformation.

Empirical data does not therefore corroborate the causal connection between homosexuality and Nazi political violence. Abrams next attempts to posit it as an abstract sociological, or perhaps anthropological, possibly a biological, generalization, citing five instances of "homosexuality" observed in ancient, Asian, and primitive rituals or warrior societies. These sometime conjunctions prove to him that "the most warlike nations have been those who were most addicted to the love of male youths." (39) Can then nations not so addicted, like the U.S.A, ever be as "warlike" as the homosexual, like Germany, and defeat them? Abrams' pseudo-social-scientific logic here is strikingly similar to the pseudo-biological logic of Nazi eugenics: he has succumbed to the same mythological argumentation.

In fact, his argument here is the argument that some Nazis, like Roehm, advanced about the special powers of homosexuals, and which had some influence on Hitler.

Rudolf Diels, the founder of the Gestapo, recorded some of Hitler's personal thoughts on the subject:

'He lectured me on the role of homosexuality in history and politics. It had destroyed ancient Greece,' he said. Once rife, it extended its contagious effects like an ineluctable

law of nature to the best and most manly of characters, eliminating from the reproductive process those very men on whose offspring a nation depended. The immediate result of the vice was, however, that unnatural passion swiftly became dominant in public affairs if it were allowed to spread unchecked.'

With its mingled elements of condemnation, dread, and admiration, Hitler's view appears to be a concatenation of eugenics, fear of conspiracy (similar to the 'Elders of Zion' legend), and the theory of homosexual superiority advanced by Hans Blueher. (40)

The "scholarly" crux of Abrams' piece is this moral reversal of Blueher's pseudo-biological theory. Blueher claimed that homosexuals were genetically more purely warriors and therefore superior to heterosexuals. Abrams agrees that they are more purely warriors, on grounds as scientifically obscure as Blueher's, but for that reason worse than heterosexuals. Abrams next proceeds to link this principle of history to contemporary America, drawing a parallel between "gay political strategy" ("exaggerating homosexual victim status") and the "Nazi/homosexual tactic" ("posturing as the victim") that presumably helped them to power. (41) Whatever the validity of his views of the political strategy of American gays, any similarity to Nazi strategy founders on a simple fact known instinctively to every student of Nazism, namely that the Nazis never, ever, portrayed themselves as victims. This was not merely a canny propaganda tactic on the part of Goebbels and Hitler. All the powerful Nazis exhibited a distinct aversion to the position of victim. Is Abrams thinking here of the Nazi propaganda image of Germany as a victim of international Jewry? If so, the image was one of blonde women and heroic men seduced and swindled by Jews. The Nazis were the relief to Germany's misery, not a part of it. Or perhaps Abrams thinks of *Mein Kampf* as the testament of a victim; on the contrary, it is a tale of the revenge of a "master" on those fools who took him to be a victim. The Nazis divided the world into masters and victims, and they were never to be found on the wrong side.

This forced analogy reveals that it is not enough for Abrams to refute gay histories of Nazi persecution -- he claims to know categorically that "in Nazi Germany, homosexuals as a specific "group" were NEVER targeted for extermination and were treated far better than most other concentration camp prisoners." (42) The point of the false parallel between Nazi and gay "strategies" is to imply further that claims of persecution should be read as a secret sign of the real (i.e., Nazi) nature of American gays! If homosexuality equals "warlike," American gays must be like Nazis in many other ways as well. After this observation, the unfolding of the Nazi regime in his article becomes a sketch of the potential dangers gays pose to America.

Abrams' task is now to show that homosexuality was rampant in National Socialist leadership -- that it survived the purge of the "homosexual" SA and was the dominant feature of the SS, the SD, and even Hitler himself, "the pathological god born of a masculo-homosexual cult." (43)

These are spectacularly garbled passages. On the one hand, Abrams claims that Paragraph 175 was less stringent after 1935, but a few pages later, in the course of asserting that political opponents of the regime, not homosexuals at all, were persecuted under that paragraph, he unwittingly presents evidence that the law was indeed made more stringent. He asserts that there were no homosexuals in concentration camps and then twice refers to the testimony of a homosexual in a concentration camp about the rapes of homosexuals in concentration camps by

the SS. And while the overall argument aims to show that homosexuality was accepted in the regime, he uses complaints and denunciations of homosexual Nazis by heterosexual Nazis to show the presence of homosexuality.

