

Chapter Five

THE PERSECUTION OF HOMOSEXUALS

Homosexualist revisionists assert that Hitler's ascension to the Chancellorship marked the beginning of a homosexual Holocaust in Germany. For example, as early as 1978, homosexual political activists claimed that "[m]any thousands and hundreds of thousands [of homosexuals] were...imprisoned in concentration camps where they died" (ONE Letter, May, 1978). Over the years the story has assumed ever more fantastic proportions. In 1986 Plant wrote, "After years of frustration...Hitler's storm troopers now had the opportunity to smash their enemies: the lame, the mute, the feeble-minded, the epileptic, the homosexual, the Jew, the Gypsy, the Communist. These were the scapegoats singled out for persecution. These were the 'contragenics' who were to be ruthlessly eliminated to ensure the purity of the 'Aryan race.'" (Plant:51). Rector writes, "Hitler's homophobia did not surface until 1933-1934, when gays had come to affect adversely his New Order designs -- out of which grew the simple solution of murdering them en masse" (Rector:24).

Unsupported assertions such as these have allowed the theory of a "Gay Holocaust" (in which homosexuals are portrayed alongside the Jews as victims of a campaign of

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Cover of Richard Plant's popular revisionist history, The Pink Triangle.

extermination) to gain currency in the United States. The evidence does not support this theory. Unfortunately, the portrayal of homosexuals as Nazi victims has assumed a kind of “untouchable” status among supporters of “gay rights,” probably because the success of the movement depends so heavily on public sympathy. Thus, today we see active suppression of information linking homosexuals to the Nazis and misrepresentation

of homosexuals’ experience in the Third Reich. A few “gay” academics are more forthright. For example, homosexualist scholar Manfred Herzer admits:

As far as the scope of homosexual men’s support of the Nazis is concerned, we face a self-imposed void in our knowledge that has taken on the dimensions of an ideologically motivated taboo. Within gay historiography, even such a repugnant figure as the Nazi leader Ernst Roehm has repeatedly been consigned to the role of victim, first of leftist and then of Nazi “homophobia,” for only by doing so has it been possible to perpetuate a slanted account of his story that persistently portrays homosexuals as persecuted martyrs and passive victims (Herzer:199).

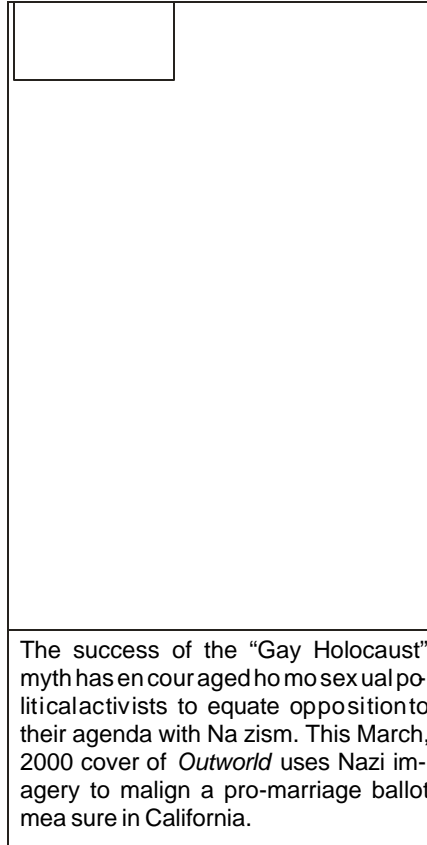
Homosexualists Jo Hansson and Percy promote the use of “outing” (exposing public figures, past and present as

“gay”) to influence public opinion about homosexuality and the “gay” agenda. They advise that “[a]ctivists should clearly not out a notorious criminal or mass murderer as they would a famed medical missionary or celebrated inventor” (Johansson and Percy:284). They acknowledge that “[a]polo gists gen er ally pre fer to deny that ho mo sexu al ity was widespread among Nazi leaders after the purge of Roehm and his associates....[although Italian “gay” activ-ist] Mas simo Con soli has re versed this ten dency by dwell-ing at length on the ho mo sexu al ity of the early fol low ers of the NSDAP (National Socialist Party). (Consoli is, how-ever, a leading proponent of the “Gay Holocaust” public rela tions ploy -- Grau:5).

Then we have the problem of simple error in claims such as that made by ho mo sexu al ist Clau dia Schopp mann. She has claimed that German “gay rights” leader Martin Radszuweit was murdered in a concentration camp (Herzer:226). Herzer states authoritatively that Radszuweit did *not* die in a con cen tra tion camp: “...he died in the 1980s in his house in Berlin- Kopenick” (ibid.:226).

The Harvard Gay and Lesbian Re view (Summer 1995) contains an admirably candid re view of the book Hidden Holocaust? by Gunter Grau (in which Schoppmann was a mi nor con tribu tor):

Grau and Schopp man con clude that there was no “holo-caust” of gays — hence the ques tion mark in the book’s title. This as sess ment is based on the wide range of con-temporary documents...Grau discounts the current wild es ti mates of the number of gays killed by the Na zis, sug-gest ing a fig ure closer to 5,000...How, then are we to read the widely quoted in cen di ary state ments by Na zis like SS leader Himm ler, who con sis tent ly called for the ‘erad ica-tion’ of homosexuals?...Much of this rhetoric, Grau says, was propa ganda meant for public consumption... Gays were never the sub ject of po groms, and never faced



