

## Panel: “State Institutions and Extermination Practices in Nazi Germany”

Heather Dewey

**Title:** Male Homosexuality during the Third Reich: Expanded Persecution through Pre-Existing Prejudices

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Ann Livschiz

**Paper written for:** History B311: Holocaust and Modern Genocides (Fall 2013)

**Heather Dewey** is a sophomore History major and Spanish minor with interest in nineteenth and twentieth century history, though she finds most areas gripping, despite a strange aversion to the eighteenth century. She participated in the Research Poster Symposium this year, and has earned several scholarships, most recently the Judie and Ralph Violette Scholarship from the Department of History. Outside of these pursuits, she is an avid creative writer, and has completed National Novel Writing Month (NANOWRIMO) three times. Sometimes she lives in a strong fantasy world, but it has yet to stop her from being grounded and thorough in her pursuits.

### Abstract

My paper examined the Nazi persecution of homosexuals from 1933-1945, with emphasis on the social and cultural traditions and justifications used to support these efforts. A distinction is made between the treatment of men and women because female homosexuality was never officially made illegal or targeted, although many were interned in prisons or concentration camps under classifications like ‘asocial’ or for other crimes. I theorize that male homosexuals were persecuted because they failed – through stereotyping – to conform to the established gender dynamic that existed at the time. They were also seen as traitorous to the patriotic Nazi regime for being unwilling or incapable to produce more German citizens, a feat deemed necessary because of supposed Aryan superiority and an increasing need for a larger population to inhabit Europe and fight in the war. The sources I used to support this theory are mainly speeches and memorandums from Nazi officials, government documents, and memoirs and interviews by homosexuals, mostly male, from Germany and Poland who recounted their experiences and the types of prejudice they faced.

My main point about the gender dynamic tied back to older stereotypes in Germany – and other parts of the world – that had carried over into Nazi policies. A severe distinction was made between the two genders. By the Nazi ideal, men were strong, militaristic, and dominant, while women were weak, domestic, and passive. By being interested in other men, homosexual males were seen as effeminate partners in a relationship and therefore weak, drawing the scorn of others by failing to conform to the expected role. This, attached to the government’s belief that they would not marry or reproduce and were then also failing to be conscientious German citizens, was a crucial source for their persecution. They were considered undesirable in a society where being different meant death. This examination is significant because it focuses on a lesser-known group that was also targeted by the Nazis and killed during the Holocaust. Homosexuals are not given much attention in the established Holocaust narrative, and received little devotion until research started to appear in the late seventies and eighties. Even now, it can be difficult to find works about their suffering. It is also important because the gender roles that caused much

of the trouble for homosexual people, especially men, were not uncommon outside of Nazi Germany and continued to exist throughout the twentieth century. Similar to anti-Semitism, disgust or consternation was directed against homosexuality in other European countries and United States, and this lingering prejudice contributed to many victims being unwilling to share their stories because it would mean admitting who they were. Much of this consternation was directed because it was believed homosexuals were failing to conform to the 'proper' gender roles.

### **Bibliographical Note**

The majority of my sources were either academically reviewed journals or translated primary source documents that I cross-referenced with other translations to check for biases or omitted passages. Otherwise, I used scholarly books, several of which were focused primarily on the plight of homosexuals, while others examined gender in Nazi Germany and contained passages on this subject. I also had access to some biographies from men who had decided to record their memoirs in the late seventies and eighties, when more and more people were emerging with their stories. The most intriguing sources I had were several oral histories from homosexual people who lived during this time. I used one from a man and one from a woman to gain both perspectives.

## Evan Frauhiger

**Title:** The *Einsatzgruppen* and Himmler: The Psychological Driving Force of the Holocaust

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Ann Livschiz

**Paper written for:** History B311: Holocaust and Modern Genocides (Fall 2013)

**Evan Frauhiger** is a junior working towards a B.A. in history while minoring in political science. He is also working towards an International Studies Certificate and an Honors Program Certificate. While he has studied many periods of history, World War II is his preferred field of study. Evan received the Withers Scholarships for 2014-2015 academic year. He is currently working on his Honors Project that investigates the legacy and impact of the Nuremberg Trials from the perspectives of the United States, Russia, and Britain. After graduating in May 2015, Evan is going onto law school to study international law or constitutional law.

