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Summary

During the time of fighting (“Kampfzeit” in Austria, which refers to the time before the Anschluss in 1938), in the area of your responsibility, did you experience any competition or friction between the SA and the SS?

Answer: No, we were comrades and always worked together harmonically. Of course, elsewhere people may have had confrontations because of personal differences.

Did Kaltenbrunner during the years ‘30 to ‘38 have any contacts to Landeshauptmann Gleissner or to the “Sicherheitsdirektor” (unable to understand the name)?

Answer: I believe that Kaltenbrunner in his role as SS leader had no such official contacts. Such official contacts were maintained only by the “political leaders”, Engineer Reinhaller and Rudolf Lengauer, later Gauhauptmann of Oberösterreich. But, yes, it is very well possible that Kaltenbrunner had such contacts to Gleissner through Reinhaller. Later Reinhaller and Kaltenbrunner shared a room with Holzinger in Kaisersteinbruch, the Internment Camp. “The Comradeship among us was extraordinary”. In Kaisersteinbruch it came to a hunger strike, the cause being desperation leading to nervous breakdowns of some interns. One killed himself. Reinhaller and Kaltenbrunner organized the hunger strike. Holzinger and... were responsible for transmitting messages from barrack to barrack (which they were not allowed to leave). They did that by signaling with handkerchiefs. They tried to break the strike, transported people to hospitals and promised release if we’d stop the strike. The Social Democrats, kept in a neighboring barrack, ended the strike and were released, but we, the NSDAP comrades, did not stop the strike. When Kaltenbrunner and Reinhaller were taken to the hospital they transferred leadership to Holzinger. “After 11 days of hunger striking we were down to 30 men.” But they reached their goal, the camp Kaisersteinbruch was disbanded. The 30 surviving Kaisersteinbruch inmates were taken to Wöllersdorf, where Holzinger continued to fast, after which he was released. During the hunger strike in Kaisersteinbruch Staatsseretär Kawinski (spelling?) came and tried to convince them to terminate the strike, but he was met with hostility. Somebody spat at him and he left without convincing the strikers. Were there any rumors that Kaltenbrunner and ___ (not able to understand the name) had contacts to Gleissner? No, such rumors did not exist. Again: Only the NSDAP political leaders made these contacts to government officials. Also on the level of his “Bezirk”, where Holzinger was the leader, he never talked to government representatives, for example the Bezirkshauptmann. Such contacts would have been looked at as suspicious. Maybe Kaltenbrunner had some personal contacts to Gleissner etc, - but knowing Kaltenbrunner’s character Holzinger does not believe he divulged any confidential information.

How was Kaltenbrunner appreciated among comrades, first in Linz and then in Austria?

Answer: Kaltenbrunner was locally always appreciated as SS leader and as a good comrade. One was happy that he advanced in his career in Linz and then Vienna. However, people also missed him when he left. The "Kampfzeit" had tied us together.

Did Kaltenbrunner ever talk to you about his vision for Austria in future?

Answer: For us Austria was part of the German Reich. It was the Führer's home country. The Führer again and again showed his special interest in Oberösterreich, specifically in Linz. He frequently examined the special plans for the expansion of Linz and we were shown those plans. - The idea to have an experienced Gauleiter, like Bürckel or Schirach, come to Austria and take control of that part of the Reich, was not discussed. "Schirach was controversial, he did not play a praiseworthy role when the Reich collapsed. Maybe it was better to appoint a foreigner as a leader in Wien. There was competition, power struggles, among Austrians. Leopold might have been a possible leader... Probably Kaltenbrunner would have preferred an Austrian in the position of Gauleiter."

After these five, a few more specific questions: What can you say about Kaltenbrunner's character?

