ERNST KALTENBRUNNER AT THE SUMMIT:
A STUDY OF THE LAST CHIEF OF THE SECURITY POLICE AND SECURITY SERVICE

by

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Abstract

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This thesis is a study of SS-Obergruppenführer Dr. Ernst Kaltenbrunner, who, from January 30, 1943, to May 8, 1945, served as chief of the Security Police and Security Service of National Socialist Germany. This post was one of the highest in the Nazi repressive machinery and one of the most important in the Reich as a whole.

The first chapter of this study is devoted to Kaltenbrunner's life from the time of his birth on October 3, 1903, until his appointment as chief of the Security Police on January 30, 1943. During this forty year period Kaltenbrunner, the son of a bourgeois lawyer, rose from law student to higher SS and police leader in Vienna. It was during these four decades that the interaction of the collapse of the Habsburg monarchy, the impoverishment of his parents, the tumult of the twenties, the depression, and other factors molded his character. During these years he first displayed the "bully-slave" nature which was later to become the dominant element in his character. It was also during the later years of this period that he joined the National Socialist Party and the SS. In fact, from 1932 to 1935 he rose from SS recruit to commander of the SS in Austria and was twice imprisoned for his Nazi activities by the Dollfuss-Schuschnigg regime. In 1938 he aided in bringing about the Anschluss. From 1938 to 1943 he was one of the leading
SS and police leaders in Germany. Then, in January, 1943, he went to Berlin as head of the Reich Security Head Office.

Chapter II is concerned with Kaltenbrunner's activities after his appointment as chief of the Security Police. It deals with his involvement in the "White Rose" affair, the "bullet" decree, the repression of the July 20 plot, the attempted destruction of the concentration camps in 1945, and the "final solution of the Jewish problem."

Finally, Kaltenbrunner's life from early 1945 until his execution on October 16, 1946, is examined in the last chapter of this study. In this part his trial before the International Military Tribunal, the case against him, his defense, and his death are described in detail. Lastly, an attempt is made to fathom the character of the man, to show how typical he was of the higher echelons of the SS and police leadership as a whole, and to relate these factors to the problem of totalitarianism in general.
For Sandra and Grandmother

... Man, proud man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
...Like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

William Shakespeare, Measure for Measure.
Act II, Scene 2
PREFACE

It is the contention of this thesis that by studying the career of Ernst Kaltenbrunner one may gain insight, not only into his own fascinating character, but also into the nature of men, like Heinrich Himmler, Heinrich Müller, Rudolf F. F. Höss, and others who operated the Nazi repressive machinery. It is also hoped that this study will provide the reader with some conception of how the National Socialist regime operated, what the internal and external stresses it faced were, and how its leadership reacted to such difficulties. Although this thesis is only a small contribution to a large field of research, it is hoped it will prove useful.

I wish to thank first and foremost Professor R. John Rath, my thesis director, for the time, taken from a very busy schedule, and the patience he has accorded me and for the able and perceptive criticisms and suggestions he has made. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to the other two members of my committee, Professors Frank E. Vandiver and Gerald M. Straka, for their aid. Next, I should like to convey my gratitude to Dr. Earl R. Beck and Dr. Elke Frank, both of Florida State University, who originally guided me into the labyrinth of the German coercive machinery. I must also thank Mr. John J. Haag, of Rice University, who helped me in gathering materials, and Mr. Robert J. Gentry, also of Rice University, whose typewriter made this thesis possible. In addition, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to the staffs of the Fondren Library of Rice University; the Robert Manning Strozier Library of Florida State University; the Hollywood (Florida) Public Library; and the Miami Public Library, for the assistance they have rendered me. Finally, I should like to
express my thanks to my fiancée, Sandra Wolf, without whose support and encouragement this thesis could never have been written. It should be noted that I alone am responsible for any errors to be found in the study.

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CHAPTER I:
THE RISE TO THE SUMMIT, 1903-1943

In the recent history of Europe there are two phenomena which overshadow all the other events around them in importance: the National Socialist regime in Germany and the Soviet system in Russia. The self-evident import of these two manifestations has resulted in the production of an enormous amount of literature, some useful, the rest not. In general, the works produced on the Soviet Union have been of a higher quality than those which deal with Nazi Germany. There are at least two reasons for this superiority of Soviet over National Socialist studies. First, the Soviet Union has been an enemy of the Western world for at least two decades. As a consequence of the cold war there is a need for as much information and explication as possible about the nature of the adversary. The very fact that such data and interpretation has had to be drawn upon to formulate a response to Soviet actions has made it imperative that it be substantially accurate and unbiased. Second, the very nature of the Communist regime has intrigued scholars, and the length of time that it has remained in existence has made it possible to render balanced judgments from the vantage point of historical perspective. For these and other reasons, many solid, well-done works have been written about Soviet Russia.

On the other hand, although a large number of books have been produced which deal with the Nazi regime, there have been relatively fewer first-rate works dealing with National Socialist Germany than there have been solid studies of the Soviet Union. The reasons for
this situation are manifold. First, since 1945 there has been no need for works which give a clear, thoughtful picture of an adversary. Furthermore, due, in part, to the very ephemeralness of the Nazi era, there has been little historical perspective upon which to draw. Also, in dealing with the National Socialist system, one is confronted with an emotionalism of a particularly virulent variety. This is not to say that there is no emotionalism to be found among students of the U.S.S.R.; there most certainly is. However, such lack of the proper historical attitude is to be found mainly among journalists rather than among professional historians. The latter, as well as some gifted amateurs, have generally displayed a lack of bias much to be admired. On the other hand, it is difficult to find an historian, whether amateur or professional, of the older generation, who has not been in one way or another deeply biased by the actions of Hitler and his minions. To these people the Second World War is still fresh; the mass murders are still starkly personal; the devastation and death are still present. Their historical perspective is still far too often affected by emotion to view the Nazi regime as simply an historical event of great importance.

In the study of no aspect of the National Socialist system has this lack of historical impartiality and accuracy been more evident than in dealing with the Nazi repressive machinery (the police, the Gestapo, the SS, etc.) and its leaders. In treating this topic writers have tended to engage in sensationalism and purple prose. They have concentrated upon the admittedly despicable mass murders,¹

¹This topic has received exhaustive treatment in Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books,
the concentration camps, individual murders, and so forth. Thus far no writer has succeeded in accurately describing the repressive machinery in relation to the government and system it served. Nor have the leaders of the huge Nazi coercive machine received adequate treatment. There have been few biographies of them, and of those few, fewer still are useful to scholars. The biographers of these men have often been more interested in sensationalism than in scholarship.

1961); and in Gerald Reitlinger, The Final Solution: the Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe, 1939-1945 (London: Valletine, Mitchell, 1953). Both deal primarily with the Jews, who were the principal mass murder victims, but also cover the other victims (Gypsies, assorted European peoples, and others).

2 The best work on concentration camps is Eugen Kogon, The Theory and Practice of Hell (Trans. by Heinz Norden, New York: Berkley Pub. Corp., 1958). Mr. Kogon spent several years in Buchenwald concentration camp, but his account remains well balanced.

3 The only attempts of value are Gerald Reitlinger's The SS: Alibi of a Nation, 1922-1945 (Toronto: Heinemann, 1956), which often breaks down into melodramatic language and which just as often lacks perspective; and E. K. Bramstedt, Dictatorship and Political Police: the Technique of Control by Fear. In the International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction series, ed. by Karl Mannheim. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner, and Co., Ltd., 1945), which is well done but which was written before many sources were available and which ends with a plea for the establishment of community centers in defeated Germany in order to democratize it!

4 An adequate life of the head of the coercive system, Heinrich Himmler, has at last appeared. This is Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, Himmler (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), which dispells many of the clouds surrounding Himmler's career. Nonetheless, this work cannot be considered definitive. It leaves the reader feeling unsatisfied. It simply does not completely explain Himmler or his place in the Nazi hierarchy.

5 For example, see Charles Wighton, Heydrich: Hitler's Most Evil Henchman (New York: Chilton Co., 1962). The subtitle of this book gives sufficient warning as to its character.
It is the purpose of this thesis to attempt to fill at least part of the void in the knowledge and understanding of the National Socialist repressive machinery by presenting the results of a study, brief and incomplete though it may yet be, of the life, work, and importance of one of the main leaders of the Nazi coercive apparatus, Ernest Kaltenbrunner.\footnote{A full-scale biography of Kaltenbrunner has never been written. There are only vignettes embedded in various works dealing with other subjects. Regretfully, these character sketches have suffered from sensationalism and emotionalism.} It is hoped that this investigation will be of more than limited interest, for, while Kaltenbrunner was an individual, he also typified many other National Socialist leaders, such as Heinrich Himmler, Heinrich Müller (the head of the Gestapo), and so on. He came from the same Austro-German, Catholic milieu as Adolf Hitler, Himmler, and others. He came from the same kind of social stratum as his peers, and his personality and ideas had much in common with those of his co-workers. In short, his life was, if not archetypical, at least indicative of certain trends which were prominent in National Socialist Germany and Austria. Thus, by examining his life, one should be able to arrive at certain insights into the sort of person who became a Nazi, an activist, a policeman, and a leader of the coercive machinery of National Socialist Germany. In addition, it is hoped that study will contribute to an understanding of how at least a part of the totalitarian government of the German Reich functioned, or failed to function, and how the decisions of one man could expedite or hinder actions.

In order to achieve these goals, one must first investigate the formative years of Ernst Kaltenbrunner's life--that is, the years
from his birth in 1903 until his assumption of office as chief of the Reich Security Head Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt) in 1943. It was during this forty year period that Kaltenbrunner absorbed the ideas and beliefs and developed the character that he was to bear during the time he was at the summit of the National Socialist repressive machine.

This formative period began on the fourth of October, 1903, when a son was born to Dr. and Mrs. Hugo Kaltenbrunner, in the small town of Ried am Inn, in the Province of Upper Austria. This boy was baptized into the Roman Catholic faith and was given the name of Ernst. Kaltenbrunner's family was solidly bourgeois. His mother was the adopted daughter of a former Belgian diplomat, who had once served his country as ambassador to Rumania, while both his father and grandfather were lawyers descended from a long line of farmers and artisans. His parental ancestors had been settled for many generations in the region along the Inn River (a region that also

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7 The title of chief of the Reich Security Head Office carried with it that of chief of the Security Police and Security Service. The former was used in internal communications; the latter in external ones. Procès des Grands Criminels de Guerre devant le Tribunal Militaire International (42 vols., Nuremberg: International Military Tribunal, 1947), Vol. IV, p. 235. The chief of the Reich Security Head Office was in general charge of the political police and intelligence services. For more details, see Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, pp. 181-187.


produced Adolf Hitler.) Hence, Ernst grew up in a family solidly ensconced in the median segment of the Austro-Hungarian middle-class and firmly rooted in an area they had long inhabited. They were a conservative, traditional, moderately prosperous family, one of a large number of similar units dotted throughout the length and breadth of the sprawling Austro-Hungarian realm around the beginning of the twentieth century. Like many others, theirs was a world of stability and certainty, governed by a monarchy that had endured for over seven hundred years (the Habsburgs). It was this world in which young Ernst spent the first decade of his life. He divided his time during these early years between playing in the beautiful Upper Austrian countryside and attending elementary school at Raab (a small town near Ried).

By the time Ernst graduated from elementary school and entered high school at Linz, the capital of Upper Austria, his snug little world had received a shock—a shock as yet of minor proportions, but one which was destined to destroy his tight little way of life entirely—World War I had begun. At first the war had little direct effect on Ernst and his parents. They pursued their normal mode of life with little change. Soon, however, the ground began to shake under their feet. The Central Powers failed to win a rapid, decisive victory, and the war settled into an incline rut—one whose

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10 Hitler was born on April 20, 1889, at Braunau am Inn, which is only a short distance from Ried.

11 "Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. XI, p. 241

inclination, as far as the Danubian monarchy was concerned, was downward into the abyss.

It was during these years of increasing difficulty and growing misfortune for the Habsburg lands, and for the Kaltenbrunner family as well, that Ernst made the acquaintance of a boy some years younger than himself who was later to be one of his principal collaborators: Karl Adolf Eichmann. Although the two boys' fathers were close friends, young Ernst, combining the usual disdain of an elder for a younger boy with a certain developing social snobbery, treated Eichmann "as his social inferior." This social snobbery resulted in part from the lower social position of the Eichmanns and in part from Ernst's already developing desire to dominate others—a desire which he was later to have many opportunities to satisfy.

Dominance was not to be Ernst's lot during the years between 1918 and 1921; nor was it to be the lot of his homeland. Instead, both were themselves to be dominated by misfortunes of great magnitude. In 1918 the long moribund multinational state, held together by the Habsburgs, their army, bureaucracy, and tradition, at last collapsed under the combined pressures of the victorious Allied and Associated Powers and the triumphant eruption of its various nationalities. The empire dissolved into a number of quarrelling, mutually

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antagonistic, and often unviable, national states. In this process, Kaltenbrunner's home province of Upper Austria became a part of the new entity called "German Austria"--a state that had no raison d'être. Since the Austrians were aware of this unviability of their state, they requested that their country be made a constituent state of the new German Republic. However, the Allies, who considered the new states of German Austria and Hungary as heirs to the guilt of the deceased Austro-Hungarian empire, would have none of such a solution. Their reasoning was simple and logical. Why permit Germany, which they had just spent four bloody years defeating and which they were highly desirous of weakening, to acquire more territory, more people, and a good strategic position by gaining German Austria, which dominated the passes leading to Italy? Instead of permitting a union with Germany, the Allies forbade it, except with League of Nations' approval.

Thus, the Austrians faced a rather bleak future, for their newly-created state was confronted by tremendous difficulties. To

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begin with, an entity precisely like it had never existed before. True, most of German Austria had formerly belonged to the Cisleithanian half of Austria-Hungary, but that structure had included much more. Also, part of this new creation had formerly been Hungarian territory. Hence, this state lacked unity, even though it was composed of people who were overwhelmingly German in nationality and language. This lack of national unity would have been hard enough to overcome, but in addition, the new state had other problems. First and foremost among these was a seemingly impossible economic situation. By itself, Austria was hardly a viable organism during the years between 1918 and 1921 and for many years thereafter. This area, which had formerly been part of the integrated economy of a large state, was now suddenly cut off from its former suppliers and buyers by nationally-inspired tariff barriers erected by its neighbors to the east and south. In addition, Austria was forbidden by Allied fiat from forming a customs union with its German neighbor to the north. Furthermore, what economic resources it did have were dislocated by the war and would require much work and capital to restore to their former prosperity. As if these were not enough problems for a new state to cope with, Austria was also confronted with Allied demands for reparations and with runaway inflation.

In addition to these economic difficulties, Austria faced very difficult socio-economic predicaments. For example, it had a large bureaucratic class, for Vienna, the Austrian capital, had formerly been the seat of governance for the entire empire. Many of these people no longer had jobs and consequently were a burden on the state. Austria also had a population divided into many conflicting
and sometimes overlapping and antagonistic groups: the Reds (socialists) and Blacks (clerical conservatives); the city (mainly Vienna, mainly socialist) and the country (the other eight provinces outside Vienna, mainly clerical conservative); pro-Habsburg and anti-Habsburg restoration; and so on and on. In short, Austria was in very bad shape.

Austria was not alone. The Kaltenbrunner family was also in difficulties. In 1914 they had belonged to the stable, moderately prosperous bourgeoisie. They were "good Austrian burghers." The beginning of the war had jolted their existence but not seriously changed it. As the conflict progressed, however, the difficulties afflicting Austria-Hungary in general struck at the Kaltenbrunners in particular. Food became scarce, prices rose, savings declined.

