

Johann Paul Kremer (1883-1965)

Extensive sections of Kremer's diary entries from November 26, 1940 to August 11, 1945 have been published. The following excerpts give insight into his work and personality (Höss, R., Broad, P., Kremer, J.P. (1984). KL Auschwitz seen by the SS. Selection, elaboration and notes by Bezwinska, Jadwiga and Czech, Danuta. New York: Howard Fertig, pp. 213-30):

“November 26, 1940: Conferring of the Faithful Service Decoration by the Führer [Hitler].

April 10, 1941: Was commanded to Düsseldorf (Police Head Quarters) to undergo medical examination in connection with being called up to join the SS military ranks. Afternoon with Gretchen. A walk through the gardens in beautiful early spring weather.

May 20, 1941: Was entered into the *Wehrmacht* [German army] card index by order of the Army command, District Münster (Section II. 3671) of May 9, 1941. Appointment for Monday, May 12, 1941. Could not get the certificate of Indispensable for War Service ‘*U.K. Schein*’ from Heinemann. Becher advises to get directly in touch with the SS. Documents handed in [on May 1941].

[...]

March 23, 1942: Hänschen [his canary] ceased to suffer at 2 p.m. I was extremely sorry, as I had been so used to this poor little fellow, always so lively. Cremation. [...]

August 31, 1942: Tropical climate with 28 centigrades in the shade, dust and innumerable flies! Excellent food in the Home. This evening, for instance, we had sour duck livers for 0'40 mark, with stuffed tomatoes, tomato salad etc. Water is infected. So we drink seltzer water which is free (Mattoni). First inoculation for typhus. Had photo taken for the camp identity card.

September 1, 1942: Have ordered SS officer's cap, sword-belt and braces from Berlin by letter. In the afternoon was present at the gasing of a block with Cyclon B against lice.

September 2, 1942: Was present for the first time at special action at 3 a.m. In comparison with it Dante's *Inferno* seems to be almost a comedy. Auschwitz is justly called an extermination camp.

September 3, 1942: Was for the first time taken ill with the diarrhoea which attacks everybody in the camp here. Vomiting and colic-like paroxysmal pains. Water did not cause it as I had not drunk it. Neither was it the bread. People who take white bread only (diet) also fall ill. Most probably it is the unhealthy continental climate, very dry and tropically hot, with clouds of dust und insects (flies).

September 4, 1942: Against diarrhoea- 1 day gruel and mint tea, then on diet for a week. Took charcoal tablets and tannalbin. On the way to recovery.

September 5, 1942: This noon was present at a special action in the women's camp ('Moslems') [*Muselmänner*, NS term for final stages of starvation]- the most horrible of all horrors. *Hschf.* Thilo, military surgeon, is right when he said today to me we were located here in the '*anus mundi*' [anus of the world]. In the evening at about 8 p.m. another special action with a draft from

Holland. Men compete to take part in such actions as they get additional rations then- 1/5 litre vodka, 5 cigarettes, 100 grammes of sausage and bread. Today and tomorrow (Sunday) on duty.

September 6, 1942: Today an excellent Sunday dinner: tomato soup, one half of chicken with potatoes and red cabbage (20 grammes of fat), dessert and magnificent vanilla ice-cream [...].

[...]

September 27, 1942: This Sunday afternoon, from 4 till 8, a party in the club with supper, free beer and cigarettes. Speech of Commandant Höss and a musical and theatrical programme.

September 30, 1942: This night was present at the 8th special action [...]

October 3, 1942: Today I got quite living-fresh material of human liver, spleen and pancreas, also lice from a typhus case, fixed in absolute alcohol. [...]

[...]

October 10, 1942: Living-fresh material [...]

[...]

October 17, 1942: Was present at a punishment and 11 executions. Have taken living-fresh material of liver, spleen and pancreas after injection of pilocarpin. [...]

October 18, 1942: In wet and cold weather was on this Sunday morning present at the 11th special action (from Holland). Terrible scenes when 3 women begged to have their bare lives spared.

[...]

November 13, 1942: Living-fresh material (liver, spleen and pancreas) from a Jewish prisoner of 18, extremely atrophic, who had been photographed before. As usual with liver and spleen, it was fixed in *Carnoy* and pancreas in *Zenker* (prisoner No. 68030). [the prisoner was later identified as Hans de Yong or de Gong, born February 18, 1924, in Frankfort, Höss et al. 1984, p230].

[...]

August 10, 1945: Was today interrogated for a formal record by the military authorities in *Warendorferstrasse* in connection with my SS membership. I was obliged to wait there for hours in spite of my serious illness. Finally I was informed I should have to appear before the Englishmen in *Wülnerstrasse* on Sunday at 9 a.m. Vossolt was also present and he told me he had got in *Wülnerstrasse* the official physician's certificate of ill health. So I went there, too. The official physician, a former student of mine, at once gave me the certificate on the grounds of which I was dispensed from shoveling during the month of August. He thought my skin rash was herpes zoster. On my return home, my colleague Wucherpfening, specialist in skin diseases of this place, confirmed the diagnosis saying that all my troubles were the result of that disease. So I had at least the consolation that my fears it was a serious kidney complaint were ungrounded. He prescribed dry treatment with powder for the rash."