

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON EDGAR KUPFER-KOBERWITZ

DETAILED BIOGRAPHY WITH PHOTOGRAPHS

FAMILY, CHILDHOOD, AND YOUTH

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz was born as Edgar Kupfer on April 24, 1906 on the Koberwitz manor estate near Breslau. → **PHOTO 1** His father Max Kupfer worked there as an administrator.¹ He had married Anna Kauschmann on March 11, 1905.² Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz's sister Irma was born on March 11, 1913. Why the family left the estate is unknown. In the years that followed the family moved frequently. Max Kupfer worked as a salesman and was often forced to find a new job. Kupfer-Koberwitz thus attended schools in Bonn, Bad Harzburg, Regensburg, and Stuttgart. → **PHOTO 2** He had loving relationships with his parents and his sister. Only upon acknowledging his homosexuality did he have a fall out with his parents. Contact to his sister remained, however.³

After graduating from school, he worked as an agricultural trainee and office and bank clerk. → **PHOTO 3** At this point he had already discovered his passion for writing and began to author and publish smaller articles and poems.

A GLOBETROTTING LIFE

Talented in mastering most situations in life, Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz was a globetrotter. He discovered the joys of traveling when he reached full legal age in 1925. He spent a lot of time on the road in the following years and lived in different countries across Europe. He visited Capri (1925-1928), lived in Venice (1930), and stayed for longer spells in Austria (1930-1932), Paris (1932) → **PHOTO 4**, Munich, and Stuttgart. In most places he took on temporary jobs to earn his livelihood. On Capri for example he worked as a waiter and concierge after his money had run out. → **PHOTO 5** His wages were mostly so low that he barely managed to make ends meet.

Upon the Nazis assuming power in January 1933, Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz felt increasingly threatened, but stayed true to his principles. For example, he refused financial support from the emergency relief agency for artists because he was unwilling to accept money from the Nazi regime: *"I said to him [employee at the emergency relief] that I currently had no heating at home, and had a number of other financial woes, and although I have to acknowledge that there are a few good things about National Socialism, I reject much more, and I don't want to clench the fist of one hand only to open the other to take something – so I'll go without."*⁴

His homosexuality, which he never explicitly talked about in his letters and notes, heightened the danger of persecution by the Nazi regime. Paragraph 175 of the German Criminal Code which made sexual relations between men a punishable offense, was already in

¹ Max Kupfer probably died in the early 1940s while in the psychiatric and nursing home at Gabersee in Bavaria.

² Anna Kupfer née Kaufmann died on September 20, 1935.

³ Cf. Ellen Goebel: Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz. Eine biografische Untersuchung des Schriftstellers und Dachau-Überlebenden (1906–1991). Master's thesis submitted to the Department of History at the University of Bonn (unpublished), 2021, p. 36.

⁴ Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz: Dachauer Tagebücher. Die Aufzeichnungen des Häftlings 24814, Munich 1997, p. 56.

effect prior to 1933, but the Nazis broadened the law's scope and tightened enforcement. Although this danger is never explicitly given as a reason in his papers, the historian Ellen Goebel believes that it could have played a role in his considerations.⁵ In 1934 he decided to move to Paris, where Hilda G., a close acquaintance, was already living. He remained in Paris until 1937 and worked as a handweaver.

A few years later Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz fell seriously ill. He planned to travel south to recover. Without the necessary financial means this plan was not viable. It was only when a tourism operator commissioned him to write a travel guide about the Italian island of Ischia that the tide turned in his favor.

He relocated to Italy, where he worked as a tour guide and attempted to boost tourism in the region through selective advertising. Once the Second World War broke out in 1939, his situation on Ischia became increasingly under threat. Italy and Germany were allied nations in the war and had signed a police treaty in 1936: "In the event of well-founded suspicion, German and Italian police will directly extradite political criminals to the other country without entering diplomatic negotiations unless this harms the interest of the respective partner state."⁶

Despite the rising political tensions in Italy, Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz was forced to remain on Ischia because he did not have enough money to leave. It was at this time that he began to write the travel guide about the island (see the bibliography).

