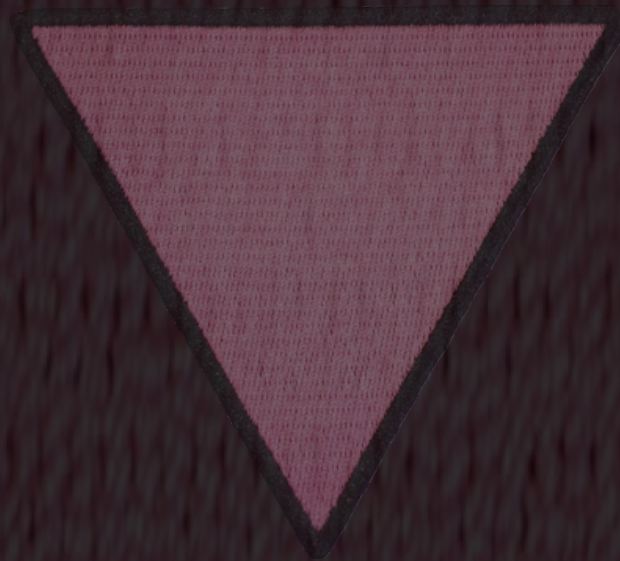


Educational Resources on

LGBTQ+ People in Germany during the Holocaust



Compiled by Dr. Jake Newsome

in conjunction with

Unspoken Feature Film



INTRODUCTION

This document presents English-language educational resources that have been created by leading institutions and experts.

The resources are organized by type. While the primary focus is on the years of the Holocaust (1933-1945), there are also resources focusing on LGBTQ+ life before and after the Nazi regime.

This document was created in conjunction with *Unspoken* feature film, which tells the story of Noam, a closeted teenager in a religious community who discovers he might not be alone. When he finds a love letter written to his grandfather by another man before the Holocaust, he sets out to find this mysterious person and uncover both his grandfather's identity as well as his own. *Directed by Jeremy Borison (2022). [Learn more.](#)*

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VIDEO LECTURES

- [Count Their Names: The Nazi Persecution of LGBTQ+ People](#)

Conversation with Dr. Jake Newsome (Public Scholar)

(January 2022. Runtime 1 hour 15 mins) Download this [viewing guide](#).

When the names and numbers of Holocaust victims are commemorated and mourned, one group of victims is often uncounted – LGBTQ+ people. It is for the most shameful reason – the persecution of gay people in Nazi Germany successor states continued after World War II.

- [The Nazi Persecution of Gay People](#)

US Holocaust Memorial Museum Facebook Live episode with guest Dr. Jake Newsome (Public Scholar)

(June 2019. Runtime 33 mins)

Within weeks of the Nazis' rise to Power in January 1933, the Nazis drove Germany's gay culture underground and waged a violent campaign against homosexuality. Over the next 12 years, more than 100,000 men were arrested for violating Germany's law against "unnatural indecency among men." During this time, proof was often not required to convict an individual. Some were sent to concentration camps and subjected to hard labor, cruelty, and even medical experiments aimed at "curing" them.

- [Queer Conspiracies? Lesbians and Gay Men in Nazi Germany](#)

Lecture by Dr. Samuel Huneke (Assistant Professor of History, George Mason University)

(April 2020. Runtime: 1 hour)

In the twelve years the Nazis were in power, the German government convicted around fifty thousand men under the country's sodomy law, §175 of the penal code. Around ten thousand were sent to concentration camps, where approximately six thousand perished. Why did the National Socialist go out of their way to persecute gay men and why did lesbians largely remain untouched by the terror? The Nazi persecution of homosexuals was motivated by fears that gay men were naturally drawn into conspiratorial cliques and thus posed a political threat to the regime. The Nazis were less apprehensive about the threat of female

homosexuality. This talk traces the changing contours of the Nazis' divergent treatment of gay men and lesbians, showing when and how their anti-homosexual views arose, how they waxed and waned, and how they ultimately impacted the formation of modern gay and lesbian identity, both in Germany and abroad.

