

What's with these pink triangles?

by Liam Whitty (X-Press Staff '90-'91)

Most of us who have ever seen a movie about the Nazi internment of the Jews can recall the symbol on the armbands of European Jews, the Star of David. Another symbol which is commonly either unknown or not understood is the pink triangle. This was Hitler's mark for the identification of homosexual prisoners during his rise to power and in the ensuing holocaust.

The Nazis believed homosexuals were effeminate and woman-like, qualities which expelled them from the "perfect" Aryan race Hitler sought to produce. Under Hitler's laws, a man could be thrown in jail for holding hands with another man. Authorities used many different methods to find gay men, from reading personal letters, diaries, even confessions under torture.

Once interned, homosexual prisoners were subject to some of the harshest treatment and conditions in the camp. Not only did they suffer persecution from their captors, the homophobia



among the others inside the camps proved just as severe. These prisoners never lived for long, often they were the subject of medical experimentation designed to "cure" their homosexuality.

Even the liberation of the camps by the allies did not end the persecution of the homosexuals. They were still considered criminals and forced to finish their prison sentences which had been interrupted by their time in the camps. After the end of World War II, the pink triangle was all but forgotten until the late 1960's. A new Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual movement had started, driven mainly by a police raid on the Stonewall, a New York gay bar. The Stonewall riots lasted for days and suddenly gays were thrust into the international limelight.

Along with this new drive for recognition and understanding came the resurgence of the pink triangle as a symbol which would now represent pride and dignity, despite the evil purpose for which it was originally created. ●

Are you heterophobic?

by Margaret McKenty

Many people don't recognize the subtle yet nasty symptoms of heterophobia in themselves or their closest friends and family. Here is a handy quiz that can help you sort out your political awareness around this sensitive issue, whatever your sexual orientation:

- * Do you assume everyone you meet is homosexual unless they tell you otherwise?
- * Are you afraid to associate with people who are openly heterosexual because others might assume you are heterosexual too?
- * Do you think your family and friends would disown you if you started wearing heterosexual symbols, like an engagement ring or a Playboy keychain?
- * Do you assume when you see two heterosexuals in public together that they must be sleeping together?
- * Do you feel panic at the thought that a heterosexual might be sufficiently attracted to you to ask for a date?
- * Are you uncomfortable when heterosexuals insist on being open about their relationships

around you? Do you wish they would be more discreet about their affectional preference? Do you wish they would explain what they do in bed?

- * Do you think heterosexuality is just a phase, that everyone is meant by nature to be homosexual?
- * Do you think it is important to discover the causes of heterosexuality?
- * [For heterosexuals only] Do you wish your boyfriend or girlfriend looked more androgynous so you could spend time together in public without everyone else figuring out which one of you is the man?
- * Do you believe heterosexual relationships are inherently unstable and immature?
- * Do you think unplanned pregnancy, STD's, yeast infections, pelvic inflammatory disease, premature ejaculation and anorgasmia are signs of God's judgement against those who engage in heterosexual intercourse? ●

