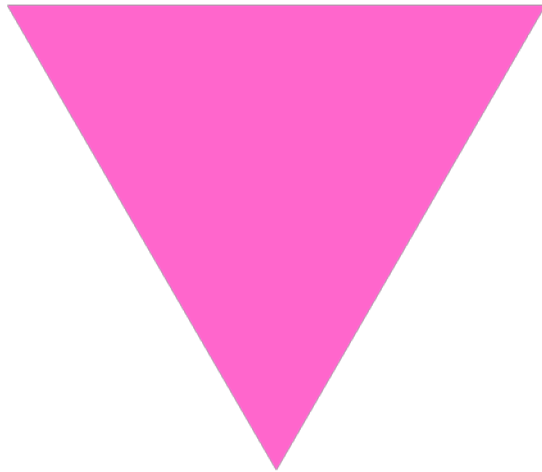


# The Pink Triangle and You



*What does it mean?*

*What is its history?*

*Why are we angry about it?*

## What is the pink triangle?

The pink triangle is one of the many badges used to identify prisoners in Nazi concentration camps during the holocaust. Wearing the pink triangle identified prisoners as homosexual men.

Sex between men was illegal in Germany under paragraph 175, and as the Nazis occupied more territory they spread the law to countries like France where homosexuality was legal, if not still taboo.



*Men wearing the Pink Triangle*

## What happened to gay prisoners of the holocaust during the war?

Few survived to tell their stories, but those who did tell their stories described:

- Rape with broken pieces of wood
- Being tortured for names of other homosexual men
- Medical experimentation
- Being worked to death
- Seeing their lovers being ripped apart by dogs
- Seeing other gay men beaten to death
- Castration

"We must exterminate these people root and branch. We can't permit such danger to the country; the homosexual must be entirely eliminated."

*Heinrich Himmler*

### What happened after the war?

After the war, gay prisoners were required to continue serving their sentences in prisons. They were not seen as victims but instead as criminals, and were treated as such.

**Pierre Seel**, who wrote an autobiography about his experiences of the holocaust, was beaten by homophobes in the mid-90s after appearing on television.

It wasn't until 2002 that the German government apologised or payed reparations for the treatment of homosexuals during the holocaust.



*'The Kiss' is part of a homosexual holocaust memorial in Berlin*

### But weren't the Nazis and Hitler gay?

While there were members of the Nazi party who were gay the most prominent were executed.

The idea that Hitler is gay became popular as a method to mock him, which is pretty insulting when you consider that gay people actually exist and were targeted by Nazis.

In fact many homosexuals fought the Nazis. **Willem Arondeus** was a member of the Dutch Resistance and took part bombing the Amsterdam public records to prevent the Nazis from identifying Jewish people.

His final words before execution:

*"Tell the people that gays are no cowards!"*

**Gad Beck**, the last known gay holocaust survivor, borrowed a Hitler Youth uniform to free his lover **Manfred Lewin** from a pre-deportation camp. Once Beck and Lewin left the camp Lewin said he couldn't abandon his family. Lewin went back to the camp alone and was murdered in Auschwitz.

### The Pink Triangle and Activism

In the 70s the Pink Triangle became a symbol for gay rights protests and in 1987 the **ACT UP** created the SILENCE = DEATH graphic with an inverted Pink Triangle.



Because of the seriousness of the symbol many gay people do not think it should have been reclaimed for activism. As for heterosexuals who appropriate the symbol:

**GO FUCK YOURSELF!**