POLITICAL PRISONER

The Italian police arrested Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz in the fall of 1940 and extradited him to Germany. Traveling via the Brenner Pass he was taken to the Gestapo prison in Innsbruck. Here he was issued with a protective custody order, the basis for his deportation to the Dachau concentration camp. He was eventually deported to Dachau on November 11, 1940. In his notebooks he gave a detailed account of his arrest and the admissions procedure at the Dachau concentration camp. In words at once powerful and reflective, he described how he was stripped of his sense of humanity and turned into a mere number. He was shocked and dismayed at how the SS treated people held in the camp as prisoners. The brutality inflicted, even on older people, appalled him, as did the poor state of health of some of his fellow prisoners. Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz also wrote about everyday life in the camp: the roll call, the "bed making", the penalties and punishments, the different work details, and his own time in the penal company. He tried to find words for the violence, the hunger, the physical exhaustion, and the effects all this had on the emotional and psychological states of the prisoners as well as their behavior. Many of his comrades were seized by greed, egoism, and apathy. But Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz also experienced solidarity and help. After his first night in the Dachau concentration camp, the next morning he had to then make his bed according to the strict requirements demanded by the SS, a task so exasperating that it almost drove him to despair. The room elder stepped in and helped him so that he could get to the morning roll call on time.⁷

⁵ Cf. Ellen Goebel: Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz. Eine biografische Untersuchung des Schriftstellers und Dachau-Überlebenden (1906–1991). Master's thesis submitted to the Department of History at the University of Bonn (unpublished), 2021, p. 41.

⁶ Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz: Dachauer Tagebücher. Die Aufzeichnungen des Häftlings 24814, Munich 1997, foreword by Barbara Distel, p. 8.

⁷ Cf. Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz: Als Häftling in Dachau, Bonn 1956.

For the first two days Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz was assigned to a work detail on the “plantation”. The “plantation” was an area of open ground located northeast of the camp where the prisoners were forced to plant and grow medicinal herbs, spices, and flowers. Kupfer-Koberwitz was assigned to a detail that had to sort chili peppers. Forced to stand for long periods and being exposed to the rain took its toll. In this situation he once again received help and solidarity from his room elder, who secured him a position as a scribe in the “economic enterprises”. Unfortunately, he could not stay long in the detail. Shortly after the SS assigned him to the penal company – a fate handed out to many new arrivals. Those assigned to the penal company were placed in separate quarters away from their fellow prisoners, where they were then subjected to harsher living and working conditions. It was during this time that Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz observed the enormous suffering of the Jewish prisoners and was shocked at how the living and the dead were treated. On January 23, 1941 he was then deported for three months to the Neuengamme concentration camp near Hamburg. A kapo, who was well-disposed to him, wanted to save him from being placed on the transport. But Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz rejected this help because it seemed to him to be unfair towards his fellow prisoners.⁸

In Neuengamme extremely hard physical work and very poor living conditions were the determining characteristics of everyday life. Many of the prisoners died after just a short time from illness and exhaustion. Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz became emaciated, weighing just 44kg. Due to his poor state of health, he was sent back to the Dachau concentration camp on an “invalid transport”. His arrival in Dachau rekindled his hope and he was relieved to return. Here he could resume old friendships, friendships which now helped him to recuperate and regain his strength. His fellow prisoners gave him extra rations of food, while from time to time parcels from Hilda and his sister Irma arrived, which he shared with those he was particularly fond of. Kupfer-Koberwitz thus not only received help and solidarity but also generously gave what he could. These packages and letters provided him with extra emotional support:

“Received a wonderful letter from Hilda. – Nothing happened to her during the bombing raid. But the janitor’s apartment in the attic is gutted. And Hilda’s letter is so beautiful. I believe she is the greatest and most wonderful treasure I have – I believe only death can snatch her away from me... and not even that.”⁹

From October 1941 Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz was able to work in the “Präzifix” screw factory located outside the main camp. Here he began to look back and note down his experiences since his arrival in the “Dachau Book” while parallel writing entries into a diary and composing poems. His fellow prisoners considered him to be somewhat of a “joker” who lived in his own world. One reason for this impression was how he imitated the mewing and purring of cats when he entered a room. He enjoyed being able to make his comrades laugh a bit. He was given the nickname “Rau Rau” as a result and his former fellow prisoners still called him this after liberation. This position afforded him a certain ‘fool’s license’ – for the most part his comrades let him be and yet still took him under their wing.