Then, in 1918 came the shock of the destruction of the monarchy. Like most Austrian burghers, the Kaltenbrunners were cut adrift. This trauma was swiftly followed by the even worse shock of the turmoil which surrounded the birth pangs of the new Austrian republic. By 1921, the year Ernst graduated from high school, the rampant inflation had wiped out the Kaltenbrunners' economic resources. While not proletarianized by any means, the family did suffer an economic decline which destroyed their savings, and a social decline which rankled a person as socially-conscious as young Ernst.

The upshot of this situation as far as Ernst was concerned was that there was no money to send him to law school, so that he could follow the profession of his father and grandfather. Consequently, young Kaltenbrunner was forced to go to work in order to earn enough money to go to school. This done, he entered the law school of the
University of Graz in the fall of 1921. To eke out a living while at the university, he was forced to take a job as a miner (working the night shift)—a job for which his massive frame made him a natural choice. By dint of hard work, he graduated from the University of Graz in 1926 with a doctor of jurisprudence degree.

It was during these years of both mental and physical labor that Kaltenbrunner first began to take an active interest in politics. He joined a German nationalist political club and eventually rose to be its chief officer—a position which he held for three university terms in the years 1924-1925.

It is interesting that of the several political clubs available he chose this particular one. The importance of this choice can be understood only if one has some conception of Austrian politics during the years 1918-1938. Throughout those two decades two parties dominated Austrian political loyalties: the generally clerical

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19 He was six feet four inches tall. Wilhelm Höttl, The Secret Front: The Story of Nazi Political Espionage (Trans. by R. H. Stevens, New York: Praeger, 1954), p. 313. Höttl, also an Austrian, was a friend and associate of Kaltenbrunner after 1938.

20 "Der Grossdeutsche Reichstag," 1938 (Doc. No. 2892-PS), Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. IV, p. 561. The degree is not as important as it sounds. It is equivalent to an American LL.B., but it carries with it the coveted title of "Herr Doktor" by which Kaltenbrunner was henceforth known.

conservative Christian Socials and the theoretically Marxist Social Democrats. The former were in power after 1920, and under their aegis an authoritarian regime was initiated in 1933. Of course, the Christian Socials were hardly a monolithic group. They harbored many varied and often competing factions.

In addition to these two feuding giants, there were several smaller parties, of which the German Nationalists were the most important as far as the present study is concerned. This party desired to have Austria included in the German Reich. They, too, were often split into factions. Some favored a Zusammenschluss (a coming together of equals) with a republican Germany, while some desired an Anschluss (a coming together of unequals) by any means and preferably with a conservative Germany. Virtually every leader and follower of the movement had his own variation on the union theme, but the theme they had in common.

Kaltenbrunner allied himself with the German Nationalists because they seemed to embody the activist and conservative lines of thought already present in his own mind. Most members of this party were supporters of a militant form of conservatism which appealed to Kaltenbrunner, who had moved from the fairly conservative position one might expect of a bourgeois lawyer (a position generally accommodated in the Christian Social Party) to a far more active form of Conservatism. This activism is but a short step away from radicalism, and one must bear in mind these twin themes of conservatism and activism when examining Kaltenbrunner's later career. Both were already present by 1926. One was the result of Ernst's social and economic background; the other was a product of the collapse of that
socio-economic stability with the disruption of the war and its aftermath. It was still debatable in the early twenties which of these two streams of thought would wax greater and destroy the other. The answer was half a decade in coming.

It was during the early twenties, while Kaltenbrunner was working on his law degree, digging in the mines, and formulating his political philosophy, that he made the acquaintance of another man who was later to be one of his collaborators: a burly giant, like himself, named Otto Skorzeny.22 The latter later had a fame all his own.

However, in 1926, neither he nor Kaltenbrunner could find any claim to fame. All that seemed to be in store for them was hard work, for even though Ernst was now entitled to be called "Herr Doktor," he was still an unknown lawyer who still needed a great deal of training before he could begin to make a decent living. Consequently, he took a position as "an apprentice lawyer" in the provincial court at Linz.23 After spending a year there, he moved to Salzburg in a similar capacity.24 He spent two years in this beautiful city. Thus, by late 1928 it seemed as though his career was launched and that he would follow in his father's and grandfather's footsteps. However,

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23Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. II, p. 575. In reality, the position was that of a glorified law clerk.

such was not to be Ernst Kaltenbrunner's destiny. In 1929 the great depression broke over a startled world and out of the turmoil into which Austria and the Kaltenbrunner family were once again thrown, Ernst was to find a new profession and a new fate.

The advent of the depression forced Kaltenbrunner to leave Salzburg and return to his family at Linz.\footnote{Ibid.\textsuperscript{25}} Once again the steady, unspectacular, moderately prosperous world of the Kaltenbrunners had been dashed to the ground. The fortunes which had been so low in the earlier twenties had been on the rise since around 1925. The Austrian economy had been stabilized, with much foreign assistance, and the country had enjoyed at least a modicum of prosperity. Dr. Hugo Kaltenbrunner had once again become moderately well-to-do and the world seemed to be returning to normal. Then came the crash, and everything slid back into the abyss once more.

This second traumatic change in his and his family's fortunes finally resolved in Ernst's mind the clash between the conservative and radical (or activist) lines of political thought which were already apparent in 1924-1926, when he was head of the German nationalist student group at Graz. During the years of apparent prosperity (1926-1929), when Kaltenbrunner could look forward to a career much like his father's, he had remained politically active as a member of a splinter group of the German nationalists known as the "Independent Movement for a Free Austria."\footnote{Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. XI, p. 241. See also, Delarue, The Gestapo, p. 263.} During these three years the conservative stream of thought in his mind seemed to be winning out over the radical current,
although he was still far more activist than most conservatives in Austria. With the coming of the depression and his enforced return to Linz, where he joined his father's law firm, this conservative trend of thought began to atrophy and the radicalism which had lain dormant since around 1925 rose to the surface. Kaltenbrunner ceased to be a conservative and began to take on the characteristics of a National Socialist. This change was not abrupt however, for it still took some time before Kaltenbrunner committed himself fully to a definite line of action. Nonetheless, the seed of this commitment was already sprouting in his mind in 1929-1930.

As the depression deepened and Austria's situation worsened, Ernst's convictions hardened. By 1932 he had firmly and irrevocably opted for the radical program of the NSDAP and of its Führer Adolf Hitler. Henceforth, Kaltenbrunner was not to swerve from the course which he had chosen.

Indeed, he made his commitment in the most emphatic manner possible, for he joined not only the Austrian section of the NSDAP, but also the Austrian branch of the Nazi Party's élite guard, the SS. This latter act provides a clue to Kaltenbrunner's character

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27 Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, p. 34.

28 Nineteen thirty-one was a bad year for Austria. Its leading bank, the Kredit-Anstalt, almost collapsed. It was saved only by foreign assistance. A proposed customs union with Germany, which would perhaps have been good for morale if nothing else, was torpedoed by the intransigence of France and her East European allies.

29 Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei. National Socialist German Workers' Party.

30 Schutzstaffeln (Defence Echelons). He was party member No. 300,179 and SS man No. 13,039. Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. IV, p. 296.
and to the reasons for his subsequent actions which has thus far only been touched upon obliquely. Kaltenbrunner became a Nazi only partly for the socio-economic and resultant psychological reasons adduced earlier in this study. He also became a National Socialist, and particularly an SS man, in order to fulfill a basic psychological drive: for Ernst Kaltenbrunner was a bully.\(^{31}\) Where else beside the SS could a young man of some standing fulfill both his political aims and his desire to dominate others? The opportunity was golden. It is only surprising that Ernst took so long in perceiving it, but then, for all his education, Kaltenbrunner was never known to be particularly perceptive. He was not dull or stupid; it was simply that his mind was slow-moving—-at times almost glacial in its movements—and consequently, he took more time to reach decisions than some men. When he reached them, however, he generally stuck by them come what might.\(^{32}\)

Thus by the age of twenty-nine Kaltenbrunner's character was solidly formed. He was a bully—-whence that trait is anyone's guess—-; he had been severly jolted by a world war, a revolution, a tremendous inflation, political instability in his homeland, and a monstrous depression. His childhood world of security and prosperity had disappeared. As a consequence, he had turned to a

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\(^{31}\)This idea was suggested by Nuremberg prison psychiatrist Dr. Douglas M. Kelley in his book 22 Cells in Nuremberg: A Psychiatrist Examines the Nazi Criminals (New York: Greenberg Pub., 1947), pp. 133-134.

political movement which seemed to be capable of rectifying these
changes—a party with an activist creed; a party, moreover, with an
organization wherein he could exercise his desire to dominate others
and be proud of it. Ernst Kaltenbrunner was well on his way to
finding his niche in the Nazi "New Order."

Several years were to pass however before he found his proper
place in the National Socialist hierarchy. Those years of waiting
must be viewed as a time of preparation for Ernst's few moments at
the summit. This preparation began soon after he joined the Party
and the SS in 1932; before that year was out, he had been appointed
speaker for his party district and attorney for SS Division 8.33

For the next two years (1933-1935) Kaltenbrunner's rise in the
SS was nothing short of meteoric. In 1933, a year after joining the
Black Order, he became commanding officer of SS Regiment 37. The
next year he was appointed commander of SS Division 8, whose lawyer
he had been only two short years before.34 Finally, in the Spring
of 1935 he became chief of the Austrian branch of the SS.35

In just three years he had risen from recruit to provincial
commander. Why? In order to answer that question, one must back-
track briefly to the year 1932 and review some other aspects of

33Proces des Grands Criminels, Vol. IV, p. 296. The Austrian
section of the Nazi Party was governed by a Landesverband (Provincial
Organization) under which there were eight Gaue (Districts). See
Andrew G. Whiteside, "Austria," in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber (eds),
The European Right: A Historical Profile (Berkeley, Cal.: University
of California Press, 1965), p. 333. The speaker was the district
mouthpiece.

34Proces des Grands Criminels, Vol. IV, p. 296.

35"Die deutsche Polizei," May 15, 1943, as quoted in ibid.,
p. 295.
Kaltenbrunner's life during the three years between the time he joined the party and when he was appointed chief of the Austrian SS. The first thing that should be noted is that Ernst did not join the party alone. Under his influence, his old friend Adolf Eichmann also became a member of both the Austrian NSDAP and the Austrian SS. There are two points of interest here as regards Kaltenbrunner's rapid rise. The first is that he was already exercising a certain amount of initiative in inducing another man to join the movement. The second, and more pertinent point, is that a comparison of the subsequent careers of these two men, both of whom entered the party and the SS rather late, shows more graphically than anything else just how rapid Ernst's rise was, and also indicates that he must have had some apparent ability, for Eichmann was by no means an inept person. This last point needs to be made, for so many writers have portrayed Kaltenbrunner as a slow-witted dolt and have attributed his rise to the summit to pure chance. This is, of course, not correct. He was slow-thinking, but hardly slow-witted, and his rapid acquisition of power indicates at least a modicum of ability.

This ability became apparent to all during the year 1934. In January of that year (the year Austrian Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss solidified his dictatorship), Kaltenbrunner was arrested because of his Nazi activities and was sent to Kaisersteinbruch concentration

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36 Manvell and Fraenkel, Himmler, p. 249.
37 Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, p. 31. See also Affidavit of Dieter Wisliceny (an SS officer and friend of Eichmann) (Affidavit C), Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. VIII, p. 610.
camp. There he organized and led a hunger strike by the prisoners which was a contributing factor in bringing the government to release some 490 interned National Socialists, including Kaltenbrunner. This exercise of initiative, organizational ability, and intestinal fortitude certainly raised Ernst's stock within the illegal party, but it was hardly the sole cause of the release of nearly 500 Nazis, as the National Socialists later claimed. Rather, the release was mainly a result of the attempt of the Austrian government, now led by Kurt von Schuschnigg, in September, 1934, to pacify the country, which was still suffering from the aftereffects of the attempted Nazi Putsch of July 25—a coup de main which had resulted in Chancellor Dollfuss' death from bullet wounds but which had failed to topple the Austrian government. Kaltenbrunner, who had not been implicated in the coup attempt because he had been a guest of the Austrian penal system, was one of the few Austrian Nazi leaders with whom Schuschnigg's regime could negotiate for a cessation of NSDAP terrorism without appearing to deal with murderers. Hence, Kaltenbrunner's position was enhanced, not only because of his leadership at Kaisersteinbruch, but also due to his being in the right place at

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38 Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. II, p. 575. It should also be noted that the Austrian NSDAP had been outlawed by the Dollfuss government in June, 1933. Whiteside, "Austria," p. 343.


40 Delarue, The Gestapo, p. 263.
the right time—the element of chance so often cited in regard to his career.

These negotiations dragged on for months—Schuschnigg not wishing to end them and the Nazis not really daring to do so. In December, 1934, as a further earnest of good faith, Chancellor Schuschnigg ordered the release of some 2,500 National Socialists interned at the Wollersdorf concentration camp. However, being good National Socialists, the Austrian Nazis were not negotiating in good faith but merely to gain tactical advantage (their position after the Putsch had been parlous, to put it mildly.) The Austrian chancellor came to this conclusion in 1935, broke off the talks, and had Kaltenbrunner, among others, tossed back into jail.

Technically, Ernst was arrested on a charge of high treason resulting with his relations with the German SS, but the actual cause was the failure of the Nazi-Austrian discussions. Whatever the reason, the result was the same. Earnst resumed his prison career. This time he spent some four and a half months in a concentration camp while the Wels county (Kreis) court investigated his activities. He then spent some more time in the Linz police prison while the court investigated further. Finally, he was brought to trial. The charge of high treason was dropped (thought Kaltenbrunner was probably guilty of it), and he was convicted of conspiracy instead. He

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\[41\] Whiteside, "Austria," p. 351.
\[42\] Delarue, The Gestapo, p. 263.
got six months imprisonment and his right to practice law was re-

voked. He was released, after serving out his sentence, in mid-

1936.

Having now backtracked and viewed Kaltenbrunner's career from

a wider angle, it is possible to speculate more exactly as to why

he rose from SS recruit in 1932 to SS leader in 1935. It would

seem evident that there are two primary reasons for this rise. First,

Kaltenbrunner's own native ability was a factor of some importance.

He had organized and led a hunger strike inside an Austrian prison

camp. He had behaved creditably in the negotiations with the Austrian

government. Second, and probably more important, those who had been

his seniors in the SS had been removed in one way or another. Some

had been imprisoned; some had been killed or executed as a result of

the July 25 Putsch; some had fled the country; and some were wanted

so desperately by the Austrian government that they had to concentrate

on staying out of its clutches rather than on running the SS. Hence,

Kaltenbrunner fell heir to the job. Thus, his climb toward the sum-

mit had so far been affected by a combination of chance and ability--

one without the other simply would not have worked.

He was to have use for both luck and skill in the two years

(1936-1938) following his release from prison, for the pitfalls were

many and the way treacherous. The situation both in Austria and

within the NSDAP was confused. In the country at large Chancellor


45 Höttl, Hitler's Paper Weapon, p.40. It is interesting that

he received his appointment just before his 1935 arrest for treason.


46 The best work on Austrian internal affairs between 1936 and
Schuschnigg was trying to maintain order and stability, while at the same time attempting to avoid being absorbed by the Nazi giant to the north. Neither was an easy task. Nor were the Austrian Nazis having a much better time of it. Not only were they outlawed by the Schuschnigg government, which meant that they had to work underground, but also they were divided among themselves. This division was basically two-fold. On the one hand, there were the extremists, led by the exiled Austrian NSDAP leaders at Munich and supported by the so-called "Austrian Legion" (which had been formed in Bavaria) and by the extremist elements within the German party itself. These people desired to overthrow the Austrian government by force; that is, they wished to take up where the Putsch of 1934 had left off and establish a Nazi Austria by bloody revolution. On the other hand, there were the moderates, led by most of the Nazi leaders within Austria, supported by the German minister to Vienna, Franz von Papen, and shading off into the crypto-Nazis, like Arthur Seyss-Inquart and Edmund von Glaise-Horstenau, who desired to take over Austria by peaceful means.


