

The Holocaust Historiography Project

Remarkable Nonsense about the Holocaust

Human-skin lampshades and human soap

Ken Kipperman and The Table of Horrors

- Some of the worst things imaginable are gathering dust, forgotten, in Washington archives. What's behind one man's crusade to bring them to light?

By Jeff Leen

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday, June 24, 2001; Page F01

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&contentId=A33464-2001Jun22¬Found=true>

KEN KIPPERMAN HANDS OVER THE FILE, apologizing.

"I have to warn you," he says. "What you're about to see is not easy to look at. I'll start with the least offensive."

[...]

The first photograph shows Kipperman holding a framed object. It appears to be an ink drawing on parchment: a knight slaying a dragon with an eagle overhead. "This is the largest **tattooed human skin** found in Buchenwald," he says. "It was physical evidence in the Nuremberg trials. You can see the two nipples -- there's a medical term for them" -- he pauses, can't think of it -- "and the belly button. Here."

There are more photographs of the worst objects from the camps. More skin with tattoos. A severed human head, bisected to show a cross-section of the brain. Kipperman is in most of the pictures, posing with what he calls "these artifacts," wearing his yarmulke and a slightly dazed look.

[...]

Now he wants some of them put on public display as documentary evidence of the Holocaust, **others buried with honor**. He has pleaded his case to members of Congress. And to the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology at Walter Reed Hospital, Elie Wiesel at Boston University, Yehuda Bauer at Yad V'shem in Jerusalem, Israel Singer at the World Jewish Congress, Ted Koppel at "Nightline" and Mike Wallace at "60 Minutes."

"My name is Kenneth Kipperman," he writes in the letter he sends everybody. "Lying in government vaults in Washington D.C., **I have discovered the actual BODY PARTS of Victims of the Holocaust**. These horrible artifacts have been lying in dust in Federal government vaults for over Fifty Two years -- what should we do with them? Should they be put on display at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum or at other Museums for the world to see, or should we have a religious service were [sic] we would have members of all the clergy gather and have these artifacts buried?"

Nobody wants to touch it. Journalists don't want the story, politicians don't want the publicity, museums don't want the artifacts, the Jewish organizations don't want any part of what seems like one man's troubled obsession.

[...]

On June 17, 1987, on his way into work, he saw a bulldozer chipping at the chimney. "I said, 'Well, Washington is the protest capital of the world. I'm going to try and save the chimney.' [...]"

[...] The result was a three-hour standoff with police, who feared the lunch bag he carried contained a bomb. [...]

[...]

He plea-bargained for a suspended sentence, a year's probation, 100 hours of community service and counseling. [...] **The examiner said he suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, related to an event he had not experienced directly: the Holocaust.**

[...]

Send all questions and comments to webmaster@historiography-project.org.