⁷ Cf. Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz: Als Häftling in Dachau, Bonn 1956.

⁸ Ibid., p. 238/239.

⁹ Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz: Dachauer Tagebücher. Die Aufzeichnungen des Häftlings 24814, Munich 1997, p. 261/262.

As the length of his time in imprisonment grew, his health deteriorated. Heart problems caused him concern and a feeling of inner emptiness seemed to engulf him.

*"How well I understand that some flirt with the fence. – Just clutch at the electrified wire once and it's all over. – Or just charge at the guard cordon. – There's a bang, – you feel a sharp pain and are released from the misery, you dissolve into the unknown. If life on the outside often appears meaningless, then how much more so here, in this monotony, which knows no end. Yesterday I was in the camp. The sun was shining but I felt nothing, not even myself, it was as if I'd died."*¹⁰

On September 22, 1943 he wrote: *"I feel absolutely wretched at the moment. – Probably because it's fall. Like it is for old people, – and I've got a large bald patch already, it's getting bigger and bigger every day, – it's going to be huge. – My hair is falling out, for others it's their teeth. – I've still got life, even if my health is battered and frail. Often I'm so tired, inwardly and outwardly, that I'd like nothing more than to lie down and die, simply die. – [...] And then there's the food and 11 hours of work, it's all too much in the long run. No wonder one gives up. Naturally it's raining outside. Everyone is waiting for peace."*¹¹

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz's wish for peace was fulfilled with the liberation of the camp in April 1945. → **PHOTO 6** At around midday on April 28, 1945 the moment had come: most of the remaining SS men left the camp. The International Dachau Committee, a union founded illegally by a section of the prisoners in the weeks before liberation, took on responsibility for the prisoners.

On April 29, 1945 Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz wrote: *"Suddenly there's yelling outside, running around, rushing: 'The Americans have arrived, the Americans are in the camp, yes, yes, they're there on the roll call area!' Everyone springs into action. The sick get up out of their beds, the almost healthy and personnel run out onto the block road, jump out of windows, climb over the boardings. Everyone runs to the roll call area. From far away to close by one hears the yelling and cheering. Shouts of joy. Everyone is still moving, running around. The sick have excited and elated faces: 'They're here, we're free, free.'"*¹²

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz experienced liberation while in the sickbay. Flying shrapnel had injured his foot during an air raid on October 24, 1944. Just a few days before he had hidden his notes under the floor of the materials store at the screw factory. With the help of the American liberators and two of his comrades he salvaged the documents and began to restore and type them out. → **PHOTO 7** However, this took much longer than he had expected.

LIFE AFTER 1945

He left Dachau first in the summer of 1945, moving to the Schloss Haus owned by the Thurn and Taxis family in Regensburg, where he continued typing his notes. Here he also wrote the preface to his diaries. He never returned to Dachau.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 147.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 171.

¹² Ibid., p. 444.

No longer wishing to stay in Germany, he moved probably in the fall of 1947 to Switzerland, where he lived, amongst other places, by Lago Maggiore. In this period several of his works were published: "Kette der Tage" (Chains of the Days, 1946), "Die Tierbrüder" (Brother Animals, 1947), and his travel guide on Ischia (1948), which he had finished at the beginning of the 1940s before his arrest. In the fall of 1952, he finally traveled to his beloved island of Ischia. Alas, the island was no longer how he remembered it. With his visa for the USA finally approved, he moved there a year later. Most likely an American military officer and professor at Chicago University had sponsored his application. The hoped-for financial support failed to eventuate unfortunately, leaving him very disappointed. Once again he fell into financial difficulties, which forced him to take odd jobs.¹³ During the seven years he lived in the USA he was unable to gain a foothold professionally. In a letter to one of his supporters in New York in 1960, he wrote: *"My time here in America has not been very fortunate. Houseboy in a hotel, nightwatchman in a department store, washing dishes, a professional Santa Claus, and here most recently doorman at a large movie theater. My strength and vigor were probably already too depleted to endure all that without intellectual stimulation from others and joy."*¹⁴