47 A former German chancellor and vice chancellor who had been very instrumental in bringing Hitler to power.

48 Both Seyss-Inquart and von Glaise-Horstenau started off as sincere Austrian patriots and ended by being Nazi officials and satraps in occupied territories in World War II.
In 1936 Kaltenbrunner was thus faced with a choice that could either make or break his future career. Which faction would he support? He decided to support the moderates. Indeed, he not only espoused their point of view personally, but also he made use of the Austrian SS to see to it that the extremists did not get too far out of hand. In doing so he again showed his ability to make important decisions and carry them out. His active support of the moderate faction earned him new respect and new enemies. In addition, it gained for him the nickname of "the policeman of July 11," for his timely support and his even more timely use of the SS had helped to make it possible for the Austrian and German governments to effect a demarche by signing the Austro-German Agreement of July 11, 1936. This treaty was a big victory for the moderate Nazis, and partly as a consequence of it, they were able to keep the unruly elements of the party in hand from July, 1936, until February,

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51 Testimony of Seyss-Inquart, Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. XVI, p. 86.

52 Ibid. The agreement provided for German recognition of Austrian independence; a promise of German non-intervention in Austrian internal affairs; Austrian consent to conduct a foreign policy not opposed to Germany's; and Austrian agreement to include members of the "national opposition" (crypto-Nazis) in the government. For the negotiations leading to the treaty, see Jürgen Gehl, Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss, 1931-1938 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 101-132. For the terms, see ibid., pp. 130-131. See also, Eichstadt, Von Dollfuss zu Hitler, pp. 108-119.
1938, while they undermined the Schuschnigg government from within.

The part which Kaltenbrunner played in all this maneuvering during the two years following the July Agreement is somewhat obscure. Undoubtedly this is partly due to the fact that he was not in the first rank of the Austrian Nazi leadership and was hence out of the limelight and partly to the fact that he had a great deal to do to rebuild the SS units under his command, which had been badly shaken after the 1934 Putsch and which had lacked firm direction since then, and hence had little time for anything else. What is known is that Kaltenbrunner continued to support the moderate elements in the party and used his influence and authority to keep the extremists in line.

Meanwhile, Chancellor Schuschnigg was trying to keep his country independent. He had hoped that the Germans would keep the July, 1936, Agreement and that he could devote himself to other pressing problems. Unfortunately for him and for Austria, the Nazis held true to form and continued to try to bring about a National Socialist Austria--albeit they moved somewhat more circumspectly and, thanks partly to Kaltenbrunner, somewhat less violently. Finally, in February, 1938, things came to a head. On the twelfth of that month, Chancellor Schuschnigg travelled to Berchtesgaden to meet with the Führer of the German Reich. It was a most unfortunate meeting for Schuschnigg, because Hitler was in rare form, and so browbeat the Austrian chancellor that the latter agreed to a set of terms which made his country a virtual German protectorate.53 It was another victory for

53. The terms included a general amnesty for all Nazis; the
the moderates which undoubtedly pleased Kaltenbrunner.

He did not remain pleased for very long. For once, Chancellor Schuschnigg decided to counterattack rather than to give way before the Nazis. On March 9 he announced the holding of a plebiscite on March 13. This vote was to be on the question of Austrian independence versus Anschluss with Germany. Naturally, the plebiscite was set up in such a way that the government could hardly lose. Hitler nearly had apoplexy. He immediately ordered preparations for the invasion of Austria (Case Otto). At the same time, orders went out to the illegal Austrian party and to its formations to prepare for action against the Schuschnigg regime. It was the end of all Kaltenbrunner's hopes of a peaceful Anschluss with the "Germanic homeland." However, nothing daunted, he saw that such action was necessary, and he took an active part in the hurried planning that went on after the Führer's orders arrived. By the eleventh both his plans and those of the other Nazi units were fixed.

On that day the German government ordered Schuschnigg to cancel the plebiscite. At first he refused. Then, after being browbeat by

appointment of Seyss-Inquart as minister for security (hence in control of the police); regular exchanges of officers between the armies of the two states; and the eventual assimilation of the Austrian economy into that of the Reich. See Gehl, Austria, Germany, and the Anschluss, pp. 170-175. See also A. J. P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (2nd ed., New York: Fawcett World Library, 1965), pp. 138-140, for a brilliant, but unbalanced, view of these events.


phone from Berlin by Field Marshal Hermann Göring, Hitler's deputy, Schuschnigg gave in and called off the vote. By that time it was afternoon, and Göring would no longer be satisfied by anything short of Schuschnigg's resignation and his replacement by Seyss-Inquart.

Meanwhile, around 4:30 P. M. Kaltenbrunner ordered his SS men out into the streets, where their duty was to gain control of all important points and to impress upon Schuschnigg the power of the Austrian Nazis. In addition, of the 600 or so men whom Kaltenbrunner personally commanded in Vienna, forty had a very special mission. These picked men, under the command of Kaltenbrunner's adjutant, Felix Rinner, were to invade the Federal Chancellory and force Schuschnigg to do their bidding. They actually entered the Chancellory around 6:30 P. M., but they had absolutely no effect on the hectic events taking place there.

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56 This is probably the only coup d'etat in history conducted by telephone.

57 Whitney R. Harris, Tyranny on Trial: The Evidence at Nuremberg (Dallas, Texas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1954), p. 81. The author of this book prosecuted Kaltenbrunner at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial.

58 This is a compromise figure. The Nazis themselves were not quite sure just how many men they had. This figure is based on an article by Fritz Rainer (Austrian SS officer), 1939 (Doc. No. 4004-PS), Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Supp. A, p. 693, and a speech by the same man on May 11, 1942 (Doc. No. 4005-PS), ibid., p. 711. The former uses the figure of 700 men and the latter 500. Hence, 600 seems a reasonable compromise.

59 Article by Rainer, 1939 (Doc. No. 4004-PS), ibid., p. 693.

While Kaltenbrunner had been engaged in these activities, Göring had been pressuring Schuschnigg to resign. He finally did so. However, a new difficulty arose when the Austrian President Wilhelm Miklas refused point-blank to countenance Seyss-Inquart as the new chancellor. Unfortunately for the president, there was no one left who would support his stand. Bowing to main force, he appointed Seyss-Inquart chancellor and immediately declared himself unable to exercise his functions, which thereupon passed to Seyss-Inquart, who now found himself chancellor and acting president of the Austrian state.

The new head of government immediately installed his regime—a regime wherein Kaltenbrunner held the relatively minor post of under secretary of state for security. He had originally been slated for the secretaryship (which carried ministerial rank), but two things had kept him from obtaining that position. The first was the violent opposition of President Miklas, who was appalled at the idea of naming the chief of the SS head of the police. However, once he had appointed Seyss-Inquart chancellor and declared himself unable to carry out his duties, nothing he said or did could have any bearing on ministerial appointments. Rather, it was another reason which kept Kaltenbrunner from becoming secretary of state. This cause was Seyss-Inquart's desire to have a respectable-looking government. If he appointed Kaltenbrunner, the SS chief, secretary, his regime would not look very good to either the Austrian people or to the Western

powers. In addition, he had some vague idea of Austria remaining an independent ally of Germany, and for this reason also he did not wish a fanatical Nazi, such as Kaltenbrunner had become, in his government. 62

Seyss-Inquart soon learned that such pretentions to independence were unwanted. At 3:00 A. M. on the morning of March 12, Heinrich Himmler, Reichsführer-SS (Reich Leader SS) arrived at Vienna's Aspern airport,63 where he was met by Kaltenbrunner and others. He immediately ordered the dismissal of the secretary of state for security, Michael Skubl, 64 and his replacement by Kaltenbrunner. Himmler's order was obeyed. 65 Thus, on March 12, 1938, Kaltenbrunner became chief of all the Austrian police as well as of the SS—a position he was to hold for some three years. 66

However, in March, 1938, he was much too busy to worry over how long he would hold office. There was a great deal to be done. Among

64 Skubl was a former Vienna police president (chief) and had held the secretaryship of state under Schuschnigg. He was the man Seyss-Inquart had preferred to Kaltenbrunner.
65 Manvell and Fraenkel, Himmler, p. 68. See also, the testimony of Michael Skubl, Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. XVI, p. 191.
66 He was secretary of state for security from 1938 to 1941. In 1938 he became a member of the German Reichstag (parliament), along with the noted Austrian historian and Nazi fellow-traveller, Heinrich Ritter von Sfbik. In March, 1938, he was promoted SS-Brigadeführer (See Appendix I for the U. S. Army equivalent of this rank and all other SS grades mentioned in this thesis). In October of the same year he was promoted SS-Gruppenführer. Finally, in April, 1941, he was appointed major general of police. Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. II, p. 576.
the first items on the agenda were the arrests of former Chancellor Schuschnigg\(^67\) and former Secretary of State Skubl,\(^68\) both of whom spent the next seven years in close confinement. They were not alone. Approximately 76,000 people were arrested in Vienna alone during the first days of Kaltenbrunner's tenure at the security department.\(^69\) Many more were to follow, for the country had to be "pacified."

As if this pacification were not enough to keep Kaltenbrunner busy, he also had to prepare arrangements for the Führer's triumphal return to his homeland. This return took place on March 13-14, when Hitler travelled through Austria from Linz to Vienna. While he was in the newly-occupied territory, he ordered its annexation to the Reich\(^70\) (thus finally ending Seyss-Inquart's delusions of grandeur). In addition, the Führer commanded that a plebiscite be held on April 10, so that the Austrian people (and the Germans of the Reich as well) could ratify his "gracious" actions.


\(^{70}\) Austria was annexed to the Reich on March 13. On the fifteenth the Austrian government gave way to a provisional regime in which Kaltenbrunner remained secretary of state. On April 14 (four days after the plebiscite), Austria was divided into eight districts (Gaue). Raphäel Lemkin, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation--Analysis of Government--Proposals for Redress (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Law, 1944), pp. 109-111. Austria as a name ceased to exist, for the area was henceforth known as the Ostmark (East Mark)--the old Medieval "Germanic" name for the area.
This decision of Hitler gave Kaltenbrunner an additional task, for he had to assure that the plebiscite's results would be "proper." He did his job well, for some 99.75% of the Austrian people approved the Anschluss. With Kaltenbrunner and his men around, they really had little choice.

Nor were these the only tasks which the secretary of state faced in those "halcyon" days of 1938-1941. He also had to deal with the Jews--those perennial scapegoats of the Nazis.

He had help, of course. His old friend, Adolf Eichmann, now an SS-Hauptsturmführer, was back in Vienna to organize Jewish emigration, and there were several other "Jewish experts" at hand to offer advice and suggestions as well. Things moved swiftly. Between March 12, 1938, when Kaltenbrunner assumed command, and December 31, 1942, about a month before he left Vienna for Berlin, 149,124 of the approximately 200,000 Jews in Austria had been removed from the country in one way or another. 71

The Jewish population of Vienna had been reduced from around 60,00072 to less than 10,000.73 It was a record Kaltenbrunner was proud of.


When he was in the midst of all these labors, in early 1941, Kaltenbrunner's title was changed from secretary of state to higher SS and police leader.\textsuperscript{74} It was a change of little consequence. All that occurred was that Austria was finally absorbed into the Reich as the last vestige of its old government vanished.

Soon Kaltenbrunner's life settled into a not unpleasant, humdrum routine.\textsuperscript{75} The pacification of the country and the persecution of the Jews were well-organized and functioned with little supervision. Hence, Kaltenbrunner devoted himself to various other matters. He personally saw to it, for example, that Theodor Körner, later the second president of the Second Austrian Republic, was thrown out of the war office archives, where he had been working.\textsuperscript{76} He helped to found the notorious Mauthausen concentration camp, which was located near his old home, Linz.\textsuperscript{77} He dabbled in the many intrigues centered around the Balkan area on the theory that Austria (National Socialist Austria) had a mission there.\textsuperscript{78} In short, he behaved like virtually

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\textsuperscript{74}"Die deutsche Polizei," May 15, 1943, as quoted in Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. IV, p. 296. Higher SS and police leaders were Himmler's personal representatives. They had been appointed for the rest of the Reich in 1939. Austria was, hence, in 1941, reduced to the level of the remainder of the "Great German state." See Hans Buchheim, "Die Höheren SS- und Polizeiführer," Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 11. Jahrgang, 4. Heft (October, 1963), pp. 362-391, for a statement of the powers and duties of this office.

\textsuperscript{75}Höttl, Hitler's Paper Weapon, p. 40.


\textsuperscript{77}Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. II, p. 58.

\textsuperscript{78}Testimony of Kaltenbrunner, Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. XI, p. 245.
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every other SS satrap did. The cast of characters changed; so did the scene, but the play remained the same.

In January, 1943, the scene for Kaltenbrunner was still Vienna; it was about to change. Ernst did not yet know it, but he stood on the threshold of the summit of his power. It might be appropriate at this point to ask the question: what sort of man was this thirty-nine year old Upper Austrian who was about to be appointed to one of the most powerful posts in Hitlerian Germany? Physically he was huge, over six feet tall, with a physique to match. He had a square, massive jaw, a thick neck, and small beady eyes which seemed to stare fixedly like those of a snake. His teeth were discolored and generally rotten. His fingers were small and pudgy. His movements were slow and gave the impression that he possessed even more bulk than he in fact did. He was gorilla-like.

He also had certain habits which impressed themselves upon his contemporaries. He smoke a great deal and he drank a great deal as well. Neither seem to have had any effect on him.

Spiritually, Kaltenbrunner was still much the same man he had been in 1933. He was a bully and a fanatical National Socialist. He was still slow to act and determined when he did act. It seems that all that some ten years time (five of them in power) had done was to reinforce those traits already present and evident when he joined the

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79 Walter Schellenberg, The Schellenberg Memoirs (Ed. and trans. by Louis Hagen and with an intro. by Alan Bullock, London: Andre Deutsch, 1956), pp. 373-374. These memoirs are also known as The Labyrinth. Schellenberg was head of SS foreign intelligence and hence a subordinate of Kaltenbrunner after 1943.

80 Ibid., pp. 373-375.
NSDAP in 1932. The next two years at the summit were to do little else. Kaltenbrunner's course was set. He was ready to ascend to the heights of his power.
CHAPTER II:

THE SUMMIT:

CHIEF OF THE SECURITY POLICE AND SECURITY SERVICE, 1943-1945

Before discussing Ernst Kaltenbrunner's life and work at the summit of power, it is necessary to digress briefly in order to examine the position as chief of the Reich Security Head Office to which he was appointed on January 30, 1943.\(^1\) Without such a background discussion, many of the events and actions of these two years would be incomprehensible. In the fall of 1939 the Nazi regime strengthened its repressive machinery in order to be in a better position to handle the war emergency. The first step in this process of rationalization of the coercive apparatus was taken in September of that year when the office of higher SS and police leader was instituted for the purpose of coordinating the activities of the police forces and the SS more efficiently.\(^2\) The second step was taken on the twenty-seventh of the same month when, by a decree of Himmler as Reichsführer-SS and chief of the German police,\(^3\) the state Security Police Main Office (Hauptamtsicherheitspolizei) and the party-SS Security Main Office (Sicherheitshauptamt) were united to form the Reich Security Head Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt).\(^4\) This new

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\(^{1}\) *Procès des Grands Criminels*, Vol. I, p. 309. Coincidentally this date was also the tenth anniversary of the Nazi seizure of power in Germany.


organization had direct control over all the political police organs, including the Gestapo, the criminal police (Kripo), the Security Service of the Reichsführer-SS (SD), and the non-military intelligence network. It was thus one of the most important branches of the National Socialist regime.