- Transgender Identities and the Police in Nazi Germany

By Dr. Laurie Marhoefer (Professor of History, University of Washington)

(May 2019. Runtime: 52 mins)

Before the Nazis came to power, Germany was one of the global centers of trans activism and home to a thriving subculture of people with transgender identities. You could legally change your birth-assigned sex in some German cities even before 1900. The Nazis changed this. They brutally enforced Germany's law against "cross-dressing." Yet many trans people seem to have nevertheless found ways to escape the violence, especially if they were not defined as "racial enemies" of the state. This talk looks at transgender activism before 1933 and discusses what happened to trans people under the Nazi State.

- Gay Berlin: Birthplace of a Modern Identity

Conversation with Dr. Robert Beachy (Professor of History, Yonsei University)

(June 2019. Runtime: 1 hour 7 mins)

Decadent, pre-WWII Berlin was the undisputed gay capital of the world—as imagined in "Cabaret," and more recently in the TV shows "Babylon Berlin" and "Transparent." Professor Robert Beachy's "Gay Berlin" chronicles the milieu that gave rise to the international gay rights movement, with key strides made for scientific research, advocacy, and visibility—before the Nazis came to power.

- The Nazi Policy against Homosexuals: Policing Behavior in the People's Community

By Dr. Jennifer V. Evans (Professor of History, Carleton University)

(March 2018. Runtime: 1 hour)

An overview of the persecution of LGBTQ+ people during the Holocaust, with a focus on gay men. The lecture also situates the Nazis' campaign against LGBTQ+ people in the larger context of Nazi ideology.

- [The Daring Life and Dangerous Times of Eve Adams](#)

Discussion with Jonathan Ned Katz (founder of OutHistory.org)

(June 2021. Runtime 1 hour 11 mins)

Eve Adams was a rebel. Born Chawa Zloczewer to a Jewish family in Poland, Adams emigrated to the United States in 1912. She took a new name, befriended anarchists, sold radical publications, and ran lesbian and gay-friendly speakeasies in Chicago and Greenwich Village. Then, in 1925, Adams risked all to write and publish a book titled *Lesbian Love*. In a repressive era, when American women had just gained the right to vote, Adams' association with notorious anarchists caught the attention of the young J. Edgar Hoover and the U.S. Bureau of Investigation, leading to her surveillance, arrest, and ultimate deportation into the Nazis' reign of terror, where she was sent to Auschwitz and killed. In *The Daring Life and Dangerous Times of Eve Adams*, historian Jonathan Ned Katz has recovered Adam's extraordinary story of Adams.

- [Persecution of Homosexuals in Germany during and after the Holocaust](#)

By Dr. Geoffrey Giles (Professor Emeritus of History, University of Florida)

(October 2016. Runtime: 1 hour 15 mins)

This lecture by one of the world's most preeminent scholars on the topic provides an introductory overview of the fate of gay men in Nazi Germany.

- Pink Triangle Memories: Transatlantic Gay Rights in the Shadow of the Holocaust

By Dr. Jake Newsome (Public Scholar)

(January 2021. Runtime 20 mins)

Which policies and social customs created the myth that LGBTQ individuals were “forgotten victims” of the Nazi regime? What role did Holocaust memories play in transnational gay liberation movements beginning in the 1970s? How did social activism influence historical scholarship and the movement to memorialize LGBTQ victims? In this lecture, Holocaust historian Dr. Jake Newsome discusses civil liberties, sexual identity, and the politics of memory by tracing the transformation of the pink triangle from a concentration camp badge into a marker of gay liberation, community, and pride.



PODCASTS

- [But What Does It Mean? The Pink Triangle and Its Many Different Roles](#)

*Sydney Reuter, Bachelor's thesis project. George Mason University
(May 2021) Runtime 17 minutes. [Download the transcript](#)*

All symbols are defined by the world around them – and the pink triangle is no exception. As the world has changed, the triangle has changed too. Join Sydney Reuter as she interviews Dr. Jake Newsome and Dr. Erik Jensen about the history and transformation of the pink triangle.

- [Ernst Röhm](#)

Bad Gays

Season 1, Episode 1. (March 19, 2019) Runtime 37 minutes.