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz began to make arrangements in September 1960 to leave the USA and to move back to Ischia. In the fall of 1963, he moved to Sardinia. A tourist company had commissioned him to write a guidebook about Sardinia. It was hoped to land a success similar to his book on Ischia. He spent the next 24 years on Sardinia but moved house quite frequently. From 1966 he lived in a small cabin on the hills near San Teodoro. → **PHOTO 8** *"Now I'm living in a cabin nearby (a scenically very beautiful area) with two stray dogs and a stray cat with two kittens. That's my family."*¹⁵

→ **PHOTO 9**

He collected material and objects about Sardinia important for his planned travel guide. However, writer's block hindered him from getting started. *"I haven't been able to write since 1945 and this is probably what I suffer from the most, by which I mean, this is the symptom of my great suffering, as if a bird would no longer sing. If I were a millionaire or a beggar, I would always write, because it's something that I have to do. But as it is now, everything in me has fallen silent and in a way it is to be the living dead. Perhaps though I've only been buried alive and one day my tomb will be opened."*¹⁶ *"What I do is, I still have a few manuscripts. I polish these manuscripts, attempt to type them up so that they are ready to print."*¹⁷

¹³ Cf. Ellen Goebel: Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz. Eine biografische Untersuchung des Schriftstellers und Dachau-Überlebenden (1906-1991). Master's thesis submitted to the Department of History at the University of Bonn (unpublished), 2021, p. 88.

¹⁴ Letter by Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz to Konrad H. from September 17, 1960, Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site.

¹⁵ Letter by Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz to Viktor Matejka dated November 19, 1958. Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA, A 1762.

¹⁶ Letter by Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz to Konrad H. from September 17, 1960, Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site.

¹⁷ Radio interview by Elfie Pertramer with Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz 1974. Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz und San Teodoro 1-4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJnS_Gj7URU (accessed February 10, 2024).

Ten years later he had to leave his home in San Teodoro for health reasons. He moved to the island's interior. Here his foster son, whom he had gotten to know on Sardinia, looked after him and the household. In 1978 he returned briefly to Germany for an operation. Back in Sardinia he continued to live on the breadline. The compensation he received from Germany for his concentration camp imprisonment was not enough to make ends meet. A family he had become friends with on Sardinia supported him financially into the 1980s.

A few years later (1986) his health worsened. He was suffering from heart failure, which forced him to return to Germany. → **PHOTO 10** With the contact to his sister no longer as close as it was, he found a place to stay with family D., with whom he was on friendly terms. But upon Mrs. D. dying, Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz was admitted to a nursing home near Stuttgart. Not much is known about his time there.

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz died on July 7, 1991. He did not live to see the publication of his diary by the then director of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Dr. Barbara Distel, in 1997. His comrades from the Dachau concentration camp laid a wreath in his honor at the funeral. → **PHOTO 11**



PHOTO 1

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz as a baby

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA F6427_0005



PHOTO 2

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz in 1912

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA F6427_0010



PHOTO 3

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz aged 17 in 1923

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA F6427_0013



PHOTO 4

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz with the poodle Casso, 1932