This importance was reflected in the fact that its first head, Reinhard Heydrich, was Himmler's chief collaborator and may have been responsible for the Reichsführer's rise to power. Heydrich was a man of great intelligence with superb gifts of organization. He helped to create the Reich Security Head Office, and as its first chief, he endowed it with a vast amount of prestige and power. Indeed, it soon became evident that the chief of the Security Police and Security Service was beginning to rival the Reichsführer-SS. The former came more and more to ignore the latter and deal directly with Hitler. By September, 1941, Heydrich had become so influential that, without consulting Himmler, the Führer appointed Heydrich Acting Protector of Bohemia-Moravia with orders to pacify the area.

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5 See Appendix II for an organizational chart of the Reich Security Head Office.

6 There is no satisfactory biography of Heydrich. Manvell and Fraenkel's Himmler, however, does a good job of outlining his career and position. See especially pp. 28, 38-39, 78-79, and 84-85.

7 Space does not permit an examination of this fascinating topic. There is no good discussion of it. Perhaps the fairest so far attempted is Manvell and Fraenkel's Himmler. See the pages cited ante n. 6.

8 Ibid., p. 78.

9 Delarue, The Gestapo, pp. 258-259. He was technically deputy protector, but as soon as he was appointed to this position, the Protector, Constantin von Neurath, went on leave and remained on leave until he was replaced in August, 1943, by the former Reich Interior Minister, Wilhelm Frick.
This appointment officially made Heydrich independent of Himmler, for while he still reported to the latter as chief of the Reich Security Head Office, he also reported directly to Hitler as Acting Protector. This anomalous and awkward situation was clarified when on May 27, 1942, Heydrich was wounded by a bomb thrown by Czech partisans. Seven days later he was dead.

The immediate consequences of the acting protector's assassination were devastating for the Czechs and for many others. In Prague and Brno over 1,300 people were executed in retaliation; in the small village of Lidice, the entire adult male population was annihilated, the women and children were carted to concentration camps, and the village was razed to the ground. In Berlin 152 Jews were arrested and liquidated at Joseph Goebbels' request. In Poland the thoroughly depraved Austrian SS officer Odilo Globocnik directed a pogrom, labeled "Operation Reinhard," of large proportions. In short, the National Socialist regime was very much aggrieved over the loss of one of its rising stars.

Was Heinrich Himmler, Heydrich's superior, also aggrieved? To be sure, he appeared to be, but there is reason to believe that a

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10 Something he had already been doing unofficially.

11 Reitlinger, *The Final Solution*, p. 100. The exact figures are uncertain. This is only an estimate.

12 See Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, pp. 991-992, for a well-written and substantially accurate account of the destruction of Lidice.

13 Reitlinger, *The Final Solution*, pp. 100-101. Paul Joseph Goebbels was one of the most important Nazi leaders, as well as minister of public enlightenment and propaganda. See Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel's *Dr. Goebbels: His Life and Death* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), for a description of his life and works.
deep feeling of relief was mingled with his grief. Since September, 1941, at least, Himmler had been painfully aware that he was being more and more overshadowed by his handsome and able deputy. In fact, at the time of the attack upon the chief of the Security Police there had been those within the regime itself who felt that this assault might have been the result of intrigues directed by the Reichsführer himself. Although this was not actually the case, the fact that officials of the government even conceived of such an idea is in itself instructive.

Some insight into Himmler's true feelings may be gained by noting that for six months (from June 4, 1942, to January 30, 1943) he himself exercised the powers of chief of the Reich Security Head Office, in addition to his many other duties. This at least partially corroborates the theory that he had come to envy and fear Heydrich, for it is doubtful whether the perenially ill Reichsführer would have added to his burdens without a very good motive. For whatever reason, the fact remains that Himmler, with the aid of the efficient deputy chief of the Security Police and Security Service, Heinrich Müller, and the sycophantic but able head of the RSHA's foreign intelligence branch, Walter Schellenberg, attempted to fill Heydrich's shoes himself. The effort was a failure. There was far too much to

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15 Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. XXII, p. 27. Müller was also head of the Gestapo (Office IV of the RSHA). He was an obscure individual, who disappeared at the end of the war and has never been seen since.

16 See his fascinating The Schellenberg Memoirs, passim.
be done as **Reichsführer-SS**, chief of the German police, Reich commissar for the strengthening of Germandom,\(^\text{17}\) etc., for Himmler, even with able subordinates, to handle the myriad duties of political police chief as well.

Consequently, the **Reichsführer** concluded that he must find a successor for Heydrich. He had several candidates ready at hand. Three among them stand out as serious contenders for the mantle of the late protector: Heinrich Müller, the deputy chief of the Security Police and head of the Gestapo; Walter Schellenberg, the director of the RSHA's foreign intelligence branch (Office VI); and Karl Wolff, the head of Himmler's personal staff.

Yet, as logical as each of these three men might have seemed as a successor to Heydrich, each had certain factors working against him. Müller, for instance, while a very able professional policeman, had the very definite problem of not having become a Nazi Party member, or an SS man, until 1939.\(^\text{18}\) Indeed, while in the Bavarian police prior to 1933 he had been active in repressing the National Socialists. It was Heydrich who had grasped the man's ability and promoted him to head the Gestapo in 1936. Even had Himmler chosen to promote Müller to chief of the Reich Security Head Office, it is extremely doubtful if the Führer would have approved.

Schellenberg also had certain disadvantages in the race to succeed to Heydrich's office. Two factors in particular worked

\(^{17}\) *Reichskommissar für die Festigung des deutschen Volksstums.* For this office and its duties, see Robert Koehl's well-documented, but badly written, **RKFDV**.

against him. The first was his age. In 1943 he was a mere thirty-five years old. This was, however, not actually the crucial matter, for the National Socialist regime generally gave little consideration to a man's age. What really ended Schellenberg's chances was the fact that he was too clever by half. This cleverness, plus his sycophantic behavior toward Himmler, had made him cordially hated by his colleagues, even though well-liked by his master (Himmler). However, even the latter had come to the conclusion that Schellenberg was far too much like Heydrich—perhaps even more cunning than the protector and hence more dangerous—to be allowed to exercise the great power inherent in the position of chief of the Security Police.

Therefore, of the three men Karl Wolff seemed to have the best chance to gain the position at stake. Unfortunately, he also had liabilities. First of all, he had had no real experience for the position. He had never been a policeman or an administrator. In addition, Himmler was loath to have a man who knew virtually everything in such a position of immense power as head of the Reich Security Head Office. In the end, Himmler finally simply decided not to appoint Wolff.

Thus, all three of the most likely candidates were eliminated from contention. Who then was to succeed Heydrich? The answer was not long in coming and it came as a shock. The new chief of the Security Police and Security Service was Ernst Kaltenbrunner. Why had he been chosen? An answer to that query is not easy to find. Indeed, one of the foremost authorities on the SS, Mr. Gerald Reitlinger, has remarked that the "choice is inexplicable. If Himmler needed an administrator to relieve him of his own burdens
which he most certainly did, Kaltenbrunner...had given no proofs of capacity. If he needed a yes-man...he could not expect to find one in this low Austrian, a man with a scarface and criminal's ears. This author reflects, in the type of language all too often used when discussing SS leaders, the incredulity prevalent both at the time of Kaltenbrunner's appointment and since. On the face of it, this surprise seems warranted, for Kaltenbrunner certainly had as many or more factors mitigating against him as did a man like SS-Obergruppenführer Wolff. After all, he was a provincial who had had little occasion to leave Austria during his entire lifetime. He knew little or nothing about the RSHA, its operations, or its personnel. He had no friends at security police headquarters. He was reputed to be stupid, though as has been shown, people mistook his slowness for lack of intelligence; in fact, his colleagues in Austria described him as a Lümme (lout). Last of all, he seems to have had the distinct ability almost automatically to alienate people. In short, Kaltenbrunner's appointment seemed irrational.

Yet, while Himmler may have often been irrational, this is one time when appearances belied reality, for if one examines this appointment closely, he will see that the Reichsführer's choice was actually a very shrewd one. Each of the points which seemingly worked

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19 Ibid., p. 237.

20 Cf. the comment of Wilhelm Höttl, Kaltenbrunner's friend and associate, that "Kaltenbrunner was without exception the least suitable for the position." Höttl, Hitler's Paper Weapon, p. 39.

21 Frischauer, Himmler, p. 162. Think of a big, stupid boxer and one has the idea.
against Kaltenbrunner actually worked in his favor. Since he was a provincial, he had no power-base in Berlin, such as the late SS-Obergruppenführer Heydrich had possessed. Since he knew nothing about the inner workings of the Reich Security Head Office and had no friends there, he could not exercise the full power inherent in the position of chief of the Security Police and Security Service as his predecessor had. He was supposedly none too bright and certainly hard to get along with; hence, he supposedly could not make himself independent of the Reichsführer, as Heydrich had succeeded in doing.22 Finally, contrary to opinions expressed both at the time and later, Himmler saw that Kaltenbrunner possessed a certain administrative ability, as well as a very definite, indeed fanatical, loyalty to the Führer. Himmler felt that this loyalty also extended to his own person, which, given his treatment by Heydrich, was a welcome relief. For these reasons, Kaltenbrunner was chosen by the Reichsführer to be the new chief of the Reich Security Head Office and this choice was ratified by the Führer.

On January 30, 1943, the tenth anniversary of the Nazis' coming to power in the Reich, Ernst Kaltenbrunner became chief of the political police of Germany and its occupied territories.23 He assumed

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22Manvell and Fraenkel, Himmler, p. 156. See also Frischauer, Himmler, p. 162.

23In June, 1943, he was promoted SS-Obergruppenführer and general of police. Heiber, Hitlers Lagebesprechungen, p. 944n. It might be noted here that he inherited the position of editor of a magazine called Kriminalistik from Heydrich as well as that of chief of the political police. See Deutsches Bücherverzeichnis, Vol. XXIV (1941-1950) (n.p.: Deutsches Bücherei, 1954), p. 1249. In the following year (1944) he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the War Merit Cross with Swords to go with his previously gained "party insignia in gold" and "blood order." Befehlsblatt des Chefs des
office with all the official power possessed by his predecessor, but without the prestige and fear which had surrounded the late protector.

Immediately upon taking office Kaltenbrunner seemed to fulfill at least one of the premises which had led to his appointment. He succeeded in a very brief period of time in alienating most of his immediate subordinates. Particularly was he estranged from his chief of foreign intelligence, Walter Schellenberg, for Kaltenbrunner knew that Schellenberg had been a candidate for the job which he now held and that the Reichsführer was heavily dependent upon the wily intelligence chief. Kaltenbrunner came to hate Schellenberg, and his feeling was reciprocated. Needless to say, this did not make for the smooth functioning of the Reich Security Head Office, and matters got worse rather than better in the next two years.

As if having one of the Reichsführer's favorites as an enemy were not enough, Kaltenbrunner also had to face the hostility of others among his chief assistants. For instance, his deputy,
Gestapo Chief Müller had served Heydrich loyally because he knew that the protector had saved him from elimination in 1933 and had promoted him. He also knew that Heydrich would have broken him at the slightest sign of disaffection. During the interregnum following Heydrich's death, however, he had tasted independence and he meant to keep it.

In addition to Müller and Schellenberg, Kaltenbrunner had two other chief subordinates.27 The first of these was Arthur Nebe, a professional police officer, who had been head of the criminal police (Office V) since its organization in 1936.28 By the time Kaltenbrunner took over as chief of the Security Police, Nebe had become disaffected from the National Socialist regime and was in contact with elements of the German resistance movement.29 Why he decided to get in touch with these people is not entirely clear. Perhaps he had truly repented of his part in the Nazi regime; perhaps he was only protecting his own interests. No one can ever really be sure why he became involved with the resistance. All that can be said is that he was no longer loyal to the police. This flirtation with the enemies of the government did nothing to improve his relationship with Kaltenbrunner, for the latter, who was naturally unfriendly,

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27See Appendix II.

28He also headed an Einsatz (mobile killing) group in Russia in 1941. His Group B slaughtered some 45,000 people (Communists, Jews, etc.) in the few months of his tenure in office. Reitlinger, The Final Solution, pp. 187-188.

reacted strongly to Nebe's apparent lukewarmness toward both him and the cause. This unsatisfactory relationship between the chief of the Security Police and the head of the Kripo was brought to an end when, following the attempted coup of July 20, 1944, Kaltenbrunner, without much evidence against Nebe, had the latter arrested and executed.  

Finally, the new chief of the Reich Security Head Office had problems with another of his assistants, Otto Ohlendorf, the head of Office III. Ohlendorf was a man of great intelligence. He was an intellectual in the strictest sense of that much misused word. He was not the sort of man who would easily accept direction by a man of such a rough-hewn nature as his new superior. For a person with as much of the bully in him as the chief of the RSHA, the independence of mind which Ohlendorf showed was not something calculated to please.

Thus, one can see that Kaltenbrunner and his closest aides never got along well together. He and Schellenberg hated each other for obvious reasons. He and Müller glared at each other, for Müller disdained him and he resented it. He and Nebe fought a duel for power, one for and one against the regime, and Nebe lost both the battle and his life. Finally, he and Ohlendorf failed to get along with each other because the latter thought the former crude and stupid and Kaltenbrunner resented Ohlendorf treating him like a schoolmaster does with a wayward child. In short, the Reich Security Head Office

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was hardly one big happy family. It more resembled a coop full of angry roosters. Therefore, Himmler's calculation that Kaltenbrunner would alienate his chief subordinates proved valid.

The only problem was that none of the other supposed checks on the new chief of the Security Polic's power worked. Between 1943 and 1945 the head of the Reich Security Head Office passed from the status of a tame deputy to that of a rival. Indeed, so "powerful had Kaltenbrunner become by 1945...that even Himmler feared him." The Reichsführer was right back where he had been in early 1942. All of his precautions had failed.

The restraints which had seemed to Himmler to encircle Kaltenbrunner in January, 1943, had not just vanished by themselves; nor had the chief of the Reich Security Head Office overcome them alone. He had had help of the most potent kind. This aid had come from one of the least known but most powerful men in Hitler's entourage, Martin Bormann. During the last two years of the Third Reich Bormann was Hitler's closest aide. He was head of the party chancellery, private secretary to the Führer, and Hitler's almost constant companion. His enmity could destroy a man and his support make one. He chose to oppose the Reichsführer, since Himmler grew more and more powerful as the war progressed. Bormann wanted to have no rivals

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32 Reitlinger, The Final Solution, p. 480.
34 There is nothing on Bormann in English. In German, see the competent biography by Joseph Wulf: Martin Bormann--Hitlers Schatten (Gütersloh: Sigbert Mohn Verlag, 1962).
35 Himmler, already Reichsführer-SS, chief of the German police,
for the supreme authority under the Führer. Himmler was a rival; hence, he had to be opposed. To counter the Reichsführer's accession of strength, Bormann supported Kaltenbrunner\(^\text{36}\) and brought him to Hitler's attention. By the early summer of 1944 Bormann had arranged for Kaltenbrunner to confer regularly with the Führer without Himmler's permission.\(^\text{37}\) This right made the chief of the Security Police virtually independent of the Reichsführer much as Heydrich had been earlier.

Kaltenbrunner was not the only one of Himmler's subordinates whom Bormann turned against the Reichsführer. Ernst's friend\(^\text{38}\) SS-Gruppenführer Hermann Fegelein, Himmler's liaison officer at Hitler's headquarters, decided that Bormann's was the winning side and sold out his chief.\(^\text{39}\) It actually did him little good in the end, for he attempted to desert Hitler in the last days of April, 1945, and was caught and shot, partly for his own desertion and partly as a substitute for Himmler (who had been trying to make peace behind the

\[\text{and Reich commissar for the strengthening of Germandom, became minister of the interior and plenipotentiary-general for administration in 1943. In 1944 he was appointed commander in chief of the Replacement Army (Ersatzheer) and commander of Army Group Vistula.}\]


\(^\text{37}\) Affidavit of Gottlieb (or Gottlob) Berger (chief of the SS Main Office [see Appendix III] and an official of the ministry for the eastern occupied territories) (Doc. No. 3723-PS), _Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression_, Vol. VI, p. 461.