Oblivious to these contradictions, Abrams concentrates on solving what seems to him the major obstacle to his case, the fact that when Hitler purged Roehm and the SA, he explained his murderous acts as a purge of homosexuals. A contemporary witticism asked: if this was what Hitler did upon discovering Roehms' homosexuality, what would he do when he found out about Goebbels' club foot!? In other words, neither the alert public in 1939 nor any historian since has taken that "spin control" at face value. Laboriously, Abrams kicks at an open door, showing what everyone already knows, that Hitler let Roehm be killed for reasons other than homosexuality. Abrams arrives at the surprisingly correct conclusion that "much to the delight of the Reichswehr (the German army), landowners and industrialists, Hitler had put an end to the "Second Socialist Revolution," (44) but from this he extracts an incorrect meaning. What it shows is not that Hitler promoted homosexuality both before and after the Roehm purge and sacrificed Roehm only to absolute necessity, but rather that homosexuality had not been and never became an important aspect of National Socialist ideology or practice; that Roehm had been supported not as a homosexual, but in spite of it, because he was a tough, fearsome and loyal supporter; that Hitler dropped him when he became a rebel. Loyalty to his person and program was Hitler's overriding demand of his lieutenants. Roehm posed a problem from the start, because he was a powerful and charismatic leader with millions of his own loyal followers, and he threatened to remain outside the Hitler state. Hitler shared an old friendship with him; but he also feared this "loose cannon," and had only reluctantly accepted him as SA chief on his return from Bolivia. (45) He disdained him in private ("The clique from the Bratwurstgloeckl are all fairies!") (46) while flattering him in public. Abrams takes precisely this flattery as incontrovertible evidence of their (homosexual?) bond. Above all, Hitler simply needed Roehm, as long as his service was unconditional and as long as Hitler lacked other means of support. Abrams puts his finger on it when he writes: "more than once he had warned his party comrades against being too squeamish about a man's personal morals if he were a fanatical fighter for the movement." (47)

Sadly, Abrams does not recognize his own insight. Moreover, it should be noted that the "morals" here referred to included much more than homosexuality-- Goebbels' actresses and Goring's thefts, for example. The army was, as Abrams proposes, deeply implicated in the Roehm purge, but not, as Abrams would have it, because it balked at the prospect of "a gang of unruly homosexual thugs running the German army." (48) The problem was not homosexuality, but that "these armed poultry farmers or department store porters would wake up with the rank of general or at least colonel, just because they had won the titles of SA group or brigade leaders as a result of various scuffles in beer cellars or back alleys." (49) Homosexuality in the SA was for the army just as secondary to the main issue -- power - as Abrams shows it to have been for Hitler. Does proving at length what everyone already knows -- that homosexuality was not a central issue in the Roehm purge -- thus prove that the National Socialist regime was and remained an expression of the "pathology" of homosexuality? Abrams tries to argue, first, that the SS inherited that SA tradition, despite the fact that it was established to protect Hitler from the SA and was led by two homophobic heterosexuals, Himmler and Heydrich, the one married and the other a notorious ladies' man. The SS

(Schutzstaffel or guard companies) was not named after "a homosexual group in Vienna." (50) The SA did not "become the Sicherheitsdienst (SD)," (51) but a military sports club (52); nor was the SD the "branch of the SS security service that controlled the concentration camps." (53) It was the SS security service, while a special division of the SS, Totenkopf, was assigned to the camps. Thus Abrams' notion that "whenever the murder of innocent masses of Jews, Poles or captured allied prisoners was portrayed in the movies, it would have been the sicherheitsdienst division, the 'butch' homosexuals, who were responsible," is patently -- Hollywood.

Abrams' insinuations that Hitler himself was homosexual are based on such tendentious reading of such dubious evidence -- wartime polemics and drug-store histories -- that Abrams himself seems unwilling to state his position baldly. And indeed, if Hitler had founded the NSDAP with homosexuals, openly promoted a homosexual agenda, had a homosexual relationship with Roehm, and so forth, one wonders why he himself remained in the closet? Hitler was not a homosexual; but he was ambivalent about homosexuality among his followers. Sometimes he complained, at other times he defended them. That is, until the dominant heterosexual elements in the NSDAP politicized the matter. Quite possibly to make the party more acceptable to the German public -- who were indeed horrified at the violence of party squads -- a campaign against homosexuality got underway, largely under Himmler's aegis. "Homosexuality" served, among other things, to pin the obnoxious violence of the 1930-1934 period on a scapegoat that had disappeared -- the "homosexual SA." Thus, as Heiden wrote: "A storm of defamation descended on these dead men." (55)