A discussion of the life and ideology of Ernst Röhm, the world's first openly gay politician...and a Nazi.

- [Born This Gay](#)

Undiscovered

(May 23, 2017) Runtime 34 minutes.

At the turn of the 20th century, Magnus Hirschfeld, a German doctor sets out to prove that homosexuality is rooted in biology—but his research has consequences he never intended.

- [Magnus Hirschfeld](#)

Making Gay History

Season 4, Episode 2. (October 25, 2018) Runtime 28 minutes.

More than a century ago, Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld chose to take a stand for LGBTQ rights, founding a movement, providing a safe space, and seeking justice through science. The Nazis crushed his vision, but not his legacy.



DIGITAL ESSAYS & ARTICLES

- [Magnus Hirschfeld](#)

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

This *Holocaust Encyclopedia* article provides an introductory overview of Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, a German Jewish doctor and a leading researcher of sex, sexuality, and gender. He wrote and lectured widely on these topics, treated and advised patients, and worked to promote the rights of LGBTQ+ people.

- [Gay Men under the Nazi Regime](#)

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

This *Holocaust Encyclopedia* article provides an introductory overview of the Nazis' persecution of gay men.

- [Lesbians under the Nazi Regime](#)

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

This *Holocaust Encyclopedia* article provides an introductory overview of the Nazis' persecution of lesbians.

- [Paragraph 175 and the Nazi Campaign against Homosexuality](#)

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

This *Holocaust Encyclopedia* article provides an introductory overview to Paragraph 175, Germany's national anti-sodomy law that the Nazis used to prosecute gay men.

- [Queer History & the Holocaust](#)

Dr. Anna Hájková. *Notches Blog: (Re)Marks on the History of Sexuality*. (January 22, 2019)

This essay provides a concise historiographical overview of the key developments in the literature on queer Holocaust victims.

- Sexuality and the Holocaust

Dr. Anna Hájková. *Oxford University Press Blog* (March 11, 2018)

This essay demonstrates how studying gender and sexuality gives us tools to examine the dynamics of unequal relationships and the stabilizing and destabilizing effects of intimacy during the Holocaust.

- Queer Fascism and the End of Gay History


Dr. Laurie Marhoefer. *Notches Blog: (Re)Marks on the History of Sexuality*. (June 19, 2018)

This essay explores the politics of queerness on both the Left and Right, using the sexual politics of late 19th century Germany and the case of Nazi leader Ernst Röhm as case studies.

- Pink Triangle Legacies: Holocaust Memory and International Gay Rights Activism

Dr. Jake Newsome. *NursingClio Blog*. (April 20, 2017)

This essay provides an overview of how the pink triangle was transformed from a concentration camp badge for gay prisoners in Nazi Germany into a logo of the gay liberation movement beginning in the 1970s.



LESSON PLANS & DIGITAL TOOLS

- [Homosexual Life under Nazi Rule: The Legacy of Paragraph 175](#)

This Facing History and Ourselves lesson plan focuses upon the legacy of Paragraph 175 of the German Constitution, used by the Nazis to systematically persecute gay men. It is closely based on the acclaimed documentary [Paragraph 175](#).

- [Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals, 1933-1945](#)

This teaching resource from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre facilitates student engagement with historical context, photograph and primary source document replication, and testimonies featured in the Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals 1933–1945 exhibition from the USHMM. The activities are recommended for grades 8 through 12.

- [The Pink Triangle: Gays in the Holocaust](#)

This lesson plan from Chicago's The Legacy Project provides context and resources to discuss the fate of gay men during the Holocaust as well as discussion prompts for how these historical lessons may be applied today.



ORAL HISTORY TESTIMONY

- Kitty Fischer on gay male rescuer in Auschwitz

(Runtime: 8 mins 30 secs)

Kitty Fischer recounts her time in Auschwitz-II Birkenau when as a young girl she encounters for the first time a gay male prisoner who will turn out to save her life. Copyright USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education.

