# New Paris monument honours gay victims of Nazi persecution



[Photo: Jean-Luc Verna/Instagram]

A new monument in Paris finally marks the experiences gay men persecuted during the Nazi regime. Situated in the public gardens near Bastille Plaza, the installation, designed by French artist and gay activist Jean-Luc Verna, takes the form of a large steel star, one side dark, symbolising the shadows of past atrocities, the other silver.

'There’s a black side in front of us, forcing us to remember…' said Monsieur Verna. 'At certain times of the day, it casts a long shadow on the ground, evoking the dangers looming over.' The silver side serves as a reminder of the ongoing fight for acceptance.

Historical accounts reveal that under the Nazi regime, an estimated 100,000 men were arrested simply for being homosexual, with about 50,000 convicted and between 5,000 and 15,000 deported to concentration camps. Many faced brutal treatment, marked with the pink triangle that has since been reclaimed by the gay community as a symbol of pride. Former President Jacques Chirac became the first French leader to recognise the persecution of gay men in a public forum back in 2005.

At the monument's inauguration, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo addressed the troubling trend of historical erasure: 'Recognition means saying "This happened" and saying "We don’t want this to happen again".' She added that there are 'extremely dangerous, strong, opposing winds that would like to deny the diversity of the victims.'

The timing of this monument’s unveiling feels particularly poignant against the backdrop of rising anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment worldwide. Deputy Mayor Jean-Luc Roméro pointed to parallels, like those occurring in the United States under the current administration, where numerous policies have sought to undermine trans rights. He remarked, 'We’ve never experienced such a setback.'

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.metroweekly.com/2025/05/new-paris-monument-honors-gay-victims-of-nazis/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=new-paris-monument-honors-gay-victims-of-nazis> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://apnews.com/article/7f8f61ce8bbcff61796674bd86ede27d> - On May 17, 2025, Paris unveiled a memorial dedicated to LGBTQ+ victims of the Nazi regime and other historical persecutions. The monument, a large steel star created by French artist and LGBTQ+ activist Jean-Luc Verna, is situated near Bastille Plaza. Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo emphasized the importance of historical recognition to prevent future discrimination. The sculpture features a black side symbolizing past sufferings and a reflective silvery side representing the passage of time and shifting public opinions. Historians estimate that between 5,000 and 15,000 gay individuals were deported by the Nazis during World War II, with former French President Jacques Chirac being the first national leader to officially acknowledge these crimes in 2005. Deputy Mayor Jean-Luc Roméro noted the troubling global climate for LGBTQ+ rights, citing recent U.S. policies under President Donald Trump targeting transgender rights, as well as Hungary’s constitutional amendment allowing the government to ban LGBTQ+ public events—actions seen as authoritarian. The Paris memorial stands as a tribute and reminder of the ongoing struggle for equality.
* <https://apnews.com/article/14bcd8e50b302637f6dce81a4e25c733> - On the 78th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Germany commemorated the often-overlooked LGBT victims of Nazi persecution. Thousands of homosexual and transgender people were arrested, with laws criminalizing same-sex acts leading to severe punishments, including lengthy prison terms, forced labor, and forced sterilization. LGBT individuals in concentration camps were marked with a pink triangle and subjected to severe abuse and medical experiments, many dying as a result. Though oppression continued post-war, with anti-homosexuality laws not repealed until 1969. Karl Gorath, a gay man, faced repeated prosecution even after the war. Baerbel Bas, speaker of Germany's parliament, emphasized the need to continue remembering all victims of Nazi persecution and denouncing ongoing discrimination. This year's ceremony in Berlin also featured testimony from Rozette Kats, who stressed the importance of honoring all persecuted groups.
* <https://time.com/5295476/gay-pride-pink-triangle-history/> - The pink triangle was originally a symbol imposed by the Nazi regime to identify and persecute gay men, who faced unprecedented cruelty such as castration, imprisonment, and use in medical experiments during the Holocaust. The symbol gained a new meaning decades later as it was reclaimed by the LGBTQ community as an emblem of pride and remembrance. This shift was influenced by the gay liberation movement, which shed light on the historical persecution of homosexuals. The triangle was notably used by the activist group ACT-UP during the HIV/AIDS crisis to raise awareness and highlight ongoing oppression. Today, the pink triangle endures as a powerful symbol of both the past atrocities and the ensuing struggle for LGBTQ rights and dignity worldwide.
* <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/series/gay-men-and-lesbians-under-the-nazi-regime> - The Nazi regime harassed and targeted gay men and lesbians by banning their organizations, shuttering their presses, and raiding and closing their meeting places. The Nazi regime’s actions effectively destroyed the networks and communities that gay men and lesbians had established before the Nazis came to power. For gay men, harassment worsened over the course of the 1930s, eventually turning into brutal persecution. Beginning in 1935, the Nazi regime used a revised version of Paragraph 175 to arrest large numbers of men accused of having sexual relations with other men. Some of these men were sent to concentration camps as “homosexual” (“homosexuell”).
* <https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2017/06/lesbians-enjoyed-limited-toleration-nazi-germany> - Research indicates that some lesbians in Nazi Germany experienced a degree of limited toleration. Police files suggest that many led relatively open lesbian lives for years before being denounced. This limited tolerance may have been due to the Nazi regime's non-threatening view of women. However, this does not mean these women led enviable lives, as the regime still viewed them as a threat to their ideals of a racially strong National community.