\(^\text{38}\) Bernadotte, _The Curtain Falls_, p. 133. Fegelein had another claim to fame. His wife, Grete, was the sister of Hitler's mistress, Eva Braun. Fegelein's and his wife's presence made it easier to explain why Eva was with the Führer.

\(^\text{39}\) Frischauer, _Himmler_, p. 186.
Führer's back). It is ironic that one traitor died because of the treason of the man he betrayed.  

In 1943-1944, however, the end was not yet known. Kaltenbrunner pursued his way to independence with Bormann's help. Slowly at first, then ever more swiftly, the provincial Austrian became a power to be reckoned with. This accession of authority brought the chief of the Security Police into conflict not only with Himmler, but also with other members of the National Socialist hierarchy. Among these was the minister of foreign affairs, the ex-champagne salesman, Joachim von Ribbentrop. He and Kaltenbrunner soon developed a violent antipathy to one another,  

for Ribbentrop, whom even Hitler thought to be a fool, had a very high opinion of himself and reacted vehemently whenever he felt that his prerogatives were being encroached upon, while Kaltenbrunner, being the heavy-handed man he was, thought nothing about alienating others. Consequently, the RSHA and the foreign office were constantly at odds.  

The tension between these two organs of the National Socialist regime can be seen graphically in the case of what has come to be known as "Operation Cicero"--an operation which involved espionage on a grand scale. The valet of the British ambassador to Turkey had obtained access to his employer's classified files and offered

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^41 Höttl, The Secret Front, p. 275.

^42 Allen Dulles, The Craft of Intelligence (New York: The New American Library, 1965), p. 143. Mr. Dulles, the former director of the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency, was chief of American intelligence for Germany in World War II.
to sell to the Germans pictures of the documents which he found there. The German ambassador to Turkey, Franz von Papen, who will no doubt be remembered as German minister to Austria at the time of the Anschluss, believed the documents to be of the utmost importance. Ribbentrop agreed. Kaltenbrunner did not. He believed that this seller of documents, code-named Cicero,\textsuperscript{43} might be a double agent. Also, the chief of the Security Police felt that the foreign office was incompetent to handle such important matters; so he ordered all foreign office personnel, including von Papen, to keep out of this affair. Naturally, von Ribbentrop protested. Kaltenbrunner protested his protest. So it went. The Reich was afforded the edifying sight of the minister of foreign affairs, who was also an SS-Obergruppenführer, and the chief of the Security Police, himself an SS-Obergruppenführer, arguing constantly while extremely valuable information remained unused.\textsuperscript{44} This dispute gives some idea of the kind of world in which Kaltenbrunner lived during the last two years of the Second World War.

This world was not, however, entirely made up of such intrigues and bickerings. After all, Kaltenbrunner did have the political police to administer. In fact, immediately after his appointment

\textsuperscript{43}The Germans knew neither his true name (Elyesa Bazna), nor that he was the British envoy's valet.

\textsuperscript{44}On Operation Cicero see the memoirs of Elyesa Bazna, I was Cicero (London: Andre Deutsch, 1962); and L. C. Moyzisch (the German contact of Cicero), Operation Cicero (Trans. by Constantine Fitzgibbon and Heinrich Freikvel and with a postscript by Franz von Papen, New York: Pyramid Books, 1958). See also Schellenberg, The Schellenberg Memoirs, pp. 388-397. All should be taken with a grain of salt.
to office he had a very "hot potato" thrown into his lap: "the White Rose affair," which concerned a group of university students in Munich who had come out into open opposition to Hitler's regime. This opposition group was led by a medical student named Hans Scholl and by his sister Sophie. Both of them were under the influence of a University of Munich professor of philosophy named Kurt Huber. For a time the Scholl group succeeded in disseminating anti-Nazi propaganda to other universities and in passing out anti-regime pamphlets without being apprehended. However, when in February, 1943, a crowd at the university spontaneously shouted down a particularly vile speech by Paul Giesler, the Bavarian Gauleiter, and threw his Gestapo and SS guards into the street, the National Socialists became alarmed. They became even more so when the Munich students, led by Hans and Sophie and by another student named Christoph Probst, openly demonstrated for an end to the Hitlerian regime. The police moved swiftly to break up the student group. Kaltenbrunner rushed south and took personal command of the suppression of this outbreak.\textsuperscript{47} The Scholls were arrested, along with Probst, Huber, and others involved in the opposition movement and brought to trial before Roland Freisler's "People's Court." Needless to say, they were convicted of anti-state

\textsuperscript{45}This title comes from "the white rose letters" which the group sent to other schools. For the whole affair see Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, pp. 1022-1023; Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power, pp. 539-541; and Delarue, The Gestapo, pp. 316-317.


\textsuperscript{47}Delarue, The Gestapo, p. 317.
activities and sentenced to death. On February 22, Sophie hobbled to scaffold and was executed by axe. She was quickly followed by her brother and many others.

It was while he was in Munich dealing with the White Rose affair that Kaltenbrunner had his first meeting with one of the most ambiguous figures in the entire history of the Third Reich, Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the chief of the Armed Forces Intelligence Branch (the Abwehr). He was a career naval officer who had headed the Abwehr since 1935. At first strongly supporting the National Socialist government, as did a great many of his colleagues in the navy, he slowly became disillusioned and began dealing with opposition elements. Like Arthur Nebe, however, he never really committed himself to the opponents of the Führer. He hung back. Indeed, he suffered from the same malady which hamstrung other opponents, or pseudo-opponents, of Hitler—indecision. This indecisiveness was particularly dangerous because Himmler and Heydrich had been working since at least 1936 to absorb the Abwehr and its functions into their own foreign intelligence network. With the death of Heydrich, this drive of the SS to destroy the Abwehr had not slackened in intensity, for the Reichsführer's favorite, Schellenberg, was chief of SS foreign intelligence and naturally enough desired to remove Canaris and absorb his agency. With Schellenberg's prompting, Himmler maintained a steady pressure

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48 Miss Scholl suffered a broken leg sometime between her arrest and execution. The Gestapo was not noted for its "gentleness."

49 Karl Heinz Abshagen, Canaris: Patriot und Weltbürger (Stuttgart: Union Deutsche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1950), p. 354. This is still the best biography of Canaris, though it is far too favorable to him.
against the admiral. Once he took over the Security Police, Kaltenbrunner, too, wished to gain control of the Abwehr. This was one of the few things he and Schellenberg ever agreed upon. Consequently, when the RSHA chief met the Abwehr director in February, 1943, the atmosphere was not precisely friendly. The two men were sizing up one another for the contest ahead. Within a year this contest was to end with the admiral's complete defeat.

However in February, 1943, that defeat was still far in the future and unknown to both Canaris and Kaltenbrunner. After their meeting in Munich, they went their separate ways. Kaltenbrunner returned to Berlin and settled down to learn the duties of his new position, and Canaris continued on his mysterious way, wobbling between support of, and opposition to, the Nazi regime.

As far as the chief of the Security Police was concerned, the months between February and July of 1943 were a time of humdrum activity. He slowly learned his job and got settled into the rut of intraregime squabbles, but nothing spectacular occurred. Then, on July 25 came the word that the Duce of Fascism, Benito Mussolini, had been overthrown and kidnapped by agents of the Italian king, Victor Emmanuel III. Hitler exploded. He immediately ordered the Security Police to find the Duce and rescue him.

50 There is a spirited narrative of this encounter in Abshagen, Canaris, pp. 354-356, which is decidedly pro-Canaris and should be read with that in mind.

The Germans eventually located Mussolini in a hotel on the Gran Sasso mountain, where he was being held by Italian guards under the orders of Marshal Pietro Badoglio's provisional Italian government. Someone had to be found to "liberate" the Duce from his captors. Kaltenbrunner knew just the man. For this job, he recommended Otto Skorzeny, his old friend and presently an SS-Hauptsturmführer. Hitler accepted the suggestion. On September 12, 1943, Skorzeny and his men dropped into Mussolini's front yard by glider, released the Duce, and flew him off the mountain and on to Germany. Skorzeny was the hero of the hour, and a little of his new-found fame was transferred to the man who had recommended him for the task. Kaltenbrunner was pleased. So was the Führer.

The Führer, however, was not as pleased about how the war was progressing. Consequently, he decided to increase the harshness of his response to the Allied pressure. Part of this task naturally fell to the Security Police. On March 4, 1944, Kaltenbrunner issued an edict which has since become known as the "bullet decree." This order stated that all escaped Allied prisoners of war (except Britons and Americans) were, if re-captured, to be deprived of their status as prisoners and were to be sent to Mauthausen concentration camp and shot.

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52 Höttl, Hitler's Paper Weapon, p. 67.


54 Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. IV, pp. 300-301.
As if this measure were not enough to discourage Allied soldiers, Kaltenbrunner moved to eliminate prisoners before they became captives. On June 6, 1944, the day the Allied armies stormed ashore at Normandy, the chief of the Security Police, Reichsmarschall Göring, Minister of Foreign Affairs von Ribbentrop, and Reichsführer Himmler, all attended a conference in Berlin to concert measures for the enforcement of an order issued by Kaltenbrunner on April 5 of the same year, which had stated:

In agreement with the Reichsführer-SS I [Kaltenbrunner] have brought about and directed all higher police officers that all Germans shall go unpunished who in the future participate in the persecution and annihilation of enemy aircrews who parachute down.56

This statement was followed by this supplementary note:

All officers of the SD and Security Police are to be informed that pogroms of the populace against English and American terror-fliers [sic] were [sic] not to be interfered with; on the contrary, this hostile mood is to be fostered.57

At the June conference it was decided to maintain these instructions in force and to see to it that they were carried out. The protocol of the meeting stated that lynch "law would have to be the rule."58

The consequences flowing from these decisions were quite logical. Civilians, whose feelings were already inflamed by the heavy

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55This was a special rank bestowed on Göring on July 19, 1940. It made him superior to all other armed forces officers. See Appendix I.

56Order of Kaltenbrunner, as quoted in the affidavit of Bertus Gerdus (a party official) (Doc. No. 3462-PS), Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. VI, p. 162.

57Order of Kaltenbrunner, as quoted in the affidavit of Schellenbert (Doc. No. 2990-PS), ibid., Vol. V, p. 695.

58As quoted in Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 237.
Allied bombings, took the authorities at their word and lynched airmen who parachuted into Germany. In fact, they often asked for, and received, men who had been taken into custody by the police, and then killed them. The sanction for such actions came from the orders signed by Kaltenbrunner.

Would-be and escaped prisoners were not the only problems with which the chief of the Security Police had to contend. In addition, in virtue of his position as chief of the Reich Security Head Office, he was, under the Reichsführer, the director of the so-called Einsatz groups. These were paramilitary units, conceived in 1938 but first used in Poland in late 1939, whose task was the elimination of all "undesirable" elements. They reached their highest peak of perfection in the early part of the Russian campaign (1941-1942), where four groups (A, B, D, and D) followed on the heels of the invading German armies to eliminate Jews, Gypsies, political commissars, and anyone else whom they deemed to be hostile or undesirable. By the time Kaltenbrunner became chief of the Security Police, the fortunes of war had reduced the effectiveness of the Einsatz groups, but they

59 As quoted in Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 236.


61 It should be remembered that Group B was at first headed by Arthur Nebe, chief of Office V of the RSHA, and Group D by Otto Ohlendorf, head of Office III. Both of them retained their respective positions as office chiefs even while in Russia.
were still moderately active and still received their orders from the chief of the Security Police. 62

While Kaltenbrunner could and did give orders to the Einsatz groups, he had no authority over the concentration and destruction camps. 63 These establishments were under the control of the Inspectorate General of Concentration Camps in the SS Economic and Administrative Head Office, 64 the former headed by SS-Gruppenführer Richard Glücks, and the latter by SS-Obergruppenführer Oswald Pohl. However, the fact that Kaltenbrunner had no direct control over the camps does not mean that he was not interested in them. Indeed, he was deeply interested. He had already helped to found the large Mauthausen camp and often inspected it. In fact, on at least one visit he had watched a demonstration of various execution techniques—with live examples. 65 On another occasion "Kaltenbrunner went laughing in [to inspect] the gas chamber" 66 used for most of the executions at Mauthausen. In other words, the chief of the Reich Security Head Office knew precisely what the concentration camps

62 Kaltenbrunner later claimed that he knew nothing whatever about the Einsatz groups before 1943. This is incorrect. He knew about them as early as 1942. See distribution chart of Einsatz group reports, which indicate that these reports went to Kaltenbrunner (Doc. No. 3876-PS), Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Supp. A, pp. 617 and 621.

63 Konzentrationslager and Vernichtungslager. The former were not primarily devoted to genocide but to custody of undesirables; the latter were liquidation camps. Persons sent to these were either immediately killed or were worked to death.

64 See Appendix III.


were like and what they were used for. Knowing this, he sent people there, for all orders for "protective custody" (*Schutzhaft*, which was really a form of arrest) and for "kin custody" (*Sippenhaft*, which was a form of taking hostages) were issued in the name of the chief of the Security Police and Security Service and were signed either by Kaltenbrunner or by his deputy Heinrich Müller. Thus, the chief of the Reich Security Head Office was deeply involved in the activities of the camps and in the mass liquidations and cremations which took place in them, even though the men under his actual command took prisoners only to the gates of the camps and not to the doors of the ovens.

Hence, Kaltenbrunner was a key man in the National Socialist campaign of mass terror and mass murder in respect to both the concentration camps and the *Einsatz* groups. This campaign affected nearly every national group in Europe. For instance, among the dead at Mauthausen were 32,180 Soviet citizens, 30,203 Poles, 12,923 Hungarians, 8,203 Yugoslavs, 6,502 Spaniards, 5,750 Italians, and lesser numbers from Czechoslovakia, Greece, Germany, Belgium, Austria, the Netherlands, the United States, Luxemburg, and the United Kingdom. These figures are of course made up mainly of non-Jews, for Mauthausen was a concentration, not a destruction,

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68 Ibid., p. 580.
camp, but they do give some idea of the scope of the Nazi genocide effort.

It will be noted that the largest numbers of dead at Mauthausen, by a large margin, were Russians and Poles. This was generally true on a larger scale as well. Next to the Jews and Gypsies, the Russians and Poles were considered to be the lowest form of life imaginable and were treated accordingly. An incident which took place in late 1944 will perhaps give some idea of the National Socialist attitude toward the Slavs and Kaltenbrunner's reaction to it. In August of that year the Poles had risen in Warsaw in the belief that the approaching Red Army would be able to reach them to assist them, much as the Parisians had risen earlier in the year, to be joined by Allied columns very shortly thereafter. However, the Russians did not come; they stopped outside Warsaw. Why this happened has never quite been elucidated, but the results for the Polish capital were catastrophic. The Germans moved in and brutally crushed the short-lived rebellion. As a result of this defeat, some 50,000 to 60,000 Poles were incarcerated in concentration camps. Later in the year an attempt was made to obtain their release, but this was refused by Kaltenbrunner on the ground that they "were being used in the secret manufacture of armaments in the Reich and that therefore a general release was out of the question." What he failed to mention was that most of these "secret" factories were

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72 Kaltenbrunner, as quoted in Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 206.
located in concentration camps where the workers soon died of exhaustion.