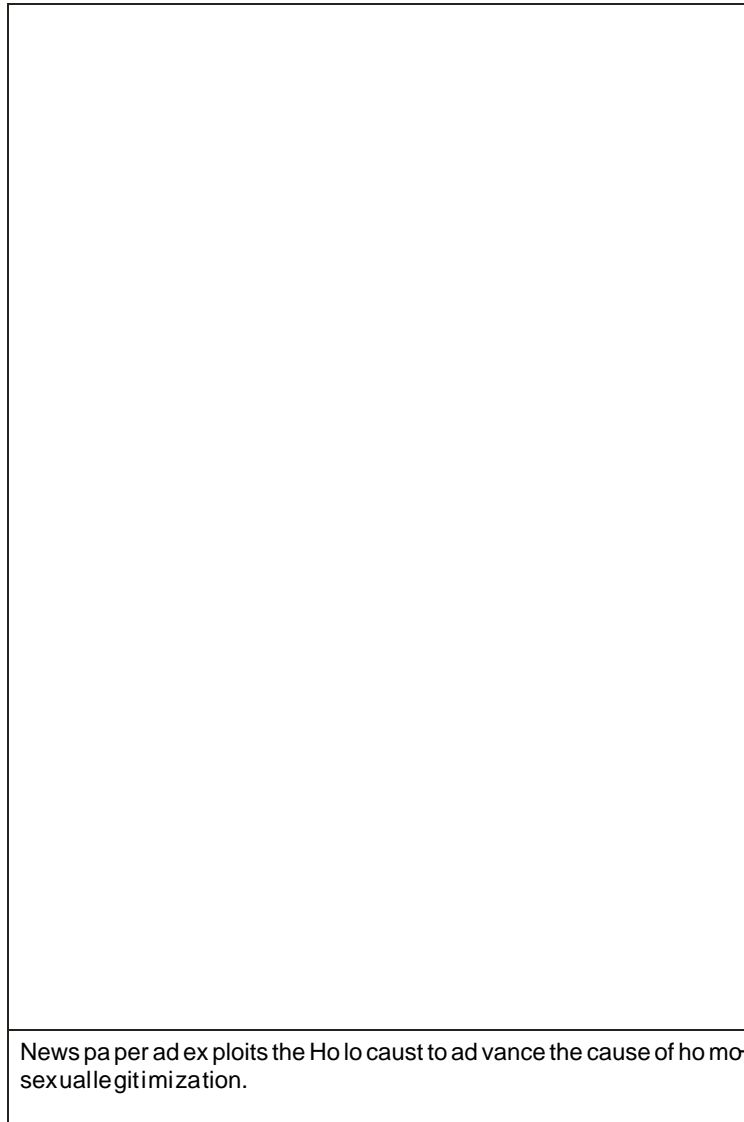
The success of the "Gay Holocaust" myth has encouraged homosexual political activists to equate opposition to their agenda with Nazism. This March, 2000 cover of *Outworld* uses Nazi imagery to malign a pro-marriage ballot measure in California.

the danger that the Jews did in Germany and occupied Europe.

Dr. Judith Reisman, in "The *Pink Swastika* and Holocaust Revisionist History," wrote this comparison of the fate of the two groups under the Nazis:

Were homosexuals treated like Jews, 2-3 million out of 2-3 million German homosexuals should have lost their businesses, their jobs, their property, their possessions and most would have lost their lives. Ho-

mo sexuals would have been forced to wear pink triangles on their clothing in the streets, they would have had their passports stamped with an "H," been barred from travel, work, shopping, public appearances without their armbands, and we would have thousands of pictures of pink triangle graffiti saying "kill the faggots," and the like. If German homosexuals were not Nazis, these 2-3 million men would have been homeless, walled in ghettos, worked as a mass labor pool, then gassed and their abuse recorded in graphic detail, as were the millions of Jews. And, if Germany's several million "gays" were not Nazis, they were Nazi soldiers, collaborators or murderers (Reisman: *Culture Wars*, April 1996).



The fact is that relatively few homosexuals died in concentrations camps. They were never murdered “en masse” or “ruthlessly eliminated” by the Nazis. Yet many homosexuals were jailed and some did die in Nazi work camps. (Of course, those who were jailed were males; there was

never a systematic prosecution of lesbians -- Grau:15). What is the truth about Nazi persecution of homosexuals?

There are several incidents in Nazi history which are most often cited as evidence of their persecution of homosexuals. This list includes (1) the sacking of the Sex Research Institute of Berlin, (2) a series of increasingly harsh public pronouncements and policies against homosexuality by Hitler and Himmler, (3) the Roehm Purge (also known as "The Night of the Long Knives"), and (4) the internment of homosexuals in work camps. We will look at each of these issues in turn.

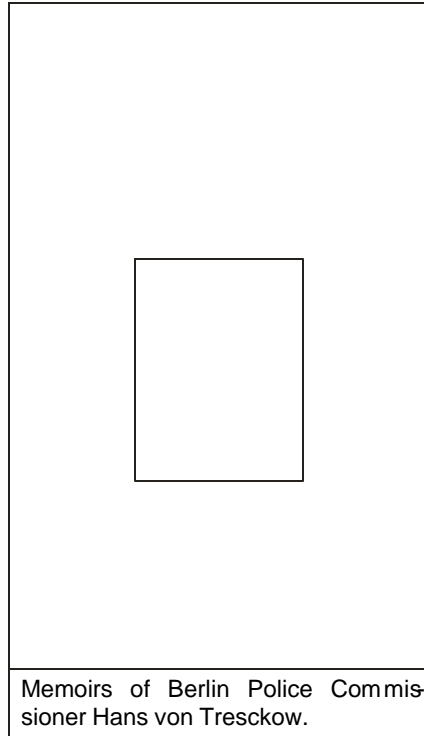
The Path of the Paranoid

One overarching factor must be kept in mind as we examine the history of Nazi persecution of homosexuals: the paranoia of Adolf Hitler. Hitler was deathly afraid that his own homosexuality would be exposed to the German people, undoing all that he had worked for in his ascension to power. Indeed, Lothar Machtan argues convincingly that the entire Nazi campaign against homosexuality, from the initial anti-sodomy policies to the Roehm purge to the internment of homosexuals in the camps, was orchestrated to prevent the truth about Hitler from coming out. Machtan writes

Hitler's determination to destroy anything that might have provided an insight into his private life is well documented. He got rid of anything he could, and his arm was long, even before 1933. Those privy to his secrets were bribed, sworn to secrecy, blackmailed or killed....Hitler's...homosexuality...was the secret from his past that threatened at any time to rear its head as he rose politically....and he defended that secret by all available means (Machtan:20f).

One of Hitler's greatest problems was black mail. Black mail of ho mo sex u als by es tranged part ners and pros titutes was a simple fact of life in Germany. "[H]omosexuals were particu larly vul ner a ble to black mail ers, known as *Chanteure* on the ho mo sexual scene," write Burleigh and Wippermann. "Black-mail, and the threat of public exposure, re sulted in frequent sui cides or suicide attempts" (Burleigh and Wipperman:184).

