

Homosexuality in the Third Reich

Despite the fact that homosexuality was illegal in Germany before the Nazi rise to power, it was generally tolerated. During the 1920s, homosexuality became a subject of public discussion, and a Scientific Humanitarian Committee was instituted for the defense of homosexuals. However, the Nazi Party denounced homosexuality as a deviation from normal behavior that was completely antithetical to its fundamental belief in the need to increase the pure, "Aryan" population and proper family life. The Nazis saw the purpose of sexual relations as reproduction, rather than pleasure, and viewed homosexuality as a threat to the superior "Aryan" race.

When Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, he banned all homosexual groups. Gay bars were raided and many homosexuals were imprisoned. In 1934 Hitler ordered the execution of his loyal aide and known homosexual, Ernst Rohm, along with 300 of Rohm's men, some of whom were also homosexual. In 1935, the law about homosexuality was made even stricter, forbidding even male friendships based on homosexuality without any homosexual acts. Soon, many who were found to be habitual homosexuals were sent to concentration camps, where they were forced to wear pink triangular badges, were treated very harshly, and thousands perished.