- Gay Survivor Stefan Kosinski

(Runtime: 7 mins 45 secs)

After his arrest in September 1942, Stefan Kosinski was incarcerated while awaiting his trial. In this clip, he recounts the conditions in the jail and his memory of seeing his mother out the window of his jail cell keeping vigil. She is also present during his trial before the Nazi court, which sentences Stefan to five years hard labor. Copyright USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education.

- Albrecht Becker on Queer Life in 1934 Germany

(Runtime: 2 mins 45 secs)

Albrecht Becker recounts the atmosphere for gays in Nazi Germany while Röhm was still in charge of the SA and how the relative freedom he enjoyed during that time changed dramatically after Röhm's assassination in June 1934. Copyright USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education.

- Douglas Fox Rescued by Queer Prisoner

(Runtime: 1 min 20 secs)

Thanks to the quick response of a gay prisoner at the Oranienburg-Heinkelwerke labor camp (a sub-camp of Sachsenhausen), Douglas Fox escaped from a line of transferred prisoners who were unknowingly being given a lethal injection upon their arrival. Copyright USC Shoah Foundation – The Institute for Visual History and Education.

- Frieda Belinfante

(Runtime: 3 mins 45 secs)

Frieda Belinfante was born in Amsterdam in 1904. Her father was Jewish but her mother was not. Trained as a musician, Frieda was one of the first female conductors. During the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, Frieda joined a Dutch resistance group. She forged identity documents for people hiding from the Nazis and their collaborators and helped to plan an attack on Amsterdam's population registry. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum interviewed Frieda when she was 90 years old, just nine months before she passed away. Read more about Belinfante [here](#). (Belinfante's interview can be viewed in its entirety on the USHMM [website](#).)



ARTIFACTS & PRIMARY SOURCES

- Gender, Sexuality, and the Holocaust

This collection in the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's digital teaching tool *Experiencing History* presents 15 artifacts and necessary historical context to help students explore: How do gender roles transform during times of war and genocide? How do understandings of sexuality and desire intersect with notions of race, gender, politics, and power? From Jewish women who took on traditionally male responsibilities, to testimonies of sexual violence, to gay and lesbian perspectives of Nazi rule, this collection explores how a focus on gender and sexuality can broaden our understanding of Jewish perspectives on the Holocaust.

- The Josef Kohout/Wilhelm Kroepfl Collection

In 1994, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum acquired the unique collection of Josef Kohout. More widely known as Heinz Heger, Kohout recorded his experiences in *The Men with the Pink Triangle*, the first published account of a gay survivor of the Nazi camps. USHMM staff shares his story. (*Runtime: 9 mins 10 secs*)

- "Do You Remember When?" Gad Beck's Album

As young, gay, Jewish men living in Nazi Berlin, companions Manfred Lewin and Gad Beck faced much uncertainty. In 1941, Manfred made Gad a small, 17-page booklet, recording moments from their daily life and titled it, "Do you remember, when." You can also watch U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum staff talk about the artifact in this [3 minute video](#).

- Queer as German Folk

In 2019, the Goethe Institute released this special exhibition to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots in New York City. The accompanying digital exhibit (queerexhibition.org) presents stunning images and historical context. The site contains collections on [the Pink Triangle](#) and [memorials to the Nazis' gay victims](#).



BIBLIOGRAPHIES

- [Bibliography on LGBTQ+ Communities Before, During, and After the Holocaust](#)

Created and maintained by Dr. Jake Newsome

- [Bibliography on Lesbian and Trans Women in Germany](#)

Created and maintained by Dr. Anna Hájková (includes works in multiple languages)

- [Bibliography on Gays and Lesbians in Nazi Germany](#)

Created and maintained by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

- [Bibliography on Queer Contemporary History in German-Speaking Europe](#)

Queer History @ Freie Universität Berlin (includes works in German and English)



DOCUMENTARIES

- We Were Marked with a Big A

Directed by Elke Jeanrond and Joseph Weishaupt. Produced by: Mediengruppe Schwabing, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and Norddeutscher Rundfunk. 1994. DVD

The persecution of homosexuals during the Third Reich is detailed by three survivors of the Holocaust in Germany. No gay survivors of the concentration camps had told their stories before this 1991 documentary was produced because they were subject to arrest by West German police under the same law used by the Nazis to imprison thousands of German gays during World War II.