Police Com mis sioner Hans von Tresckow, who served in Berlin during the years that Hit ler was on the streets in Munich and Vienna, wrote the following in his mem oirs:



One of the worst features of homosexuality is that it gives rise to an enormous amount of male prostitution. Many per sons who are per fectly nor mal find it a lu cra tive though dis grace ful trade. In Berlin there are many cen ters where homosexualists make the ac quain tances of ac com plices who will serve their requirements. And there are many cafés and tav erns which are fre quented al most ex clu sively by such peo ple. The po lice are pow er less to put down this prac tice, be cause they re quire le gal au tho ri za tion to in ter fere. My ex pe ri ence is that male pros ti tu tion has been steadily increasing for some de cades past and cases of black mail are be com ing more nu mer ous ac cord-

ingly; for a person who goes in for this profession is almost always a black mailer. (Treschow in Lively:18).

For Hitler, the list of blackmailers included numerous political opportunists. Igra reports that Heinrich Hoffman, the official Nazi photographer, gained his position by using information about Hitler's perverse abuse of his (Hoffman's) daughter, Henny, to blackmail the future *Fuehrer* (Igra:74). (Henny Hoffman was later married off to reputed homosexual Baldur von Schirach, probably to quell rumors about his exploits with Hitler Youth boys). Heiden relates another story in which Hitler bought an entire collection of rare political writings to regain possession of a letter to his niece in which he openly revealed his "masochistic-coprophilinclinations" (Heiden, 1944:385).

Even more dangerous than the political opportunists were the political enemies who could not be bought off. As early as 1923, Hitler's enemies were relying on their proof of his perversion to secure an advantage, even if that advantage were only their own self-preservation. Eugen Dollman recorded his experience at a dinner meeting with General Otto von Lossow at the Bavarian war ministry.

Since November 9 [said Lossow], Hitler and his supporters have been well aware that any attempt on my life or those of my officers would cause a European scandal. I have some good friends in this world, and Adolf would lose that game just as he did on November 9 [date of the failed "Beerhall Putsch"]....The general produced from a desk drawer a police file containing secret reports and depositions about the private life of Herr Adolf Hitler dating from the time that he again turned up after the war -- all from the vice squad or police headquarters on Ettstrasse....What a dangerous weapon Otto von Lossow had forged during the years when he was at the height of his authority in Munich (Machtan:135).

Lossow would in fact survive unscathed until his death in 1938, despite “Hitler’s well-documented hatred of the ‘traitor Lossow’” (ibid.:137).

Others without benefit of hidden documentation of Hitler’s sexual sins did not fare as well, even those with whom he had been intimate. Sklar writes that “Hitler attempted to bury all his earlier influences and his origins, and he spent a great deal of energy hiding them...[In this campaign to erase his past] Hitler ordered the murder of Reinhold Hanisch, a friend who had shared his down and out days in Vienna” (Sklar:21). Hitler was enraged that Hanisch had collaborated with Konrad Heiden, the Hitler biographer who had aired the Nazis’ dirty linen (Machtan:52).

Until Hitler and his crew finally gained power in Germany, their methods for dealing with those privy to Nazi secrets were limited in form and scope. Afterwards, however, there were more and better ways to solve these kinds of problems and to punish their enemies at the same time.

The Sacking of the Sex Research Institute

The Nazis’ hunt for incriminating evidence was obvious in the attack on Magnus Hirschfeld’s Sex Research Institute on May 6th, 1933. As noted previously, the Sex Research Institute of Berlin had been founded by Hirschfeld in 1919 as a center for the “study” of homosexuality and other sexual dysfunctions. For all intents and purposes, it served as the headquarters for the effeminate branch of the German “gay rights” movement. For this reason alone, the “Butch” homosexuals of the Nazi Party might have destroyed the Institute. Indeed, throughout the preceding years the Nazis had increasingly harassed Hirschfeld personally.

Victor Robinson, editor of an autobiographical sketch by Hirschfeld, wrote in 1936 that “[a]lthough the Nazis themselves derived great profit from Hirschfeld’s theories

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Adolf Hitler speaking to the German parliament. Once he had taken power, Hitler quickly fashioned a political climate in which he could control, jail or kill all potential blackmailers.

(and called on him personally for help) they continued his persecution relentlessly; they terrorized his meetings and closed his lecture halls, so that for the safety of his audiences and him self, Hirschfeld was no longer able to make public appearances (Haeberle:368). Homosexualist James Steakley acknowledges the “Butch/Fem” aspect of the in-ci-

dent, saying that some German homosexuals “could conceivably have approved of the measure, particularly if they were Nazi sympathizers or male supremacists” (Steakley:105).

Ignorance of the “Butch/Fem” conflict in the German “gay” subculture left many contemporary writers puzzled as to why the Nazis would attack Hirschfeld. An obituary for Hirschfeld written in 1934 exemplifies this confusion:

There is a darker and more savage irony in the fact that the Nazis should have treated him as an arch enemy; for the Nazi ranks are notoriously honeycombed with all degrees of homosexuality, and Hirschfeld is indisputably the man to whom it is mainly due that the right of these 2 percent of sexual abnormals in the masses of the European populations to exist and to function on their own lines is now a matter for public discussion and public agitation (Herzer:221).

The attack against the Institute, however, was not motivated solely by the Nazi enmity against effeminate homosexuals. It was also an attempt to cover up the truth about rampant homosexuality and other perversions in the Nazi Party. Hitler also knew that Hirschfeld’s facility had extensive records that could be damaging to himself and his inner circle. This was the reason for the raid, according to Ludwig L. Lenz, the assistant director of the Sex Research Institute, who was in charge on the day of the raid. His description of the situation, part of which was quoted previously, is given here at greater length.

[O]ur Institute was used by all classes of the population and members of every political party...We thus had a great many Nazis under treatment at the Institute. Why was it then, since we were completely non-party, that our purely scientific Institute was the first victim which fell to the new regime? The answer to this is simple...We knew

too much. It would be against medical principles to provide a list of the Nazi leaders and their perversions [but]...not ten percent of the men who, in 1933, took the fate of Germany into their hands, were sexually normal...Many of these personalities were known to us directly through consultations; we heard about others from their comrades in the party...and of others we saw the tragic results: I refer here especially to a young girl whose abdomen was covered with pin scratches through the sadism of an eminent Nuremberg Nazi; I refer also to a thirteen year old boy who suffered from a serious lesion of the anal muscle brought about by a senior party official in Breslau and to a youth from Berlin with severe rectal gonorrhea, etc., etc....Our knowledge of such intimate secrets regarding members of the Nazi Party and other documentary material — we possessed about forty thousand confessions and biographical letters — was the cause of the complete and utter destruction of the Institute of Sexology (Haberle:369).

