

Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals

- By the early 1930s, some 350,000 homosexual men and women lived among Berlin's four million inhabitants. Scores of same-sex "friendship leagues", clubs like the Eldorado, bars, and cafes provided their clientele both support and community.
- 1919 to 1933, Germany's criminal law section 175 declared "unnatural indecency" between men to be "punishable by imprisonment" for up to two years. The either defined indecency nor made mention of homosexual acts between women.
- Homosexuality was accused as being a factor in declining birthrate that threatened to leave Germany unable to sustain itself. It was also feared as an "infection" that could become an "epidemic" to foster public acceptance of state-sponsored intolerance and brutality.
- Lesbians were not systematically persecuted under Nazi rule. The limited and subordinate role of women in general, it was argued, diminished a lesbian's "corrupting influence"
- 1933-1939 the regime shut down homosexual gathering places, organizations, and publications in broad attack on "public indecency"
- Murder of homosexual leader Ernst Rohm linked homosexuality to subversion, even treason
- Enforcement of 175 fell to the Criminal Police and the Gestapo, unified by 1936 under the SS and its leader, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler
- 1937 to mid-1939, German police arrested almost 78,000 men under 175, one-third of whom were convicted and sentenced to prison. Hundreds more were interned in concentration camps without legal recourse.
- Nazi crackdown on homosexuality began with the closing of same-sex bars and clubs.
- On May 6, 1933, Nazi student groups and sympathizers ransacked Magnus Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science
- The pink triangle was the badge imposed on the estimated 5,000 to 15,000 male homosexual prisoners who suffered in Nazi concentration camps.
- The Gestapo seized without warrants and confined in camps suspected homosexual men, political opponents, and others

- Homosexual detainees, easily identified by their pink triangles, bore vicious physical abuse from the SS camp guards. Fellow prisoners shunned the homosexuals, leaving them isolated and powerless within the prisoner hierarchy.