### Abstract

Hitler's Germany during World War II arguably created the worst atrocity that civilization had ever seen: the Holocaust. The Holocaust was not simply a static event, however. It was characterized by many elements and evolutions of implementation throughout the course of the war. One of the most important elements was the *Einsatzgruppen*, a unit within the SS (one of the strongest military organizations within Nazi Germany) that followed the German Army throughout the Soviet campaign. This group was responsible for carrying out the beginning phases of the Holocaust, including mass shootings and the use and operation of gas vans throughout the Soviet Union. Their most important contribution to the evolution of the Holocaust, however, was not their actions but their responses. After carrying out many mass shootings in which men, women, and children were the victims, the Nazi commanders started to worry about the impact on psychological health that these operations were causing, especially Heinrich Himmler. The concern over psychological health was not focused on the victims of the Nazis, but rather it was focused on the soldiers who carried out the killings: the *Einsatzgruppen*. Himmler especially became obsessed with this potentially harmful factor and it drove him to continuously search for alternative methods of murder that could reduce this perceived problem. Looking at each stage of the Holocaust in chronological order, the impact of psychological health is evaluated to determine its role in changing the course of Nazi extermination from the start of the mass shooting campaigns to the use of extermination camps. In the end, the factor of psychological health appears to be an influential element in deciding the various steps and methods of implementation regarding the Holocaust.

### Bibliographical Note

The research for the information being presented comes from a variety of sources both primary and secondary. The primary sources used are mainly firsthand accounts of the actions of the *Einsatzgruppen* including recollections by civilians and ranking Nazi officials such as Heinrich Himmler and his Chief of Staff, Karl Wolff. These sources not only give information about the atrocities committed by the Nazis but they also provide insight into the twisted minds of the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Also included in the primary sources are government documents such as the many reports of the *Einsatzgruppen* as well as transcripts from the Nuremberg Trials after the war. The secondary sources used include many studies by leading historians on the

Holocaust that both observe the larger picture of the Holocaust and focus on the individuals such as Heinrich Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich who helped to develop the methods of murder used during WWII.

## **Tina Gasnarez**

**Title:** The German National Railway (*Reichsbahn*) Under the Nazi Regime: The Transformation from a Glorified Past to an Enduring Legacy of Horror

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Ann Livschiz

**Paper written for:** History B311: Holocaust and Modern Genocides (Fall 2013)

**Tina Gasnarez** is a senior and is currently pursuing a B.S. in Secondary Education-Social Studies, and a Certificate in International Studies at IPFW. Recently, she earned the top undergraduate award for her history research poster at the 2014 Student Research and Creative Endeavor Symposium (IPFW), and is a recipient of a 2014-2015 Ron Venderly Scholarship Award. This summer, Tina plans to culminate her year of Holocaust studies and research by experiencing the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C.

### **Abstract**

The German railway system heralded the country's much-desired advancement towards modernity and prosperity. As early as 1814, German planners of the railway system envisioned their railway to be an innovative means of travel that it would boost unity, national strength, and increase trade with neighboring countries. However, one segment of the population would be noticeably absent from the initial phase of securing the financial support it needed to launch the railway system: Jews. Railway funding from Jews would be restricted until 1848. From its inception, anti-Semitism was rooted in the formation of Germany's railway system. The early exclusionary practices by Germany's railway planners against Jews set in motion a chain of events that would lead to the largest mass transit of humans to the Nazi concentration and death camps over one hundred years later. When Adolf Hitler became Germany's Chancellor in January 1933, he immediately began to weave his Nazi ideology into every aspect of German life, and this included Germany's most cherished enterprise, the German National Railway Company. The largely autonomous and apolitical railway company had successfully transported people and goods from East to West at dizzying speeds. It had become one of Germany's largest employers and one of its most influential. However, the leader of Germany's advancement towards modernity and prosperity suffered a massive derailment when its leaders allowed the railway system to become the Nazi regime's own malevolent vessel: "The Most Valuable Asset of the Reich." From the willing actors within the Reich who orchestrated the forced deportations of millions of Jews into the darkened cattle cars to the death camps in Eastern Europe, the Reichsbahn, as it was later renamed, was forever transformed from a symbol of national pride and progress into one with a horrific and enduring legacy rooted in anti-Semitism.

### **Bibliographical Note**

For my research analysis, I utilized secondary sources about the history of the German railway system by noted historians, Alfred C. Miersejewski and Todd Samuel Presner. I read several books about the Holocaust inside Germany's boxcars by authors such as Simone Gigliotti. In addition, I read the personal testimonies during the Nürnberg Trials of the survivors on the Holocaust trains, as well as the SS officers who participated in Adolf Hitler's final solution.