Burleigh and Wiperman report that the ransackers had “lists” of materials they were looking for (Burleigh and Wiperman:189) and that they carted away two truck loads of books and files. The materials taken from the Institute were burned in a public ceremony, captured on film, on May 10th (Steakley:105). The spectacular and oft-replayed newsreel footage of this event has caused the burning of books to become synonymous with Nazism. What information went up in smoke on that day will never be known, but we can be sure that the pile of burning paper contained many Nazi secrets. According to homosexual sources who were in Germany at the time, the Nazis destroyed twelve thousand books and thirty-five thousand photographs.

The building itself was confiscated from the SHC and turned over to the Nazi Association of Jurists and Lawyers (ibid.:105). This may perhaps be interpreted to mean that it remained in the hands of homosexuals. We know that at least Hans Frank, Hitler’s private lawyer, and the Nazi

party's star attorney Dr. Alfons Sack were homosexuals (Machtan:219).

Anti-Homosexual Policies

Whenever the Nazis arrested homosexuals and raided even the homes of their supporters they were looking for incriminating evidence against themselves. Machtan writes:

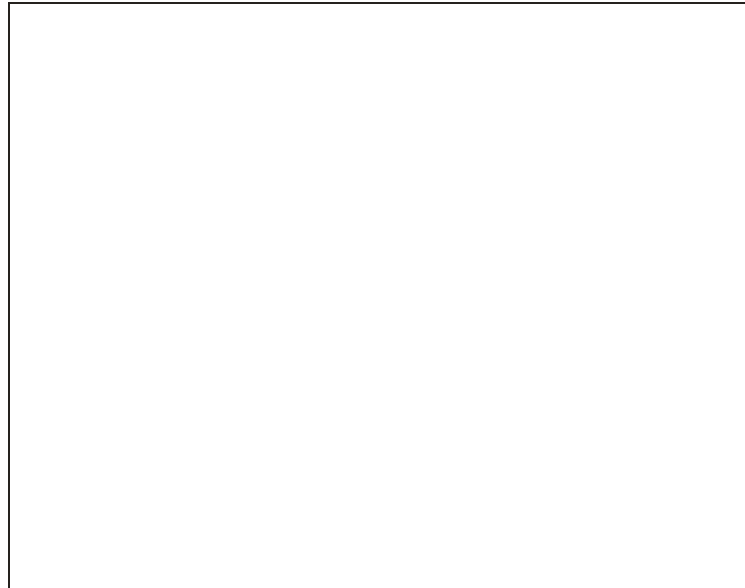
Hitler was mortally afraid of the obscurity of the homosexual milieu, which he himself had experienced first-hand in Vienna and Munich. He knew that this demimonde could at any time yield up disreputable secrets -- even some, perhaps, that might affect him personally....Although not interested in a policy of repression toward "ordinary" homosexuals, he was doubly so in cases where definite interests were involved (Ibid.:226).

However, there were also old scores to settle with the effeminate homosexuals who had opposed the Nazi rise to power. What developed, then, was a policy designed primarily to prevent embarrassment to Hitler in which all things homosexual were closely scrutinized by Himmler's secret police. But action was taken only when the Nazis caught enemies of the party or of the regime. These activities occurred independently of normal police functions in which violators of German anti-sodomy and anti-pederasty laws continued to be processed through the courts.

The law against homosexual conduct had existed in Germany for many years prior to the Nazi regime as Paragraph 175 of the Reich Criminal Code, to wit: "A male who indulges in criminally indecent activity with another male, or who allows himself to participate in such activity, will be punished with imprisonment" (Burleigh and Wipperman:188). When Hitler came to power he used this law as a means of tracking down and punishing those homosexuals who, in the words of one victim, "had defended

the Weimar Republic, and who had tried to forestall the Nazi threat” (ibid.:183). Later he expanded the law and used it as a convenient tool to de tain other en e m i e s of the regime.

In February of 1933, Hitler banned pornography, homosexual bars and bath-houses, and groups which promoted “gay rights” (Plant:50). Os ten si bly, this de cree was a blanket con dem na tion of all ho mo sex ual ac tiv ity in Ger many, but in prac tice it served as just an other means to find and de stroy anti-Nazi groups and in di vid u als. In deed, it is likely that Hit ler had been a pa tron of some of the ho mo sex ual-oriented businesses that he shut down. The Berlin “Eldorado” club, for ex am ple, was a fa vor ite haunt of the Berlin SA under Captain Paul Rohrbein, a close friend of Roehm and Karl Ernst (Machtan:185).



Was Hitler truly opposed to pornography and “gay” bars? Hitler’s close personal friend was the por no gra pher, Ju li us Streicher (cen ter), seen here in March, 1934 with some Brownshirted “gay” bar reg u lars.

The “masculine” homosexuals in the Nazi leadership enforced the new policy selectively, “employ[ing] the

charge of homosexuality primarily as a means to eliminate political opponents, both inside his party and out” (Oosterhuis and Kennedy:248). Revisionist Frank Reuter also admits that the decree “was not enforced in all cases” (Reuter:66). Oosterhuis and Kennedy write that “Although he was well known as a gay-activist, [Adolf] Brand was not arrested by the Nazis” but nearly all of his files were confiscated (Oosterhuis and Kennedy:7).

The Washington Blade, the newspaper of the homosexual community in Washington D.C., reported on the research of John Fout, a “gay” history professor at Bard College in New York:

The Nazis shut down the two or three active Gay political organizations that had been operating in Germany (sic) as soon as Hitler took power in 1933. However, according to Fout, Gay bars and bathhouses remained open until the late 1930s.... ‘The Gay urban subculture survived the Nazi period,’ said Fout (Researcher says Nazi persecution not systematic, *The Washington Blade*, May 22, 1998).

Jewish homosexual Gad Beck, Director of Berlin’s Jewish Adult Education Center, also challenges “gay” dogma on the degree to which homosexuals were persecuted in Germany. In his book, An Underground Life: Memoirs of a Gay Jew in Nazi Berlin, Beck claims “There was no problem being a homosexual Jew. Everyone turned a blind eye to whatever we boys were up to with each other” and cited only one case of the Nazi’s persecuting a homosexual man (Beck in “Fearless under the Führer,” *The Advocate*, October 26, 1999).