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA F6427_0023



PHOTO 5

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz on Capri, 1924

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA F6427_0016

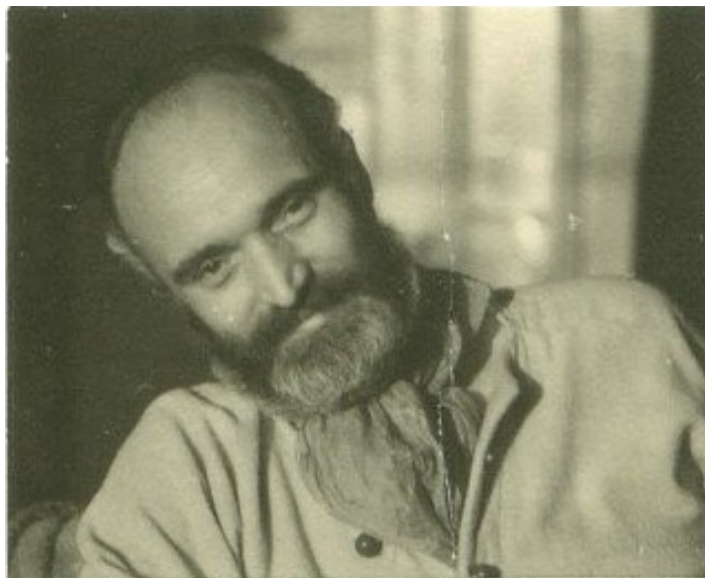


PHOTO 6

**Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz after liberation from
the Dachau concentration camp, 1945**

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA F6427_0030

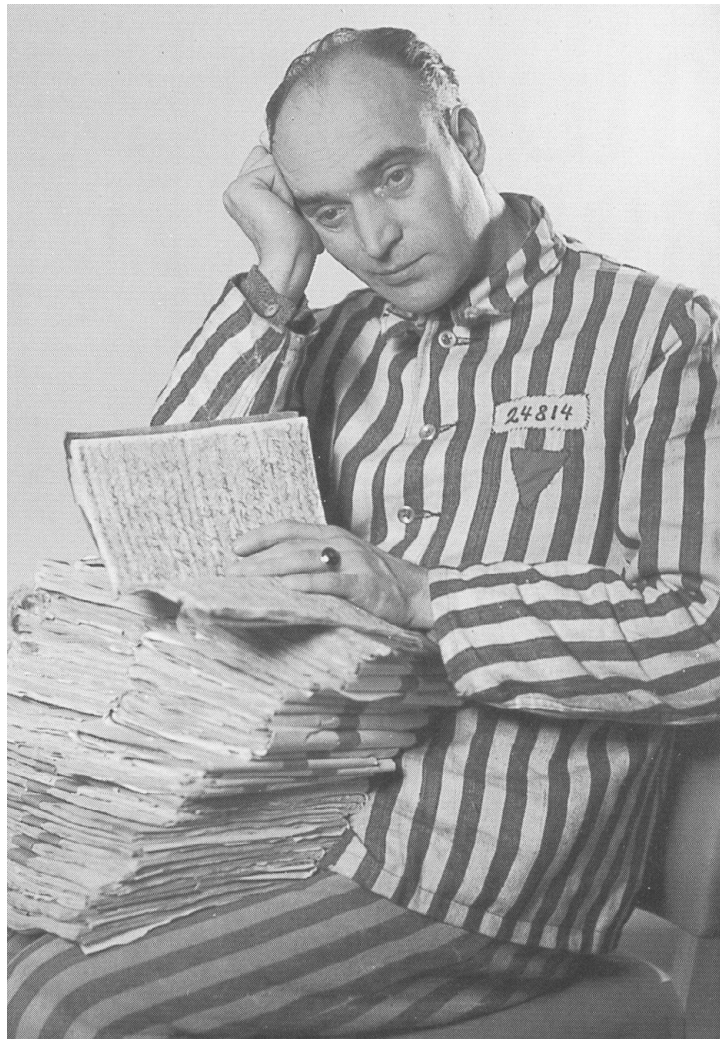


PHOTO 7

**Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz in his former prisoner clothes
with all the manuscript pages, beginning of 1946**

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA F5229



PHOTO 8

**Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz on Sardinia
(probably between 1966 and 1976)**

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA F6427_0048



PHOTO 9

**Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz, taken probably in Switzerland
between 1966 and 1976**

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, DaA F6427_0051



PHOTO 10

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz, 1988

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site



PHOTO 11

**Wreath for Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz laid at his funeral,
dedicated by his former fellow prisoners**

Archive of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON EDGAR KUPFER-KOBERWITZ

KEY DATES IN THE LIFE OF EDGAR KUPFER-KOBERWITZ**April 24, 1906**

Edgar Kupfer is born on the Koberwitz manor estate near Breslau.