But the official campaign was also fed by an increasing social intolerance of any but a "normal" heterosexual lifestyle in Germany. Nazi politicization of the issue of homosexuality, now labeled "a frightful legacy of the liberal period," itself created the evidence of homosexuality in Nazi organizations -- the celebrated cases, the rumors, the jokes -- on which Abrams relies. "Among older youths, homosexuality, that very special Nationalist Socialist 'crime,' became a prominent feature of the criminal landscape, mostly because the Hitler youth and SS, by no means immune from this supposed flaw, mobilized a 'sharpened fight' to eradicate it." (56) It is worth noting that the contemporaneous attack on 'gay New York' by politicians and police (57) had much less scope for persecution than did the SS, because of the comparative strength of American civil rights. Only thirty years later did new emancipation movements in both Germany and the U.S.A. once again reveal the presence of homosexuals in all walks of life. The notion that this movement derived from Nazism, or, as Abrams puts it, shares a "homosexual pathology" with the Nazis, requires, we have already noted, not only tendentious research, fallacious reasoning, and gullibility -- excusable because ignorance can be changed -- but also a dishonorable determination to adapt the evidence to his needs.

The abuse to which he subjects Heiden's *Der Fuehrer* is particularly flagrant. To suggest Hitler's homosexuality, for example, Abrams changes Heiden's text: "With Roehm and Heines, Stennes helped to impose the rule of the homosexuals over the SA" to: "with Roehm and Heines, Hitler helped to impose the rule of Roehm's exclusively homosexual clique over the SA." (58) Abrams has Roehm writing from Bolivia that he intended "to spread the culture," whereas in the original, he spreads "culture," i.e. Kultur. (59) In another example, Heiden

describes a factional feud inside the party, during which Goebbels, taking sides against Hitler, called him a "vain operetta queen" (60) -- a play on Hitler's popular title, "The King of Munich." In Abrams' rearrangement of the text, Goebbels is referring to Roehm and appears to be complaining about his homosexuality (61). Since in German the word queen (Koenigin) has no reference to homosexuality whatsoever, this error speaks volumes for the quality of Abrams' scholarly credentials. These selected instances must suffice to show how assiduously Abrams has doctored his quotations; it would be tedious to list them all.

Two myths challenged by the recovery of the memory of homosexual victims of Nazism seem to have provoked Abrams' exercise in "revisionism." First, his irritation that "gay apologists...portray themselves as historical victims of Nazi persecution on par with the Jewish people" (62) reveals his unrealistic assumption that the "honor" of being victimized by the Nazi regime is possessed exclusively by one group. Though certainly each category of victims was subjected to unique conditions, and thus the term "victims of the Holocaust" should indeed refer to those exterminated on grounds of race, the term "victims of Nazism" cannot refer exclusively to those who perished in Operation Reinhard. After all, apart from Jews and gypsies, millions of other individuals died as a result of Nazi persecution and aggression. Indeed, recent research suggests that our conventional categories may not take Nazi plans into account. The millions of dead Slavs who died of hunger, disease, exposure, overwork, and violence are generally not included in the category of victims of the Holocaust, yet their eventual disappearance by attrition was anticipated. (63) But even if Abrams were correct to exclude all other groups from victimhood, Charles Maier's objection to such an abuse of the Holocaust seems apt: he terms it "the perverted myth that exploits the memory of an infinite horror to justify even a far less repressive behavior." (64)

A second deeply rooted attitude is revealed when Abrams identifies homosexuality with heightened masculinity, murderous violence, and sadism (although, in a manner dangerously close to a conspiracy theory, he also associates it with femininity and passivity.) This leads him to protest the gay claim of the persecution of homosexuals from another emotional angle -- victimhood just does not suit his image of them. On the contrary, he envisions destruction, killings, and the rape of prisoners as typical of homosexuality. Such violent assaults, however, are not expressions of any sexuality. They are rather a typical weapon of heterosexuals used to intimidate and torture both homosexual and heterosexual males in all-male environments -- such as American prisons. Can Abrams thus argue that the American prison population is basically homosexual? Rapes by the SS do not require such belabored myth-making as this article to explain: they raped as heterosexuals, and their actions do not show that the Nazis were homosexuals at all. Steakley proposes that with their relentless emphasis upon strength, purity, cleanliness, and masculine comradeship, the Nazi *Maennerbuende* (all-male groups) surely contained a strong element of deeply repressed homoeroticism; the degree of repression was evidenced by the vehemence of the Nazi reaction to those who were overtly homosexual. The biblical scapegoat was the sacrificial animal upon whose head the amorphous guilt of the entire community was placed. (65) Perhaps he is also correct to say that "The self-righteousness that could prompt this type of action cuts through the entire ideology glorifying racial purity and extermination of degenerates to reveal stark fear of homosexuality." (66)

