

OFFICE OF U.S. CHIEF OF COUNSEL
FOR PROSECUTION OF AXIS CRIMINALITY

INTERROGATION DIVISION SUMMARY

Interrogation of: ERNST KALTENBRUNNER and GABOR VAJNA
By: Lt. Col. S. Brookhart, 15 October 1945, P.M.

PERSONS AND ORGANIZATIONS IMPLICATED AND SUBJECTS

1. KALTENBRUNNER

- a. Police Function
 - (1) Position in chain of command (p. 1-3, p.7)
 - (a) Winkelmann and Eichmann as direct subordinates of Himmler (p. 4-6)
- b. Deportation of Jews from Hungary (p. 8-14)
- c. Involvement in Hungarian Politics
 - (1) Establishment of German Control (p. 15)

2. VAJNA

- a. German Exploitation of Hungary (p. 18-24)

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND

Vajna stated that on the basis of his negotiations with Himmler, Berger and Kaltenbrunner in connection with the affairs of Hungary in 1944, the following is his impression of the chain of command: Himmler to Berger, to Kaltenbrunner, to Winkelmann (in charge of German police for Hungary) and Eichmann (in charge of Jewish affairs) (p.1-2) (Vajna drew chart to illustrate, which was marked Exhibit "A"- Vajna). With respect to Eichmann, Vajna acknowledged that he replied on "...the backing of German might and especially Kaltenbrunner..." (p.3,7).

In reply Kaltenbrunner again denied that he was Eichmann's superior, insisting as always that Eichmann was under the Secret State Police, with which organization he, Kaltenbrunner, had no connection (p.4). He stated that Vajna is "suffering under a mis-impression" (p.4). Kaltenbrunner continued to insist that Vajna, a "foreigner", misunderstood German organizational structure; that Vajna's visit to Berlin in 1944 was merely a social call, that the questions of police jurisdiction and the organization of the Hungarian Gendarmes in connection with the evacuation of Hungarian civilians might have been discussed, but Kaltenbrunner naturally was not empowered to take any official action in the matter. Winkelmann is pointed to as a direct subordinate of Himmler's. Neither Berger nor Kaltenbrunner constituted intervening agencies (p.4-5).

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THE JEWS IN HUNGARY

Kaltenbrunner stated that in the discussion in 1944 regarding the evacuations of Hungarian civilians it was his understanding from political reports that the Jews were to be kept in Hungary (p.8). Vajna, however, was quoted as having previously stated that Kaltenbrunner had ordered the immediate delivery of the Jews from Hungary to Germany (p.8). Apparently measures were taken to evacuate certain of the Jews to neutral countries (p.9). Vajna reiterated that Kaltenbrunner had assured him that he would give every possible support to the Hungarian Police agencies handling the evacuation (p. 10).

The evacuation of the Jews was handled by Lt. Col. of the Police Ferenczy. The Jews were concentrated at a central point. Those who did not report voluntarily were arrested, "conscripted" (p.10). The matter of deportation (transportation, feeding, etc.) of the Jews was handled by the Army. Kaltenbrunner stated that he knew nothing of these details (p. 16), that he had never discussed the matter with Eichmann (p. 11). Kaltenbrunner insisted again that the entire matter was handled by Eichmann under the direct order of Himmler, (p. 12), that he (Kaltenbrunner) had nothing whatever to do with the matter (p. 13), insisting that his functions merely involved the preparation of Internal Information reports (p. 14).

KALTENBRUNNER AND HUNGARIAN POLITICS

Kaltenbrunner stated that in the matter of establishing a German controlled government in Hungary he had come in sharp conflict with Ribbentrop. Kaltenbrunner had (in conjunction with Veessenmayer) consistently advocated a government formed under a general plenipotentiary for the whole of Hungary, Haslachner (p. 15). Ribbentrop was opposed to the move, thus it never succeeded. Kaltenbrunner never appeared again on the Hungarian scene (p. 15).

GERMAN EXPLOITATION OF HUNGARY

Vajna stated that after the occupation in March 1944 there was a gradual encroachment of German control in Hungarian policies. For example, in the matter of the huge Manfred Weisz factory (employing some 45000) the Hungarian management, including many Jews, was replaced by Austrians. Protests brought assurances from Himmler that the control would last only for the duration of the war (p. 18). German police agencies in Hungary arrested certain of the Hungarian political leaders without giving notification to Hungarian authorities. Jews were also included in the drag-net (p. 18-20). Himmler was particularly interested in the establishment of a Secret Hungarian State Police to work with the German Secret Police (p. 18). Vajna stated that it was only toward the end that he gained the impression that it was the intention of the Germans to completely absorb the control of the Hungarian Government - to eventually dispose of all Hungarian leaders (p. 21). It was likewise at this time that Vajna and his associates came to realize the intention of Germany to plunder and exploit the country (p. 21). Vajna stated that he had often wanted to protest to Himmler regarding the atrocities which were committed against Hungarian refugees at the border in 1945. Through it all Hungary's loyalty was based on one principal hope - that the German assurances of quick victory through the use of a secret weapon or similar instrument was true (p. 24).