Following years

Edgar Kupfer's family leave the estate. The family is forced to move frequently for employment reasons. Edgar thus attends schools in Bonn, Bad Harzburg, Regensburg, and Stuttgart.

July 6, 1913

Birth of his sister Irma in Stapelburg, Harz.

1921-1923

After graduating from school, he works as an agricultural trainee and office and bank clerk; also active as a writer and the first poems and newspaper articles are published.

1920s

Meets and becomes acquainted with his close confidant, Hilda G.

From 1925

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz begins to travel around Europe.

1925-1928

Lives on the island of Capri. Here Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz decides to become a vegetarian.

1930

Moves to Venice.

1930-1932

Moves to Austria.

1932

Lives in Paris.

Ca. 1933/34

Returns to Germany, lives for a time in Munich.

1934-1937

After the Nazis assume power he immigrates to Paris.

1937

Commissioned by a tourist company to write a travel guide about the island of Ischia. Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz subsequently moves to Italy.

Fall 1940

Arrested on Ischia and transferred to the Gestapo prison in Innsbruck on the basis of a police agreement between Germany and Italy.

November 11, 1940

Deportation to the Dachau concentration camp.

January 1941

Transferred to the Neuengamme concentration camp near Hamburg.

April 1941

Returned to the Dachau concentration camp on an "invalid transport".

1942-1945

Works in the office of the Dachau external work detail "Präzifix", writes the Dachau Diaries. Helped by a fellow prisoner, he hides his notes under the floor of the "Präzifix" screw factory.

April 29, 1945

Liberation of the Dachau concentration camp by American troops. Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz experiences the liberation while confined to the sickbay. Shortly after liberation he begins to dry and restore his notes.

1945

Changes his surname from Kupfer into Kupfer-Koberwitz.

Probably fall 1947

Completes the restoration of his diary and moves to Switzerland.

1946-1948

Publication of literary works.

Probably fall 1952

Returns to the island of Ischia.

1953-1960

Emigrates to the USA but cannot gain a foothold professionally.

1960/61

Returns to Ischia.

Beginning of the 1960s

Commissioned by a tourist company to write a travel guide about Sardinia.

On Sardinia, Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz lives from his monthly compensation payments for his concentration camp imprisonment as well as odd jobs. He frequently changes his place of residence on the island.

1978

Short visit to Germany for an operation.

1986

Return to Germany due to his poor health. He lives with a family he is on friendly terms with.

Ab 1987

Lives in a nursing home near Stuttgart.

7. Juli 1991

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz dies. His grave no longer exists.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION ON EDGAR KUPFER-KOBERWITZ

LITERARY WORK (SELECTION)

„MENSCHEN AUF CAPRI. EINE LÄSTERIADE“

(People on Capri. A Blasphemy)

(1925–1928, unpublished)

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz wrote this book about the island while living on Capri – presumably one of his earliest works. In it he describes the small scandals of the people on the island, whom he gives codenames. The topic of homosexuality also plays a role.

„ZAVA“ (1930, novel, unpublished)

The unpublished novel is about the life of a young man, Harry Graf von der Zava. When his stepfather finds out Zava is homosexual he throws him out of the house. The protagonist moves to Berlin, works there as a composer and finds love. Despite this positive development, the story ends in tragedy. The historian Ellen Goebel believes that the text contains unmistakable parallels to Kupfer-Koberwitz's own life: "the lack of understanding shown by the family, the secret way of life, the wish to be able to live openly as a homosexual, the attempt to be successful with artistic work."¹

„DAS LEBEN – DIE HÖLLE“

(Life – Hell on Earth)

(1931, satire, out of print)

This work is only 38 pages long and is a piece of social criticism in poetic form. Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz criticizes in particular rampant consumerism, wars, and the treatment of animals – topics still relevant today. The book was brought out as a self-publication in Stuttgart.

