

Lively slant on history

The OCA's Scott Lively rewrites history to make gay men the perpetrators in Nazi Germany

by Inga Sorensen

A well-known Oregon Citizens Alliance figure is embarking on a new career. Scott Lively, the OCA's membership director, says he is currently writing a book detailing "the truth about homosexuals in the Nazi Party." When revealed, Lively says, that "truth" will show that gay men were not persecuted in large numbers by the Nazis during World War II. More importantly, he says, the "truth" will show that gay men were a major force in the Third Reich and much of the Nazi Party's philosophy was directly derived from gay men's organizations of the immediate pre-Nazi era.

"Most people believe that the Nazi Party persecuted homosexuals. In one sense, they did, but it wasn't anything like we've been led to believe. In fact, it is almost exactly the opposite," explained Lively, during a recent airing of *Homosexuality and the Nazi Party* appearing on cable access television in the Salem area.

Among Lively's claims: the German Workers Party—the forerunner to Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party—was founded at a gay bar in Munich in 1919; the Nazi Party's most influential players were gay; and the "siege heil" salute, the term "Führer," and the use of the swastika as a Nazi symbol are all traceable to gay men's organizations.

Using a detailed chart, Lively seeks to highlight the various connections between these groups and the Nazi Party. "When we think of the Nazi Party, we think of what the liberals have tried to present as a historic image of the Nazis [which is] something very different than they were," he says.

In addition to his speaking tour, Lively says he is co-authoring a book on the subject with Kevin Abrams, a Canadian orthodox Jew who has authored *The Other Side of the Pink Triangle*, in which he asserts 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."

Many historians say men engaging in homosexual acts were in fact targeted for persecution by the Nazis. Those deemed to have engaged in such an act were marked in the Nazi concentration camps with a pink triangle.

Some civil rights activists are taking Lively's current crusade very seriously. Gary Smith, a member of the West Valley Human Rights Coalition and Equal Rights PAC of Marion County, has watched Lively's presentation on cable access. Smith describes it as "anything but shallow. I think it is not to be taken lightly. [His information] is presented in a very professional manner. If we have any good historians on the subject, I think we should have a point-by-point-analysis of Lively's

presentation."

Film and radio producer Barbara Bernstein, who has conducted numerous investigative reports on the religious right, also offers an analysis: "Lively's historian experts are the historic equivalents to the religious right's psychological experts: Paul Cameron, Judith Reisman—who is another expert cited by Lively in his Nazi work—and Joseph Nicolosi. Cameron has been thrown out of the American Psychological Association for unethical methodology; Reisman has been discredited by the [National Institute of Mental Health], who paid her to conduct a study which they refused to publish [because] it was so poorly executed; and Joseph Nicolosi is currently under attack for his claims that he can cure homosexuals with reparative therapy."

Marcy Westerling, project coordinator for the Rural Organizing Project, says gay- and lesbian-rights activists "need to get a better handle on the Holocaust." She says, "In the past, a lot of people simply called Lon Mabon and the OCA Nazis. I think we need to address the issue as one in which we examine what it was about German society that allowed the Nazi Party to flourish. What was the climate, and how may that parallel with what is occurring in Oregon today? It's time to stop the name-calling and instead embark on a substantive discussion."

According to Lively, he in fact began his research after being called a Nazi one too many times. "Most of us who had anything to do with the Measure 9 campaign got used to the idea of being called a Nazi every time a liberal crossed our path....

We were vilified over and over and over," he says. "Finally I said to myself, 'Enough is enough.'"

Westerling says she believes the recent tour of the Anne Frank Exhibit throughout small-town Oregon may have been a catalyst for Lively's new project. ROP was instrumental in bringing the exhibit, which examines the Holocaust through the eyes of the young diarist, to Oregon.

"I think this is the first time we've turned the tables on [the OCA]," she says. "Instead of us reacting to them, we have forced them to respond to the Anne Frank Exhibit, an extremely important educational tool that has been viewed by thousands of Oregonians over the past year."

But Bernstein says the education shouldn't end there. "Many people don't have accurate information about the Nazis," she says. "We need to have the specifics in order to respond in an appropriate and effective manner."

Westerling says materials detailing Lively's current work have been forwarded to the Anne Frank headquarters in New York for analysis.



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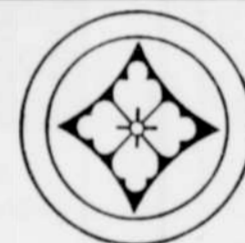
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