In 1935, Paragraph 175 was amended with Paragraph 175a which broadened the scope of the law restricting homosexual conduct (Burleigh and Wipperman:190). (Interestingly, the new criminal code addressing homosexuality deleted the word “unnatural” from the definition --

Reisman, 1994:3). This new law provided the Nazis with an especially potent legal weapon against their enemies.

It will never be known how many non-homosexuals were charged under this law, but it is indisputable that the Nazis used false accusations of homosexuality to justify the detainment and imprisonment of many of their opponents. "The law was so loosely formulated," writes Steakley, "that it could be, and was, applied against heterosexuals that the Nazis wanted to eliminate...the law was also used repeatedly against Catholic clergymen" (Steakley:111). Kogon writes that "The Gestapo readily had recourse to the charge of homosexuality if it was unable to find any pretext for proceeding against Catholic priests or irksome critics" (Kogon:44).

The charge of homosexuality was convenient for the Nazis to use against their political enemies because it was so difficult to defend against and so easy to justify to the populace. Since long before the Nazis assumed power, homosexuals generally lived clandestine lives, so it was not unusual for revelations of their conduct to come as a surprise to their communities when it became a police matter. This is not to say that actual homosexuals were not prosecuted under the law. Many were. But the law was used selectively against the "Fems." And even in this case, many effeminate homosexuals, especially those in the arts community, were given protection by certain Nazi leaders (Oosterhuis and Kennedy:248). Plant writes,

The most famous example is that of the actor Gustaf Grundgens...Despite the fact that his homosexual affairs were as notorious as those of Roehm's, Goering appointed him director of the State Theater...[And] On October 29, 1937...Himmler advised that actors and other artists could be arrested for offenses against paragraph 175 only with his personal consent, unless the police caught them *in flagrante* (Plant:116).

Even the most visible “Fems,” however, were treated far differently than were the Jews. Kurt Hiller, successor to Magnus Hirschfeld in the “Fem” faction of the German “gay” movement, was interned in a concentration camp but released (battered but alive) after nine months (Steakley:103).

An unknown percentage of homosexual prisoners were arrested not for sexual offenses at all, but for political reasons. A document from the Buchenwald archive states,

In the spring of 1942 a Berlin writer called Dahnke was sent to the camp as a homosexual. The main reason for his internment, however, was political statements which had brought him to the attention of the Gestapo (Grau:267).

A study of the Hitler Youth offers more examples that expose the meaninglessness of the Nazi’s harsh rhetoric against homosexuals. We have already noted Koehl’s observation that Himmler “mitigated his penalties privately” and tried to keep every incident of homosexual molestation of the Hitler Youth boys by the SS “as secret as possible” (Koehl:51f). But Koehl goes on to cite the records of the RJF, the security division of the Hitler Youth administration. “[D]uring the first six months of 1940,” he writes, “[there were] 10,958 crimes committed by Hitler Youths, the most common were theft (5,985), [and] homosexuality (901)” (ibid.:84). When he compared the number of homosexual offenses to the list of expulsions from the organization (an absurdly mild punishment for a supposed capital crime), however, Koehl found a low rate of expulsions for homosexuality:

Since the RJF Report listed 900 cases of homosexual crimes during a six month period alone, and only a third of that number were expelled during a twenty-five month period by court action, it suggests that the RJF was more

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Hitler Youth were frequent targets of the sexual predators in the SA and SS. Yad Vashem

hesitant to uphold Article 175 of the Criminal Code than its official propaganda would have the public believe...[One] young delinquent with a record of minor thefts, for which he had spent eight weeks in jail, was not expelled from the HJ [Hitler Youth]. In September 1940...[officials] surprised him and several prison work-

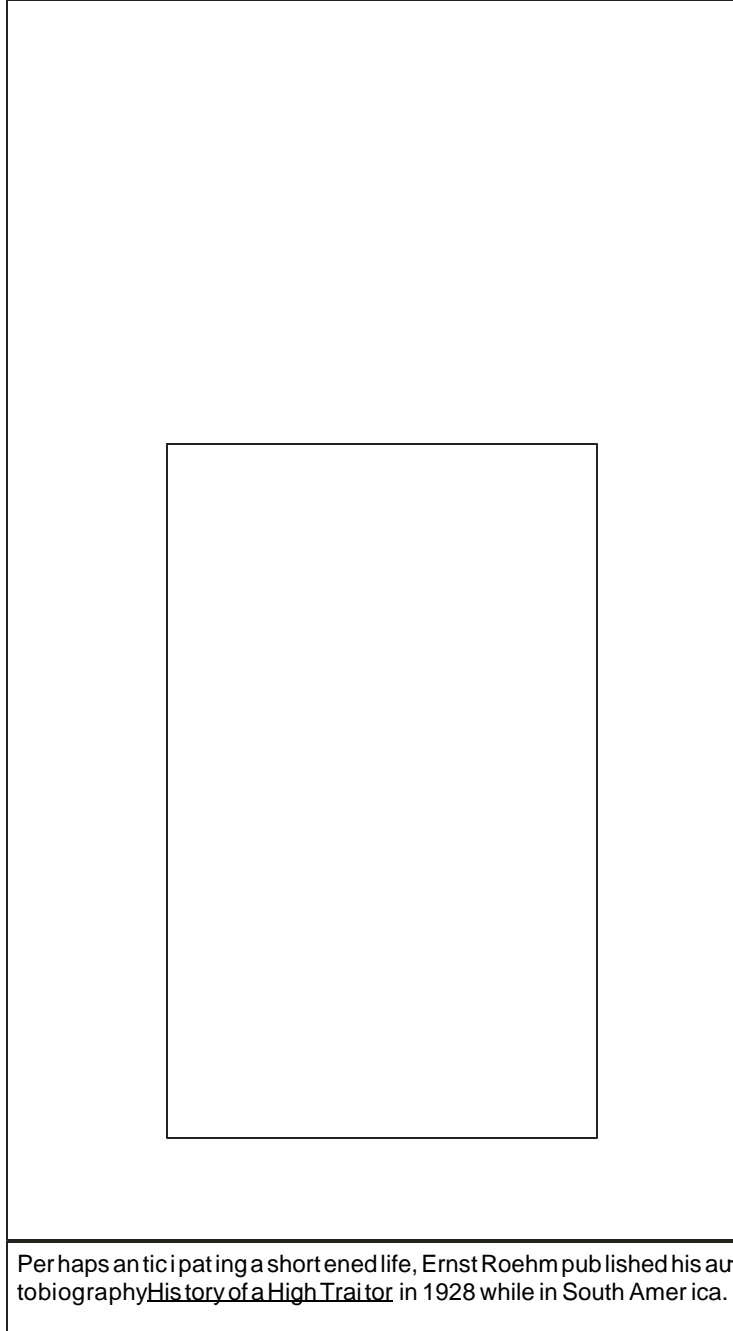
ers in a wild homosexual orgy in broad daylight on a road side. With sensational evidence like this in hand, the...leader then sought to have the culprit expelled from the HJ. But it took some time before this occurred, suggesting that the enforcement of Article 175 was lax (Koehl:85ff).