Kaltenbrunner's attitude toward the Poles is indicative of his general outlook. He was a fanatical Nazi, a bully, and an authoritarian-minded man. Consequently, he was a firm believer in the so-called Untermensch philosophy. In other words, he considered people as racial types. To him the Germans were supermen. The other Nordic races, like the Scandinavians, English, Dutch, and German Swiss, were superior beings, though not as good as Germans. The Latins were human, but just barely. The Slavs, particularly the Poles, Russians, and Ukrainians, were sub-human animals. Finally, Gypsies and Jews were vermin to be obliterated from the face of the earth.

Given this Weltanschauung, it is not surprising that Kaltenbrunner was deeply involved in the "final solution of the Jewish problem." He had not been directly concerned with the discussions which took place in 1941 that had led to the decision to make genocide the final solution, although, as higher SS and police leader in Vienna, he had been involved in the persecution and then the liquidation of the Jews. After taking over the Reich Security Head Office, in January, 1943, he continued the harsh measures instituted and carried through by his predecessor.

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74 For a general treatment of this particular topic see Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews; and Reitlinger, The Final Solution.
His first big problem with the Jewish question occurred in August, 1943. In that month the dock workers in the German "protected" state of Denmark staged a strike. Riots occurred, and the Germans declared martial law. This overt opposition to the Reich enabled Himmler and Kaltenbrunner to attempt to solve the Jewish problem in Denmark. Until this time the opposition of the Royal Danish government and the German desire to use Denmark as a show place--"a model protectorate"--had combined to enable the some 7,800 Jews or part-Jews, both Danish and stateless, to escape liquidation. Now, acting on Himmler's instructions, and with Hitler's approval, Kaltenbrunner ordered the round-up and deportation to the camps of all Jews in Denmark. Unfortunately for the Germans, the Danes got wind of what was coming and warned the Jews. As a consequence, less than 500 were actually caught by the police. Nearly 6,000 were spirited out of the country. The rest remained in hiding until the end of the war. The Nazis had been made to look foolish and they did not appreciate that. Partly as a result of this fiasco, a conference was held on December 30, 1943, to discuss Denmark.

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75 Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, pp. 171-173. This is the best account of the fate of the Danish Jews. See also, Reitlinger, The Final Solution, pp. 345-351.


77 Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, p. 173.

78 Ibid., p. 174. Part of those evacuated to Sweden were half-Jews or non-Jews married to Jews, so that about half the Jewish population remained in the country.
Present at this meeting were Kaltenbrunner; Himmler; Dr. Werner Best, the Reich plenipotentiary for Denmark (and a former deputy chief of the Gestapo); Günther Panche, higher SS and police leader for Denmark; the Führer; Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, the head of the Armed Forces High Command; Colonel General Alfred Jodl, the armed forces chief of operations; and General Rudolf Schmundt, Hitler's armed forces adjutant. At this conference the carrying-out of so-called "clearing murders" (reprisals) in retribution for anti-German actions by the Danes (such as hiding over 3,000 "Jewish Vermin") was discussed. It was decided that such killings were to take place. 79 Needless to say, Kaltenbrunner gave the orders for these reprisals.

Hardly was this conference over when the chief of the Security Police was forced to turn his attention to the Jewish problem in Hungary. On March 19, 1944, German troops occupied that country and forced the Regent Miklos Horthy to appoint the strongly pro-German Döme Sztojai prime minister. Up until this time Hungarian Jews had been relatively well-off. The country had been sort of an island of safety in a sea of murder. Now all that changed, for Sztojai's government agreed to aid the Germans in carrying out a cleansing of Jewry from Hungary. To forward this aim, Kaltenbrunner himself went to Budapest at the end of March to coordinate matters. 80 He was instrumental in getting László Endre and László Baky made state

79 Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 217.
secretaries in the Hungarian Interior Ministry.\footnote{Braham, The Destruction of Hungarian Jewry, Vol. I, pp. xvi-xvii.} Both were extremely pro-German and anti-Semitic and were determined to make Hungary "Jew-free." Also, he recommended to Himmler that \textit{SS-Obergruppenführer} Otto Winkelmann be appointed higher SS and police leader in Hungary.\footnote{Affidavit of Kurt Becher (SS officer) (Doc. No. 438), \textit{ibid.}, Vol. II, p. 896.} This was done. Finally, he ordered the chief of his Jewish affairs sub-office (Office IVB4), his old friend Adolf Eichmann to come to Budapest to direct all anti-Jewish activities. The latter took his entire office with him, since Hungary was virtually the last place still under German control with a large number of free Jews.\footnote{Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, p. 140.}

At this time, Hungary provided a good example of National Socialist administrative practices in general, for there were at least four different chains of command directly connected with the Jewish problem. First of all, there was the Reich Plenipotentiary Edmund Veesenmayer, who was the chief German representative in Hungary. Then there was \textit{SS-Obergruppenführer} Winkelmann, the higher SS and police leader, who by virtue of his office had general supervision over all SS and police forces in the country. Next there was \textit{SS-Obersturmbannführer} Adolf Eichmann, who was directly in charge of all anti-Jewish activities but who was not technically under Winkelmann's control, since he was a Reich Security Head Office
bureau chief. Lastly, there was a sort of free agent, SS-Standartenführer Kurt Becher, who was Himmler's personal agent in Hungary. It hardly needs to be mentioned that none of these four got on well with the others. As a consequence, a great deal of senseless bickering took place. Not that it helped the Jews much, for some 180,000 to 200,000 were departed nonetheless. 84

Of these 180,000 or so Jews, some were deported in a particularly brutal manner. In theory because the Allies had blown up the Hungarian railway system, Eichmann proposed to Kaltenbrunner that the Jews be marched out of Hungary to camps in Germany. Kaltenbrunner accepted this suggestion and ordered the march. 85 Not many deportees made it.

Meanwhile, at the same time that he was supervising the deportation of Hungarian Jews, Kaltenbrunner was making plans for their use. On June 7, 1944, he received a request from the Mayor of Vienna, Honorary SS-Brigadeführer Karl Blaschke, to assign Hungarian Jews to work in the factories in the Vienna area, which were desperately short of labor. On the fourteenth Eichmann told the chief of the Security Police that he could supply an initial shipment of 30,000. 86 On the thirtieth Kaltenbrunner wrote Blaschke that only 3,600 of the first 12,000 Jews sent would be usable. The remainder were to be the object

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84Reitlinger, The Final Solution, p. 497. For the whole Hungarian situation, see ibid., pp. 412-417; and Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, pp. 138-150 and 194-202.


86Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, p. 545.
of a "special action," in short, murdered, because they were unfit for work. 87

Thus, Kaltenbrunner played a major part in the attempt of the Nazis to render Europe 'Jew-free.' Of course, he worked mainly on the practical side of this undertaking. Occasionally, however, he became involved in the theoretical aspect of anti-Semitism as well. For example, he was to have been a delegate to an anti-Semitic congress, which was to have been held in Cracow in mid-1944. Unfortunately he never got to go because the rapid advance of the Red Army rendered Cracow unsafe and the congress had to be cancelled. 88

This incident shows that the chief of the Security Police was also interested in theoretical problems, although he normally had little time for such matters, since he devoted most of his attention to the work of his office. For example, in early 1943, prior to the white rose affair, he had another experience involving flowers. It seems that Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Dr. Ernst Woermann allowed some twelve newspapers (ten Neuen Zürcher Zeitungen and two issues of The Times of London) to get out of his possession. They turned up in a florist's shop where they were being used as wrapping for cut flowers. In view of the seriousness of allowing foreign newspapers to get into circulation, Kaltenbrunner wrote Woermann and suggested strongly that he be more careful in the future. 89 Woermann agreed to do so.


88 Wulf, Martin Bormann, pp. 93-95.

Another example of the RSHA chief's close supervision of his office occurred in mid-1944, when his deputy Müller asked him, at one of the daily situation conferences which he held, what to do with some twenty-five diseased French prostitutes who were endangering the health of German soldiers. Kaltenbrunner's answer was brief and to the point: "Shoot them."

He was equally harsh in his treatment of the fifteen members of an Anglo-American military team that was parachuted into Slovakia in January, 1945. These men, all of whom were in uniform and one of whom was an Associated Press correspondent, were ordered taken to Mauthausen and executed. This order was given by Kaltenbrunner.

Nor were these the only Allied soldiers to feel the chief of the Security Police's heavy hand. In early November, 1944, an act of violence having been committed against a German officer in France, Hitler ordered a French general—any one would do—killed in retaliation. Kaltenbrunner was assigned the task of picking the victim and carrying out the murder. On December 30, the chief of the Reich Security Head Office submitted a plan to Himmler to murder one of the French generals interned at Camp Koenigstein. The idea was that, since it had long been planned to move the seventy-five general officers who were in this camp, a group of five or six

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92 Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 273.
would be transferred and one would be killed by carbon monoxide en route. That one was to be General Deboisse. ⁹³

By the eighteenth of January, 1945, the plan was ready for execution. In the interval between the time Kaltenbrunner sent his letter to the Reichsführer and the actual time when the plan was to be carried out, several changes had been made in this project. First of all, it was decided simply to shoot the prisoner "while attempting to escape" instead of using carbon monoxide. Secondly, it was resolved to replace General Deboisse with General Mesny, because of possible security leaks. ⁹⁴ Consequently, it was Mesny who was marked for death when the three cars bearing the French generals left Koenigstein early in the morning of January 19. In the first car, which departed at 6:00 A. M., were Generals Daine and Deboisse. In the second, which left at 7:00, was General Mesny, who was alone—the general who was originally to have accompanied him having been conveniently ordered to remain behind. Finally, in the third car, which departed at 8:00, were Generals Flavigny and Buisson. The men in cars one and three arrived at Colditz (the German's maximum security prisoner of war camp) around noon. The car bearing Mesny did not arrive, ⁹⁵ and for good reason, for he had been shot "while attempting to escape" when the car had halted so that its occupants

⁹³Kaltenbrunner to Himmler, Berlin, December 30, 1944 (Doc. No. 4048-PS), Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Supp. A, pp. 807-809. It has proved impossible to discover this general's first name or anything about him.

⁹⁴Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 275. The writer has been unable to find out anything about General Mesny save his rank and surname.

⁹⁵Ibid.
could fulfill the call of nature. Thus was Hitler's order and Kaltenbrunner's plan carried out.

From what has been noted thus far one can see that the chief of the Reich Security Head Office was involved in many varied activities in the two years between January, 1943, and March, 1945. Some were of a minor nature; others were of great moment. Belonging in the latter category were the part he played in the final destruction of Admiral Canaris' power, and of Canaris himself, and his role in the Attentat of July 20, 1944.

In the case of the Abwehr chief, it took Kaltenbrunner approximately a year from the time of his first meeting with the admiral to break Canaris' power. It should be remembered that in this destruction of the Abwehr Kaltenbrunner played a large role, but not the only one. Both Himmler and Schellenberg were also out to get Canaris. In addition, Kaltenbrunner had the aid of Canaris' own semi-treasonous activities in the struggle to overthrow the admiral. With such support, the chief of the Security Police was able to force Canaris out of office as head of the Abwehr in February, 1944. Nor was this all that was accomplished, for in addition, the Abwehr was deprived of all its special intelligence duties, which were now transferred to the Reich Security Head Office as the Military Office (Amt Militär), under first Colonel Georg Hansen and then under Schellenberg.97

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96 Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, p. 1026. Canaris became head of the office of commercial and economic warfare—a post with no real duties. Ibid., p. 1026n.

97 Delarue, The Gestapo, pp. 319-320. Hansen was involved in the July 20 plot and was executed.
Canaris remained at liberty until after the attempted Putsch in July, when he was arrested and sent to Flossenbürg concentration camp. There he remained until the nineteenth of April, 1945, when he was killed on Kaltenbrunner's orders. The slow-moving Austrian thus finally ended the career of the slippery admiral. 98

In order to carry the story of the Abwehr and Canaris to its final conclusion, it has seemed proper to anticipate certain events. It is now necessary to backtrack to late July, 1944, in order to see how the chief of the Security Police figured in the attempted revolt of the twentieth of that month, when Colonel Count Claus von Stauffenberg planted a bomb in the Führer's conference room at Rastenburg, East Prussia. 99 This was part of a plot against the Nazi regime devised by a group of army officers, civilians, and intellectuals. Due mainly to the fact that Hitler was not killed, nor even seriously injured, by the explosion, and to the fact that the rebels failed to act resolutely, the plot failed. Kaltenbrunner played his part in seeing to it that these rebels paid for their mistakes.

On that fateful day in July, immediately after the first reports arrived in Berlin of the explosion at the Führer headquarters, Kaltenbrunner boarded a plane for East Prussia, arriving there about two P. M. 100 Upon reaching Rastenburg he met Himmler, and together

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98 Abshagen, Canaris, pp. 396-397.

99 For a general account of the revolt, see Constantine Fitzgibbon, 20 July (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1956); Bullock, Hitler, pp. 743-752; Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, pp. 1048-1083; Trevor-Roper, The Last Days of Hitler, pp. 91-98; and Wheeler-Bennett, The Nemesis of Power, pp. 535-693.

100 Höttl, The Secret Front, p. 53. The bomb exploded at 12:45 P. M.
they returned to Berlin, where they arrived about 8:00 P. M.\textsuperscript{101} Once back in the capital, the Reichsführer empowered the chief of the Security Police to take charge of rounding up and questioning the persons involved in the plot. Kaltenbrunner was to be assisted in this by his old friend Otto Skorzeny.\textsuperscript{102} The chief of the Reich Security Head Office set to work immediately, and by midnight he was personally in charge at army headquarters on the Bendlerstrasse, where he stopped the executions which Colonel General Fritz Fromm (the commander in chief of the Replacement Army) had been conducting to cover his own tracks.\textsuperscript{103} Kaltenbrunner knew better than to kill witnesses who could be made to talk. For good measure, the RSHA chief arrested Fromm, who was later executed.

Space does not permit a review of the broad aftermath of this coup attempt with its bizarre trials before the "People's Court" and its grisly executions. Suffice it to say that Kaltenbrunner was in charge of cleaning up the conspiracy after the Putsch failed. He directed the investigations and interrogations. He ordered the arrests and the protective custody incarcerations. He reported every detain to Bormann and through him to Hitler. The clean sweep made after July 20, 1944, owed much of its thoroughness and ferocity to Kaltenbrunner.\textsuperscript{104} His excellent performance made it much easier for

\begin{footnotes}
\item[102] Ibid. See also, Manvell and Fraenkel, Himmler, p. 194.
\item[104] See his reports to Bormann, Spiegelbild einer Verschwörung: Die Kaltenbrunner Berichte an Bormann und Hitler über das Attentat
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Bormann to advance Kaltenbrunner's position with the Führer. Henceforth, Hitler had the utmost confidence in his fellow countryman.

While he had been helping to destroy the Abwehr and the July conspirators, Kaltenbrunner had also become involved in the confused "Vlassov movement." This movement, headed by Andrei Andrijivich Vlassov, a renegade Soviet general, was dedicated to the creation of a non-communist Great Russia. Vlassov and his supporters had formed an army out of Soviet prisoners of war to fight with Germany against the Soviet Union. However, this army had not been well-received by the Germans. Most Nazi leaders disliked giving weapons to sub-humans (as they considered Russians), while others, like Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi "philosopher" and minister for eastern occupied territories, favored a separatist system in Russia, whereby Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Armenians, etc., would have their own little puppet states, and hence opposed the Great Russian nationalist Vlassov on principle. Consequently, the plan for a Russian army fighting with the Reich against the Soviets made little progress until Germany was in a desperate situation. At his point, Kaltenbrunner got involved in the controversy over the Vlassov army, at the goading of his foreign intelligence chief, Schellenberg.\(^{105}\) Because his old enemy Gottlieb Berger was backing the anti-Vlassovites, Kaltenbrunner, a firm believer in the Untermensch philosophy, became a supporter of the

\(^{105}\) Reitlinger, The House Built on Sand, p. 358.
Vlassovites. He even had some Russian nationalists released from confinement to show that he was backing them. However, his enthusiasm soon cooled when Berger changed from an anti- to a pro-Vlassov position. Kaltenbrunner promptly reversed his earlier stand and protested against the holding of a Vlassovite congress. All in all, the bickering among the Nazi leadership managed to render the Vlassov movement even more futile than it might otherwise have been.

