

Selection By Gold Teeth

I don't think that it's particularly appropriate to joke about this subject.

Here's an example of how prisoners in one Nazi death camp were crudely identified for their "high dental gold content":

"Before being exterminated, the buckle cavity of the Häftlings was examined. If they had gold or platinum teeth, they were marked on the chest, thus facilitating the removal of the precious metal dental works after shot or gassed. A detainee from the Sonderkommando prized open with a crow bar the jaws of the marked corps, while another pulled out or, more correctly, tore off the gold teeth. After cleaning them in a solution of hydrochloric acid which decomposed the bone and flesh bits that clung to the metal, the teeth were melted and turned into gold bars of half a kilogram each before sending them to the Reich's Bank.

It has been estimated that from Birkenau-Auschwitz alone 6,000 kilograms of dental gold were sent to Berlin."

http://isurvived.org/Lustig_Oliver-CCDictionary/CCD-09_L.html

And here's another slightly more sophisticated method:

"The prisoners were then herded into a basement, where the SS took their personal details. Besides names and places of birth, they were asked about family diseases and how many gold fillings they had.

"Why? Because if they killed or shot you, the first thing they did was look inside your mouth to see if they could find gold teeth. And the family would get a message saying (their relative) died of a disease in the family," Paczynski says. "This was the beginning of the camp."

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/europe/01/26/auschwitz.barber/index.html>

Much of the stolen dental gold was melted down into gold bars at the death camps.

It is not unreasonable to suggest that if any camp wanted to increase its gold production in the short term at any time then it could have chosen those prisoners who were known to have greater quantities of dental gold in their mouths to be murdered first.

But it's not funny either.

By the way, there's an account of a "selection" written by holocaust survivor Primo Levi in his book "If This Is A Man" (better known in the US under the title "Survival in Auschwitz", which appears puzzling, even to Levi when describing it, as to the way in which it was organised. I think that this account is much less puzzling if one imagines that the prisoners were being made to run naked (except for their shoes) in single file through a metal detector which had been set up by the Nazis without the prisoners realising it.

And I'm not joking about that either.

Keith P Walsh

PS, at today's prices 6,000 kilograms of gold is worth around 100 million US dollars - and that was from Birkenau-Auschwitz alone.

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This piece was written in response to a reply to the Google Groups thread which followed the original posting of "Holocaust Pyres - Hiding Evidence or Smelting Gold?"

Uploaded in PDF format with corrections – May 2014