Answer: From '30 to '33 a lot of people joined the NSDAP. The units of the SA, SS and Hitlerjugend had to be split up again and again because they grew so rapidly. As tension with the government grew the NSDAP was outlawed in 1933. Consequently, we had to go underground, claiming to not be NSDAP members, but we maintained our convictions. Some were caught when, for example, distributing newspapers and they were jailed. They tried to get those who were arrested to betray comrades and that's how the wave of arrests grew. The growing conflict and opposition led to the creation of internment camps ("Anhaltelager"), Kaisersteinbruch and Wöllersdorf being the first ones. – "During the July Putsch of 1934 I was incarcerated. I had been caught with illegal newspapers. At that time, I noticed that more and more comrades were jailed." Holzinger does not know whether Kaltenbrunner was involved in that putsch. – Holzinger merged SA, SS and Hitlerjugend to form one organization in his "Bezirk Schwanenstadt", in order to coordinate activities better. This merger was possible because he was appreciated by all. – He was not indicted after the '34 putsch because he was incarcerated during that time and his two people replacing him, who were convicted, said that he, Holzinger, had no knowledge of the putsch. – Yes, he was with Kaltenbrunner several times, also after '38. "Once, with Hitler present, we met until 3am." He also met Kaltenbrunner later, in November of '44, in the Wilhelmstrasse in Berlin. Holzinger was a soldier on the front, later Kaltenbrunner sent him some cigarettes for distribution to Holzinger's unit. - Holzinger thought that Kaltenbrunner would have liked to stay in Austria, just as he, Holzinger, would have liked to stay in his home land.

How was the "Judenfrage", the "Jewish Issue", assessed in Oberösterreich, - before '38 and after '38?

Holzinger feels that the proportion of Jews of the entire Austrian population was much too high. After the first world war trains full of Jews arrived at the Ostbahnhof in Vienna and the resident Jews, who were shopkeepers, helped these newcomers to get established. Consequently, they were able to dominate large sectors of society (culture, judicial system, etc). When the time of economic crisis started the people you'd see wearing fur or jewelry were generally Jews. "And our people suffered." In Oberösterreich, however, there were hardly any Jews: in Schwanstadt none, in Steyr one. - "That's how the hate against Jews became prevalent. We understood this situation and felt that the important positions in society (government, economy, culture, press) must be filled with Austrians, not Jews..... That's how Hitler explained in Mein Kampf the Jewish issue should be dealt with." In '38 nothing changed in Holzinger's area, because there were no Jews there. Then came the war and, "as far as I know, Weizmann (spelling?) in America declared war on Germany in the name of the entire Jewry. Then Canaris said 'they declared war, they are among us, but we don't know them'. That is how the David Star came about. Then Hitler sent boatloads of Jews to England and France, but they did not take them, so they came back and then they got into Concentration Camps. Then everything became more radical and more difficult because of the war." Holzinger claims that the numbers of Jews killed are exaggerated: "There were not as many Jews in Austria as they claim were killed." Then he recounts some happenings he experienced as a company commander (Kompaniechef") during the latter part of the war: "A column of Concentration Camp inmates marching with a white flag was mowed down by fire from attacking airplanes. Another episode: A group of Concentration Camp inmates was killed by machine gun fire from the enemy. And an unknow number of people were killed from bombardments of cities. Also: Stalin sent 2.3 Million Jews to Siberia, - by train, in Winter. Most of them froze to death on the way. In Romania Romanian units shot masses of Jews. All that is counted as being caused by us! All wars are horrible and horrible things happen. Humans may turn into monsters. And if our people were being sentenced to death (illegally, since those sentences were not based on laws), why was in England, America or France never anybody indicted, because the same things happened there as well... We are burdened by this heavy load Everybody wants to be proud of his people. And we Germans always were proud and we still are. And the heaviest burden for me is that there are still people who stain their own nest, because all we did was loving our home country as you do as an American. In the war criminals camp, we experienced American commanders who were pigs and others who were friends, who declared that they had highest respect for the German soldiers, because there are no better and no more decent soldiers.

What was the position of the NSDAP in Oberösterreich and generally in Austria on social issues, vis-à-vis business and capital?

Answer: The worker was going to be integrated in society, would not be exploited, as was the case in the past. Only under Hitler did the worker learn that he belonged to the community. And we in the SA cultivated that comradeship, that integration, which workers had never experienced before. The objective was the people community ("Volksgemeinschaft"). Another essential issue was that only he who worked and achieved was of value: The do-nothing, the idler, was of no value. Those were the criteria we used when staff decisions had to be taken. Classes were to be extinguished. Property remained untouched, though. Also, large businesses

remained intact. The long-term goal was to have workers partake in the company's profit. Companies who managed business in this fashion were recognized with the "Goldene Fahne", the "golden flag".

Holzinger did not think that after '38 the Austrians felt overwhelmed by Germans coming in and taking over much of the administration. At least in his area, Oberösterreich, such feelings did not exist.