While the chief of the Security Police was enmeshed in the Vlassov controversy, he also became involved in another imbroglio. This affair involved Count Folke Bernadotte of the Swedish Red Cross and his attempts to free Scandinavians who were being held in German concentration camps. In February, 1945, the Count arranged to meet with Kaltenbrunner in order to present his proposals and to set-up a further meeting with Himmler. This conference between the Swedish aristocrat and the Austrian bourgeois took place in the latter's plush home in the Wannsee district of Berlin. The chief of the Security Police listened politely to Bernadotte's proposal to take all Scandinavians out of the camps and carry them to Sweden, but remained noncommittal. Shortly thereafter, the Count saw Himmler, who, due to the obvious trend of the war, was in a generous mood.

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107 Ibid., p. 647n.


He agreed to the release of the Scandinavian prisoners. Kaltenbrunner soon learned of this arrangement and set out to block its implementa-
ion. He did this partly out of belief in the rightness of the National Socialist cause, which the release of the prisoners seemed to throw doubt upon, and partly out of a reaction against Himmler's "soft" attitude. Kaltenbrunner was a hard-liner, and, like most bullies, he disliked "weaklings." On March 15 Bernadotte confronted Kaltenbrunner and plainly told the Security Police chief that the Reichsführer approved of his mission and Kaltenbrunner must not oppose it. The latter gave way with much bad grace.

The Bernadotte negotiations and the Vlassovite controversy throw into bold relief the combination of stubbornness, fanaticism, and opportunism which made up Kaltenbrunner's character. Sometimes his actions would be those one would expect of a fanatical Nazi; at other times, he would behave like a rank opportunist. The man was unstable, and it was impossible to predict just what his reaction to any given situation would be. This unpredictableness seems to lend credence to the idea that one can best explain Kaltenbrunner by thinking of him as a bully. Bullies are almost always unstable characters who are insufferable in triumph and despicable in defeat. Thus, it is clear that Kaltenbrunner's years at the summit had had little effect upon his nature. Bully he had been; bully he remained.

111 Bernadotte, The Curtain Falls, p. 64.

112 Ibid., pp. 66-67. The text indicates that the meeting was on the fifth. This is a misprint since Bernadotte was in Sweden on the fifth. See ibid., pp. 62-66.
The final year of his life was to produce many changes as he fell from the summit to his death.
CHAPTER III:
THE FALL FROM THE SUMMIT, 1945-1946

Kaltenbrunner's fall from the summit was a direct result of the collapse of the Third Reich. By the time of the Bernadotte negotiations (late February and early March 1945) it was clear to all but the most obtuse, or insane, that the Reich was in deep difficulties. The Russian armies had overrun Eastern Europe and were threatening Berlin itself. The Anglo-American forces were nearing the Po River in Italy and were menacing the Alpine passes. Yugoslav partisans had cleared their country and were about to link up to the east with the Russians and to the west with the English. In the west, the Allied armies were across the Rhine. Germany was caught in a vice. It was evident that it might soon be cut in half.¹

Due to the imminent possibility of the splitting of the Reich in half, Kaltenbrunner was created chief of security for the southern portion of Germany in late March, 1945.² This position made him Himmler's deputy not only for the agencies under the authority of the Reich Security Head Office, but also for all organizations under the direction of Himmler as Reichsführer-SS, chief of the German police, minister of the interior, and commander-in-chief of the Replacement Army.³ Thus, Kaltenbrunner became sort of a South German Himmler

¹For this period generally see John Toland, The Last 100 Days (New York: Random House, 1965).
³Höttl, Hitler's Paper Weapon, pp. 151-152.
with virtually complete control over that part of the Reich below the Main River.

Needless to say, Kaltenbrunner's appointment as head of security for the south had not been made solely on the Reichsführer's own initiative. It is evident that Bormann had influenced the Führer to "suggest" that Himmler grant his unruly subordinate the vast authority inherent in the position of chief of security in the south. As a consequence, the Reichsführer took precautions to protect his own rights. He sent his close associate and Kaltenbrunner's old foe, Gottlieb Berger, south to watch the chief of the Security Police.²

Sometime before March 23 Kaltenbrunner went to southern Germany in order to investigate the prevailing conditions. He did not like what he saw. Chaos and defeatism reigned everywhere. Upon seeing the difficulties in which the Reich found itself, Kaltenbrunner's latent opportunism came to the fore and he decided peace must be made before Germany was totally destroyed.⁵ Having made this decision to push for an immediate peace settlement, he returned to Berlin, via Flossenbürg concentration camp. There he had a long, private interview with his fallen rival Canaris,⁶ for what purpose no one can be certain, but it might logically be assumed that, having decided to make peace, Kaltenbrunner went to talk with a man whom he knew to have contacts in the west. The word "west" is important here, for the chief of the Security Police, like many Nazis, felt that the

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²Reitlinger, The SS, p. 421.
⁵Höttl, The Secret Front, p. 288.
⁶Abshagen, Canaris, pp. 391-392.
Western Allies could be induced to make a separate peace leaving Germany free to deal with the "Bolshevik menace."

However that may be, after meeting with the admiral, Kaltenbrunner went on to Berlin to confront the Führer in order to induce him to make peace. He arrived there on March 23. On that day, Hitler gave one of his last and one of his best performances. Kaltenbrunner had arranged a private interview with the Führer that afternoon. When he arrived, he found Hitler examining a model of Linz (Kaltenbrunner's home town). The Führer looked up from the table, and appearing full of energy and confidence, he opened a long discussion of his plans for rebuilding Linz as the great urban center of Central Europe. The Führer kept inquiring what Kaltenbrunner, as a Linzer, thought of such-and-such or so-and-so. As was his wont, he worked himself into a state of high enthusiasm. Then, abruptly he became serious and told the chief of the Reich Security Head Office that he knew why he was there, but that he should not despair. He should trust his Führer. With that the interview was at an end.

At this point all of Kaltenbrunner's opportunism vanished and his fanaticism returned in full force. Hitler had for him an hypnotic fascination—he worshipped him. Now, having been confronted with the Führer's determination and confidence, he reverted to type and once more became fanatic in his devotion to the cause. He left

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8 Höttl, Hitler's Paper Weapon, p. 151.
10 Höttl, The Secret Front, p. 66.
Berlin and set up headquarters in the little town of Alt-Aussee, in the Totengebirge (Dead Mountains) near Salzburg, determined to establish an Alpine Redoubt (Alpenfestung), where "true" National Socialists could hold out even if all the rest of the Reich were occupied.

Up until this time (late March, 1945) nothing had been done to found such a redoubt, but the chief of the Security Police felt it could be done in a very short time and he planned to do it. However, now that he was free from Hitler's overpowering personality and under his associate Höttl's influence, his opportunistic streak started to surface again, if in a modified form. He began to see himself as the "saviour of Austria" and started dreaming of heading an anti-Bolshevik Austrian regime, if anything should befall the Führer.

Before he had been able to do much toward realizing these plans however (and neither the redoubt nor the proposed Austrian government ever materialized), he again returned to Berlin to tidy up loose ends at the Reich Security Head Office headquarters. This was to be his last trip there; for on April 19 he left Berlin, never to return.

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12 Ibid., pp. 294-295. Höttl still lives in Alt-Aussee today (1966), where he runs a boarding school for girls.
13 Höttl, Hitler's Paper Weapon, pp. 150-151.
14 Ibid., p. 152.
15 Benedikt, Geschichte der Republik Österreich, p. 287.
16 Reitlinger, The Final Solution, p. 480.
Though there is no evidence that he saw Hitler during this visit to the capital, the trip seems nonetheless to have stoked the dampening fires of fanaticism, for on his return to Alt-Aussee he ordered the arrest of Wilhelm Höttl for treasonous contacts with the enemy—contacts of which he had earlier approved. Needless to say, Höttl was somewhat upset by the whole business. He managed to contact a friend of his on Kaltenbrunner's staff who talked the chief of the Security Police into authorizing Höttl's release. When the latter saw the former again, he berated him for his actions. Kaltenbrunner shrugged his shoulders and commented: "I never thought twice about it." 18

Of course, arresting subordinates, traveling to Berlin, and planning the redoubt were not Kaltenbrunner's only projects during March and April, 1945. He also had other irons in the fire. One of these was his project of buying arms from the Yugoslav partisans. To understand the full irony of this, one must remember that the weapons the partisans were using had either been taken from the Germans, or Italians, or slipped in by the Allies. These arms had then been used in the bloody, vicious German-Yugoslav guerrilla war. Now Kaltenbrunner was buying these weapons to equip needy German army and home defense units. Of course, he was buying them with forged British pound notes—the same kind used to pay off Cicero earlier.

17 Höttl, The Secret Front, p. 299.
18 As quoted in Höttl, Hitler's Paper Weapon, p. 155. The entire incident is described in ibid., p. 154.
19 Ibid., pp. 104-105.
Meanwhile, Kaltenbrunner had other problems—the most pressing being what to do with the incriminating evidence presented by the inmates of the remaining concentration camps, particularly those in the south. Kaltenbrunner allegedly came to the conclusion that these people must be destroyed. To affect this destruction, Operation "Cloud-fire" (or "Cloud A-l") was planned. This operation had as its object the liquidation by poison of the prisoners in the Dachau, Landsberg, and Mühlsdorf camps (with the exception of "Aryan" citizens of the Western nations). Fortunately, the advancing Allied armies prevented such drastic measures from being carried out.

The chief of the Security Police is also supposed to have ordered the inmates of Mauthausen concentration camp transferred to an underground aircraft factory at Guren, which was then to be blown up along with all the prisoners. At least, he was accused by the dying commandant of Mauthausen, Franz Ziereis, of having given such orders. Kaltenbrunner denied Ziereis' charges and said that he had


\[\text{The word "allegedly" was used because Kaltenbrunner's part in this action has been disputed by no less an authority than Gerald Reitlinger (see The Final Solution, p. 471), who believes these plans were local affairs. Since Mr. Reitlinger is hardly sympathetic to Kaltenbrunner, his thoughts must be taken into consideration. It seems likely, however, barring further evidence, that Kaltenbrunner was involved. This plot is precisely the kind of thing he would become entangled in. Until new evidence to the contrary is presented, this writer will accept Mr. Tenenbaum's elucidation.}\]
ordered the camp given over intact to the American. Höttl supported Kaltenbrunner's position. On the whole, it seems more than likely that Ziereis was telling the truth. He was dying and knew it; so he had little reason to lie. Besides, this plan sounds much like "Operation Cloud-fire" and fits in with the chief of the Reich Security Head Office's attitudes.

Some insight into those attitudes may be had by noting Himmler's comment when he was asked to release prisoners from the camps. He said: "How am I going to do that with Kaltenbrunner about? I shall be completely at his mercy." This statement leads one back to the idea that Kaltenbrunner took a hard line not only out of a fanatic attachment to the ideals of National Socialism and the person of the Führer, but also because Himmler was taking the opposite tack, much as the chief of the Security Police supported the Vlassovites because Berger opposed them. When assessing Kaltenbrunner's actions one should never forget that they were often based on irrational premises like personal dislike and ideological fanaticism.

Thus, Kaltenbrunner pursued a very confused course in the five weeks between his eventful meeting with the Führer and the latter's death by his own hand on April 30, 1945. At one moment the chief of the Security Police pursued a hard line, ordered concentration camps destroyed, arrested the "soft-liner" Höttl, and generally behaved like

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23 Reitlinger, The Final Solution, p. 474.
24 See ante, n. 22.
25 As quoted in Manvell and Fraenkel, Himmler, p. 225.
a good Nazi. The next minute he tried to create an independent Austria to fight with the West against the communists. Never was the instability of his personality more evident; never were his actions more futile.

For while Kaltenbrunner gyrated, the Allied armies marched. Berlin was surrounded and the Führer chose to remain in his dying capital. His troops in Italy surrendered at the orders of Kaltenbrunner's former rival, SS-Obergruppenführer Wolff, and of Colonel General Heinrich von Vietinghoff. The troops of the Soviet Union and the United States met at the city of Torgau, splitting the Reich in twain. The Führer committed suicide. The Third Reich was crumbling and the summit upon which the chief of the Security Police sat was sliding into the abyss.

The first week in May found Kaltenbrunner still in Alt-Aussee attempting to figure out what he should do. It was obvious he had little time left to act, for Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz's government, which had succeeded the rule of the Führer, was obviously a caretaker regime, and just as plainly, the Allies were after the number two man in the repressive machinery in order to bring him to trial for his actions as head of the Reich Security Head Office.

While he was attempting to decide what action to take, the erstwhile political police chief saw three old acquaintances who all happened to be in Alt-Aussee at this time. The first was Otto Skorzeny, the rescuer of Mussolini, who passed through on his way to Spain.  

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26 Höttl, *The Secret Front*, p. 308. Skorzeny was also wanted by the Americans for heading a special unit, during the Battle of the Bulge, which had worn American uniforms and committed some acts not approved by the Geneva code. He got to Spain and is still alive (1966).
He had little advice for the man who had given his career such a boost and left Alt-Aussee as soon as he could.

The second acquaintance was Kaltenbrunner's advisor and hanger-on, Wilhelm Höttl. Höttl's home was in Alt-Aussee, and he quietly disassociated himself from his superior and withdrew to his own home. He later turned up at the Nuremberg War Crimes Trial as a witness for the prosecution. He himself was never tried.

It was the third of Kaltenbrunner's associates whose final meeting with the chief of the Security Police was most interesting. This friend was Adolf Eichmann, the "Jewish expert." On May 5, 1945, he located Kaltenbrunner living in a summer villa near Alt-Aussee. When Eichmann found him Kaltenbrunner was wearing an SS-Obergruppenführer dress blouse, ski-pants, and ski-boots. He was playing solitaire and drinking cognac.

Kaltenbrunner asked Eichmann what he planned to do now that everything was collapsing. The latter replied that he intended to retreat to the mountains and fight on. Kaltenbrunner, still playing solitaire, said that this sounded like a good idea—for Eichmann. The latter then rose to leave. As he went out the door, he heard his old friend murmur: "It's all a lot of crap. The game is up." It was the last time they ever saw each other. This meeting is particularly interesting because it shows Kaltenbrunner's state of mind at the time.

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28 Eichmann, "Adolf Eichmann Tells His Own Damning Story--Part II," p. 152.

29 Ibid., p. 155.
He was numb, but not so numb as to flee to the mountains with Eichmann to fight on. That he knew was foolish, as Eichmann soon discovered. The estwhile chief of the Security Police just sat like a stunned animal. He had started the rapid transformation he was to undergo in the next few months.

