

The Holocaust Historiography Project

Remarkable Nonsense about the Holocaust

Magical tattoos from a man who 'saw it all'

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FEATURE

The Auschwitz tattooist

by ANGIE FOX, Australian Jewish News
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LOU Sokolov wears a permanent reminder of the three years he spent in Birkenau. Although it is faded, the number 32407 is still clearly legible on his left forearm. The tattoo which indelibly scars his tanned skin bears witness to his encounter with hell on earth.

Indeed, **thousands of Holocaust survivors worldwide**, as well as at least 10 in Melbourne -- including his late wife Gita -- bare the same reminder, not just of the horrors they endured at Auschwitz/Birkenau, but of Sokolov's presence at the Nazi death camp.

Small with pale blue, haunting eyes which large glasses fail to hide, Sokolov was the Auschwitz/Birkenau *tetovierer* (tattooist). From August 1942 to late 1944 he, along with assistants, **tattooed the arms of 200,000 Jews** from Holland, Belgium, Yugoslavia, Norway, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Austria, and Hungary.

A piece of wood attached to two needles and a pot of ink were the tools of his trade. **Each tattoo, he says, took 30 seconds.** [...]

[...]

"I witnessed things, killings, torture, beatings. [...] I saw it with my own eyes."

[...]

"I saw one-and-a-half million people die. One-and-a-half million people go through the chimney. Some people can't take it, but one good thing is that I helped a lot of people."

Sokolov even came face to face with the notorious "Angel of Death", Dr Josef Mengele, whose infamous medical experiments have been well documented. Dr Mengele also acted as an Auschwitz selector, sending new arrivals either to the gas chambers or the camp. After witnessing these selections on numerous occasions, Dr Mengele approached Sokolov, though the encounter is one he would rather forget.

[...]

During his time as the camp tattooist, **he used his privileged position to save lives.**

[...]

Sokolov witnessed many of the events at Auschwitz and Birkenau which fill the pages of history books and memoirs. He recalls the daily suicides by people who threw themselves against the electric fence, the public hangings, the day the entire gypsy camp of 4,000 inmates was gassed, the building of the three crematoria in 1943 and the uprising by the SonderKommando -- Jewish men who worked in the crematoria and revolted by throwing SS officers into the flames. He also recalls the day, in 1944, that Crematorium Three was blown up by the SonderKommando.

[...]

Sokolov narrates his epic story with relative calm, becoming emotional only when talking about Gita, who died two months ago.

But when asked about Holocaust denier [*sic*] David Irving, he becomes enraged. "I would kick him in the pants and say '**I was there. I saw it.**'"

Editor's note: Once scarcely knows where to begin with accounts such as this. The most obvious cause of wonderment is that this story claims that 200,000 were tattooed in an extermination camp, and yet 60+ years later, there are still thousands alive all over the world. That's a pretty amazing survival rate for inmates of a so-called extermination camp.

And then there are those tattoos. If each of Sokolov's tattooists was able to tattoo one person every 30 seconds, and work without stop 12 hours a day, seven days a week, year in and year out, It would have taken roughly 2.28 man-years to tattoo 200,000 persons, so there is a surface plausibility to that part of the story. However, Sokolov claims to have been working with a crude tattooing device, which would almost certainly have been slower than today's electric tattooing machines. Today, it would take 10 to 12 minutes to do a similar tattoo, in part because the area would first be shaved and disinfected, a new disinfected needle would be fitted to the machine, and the area would be disinfected afterwards.

For the tattooing to have taken place, Auschwitz/Birkenau would either have required tons of tattooing needles, and/or an autoclave, to prevent each inmate in the camp from contracting a blood-borne disease, such as hepatitis B or C, or even syphilis. It is worth noting that hepatitis B and C can both be fatal, and hepatitis C can even cause cancer of the liver.

Even if Sokolov and his crew were able to match today's time of 10 minutes -- using their crude tattooing equipment -- this works out 45.66 of tattooing man-years. This implies there would have to almost two dozen assistants, each of which was able to work 12 hours a day, seven days a week. One admires their diligence in working for the Nazis.

And of course, he met with Mengele. And of course, he personally saw 1.5 million people cremated. But perhaps a man who can use a crude implement to perform a 10-minute tattoo in 30 seconds is able personally to watch 1.5 million people being cremated at 90 minutes per person (along with the killings, torture, and beatings he personally claims to have witnessed, and saving the lives of others), while he's tattooing, of course, because otherwise, he himself would go "up the chimney," right?

Last but almost certainly not least, it has long been noted that there are no reliable eye-witnesses who can verify Holocaust extermination claims. Yet, here is a man who -- if he's not lying -- could put paid to huge portions of the position of Holocaust revisionists. Why are they hiding this man's light under a basket?

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