The increasing in difference of Hitler Youth officials toward homosexuality was an attitude reflected in the larger society as well. In 1937 the Reich Minister of the Interior issued a change of policy regarding Paragraph 175. Under the new ruling only four-time repeat offenders could be jailed or sent to camps for homosexual offenses. This was reaffirmed in 1940 by Himmler (S. Katz:146).

The Roehm Purge

The event in history most frequently cited as evidence of Nazi persecution of homosexuals is known variously as the Blood Purge, the Night of the Long Knives, and the Roehm Purge. Steakley writes that “[t]he indisputable beginning of Nazi terror against homosexuals was marked by the murder of Ernst Roehm on June 28, 1934, ‘the night of the long knives’” (Steakley:108). It was on this night (actually over an entire weekend), that Adolf Hitler’s closest aides orchestrated the assassinations of hundreds of his political enemies in one bloody sweep. Included in this purge were Roehm and several of the top officers of the SA.

We have emphasized that the leadership of the SA was mostly, if not entirely homosexual. The fact that SA leaders were the primary targets in the massacre could therefore be construed as a sort of “moral cleansing” of the Nazi ranks, which, in fact, Hitler claimed it was. But Hitler lied. The Roehm Purge was driven by political, not moral concerns. Hitler feigned disgust and outrage about the homosexuality of the murdered SA leaders to justify himself



Perhaps anticipating a shortened life, Ernst Roehm published his autobiography History of a High Traitor in 1928 while in South America.

to the German people; it was a tactic he had used previously to allay public suspicions about the sexual deviancy of his inner circle. The importance of this fact is asserted in many leading works by both mainstream and homosexualist historians. The following are excerpts from four different historians who have examined the issue:

Hitler eliminated his closest friend Roehm and certain SA leaders as potential rivals. The strictly political motivation of this ruthless power play was initially too obvious to be entirely denied, but later it was conveniently obscured by charges of homosexual depravity (Haberle:369f).

The formal accusations against Roehm and those arrested with him centered on their homosexual activities, which Hitler had of course known about for fifteen years and shrugged off, it being alleged that these activities disgraced the party. For those victims without any homosexual background, "the Great Blood Purge" continued all over Germany, as Nazi leaders got rid of all their most hated enemies, as well as the inevitable "mistakes" (Garde:726f).

Ernst Roehm wasn't shot because the Nazi Party felt outraged by the abrupt discovery that he was "having" his storm troopers — that had been known for ages; but because his sway over the SA had become a menace to Hitler. In the Hitler Youth the "dear love of comrades" was evilly turned into a political end. And if the Nazi hierarchy was well larded with homosexuals, so was Wilhelm II's court and so was the Weimar Republic (Davidson:152).

Hitler himself, of course, had been well aware of Roehm's sexual orientation from the earliest days of their long association....So strong was Roehm that the Wehrmacht [German Army High Command] was con-

cerned that he might seize control of the army. In 1934, Hitler became fearful that the Wehrmacht was plotting a coup against him to prevent such a takeover. To forestall this danger, Hitler had Roehm and about one thousand other men murdered one weekend in June 1934, the famous "Night of the Long Knives" (Crompton:79f).

There is some dispute among historians about whether Roehm had planned a coup against Hitler after Hitler's refusal to replace the regular army with Roehm's troops. This takeover of the army had apparently been part of the Nazis' original plan for the maximization of their political strength. Upon his appointment as Chancellor, Hitler was confronted with new and different challenges which required new and different alliances. For some time it appeared that Hitler would remain true to his pact with Roehm. From the time Hitler assumed control of the German government in January of 1933, until the spring of 1934, he allowed the SA to grow from 300,000 to over 3 million members (Plant:54). During this period of rapid growth, Roehm's rivals within the Nazi inner circle grew increasingly alarmed, as did the powerful industrialists and military leaders.

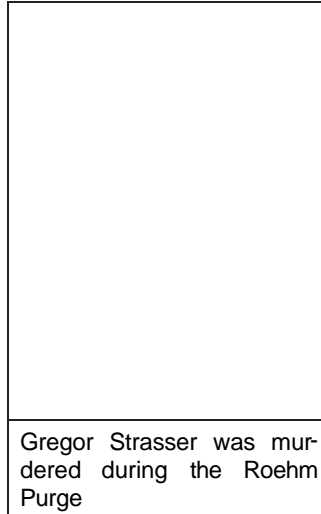
Tension between the SA and the army increased. General Walther von Brauchitsch, speaking for the majority of his fellow officers, said, "[t]hat gang of homosexuals, thugs and drunks should be allowed no part of [German rearmament]" (Gallo:87). For their part, the SA taunted the regular army soldiers, singing "The grey rock will be drowned in a sea of brown" (ibid.:87), meaning that the grey uniformed army would be swallowed up by the Brown shirts. Strasser writes,

At a meeting of the Cabinet, to which he belonged, [Roehm] demanded the incorporation of the Brown Shirts into the regular army, the Brown Shirt officers to retain their ranks. In other words he demanded supreme com-

mand of the Reichswehr, the S.S., and the S.A.. He confidently believed that he had Adolf's support...but Hitler remained silent..Blomberg, the Minister of National Defense, suddenly declared that the only course open to President Hindenberg would be to refuse outright. "The discussion is closed," Hitler then said, without daring to look his old friend in the face. Roehm, speechless with fury, walked quickly from the room. After June 30, General von Reichenau declared in an interview with the *Petit Journal* that Roehm's death sentence was virtually signed that day (Strasser, 1940:178).

