

HISTORY

Twisted truth

Scott Lively's book fails to tell the whole story in its attempt to blame homosexuals for the Holocaust

by Sukie de la Croix

Over the years gay men have been blamed for just about everything, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Jack the Ripper murders. And now, according to a recently published book, homosexual males were responsible for the Nazi Holocaust.

The Pink Swastika: Homosexuality in the Nazi Party, co-authored by Scott Lively, former Oregon Citizens Alliance membership director, and Kevin Abrams, an Orthodox Jew and member of the National Association for the Research and Therapy of Homosexuality, is a 224-page book claiming that homosexuality was the "central element of the fascist system," and that the high-ranking Nazi elite were pedophiles and homosexuals.

Lively said in a press statement, "If history is to be told accurately, the behavior of homosexuals under Hitler's barbarous rule provides further evidence that homosexuality is a pathology."

The Pink Swastika could be easily dismissed as just another crackpot theory from the religious right, written without a shred of evidence. The problem is that the book does have a shred of evidence, which the bigoted authors have distorted and blown out of all proportion to fit in with their own peculiar ideology.

So, what are the facts? What role did homosexuals play in the Nazi Party? And, if homosexuals did play a role, why were they ultimately persecuted?

Certainly, in the early years of the Nazi Party, Hitler associated freely with known homosexuals,

most notably with his close friend Ernst Röhm. The two men met in 1919, and Röhm was instrumental in Hitler's rise to power. If Hitler was unaware of Röhm's homosexuality, then it was certainly brought to his attention in 1925, when Röhm took a male prostitute to court and charged him with theft. Yet Hitler continued to court Röhm's support, electing him to transform the ramshackle brown-shirt militia into the highly disciplined elite Storm Troopers.

This unlikely alliance ended on June 30, 1934, when, after pressure from his military generals, Hitler ordered the assassination of Ernst Röhm and dozens of other, mostly homosexual, Storm Trooper leaders. This was known as the Röhm putsch, or the "night of the long knives."

Was Röhm murdered because of his homosexuality, or did he just step on the wrong toes? Whatever the reason, the "night of the long knives" proved to be the turning point in Hitler's tolerance of homosexuality within the Nazi Party. The small clique of sadistic and misguided homosexuals that aided his rise to power were now of no further use to him. He had successfully convinced the German people that Jews were subhuman and a poisonous blight on society, and now it was time to turn his attention to other "undesirable" groups.

At a 1935 Nazi Party Congress at Nuremberg, Gerhard Wagner, a leader of the German medical profession, stated that the Jewish population had a higher percentage of homosexuals than did the non-Jewish population, thus successfully linking homosexuality with an already despised minority.

"Homosexuals are like Jews," said one physician of the period. "They build a state within a state, they are state criminals. They are not poor,

sick people but enemies of the state to be eliminated!"

As he did with the Jewish people, Hitler turned to the medical profession to justify the extermination of homosexuals. By the mid-1930s, German physicians were united in their belief that homosexuals posed a public health threat. They pointed to a large body of evidence that had been compiled, since the turn of the century, to confirm the pathological nature of homosexual males.

This research began formally in 1905, when physician Alfred Ploetz, psychiatrist Ernst Rüdin, lawyer Anastasius Nordenholz and anthropologist Richard Thurnwald founded a society called Gesellschaft für Rassenhygiene (the Society for Racial Hygiene). In the society's first published volume, *Archiv für Rassen- und Gesellschaftsbiologie* (*The Journal of Racial and Social Biology*), Ernst Rüdin argued that homosexuality was a genetically determined "diseased form of degeneracy."

A typical statement of the Nazi period was made in 1934 by Professor Lothar Tirala of Munich, who said, "Germans must use all possible means to suppress such sick perversions in the body of our people."

Hitler took the evidence of these medical "experts" and used it to send tens of thousands of homosexual males to the death camps.

So who is to blame for the Nazi Holocaust? The authors of *The Pink Swastika* accuse homosexuals of running the death camps, while ignoring the factual evidence that Hitler had already

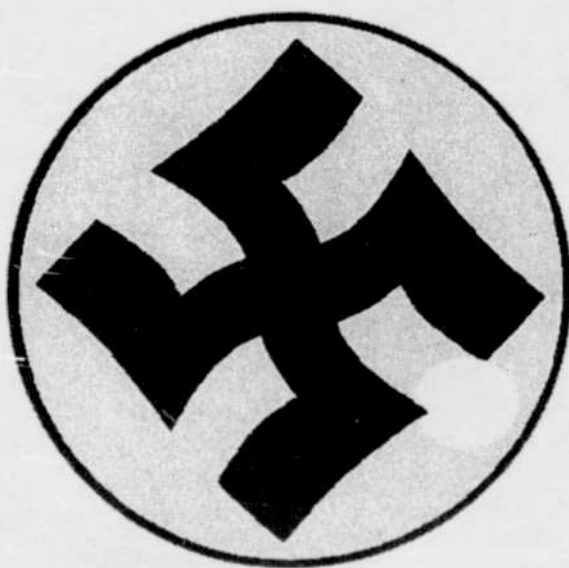
cleansed the Nazi Party of all known "sexual deviants" long before the atrocities at Auschwitz, Treblinka, et al.

It's a bitter pill to swallow, but the gay slogan is true: "We are everywhere." We write speeches for televangelist preachers, we vote for anti-gay laws in the corridors of power, we make homophobic announcements from within the walls of the Vatican, and we contributed to the rise of the Nazi regime.

But for the authors of *The Pink Swastika* to say that homosexuality was the "central element of the fascist system" is nonsense. The finger of blame must point to all of us, to the individual, for his or her gullibility in handing over our future to politicians without monitoring their every subsequent move. We are all responsible for our history. All we can do now is to ensure that a similar tragedy never happens in our future.

Authors Scott Lively and Kevin Abrams give away their true motives for writing this book by describing homosexuality as "pathological." These were the words of Adolf Hitler himself. You can call *The Pink Swastika* whatever respectable name you like—a Christian perspective, an orthodox Jewish perspective—but what it is, undoubtedly and without question, is two men planting the seeds of fascism.

Sukie de la Croix is a columnist for The Pink Paper in London and has been writing for the gay press in England for 15 years. He has recently published a book of short stories called Black Confetti: New Fairy Tales for an Old Country and is currently writing a libretto for an operetta. He now lives in Chicago with his lover.



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