- Paragraph 175

Produced and directed by Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman. Telling Pictures. 2000. DVD

The Nazi persecution of homosexuals may be the last untold story of the Third Reich. Directed by Oscar winners Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman, Paragraph 175 fills a crucial gap in the historical record, and reveals the lasting consequences of this hidden chapter of 20th century history. These are stories of survivors – sometimes bitter, but just as often filled with irony and humor; tortured by their memories, yet infused with a powerful will to endure. Their moving testimonies, rendered with evocative images of their lives and times, tell a haunting, compelling story of human resistance. Intimate in its portrayals, sweeping in its implications, Paragraph 175 raises provocative questions about memory, history and identity.

- Desire

Directed by Stuart Marshall. Maya Vision, 1989.

From 1910- 1945 Germany was subjected to one of the most turbulent periods of social and political change that has been experienced by any European country in the twentieth century. In *Desire*, Stuart Marshall traces cultural and official attitudes towards sexuality through this period as competing forces struggled to define the meanings of masculinity and femininity.



TERMINOLOGY

Language evolves over time, and while these changes can provide us with new and precise ways of describing the world, they can also lead to uncertainty. Some people report that they have avoided discussions with or about LGBTQ+ people because they were uncertain about the appropriate language to use and they didn't want to inadvertently offend anyone. This issue can be made more complex when studying LGBTQ+ history since some terms in the past are outdated or even considered offensive today.

Read the [LGBTQ+ Terminology in History Education Report](#), which contains information on guiding educators in using informed, accurate, inclusive, and dynamic language when teaching about LGBTQ+ history. It may be useful to first study some of the common terms so that all learners start from a common understanding. Below is a glossary of common LGBTQ+ terms.

GLOSSARY

LGBTQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (and/or Questioning). The plus sign (+) represents the existence of additional sexual orientations and gender identities. You may also see additional letters, such as: "I" for intersex, or "A" for asexual. The use of the LGBTQ+ acronym began gaining prominence in the late 1990s as a way to reflect the diversity of the community beyond gay and lesbian.
Gender (or gender identity)	One's innermost concept of self as man, woman, a blend of both or neither. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth.
Sexuality (or sexual orientation)	The desire one has for emotional, romantic, and/or sexual relationships with others based on their gender expression, gender identity, and/or sex. Many people choose to label their sexual orientation, while others do not.
Sex (or biological sex)	Sometimes referred to as "sex assigned at birth," indicates the sex (male, female or intersex) that a doctor or midwife uses to describe a child at birth based on their external anatomy.

Queer	An adjective people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or nonconforming gender identities. This term was previously used as a slur, but has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement.
Homosexual	Adjective coined in the 1860s to refer to individuals who were attracted to members of the same sex. It was used by early gay scientists, activists, and communities themselves to argue that being gay was a natural variation of human sexuality. In the mid-to-late 1900s, however, medical field asserted that homosexuality was a physical disease or mental illness. As a result, many people in the homosexual community began using other terms (such as gay) as identifiers to distance themselves from the stigma of disease that was associated with homosexual.
Transgender	Adjective describing someone whose gender identity differs from the one that was assigned to them at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.
Transvestite	This word was coined as a medical and scientific term in Germany in 1910 as a way to describe and legitimize gender-nonconforming identities. Its original meaning referred broadly to anyone who wore clothing typically worn by the opposite sex. So, it included anyone who cross-dressed for any reason as well as people who today would identify as transgender. Today, <i>transvestite</i> has a very specific meaning describing someone (usually a man) who wears clothes designed for the opposite sex. It is offensive to refer to a transgender person as a transvestite.
Cisgender	Adjective describing a person whose gender identity matches the gender they were assigned at birth.
Gender non-conforming	Adjective describing someone whose gender identity and/or gender expression expands beyond, actively resists, or does not conform to the current cultural or social expectations of gender, particularly in relation to male or female.

For more terms and definitions see this [glossary](#) by the It Gets Better Project.



UNSPOKEN