

From Purple to Pink Triangles: My Past and Present Holocaust Symbols
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I was raised as a Jehovah's Witness. Over a decade ago, I disassociated myself from them. My queer, feminist, political activist identity and the fundamental beliefs of my Christian religion were diametrically opposed.

Yet, I cannot discount all I learned from my former faith, for among many things it was my introduction to the Holocaust and the purple triangle the Nazis made Witnesses wear then.

I remember studying an article in The Watchtower at my Kingdom Hall about the horrors a Witness family endured during Hitler's reign. Afterwards, I asked my mother questions that as a child seem so innocently straightforward, but as an adult are so painfully complex: Why were we killed for our beliefs? Why would people hate us so much? How could people allow someone as evil as Hitler to be their leader? What would I do if I were tortured? Would I still find strength in my faith and not lose hope?

Years later, at Mohawk College, I along with several other students formed Mohawk Pride - a peer support club for queer students. One year we set up an information table and display at the college to commemorate Pink Triangle Day (Feb 14). During the Holocaust gays wore a pink triangle and lesbians a black triangle. Our display was an eye opener. Distressingly, many knew very little about the Holocaust and many more didn't know that the Nazis persecuted gays and lesbians.

Under the Nazi regime, I as a queer woman and formerly as a Jehovah's Witness would have shared the same fate as Jews, Gypsies, Slavic peoples, immigrants, people with disabilities, social democrats,

labour unionists and the list goes on. Millions were murdered. How could I ever hate anyone whose blood would have been spilt along with mine?

If every group that was persecuted by Hitler's Nazis were removed from our community, we wouldn't have a community left.

Yet, did I see Swastikas on people's homes? Jewish schools firebombed? Hear Anti-Semitic rhetoric? In Canada? In 2004?

Have we learned nothing from our past? Or are we still teaching each other to hate?