The historical record is far from supporting Kevin Abrams' emotional and ignorant assertions. The advice his essay implies – to support governmental action to repress a "masculo-homosexual cult, marked by deviance, brutality and dictatorial power" -- should be recognized for what it is, what Jefferson would have called "a form of tyranny over the mind of man."

Endnotes

1. Quoted in Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge, England, 1991), 193.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, 183; James D. Steakley, *The Homosexual Emancipation Movement in Germany* (New York, 1975), 110.
4. *Ibid.*, 110; Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 192.
5. Gerhard Rempel, *Hitler's Children* (Chapel Hill, 1989), 52.
6. Steakley, *Movement*, 111.
7. *Ibid.*, 106.
8. Klaus Mueller, "Introduction," in Heinz Heger, *The Men with the Pink Triangle* (Boston, 1980), 13.
9. Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 191.
10. *Ibid.*, 192.
11. Eugen Kogon, *The Theory and Practice of Hell*, trans. Heinz Norden, (New York, 1979), 35.
12. Ruediger Lautman, "Gay Prisoners in Concentration Camps as Compared with Jehovah's Witnesses and Political Prisoners," in Michael Berenbaum, ed., *A Mosaic of Victims: Non-Jews Persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis* (London, 1990), 201.
13. *Ibid.*, 202.
14. Steakley, *Movement*, 113.
15. Heger, *Pink Triangles*, 37-45; Steakley, *Movement*, 121.
16. Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 195-197.
17. Kogon, *Hell*, 43-44.

18. Heger, *Pink Triangles*, 101.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Quoted in Steakley, *Movement*, 116.
21. Lautmann, "Gay Prisoners," 204.
22. If Kevin Abrams has quoted Judith Reismann correctly in "The Other Side of the Pink Triangles," (n.p., n.d.), 6.
23. Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 46.
24. Informationsdienst, June 20 1938, quoted in Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 213.
25. Judith Reismann, quoted in Abrams, "Other Side," 6.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Steakley, *Movement*, 84.
28. Burleigh and Wippermann, *The Racial State*, 194.
29. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 194.
30. *Ibid.*, 10.
31. Steakley, *Movement*, 21-69.
32. See Nicholas Sombart, "The Kaiser in his Epoch," in John C.G. Rohl and Nicholas Sombart, eds., *Kaiser Wilhelm II, New Interpretations: The Corfu Papers*, (New York, 1982).
33. George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe*, (Madison, Wisconsin, 1985), 88,122.
34. Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship*, (New York, 1970), 55.
35. *Ibid.*, 45.
36. Quoted in Abrams, "Other Side," 4.
37. Mueller, "Introduction," 10.
38. See Jorn Meve, *Homosexuelle NS: ein Stereotyp in Politik und Literatur des Exils*, (Berlin: 1990).

39. Quoted in Abrams, "Other Side," 5.
40. Steakley, *Movement*, 109-110.
41. Abrams, "Other Side," 5.
42. *Ibid.*
43. *Ibid.*, 10.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Martin Broszat, *The Hitler State* (London and New York, 1981), 37-8.
46. Konrad Heiden, *Der Fuehrer* (Boston, 1944), 294.
47. Abrams, "Other Side," 9.
48. *Ibid.*, 8.
49. Heiden, *Der Fuehrer*, 746.
50. Abrams, "Other Side," 7.
51. *Ibid.*, 7.
52. Broszat, *Hitler State*, 35-38.
53. Abrams, "Other Side," 7.
54. *Ibid.*
55. Heiden, *Der Fuehrer*, 763.
56. Rempel, *Hitler's Children*, 83.
57. See George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940*, (New York, 1994).
58. Abrams, "Other Side," 7; Heiden, *Der Fuehrer*, 372.
59. Abrams, "Other Side," 6; Heiden, *Der Fuehrer*, 303-304.
60. *Ibid.*, 370-371.

61. Abrams, "Other Side," 6.

62. Ibid., 10.

63. Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution*, (New York, 1991), 66-84.

64. Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1988), 166.

65. Steakley, *Movement*, 117-118.

66. Ibid.