As the conflict came to a head, SA conspirators created a "hit list" of Army officers who were to be killed (ibid.:218) and allegedly selected *Standartenfuhrer* Julius Uhl to assassinate Hitler himself (ibid.:237). It may be, however, that these allegations were invented as part of a fall-back rationale for the purge. It is well known that Himmler, Goering and Himmler's deputy, Reinhard Heydrich, worked behind the scenes to limit Roehm's power; and it has been reported by some sources that they generated rumors of a Roehm plot to drive a wedge between Roehm and Hitler. In any case, the Roehm Purge was not motivated by the homosexuality of its victims. The great majority of victims were not homosexuals at all. Otto Strasser, a high Nazi functionary whose brother, Gregor, was murdered that night, lists some of the casualties in Hitler and I:

Klausener and several other Catholic leaders were executed, as well as [Vice Chancellor] von Papen's secretaries. At Hirschberg, in Silesia, all the Jews, all the members of the Stahlhelm, and a few communists were arrested...beaten with rifle butts...and eight people were murdered...[V]on Kahr, an old man of sixty three...was taken from his bed, taken to Dachau, and tortured to death...His crime had been his failure to support the Munich *putsch* in 1923. Ballerstaedt...who had been in-



Gregor Strasser was murdered during the Roehm Purge

strumental in Hitler's being sentenced to three months imprisonment, was murdered by a special killer squad. [And] death was the penalty paid by Father Staempfle for having edited *Mein Kampf*, and therefore being familiar with the author's weaknesses (ibid.:200).

Igra provides us with a long and detailed account of the power struggle which led to the purge,

beginning with a refutation of the idea that it represented a policy of extermination of homosexuals by Hitler:

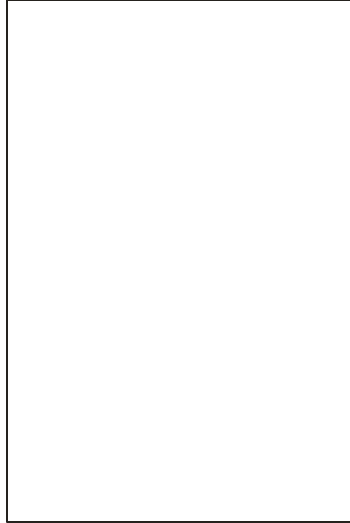
We shall find that, far from eliminating the sex perverts from his party, Hitler retained most of them, and that he moved against those whom he did eliminate only with the greatest reluctance and after he had been relentlessly pushed by outside forces and circumstances. On June 14 and 15 Hitler was in Venice to see Mussolini. It soon became common knowledge that the German Dictator and his entourage had made an unfavorable impression upon the Italians...Mussolini was never a stickler for puritan morality, to say the least, but there was one vice which the Italians particularly loathe; they call it *il vizio te desco*, the German vice. The conduct of some members in Hitler's entourage at Venice disgusted the Italians. Mussolini protested against the moral character and political unreliability of the leading personnel in the Nazi Storm Troops and warned Hitler that he would have to sacrifice his favorite colleagues if he wished to save his own personal prestige and that of his regime. Among those colleagues, Roehm, Heines and Karl Ernst were mentioned.

What chagrined [Hitler] the most was that he knew Mussolini had been prompted...by...[German] President

Hindenberg...On June 21, Hitler went to Neudek, Hindenberg's country seat...[He] was literally dumbfounded when confronted on the steps of the Hindenberg family home by General Blomberg and Goering, both in uniform. They informed him that the President would not receive the Chancellor, and that if the heads of the SA were not dismissed martial law would be declared, whereupon Goering would take over civilian control as Chief of Police, and Blomberg, as Minister of War, would take over military control.

Hitler was still recalcitrant and conceived the idea of rallying the Storm Troops around him, as a gesture of defiance against those gentlemen of the right...But an event occurred...which led Hitler to change his plan...He was summoned to Krupp's headquarters and there was received by Goering, and the heads of the Krupp firm and other industrialists...[T]hey delivered their ultimatum: Either Hitler should get rid of his companions or the Goering-Krupp-Blomberg combination would withdraw their support for the regime. Hitler accepted the alternative, but in his own way. He would double-cross Roehm, but he would also double-cross his taskmasters to the Right. He would eliminate a few of the elements that had proved objectionable to the Right, but he would maintain the bulk of them. Besides, he would take the opportunity of the general massacre to remove those against whom he had a grievance -- General Streicher, General Bredlow, Gregor Strasser, etc.(Igra:77f).

Lothar Machtan's analysis, benefitting from an additional fifty years of hindsight, adds another important perspective on this critical event. His study emphasizes that while the German powers were forcing their will upon Hitler, the Fuehrer was confronted with one unescapable truth: the very men he must betray were the ones who held his own darkest secrets in trust. These were already hinting at blackmail due to the increasing tensions in the party. Machtan writes:



Roehm was not only acquainted with the shady beginnings of Hitler's political career, he was one of the very few people who knew about his homosexuality. It must have been Hitler's night mare that he would one day launch a smear campaign....Roehm's friend Edmund Heines [once threatened in 1933] "Adolf hasn't the slightest reason to open his trap so wide -- one word from me, and he'll shut up for good"....As Hitler him-

self put it, he was faced with "a crisis that could only too easily have had truly devastating consequences for the foreseeable future." His political instinct for self-preservation, if nothing else, compelled him to escalate matters. At the same time, he was urged on by the prospect of concealing his own homosexuality forever by the elimination of dangerous witnesses (Machtan:211f).

Edmund Heines was an especially dangerous threat if former Freikorps soldier Peter Martin Lampel is to be believed. In his unpublished memoirs *Niemandes Knecht*, Lampel claimed to know "a lot about Hitler's homosexuality," including specific knowledge of a liaison with Heines (ibid.:138). Roehm, too, was alleged to have been a sex partner of Hitler, although these rumors were considered "highly exaggerated" by one-time Hitler favorite Putzi Hanfstaengl (ibid.:113).