„KETTE DER TAGE. GEDICHTE ÜBER DACHAU“

(Chains of the Day. Poems about Dachau)

(1946/1947, out of print)

Along with his diary entries, Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz began to write poems during his imprisonment in the Dachau concentration camp. The volume of poems *Kette der Tage* was published in 1946.

¹ Cf. Ellen Goebel: Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz. Eine biografische Untersuchung des Schriftstellers und Dachau-Überlebenden (1906–1991). Master's thesis submitted to the Department of History at the University of Bonn (unpublished), 2021, p. 38.

„DACHAU-BUCH“ UND „DACHAUER TAGEBÜCHER“ (Dachau Book and Dachau Diaries)

(1946: excerpts published in a booklet on the Dachau concentration camp; 1956: excerpts from the book published in the journal *Das Parlament*; 1956: special issue entitled “A prisoner in Dachau” in the series of the Bundeszentrale für Heimatdienst in Bonn; 1957 and 1960: publication of an abridged version in two volumes entitled *Die Mächtigen und die Hilflosen* (The Powerful and the Helpless); 1997: publication of the Dachau Diaries by the former director of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Dr. Barbara Distel)

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz’s notes written while in the Dachau concentration camp comprise two documents. As he began to write in November 1942, he depicted his experiences since his arrest in September 1940 in what was called the “Dachau Book”. This manuscript contains circa 1,300 pages. Parallel to this he works on the second document – his diary. On more than 580 pages he tells of accounts and stories from other prisoners as well as his own experiences (Dachau Diaries).

Many factors came together to make the notes possible: Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz had access to the necessary materials in his new work detail at the “Präzifix” screw factory located outside the main Dachau camp, he had enough privacy as well as the energy and time for writing, he possessed the required background as a writer and the talent, as well as the will to record his experiences. His notes were written with his close confidant Hilda G. in mind.

„DIE TIERBRÜDER. ,ICH TUE MEINEN MUND AUF FÜR DIE STUMMEN“ Brother Animals. Speaking up for those who can’t (1947, new editions 1994, 2010)

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz turned vegetarian in 1925. He had this love of and compassion for animals from his father. His niece Wally Walter has told Ellen Goebel about an incident in Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz’s childhood that had a formative influence on him. As a child Kupfer-Koberwitz liked to shoot at animals with an air gun. His father explained that this could hurt the animals and indeed even kill them. From then on he fired only at objects.²

Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz already began to work on the book in 1945 while confined to the sickbay of the Dachau concentration camp. The text addresses readers in letters and makes the case for renouncing meat. Examples from everyday life are cited which show how animals have to suffer for human enjoyment. Animal rights and vegetarian associations still refer to the work today.

² Ibid., p. 34.

„ISCHIA. DIE VERGESSENE INSEL“ (Ischia. The Forgotten Island) (1948)

In this travel guide Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz tells about the island of Ischia, its nature, myths and legends, and his warm encounters with locals. The book reads like a novel. Life on Ischia is described as very tranquil and romantic, far removed from mass tourism. Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz hoped that this work would entice more tourists to visit the island and help the population become more prosperous.

WORKS AFTER 1950

After 1950 Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz wrote no new books and texts which were published. A German tourism company commissioned him to write about Sardinia, but he was never able to move beyond the stage of collecting material. He seems to have suffered from writer's block.³

At the same time, Edgar Kupfer-Koberwitz followed very closely how his “Dachau-Buch” and “Dachauer Tagebücher” were received publicly. He collected all the reviews he could find and letters from readers into an album. While the positive resonance pleased him, he had wished for a broader appreciation and readership of his works. He did not live to see the publication of his diary by the former director of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site, Dr. Barbara Distel, in 1997.

³ Ibid., p. 92.