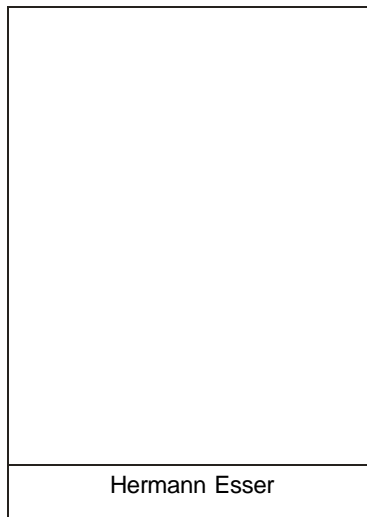
Pushed to the wall, Hitler chose the Nietzschean path of merciless self-interest. Machtan writes:

Hitler could defend himself only by going to extremes, so the few people who knew that he, too, was homosexual

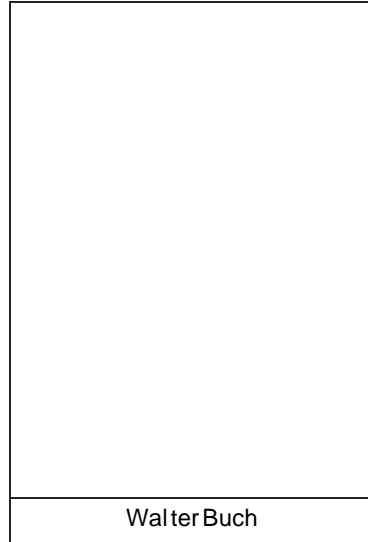
had to be either murdered or thoroughly intimidated. This is revealed by a closer look at the individual victims...Roehm, Ernst and Heines...Gregor Strasser...Karl-Gunther Heimsoth and Paul Rohrbein...senior civil servants privy to potentially explosive evidence about Hitler, for instance, [Prussian Police officials] Erich Klausener...and...Eugen von Kessel; Reichswehr Minister...Kurt von Schleicher and his right hand man, Ferdinand von Bredlow, the Munich police chief August Schneiderhuber, the ex-premier of Bavaria, Gustav Ritter von Kahr...the attorneys of Roehm, Strasser, Ludecke and other senior Nazis...the Munich journalist Fritz Gerlich...and...Karl Zehnter [of the “gay” bar] *Bratwurstglockl*.

It may readily be inferred from these few examples that the operation carried out on and around June 30 was...a carefully planned campaign against people who knew, or were suspected of knowing, too much about Hitler (Machtan:216ff).

The Roehm Purge, then, was not a “moral” cleansing of the Nazi ranks, but a political one. Equally it was a realignment of power behind the German government which



was primarily forced upon Hitler by powerful political elements, whose support he needed to maintain control. Igra points out that not only did the majority of the SA homosexuals survive the purge, but that the massacre was largely implemented by homosexuals. He cites Strasser that the “Chief Killers of Munich [were] Wagner, Esser, Maurice, Weber and Buch.” These men



Walter Buch

“were all known to be sex pervers...of one type or another,” concludes Igra (ibid.:80). Plant records that the larger campaign of assassinations across Germany was orchestrated by Reinhard Heydrich, also a homosexual (Plant: 56). Igra addresses Hitler’s justification for the purge:

In his defense before the Reichstag a week later Hitler talked of “traitors.” That

was his alibi...In his speech to the Reichstag he admitted that one of the motives for ordering the massacre was to get rid of the moral pervers in his party and that they were traitors because they practiced homosexuality. But under the dictatorship it was not possible for any one to put Hitler a question. No body asked him to explain how it was that, if his purpose was to get rid of homosexuals, he really didn’t rid himself of them but used them as the instruments of his own murder lust and still retained most of them as members of his personal entourage, as well as in key positions of the party organization and the government. Otto Strasser, in his book, The German St. Bartholemew’s Night (which has not been published in English), mentions sixteen of these highly placed homosexualist officials who survived the massacres of June 30 and retained their posts (Igra:82).

Following the purge, Hitler received a telegram from Hindenberg “expressing his ‘profoundly felt gratitude.’” “‘You have saved the German people from a grave peril,’ the President wired” (Fest, 1975:470). Like wise, “Defense Minister von Blomberg congratulated Hitler for the successful completion of the ‘purge.’ (ibid.: 470). The army,

too, was pleased by Hitler's move. Only a week after the purge an anti-Nazi Reichswehr officer told the French military attaché in Berlin that the army was 25% pro-Nazi before the purge, but 95% pro-Nazi after the purge (Gallo:312).

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Hitler with German President Hindenberg. Yad Vashem

After the Purge

While it is certainly true that several of the most prominent homosexuals in the Nazi regime were killed on the "Night of the Long Knives" the fact of history is that Adolf Hitler did not purge his regime of homosexuals in this incident or at any subsequent time. On the contrary, a simple review of the historic record reveals that Hitler continued not only to surround himself with homosexuals, but to place them in key positions in the Third Reich.

Judith Reisman notes that "Kazimierz Moczarski, a Polish resistance fighter, confirmed that homosexuals 'remained party members...got promotions...were protected by the top [Nazi] brass' and served on the battle field and in prisons" (Reisman, 1994:3). Of the thirteen corps

commanders of the SA, all known or suspected homosexuals, only seven were killed in the Roehm Purge (Gallo:16). The rest, along with the probable thousands, perhaps tens of thousands of homosexuals remaining in the SA, were quickly reassigned by Hitler, who put the entire SA under the authority of Heinrich Himmler's SS. Many of these sadistic, brutal men had been useful to Hitler since the beginning, and he made certain that their talents would remain available to him. It is likely that some of these SA survivors were among the participants in Goebbels' dinner-party-turned-orgy in 1936 (Grunberger:70).

Not all SA homosexuals remained loyal to Hitler, however. Snyder records that at least 155 SS leaders were killed in late 1934 and 1935 by a group called "Roehm's Avengers" who "identified their unit on a slip of paper pinned to the body of each victim" (Snyder:298). These assassinations help to explain why Himmler's "anti-homosexual" policies were initially strictly enforced, but later (after the Roehm loyalists had been arrested) were much less rigorously applied.

Aside from the SA, Hitler retained all of the sexual deviants of his inner circle, including Goering, Streicher, Frank, Maurice, Schaub, Wagner, Brueckner, Weber and Karl Kaufman, gauleiter of Hamburg. Hess was to remain until 1941, when he left (whether of his own accord or as an emissary of Hitler is still unknown) on his ill-fated "peace" mission to England. As an aside, the loss of Hess must have been very difficult for Hitler. As Ebermayer noted, Hess "was for many years the Fuehrer's [homosexual] partner, especially during their joint detention in Landsberg" (Ebermayer in Machtan:232).

Hitler later openly rewarded some of these men with top jobs in the government. Rector, for example, writes that "Hitler knew about [Walther] Funk, a 'notorious' homosexual, when he appointed him Reich Minister of Economics on February 5, 1938" (Rector: 63). SS