Finally, two days later, on May 7, he made his decision. He would attempt to flee—where he was not quite sure. On that day, accompanied by his chauffeur, adjutant, and orderly, he headed for the Totengebirge. He had made few preparations for the trip and the forged papers he carried, made out in the name of a Dr. Unterwegen (an armed forces M. D.), would not have fooled a two year old child. He assumed that the people around Alt-Aussee would help him since he had prevented the blowing up on the Salzburg mines where a great many priceless works of art had been stored. He miscalculated. His guide, a forest ranger, betrayed him by reporting his hiding place to Johann Brandauer, a local anti-Nazi. Brandauer went to the American authorities. On May 12, R. E. Matteson, an officer of the 80th Counter Intelligence Corps detachment, in civilian clothes, and accompanied by men of the 318th infantry regiment,


31Col. Ralph E. Pearson, Enroute to the Redoubt: A Soldier's Report as A Regiment Goes to War; A Chronological Account of Some of the Activities of the 318th in Europe (5 vols. in 1, Chicago: Adams Printing Service, 1957-1959), Vol. III, p. 230. This "book" is a real hodgepodge. It is almost a scrapbook. However, it contains much primary source material on Kaltenbrunner's capture.


surrounded the cabin, called Wildensee Hutte, in which Kaltenbrunner was living. When they rushed the place, Kaltenbrunner came stumbling out half asleep. The hut was searched and produced quantities of ammunition, weapons, candy, and counterfeit money. At first, Kaltenbrunner denied his true identity and refused to say anything. Then, by a fluke, his attempt at concealment was abruptly shattered. The Americans confronted him with his mistress, a Gisela Countess von Westarp by name, who obligingly played into the Americans' hands by impulsively planting a kiss on Kaltenbrunner's cheek, whereupon the former chief of the Security Police gave up his pretense and admitted his identity. He even talked about his plan for setting up an anti-Bolshevik underground in Germany and Austria.

What he did not talk about is almost as interesting as what he did discuss. When informed that his wife had been arrested four days earlier, Kaltenbrunner simply shrugged his shoulders and neither asked about her condition nor about that of their children. Nor was he particularly interested in his mistress or their two six-month

35 Ibid.
36 Höttl, The Secret Front, p. 313.
37 Minott, The Fortress That Never Was, p. 27.
38 Ibid.
40 Ibid., p. 231. What his wife's name was, when they were married, or how many children they possessed seem to have been state secrets, for it has proved impossible to find out anything about them. It is plain Kaltenbrunner cared little for them.
old twins, Visula and Wolfgang. Kaltenbrunner was probably incapable of love, or even of caring about another person deeply. He was interested only in himself and the gratification of his own desires. Nothing else mattered much. Again, one can see the bully in Kaltenbrunner. People meant next to nothing to him, except as they could be used or abused. Indifference to others was his way of life. It never really changed.

Shortly after his capture by the American patrol, Kaltenbrunner was transferred to the prison at Nuremberg to await trial as a war criminal. The last period of his life was beginning.

That final year and a half were to be dominated by his trial and its aftermath. As the eminent political scientist Hannah Arendt once wrote: "The focus of every trial is upon the person of the defendant, a man of flesh and blood with an individual history, with an always unique set of qualities, peculiarities, behavior patterns, and circumstances." This was, of course, true for the situation with which she was dealing—the Eichmann trial in 1961. It was less true of the trial of the major war criminals in 1945. In the latter case there was not one defendant, but twenty-one. For Kaltenbrunner the situation had even less relation to Miss Arendt's statement, for he was

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41 Ibid., p. 231. Gisela and the children disappeared later; they are rumored to have gone to Canada.


43 Twenty-four major war criminals were indicted, but Robert Ley, the head of the Labor Front, hanged himself before the trial began, while Alfred Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, the industrialist, was too ill to be tried, and Martin Bormann, Kaltenbrunner's friend, had vanished and was tried in absentia. Hence there were only twenty-one defendants in the dock.
relatively less well known to the world and even to the trial personnel than some of his co-defendants, like Göring, von Ribbentrop, von Papen, and Keitel. Their presence overshadowed him, and as a consequence, persons writing about the trial often gloss over the former chief of the Security Police and pass on to the more glittering defendants, such as Göring, who was enjoying his final hour as the center of attention and relishing every moment of it. Finally, Kaltenbrunner was out of place at Nuremberg. He was being tried in the wrong court. Undoubtedly he would have been tried in any case, but his trial really belonged among the so-called trials of minor war criminals. Kaltenbrunner stumbled into the trial of the major war criminals by chance. He was in the "right" place at the "right" time, just as he had been in 1935, when he became chief of the Austrian SS, partly by reason of his qualifications and partly because there was no one else available to run the SS in Austria. In Nuremberg the situation was the same. Kaltenbrunner was there because Himmler was not. The Reichsführer's last days had not been particularly heroic and he had eventually blundered into the hands of the British military authorities. However, before he could be thoroughly searched, he took poison and died. With Himmler dead, the Allies were faced with finding a substitute to represent the horrendous crimes of the SS and police. Kaltenbrunner was the logical choice. The chief of the Reich Security Head Office was not there as "a man of flesh and blood" but as an archetype. He was a model representing Himmler, Pohl, Müller, Heinrich Müller disappeared during the final fighting in Berlin. He was never seen again. It has been rumored that he went over to the Russians. It would seem possible, but no determination can now be made, or probably ever will be. Pohl was tried and condemned to death by one of the later trial.
and all the other leaders and followers of the National Socialist terror machine. As a consequence of this, the trial saw little of Kaltenbrunner's peculiar individuality, though if one peruses the trial records after having gained some insight into the man's nature, the salient points are quite evident.

As if this role of archetypical SS man were not enough to obscure Kaltenbrunner as an individual, he also had the problem of missing a good part of the trial due to illness. On November 17, 1945, the former chief of the Security Police suffered "spontaneous subarachnoid hemorrhage"—a condition caused by the rupturing of blood vessels in the membrane of the brain. Though such conditions can possibly prove fatal, Kaltenbrunner's case only resulted in severe headaches and difficulty in moving around. For a time he appeared to be recovering, then he suffered a relapse. Eventually, however, he recovered and was able to resume his seat in the dock in time to hear the presentation of the prosecution's case against him.

This case was structured around four basic charges. The first of these was that he was responsible for the tortures and murders carried out by the Einsatz groups. It is interesting to note that this charge used as evidence incidents which took place both before and after he became chief of the Security Police and the Security Service. In short, he was being used as the symbol for all the other people involved in this campaign of genocide, particularly Himmler and Heydrich, as well as being tried as a defendant in his own right.

45 Kelley, 22 Cells in Nuremberg, p. 134.
Secondly, Kaltenbrunner was accused of having ordered the execution of "racially and socially undesirable" elements among the prisoners of war.\textsuperscript{47} This particularly applied to Eastern Europeans, like Russians, Poles, etc.

Next, the former chief of the Reich Security Head Office was charged with having re-captured prisoners of war liquidated in concentration camps\textsuperscript{48} in accordance with the provisions of the "bullet decree"--a decree which he himself had issued. This also applied especially to Eastern Europeans.

Finally, Kaltenbrunner was alleged to bear the responsibility for having ordered persons considered "socially or racially undesirable" sent to concentration or extermination camps where they were either worked to death or killed outright. He was accused of having done this in the full knowledge of the fate awaiting them there.\textsuperscript{49}

These four counts made up the basis of the prosecution's case. They were supported by large masses of evidence, often poorly assembled and edited, but on the whole irrefutable. Given the short time allotted for preparation and the chaotic state of the German records,\textsuperscript{50} Whitney R. Harris, who handled the prosecution of Kaltenbrunner, managed to assemble a case which would have been very hard to defend oneself against under the best of circumstances.

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Procès des Grands Criminels}, Vol. IV, p. 299.
\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 300.
\textsuperscript{49}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 302.
\textsuperscript{50}The Gestapo records were totally destroyed on Müller's orders.
As it turned out, he need not have worried overmuch about the defense. To the historian looking back over two intervening decades, Kaltenbrunner's response to the charges lodged against him strikes one not only as ludicrous but also as very enlightening. As an answer to the accusations, it is of little consequence, but as a clue to Kaltenbrunner's character it is of substantial importance. He began by making a statement which foreshadowed the trend of his entire testimony. He said:

I want to declare that I accept the responsibility for all the wrongs committed by the RSHA since the time that I was named its Chief, insofar as they were within my area of authority, and insofar as I knew or ought to have known about them. 51

Once having said this, he went on to state that he was innocent of the charges brought against him. "I do not consider myself guilty of any war crimes. I only did my duty in the service of state security and I refuse to be judged as a substitute for Himmler." 52 "I know that the hatred of the world is directed against me; that especially since Himmler, Müller, and Pohl are dead, I alone must answer before this tribunal and before the world." 53 All of the crimes with which he was charged were really the work of Himmler, Müller, and Eichmann. 54 To substantiate this denial of complicity he continued by telling a fascinating story. He said that he had not really


52 Kaltenbrunner's marginal comment on the indictment as quoted in Heydecker and Leeb, The Nuremberg Trial, p. 84.

53 Testimony of Kaltenbrunner, Procès des Grands Criminels, Vol. XI, p. 240. Pohl, of course was not dead. He was executed in 1951.

wanted to be head of the Reich Security Head Office, because he had no familiarity with police work—which was untrue. Himmler had persisted in his entreaties and eventually Kaltenbrunner had given in to him but with the proviso that he should have nothing whatsoever to do with the "executive functions" (Gestapo, arrests, etc.) of the Reich Security Head Office, but be empowered only to control the intelligence services.\(^5\) He further stated that this limitation on his authority was known, for security reasons, only to Himmler (who was dead), Müller (who was missing), Nebe (who had been shot on Kaltenbrunner's orders), and presumably to Hitler (who was also dead).\(^6\) Thus, according to Kaltenbrunner, he was totally innocent. Naturally everything he said was untrue. There had been no limitation on his authority, and he had certainly carried out executive tasks in the white rose affair, the July 20 plot investigation, the bullet decree, the Hungarian Jewry affair, and a good many other instances. This was hardly a refutation of the prosecution's case. However, it is indicative of Kaltenbrunner's character. As a bully he had relished in his power; now that it was time to pay the piper, he tried to shift the responsibility to others.

This latter point was made even clearer in his later testimony when he stated that documents bearing his signature were forged by his subordinates.\(^7\) To be sure, all large organizations use

\(^6\) Ibid., p. 248.
\(^7\) Ibid., p. 250.
facsimile stamps, or duplicating machines, for the signature of the head of the agency, but it is totally beyond the realm of possibility that Kaltenbrunner did not know what documents his signature was on. Here again it was all the work of Himmler, Müller, and Eichmann.

Kaltenbrunner elaborated this theme by saying that he opposed Himmler on certain fundamental points. This is correct. It is just that he claimed at his trial that the points on which he opposed Himmler were not those of who would run the repressive machinery or what to do with embarrassing concentration camp inmates, but rather such things as the Reich's "violations of the law." 58

The former chief of the Security Police also came out with the rather startling claim that he had openly opposed the use of "protective custody." 59 This was hardly the case. Kaltenbrunner also asserted that he had not approved of the "final solution." Indeed, he found Hitler's anti-Semitism "barbaric." 60 This leads one to ask whether he went to Budapest in late March, 1944, for his health? Finally, the former Security Police chief said he had not known about the Einsatz groups prior to 1943 and when he did learn of their existence, he naturally exercised no control over them, 61 since that was an "executive function" which was not his responsibility. Of course, neither of these statements is correct, for he both knew

59 Ibid., p. 251.
60 Kaltenbrunner, as quoted in Monneray, La Persecution des Juifs, p. 391.
of the Einsatz groups before 1943 and controlled them after that date.

Hence, what Kaltenbrunner offered was hardly a defense at all. The importance of his statements lies rather in the support they lend the bully theory—in power, defiance; in defeat, grovelling.

This aspect of Kaltenbrunner's personality can also be seen in Kaltenbrunner's religious views. He had been born a Catholic, but, like so many of his generation, like Himmler and Müller, he had drifted away from the Church. Indeed, he had even assumed an anti-ecclesiastical attitude, though this never became rabid. Indeed, when he succeeded Heydrich he dismantled the latter's anti-ecclesiastical machine. However, he was hardly a good son of the Church. At Nuremberg, however, he resumed attendance at mass, along with Seyss-Inquart, von Papen, and Hans Frank, and made his peace with his church. It would seem to be a surprising thing, except when one recalls that all of Kaltenbrunner's arrogance was gone and he was desperately in need of support. Also, he knew his chances of being executed were good, and it seemed intelligent not to take any chances on the world beyond. Again the bully syndrome can be seen.

He was soon to need all the help he could get. The Tribunal had reached its decision. On October 1, 1946, the court read its

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63 Franz von Papen, Die Wahrheit eine Gasse (Munich: Paul List Verlag, 1952), p. 632. Hans Frank was the Governor General of Poland under the Nazi regime. He was executed.
64 Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 481
judgment to the accused. The verdict was guilty. Then, the presiding justice intoned:

Defendant Ernst Kaltenbrunner, on the counts of the indictment on which you have been convicted, the Tribunal sentences you to death by hanging.  

Kaltenbrunner bowed silently and left the court room. He accepted his fate quietly and with composure. He filed no petition for clemency. Rather he spent his last few days preparing to die. Finally, on October 16, 1946, he made confession, took communion, and then walked to the scaffold. There, at the bottom of the thirteen steps which led to the gallows, he said:

I served the German people and my fatherland with willing heart. I did my duty according to its laws. I am sorry that in her trying hour she was not led only by soldiers. I regret that crimes were committed in which I had no part. Good luck Germany.

Having said this, he turned and mounted the steps to the scaffold. At 1:36 A. M. he reached the top. At 1:39 the trap was sprung. Thirteen minutes later he was pronounced dead. Then his body was carried out, placed on a plain wooden coffin, and, with the rope still around its neck, photographed for posterity. With this grisly ceremony over, the body was cremated and the ashes dumped into the Pegnitz River (which flows through Nuremberg). The career

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65 Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 479.
66 Ibid.
67 Ibid., p. 482.
69 Kaltenbrunner, as quoted in Harris, Tyranny on Trial, p. 486.
70 Pearson, Enroute to the Redoubt, Vol. IV, p. 269.
71 See the photograph in Harris, Tyranny on Trial.
of Ernst Kaltenbrunner, lawyer, SS man, police chief, and convicted war criminal, was finished. All that now remains is to attempt an explanation and an evaluation of this man.

The prosecution at Nuremberg almost inadvertently made a very good choice when they picked Kaltenbrunner as the symbol of the entire repressive machinery, for he was typical of many of the SS leaders, like Adolf Eichmann, Oswald Pohl, and Rudolf F. F. Höss (the Commandant of Auschwitz). As such, his character tells one much about many of the leaders of the coercive apparatus.

Kaltenbrunner's nature was complex, but it would seem that the basic motivation of his life was a kind of "bully-slave" urge which was evident in his make-up from at least the late twenties. This impulse may be described as "as a craving for power over others with a longing for submission to an overwhelmingly strong outside authority."72 It would seem that this craving for power and for security flowed partly from two separate streams.

In the first place, Kaltenbrunner was a bully. How this quirk of character came about is unknown, but that it was a very definite part of his nature is evident. While the chief of the Security Police was at the summit of his power, he was arrogant, hard to get along with, and extremely callous. When he had fallen from power, he became eager to shift the blame to others, sentimental, and in fact grovelling in his attitude.73 For example, the prison psychiatrist,


73 Kelley, 22 Cells in Nuremberg, p. 135.
Dr. Douglas Kelley, used to visit Kaltenbrunner frequently. Virtually every time he went to see the former RSHA chief, the latter broke down and cried, saying that everyone was picking on him.\(^7^4\) Again, in exchange for a candy bar, Kaltenbrunner wrote for the prison authorities an essay condemning Himmler\(^7^5\)—something one would hardly have expected from a former hierarch of National Socialist Germany. On another occasion, it was discovered that the scars which crisscrossed his face, and which he had always boasted of as dueling scars (which certain segments of the German people thought honorable), were really the result of an automobile accident in which Kaltenbrunner had been thrown through the windshield.\(^7^6\) In short, he was "a typical bully, tough and arrogant when in power,... craven in defeat, unable even to stand the pressures of prison life."\(^7^7\)

The slave aspect of Kaltenbrunner's character is somewhat easier to explain. To begin with, it was partly a result of his being a bully. Many a man who domineers over his subordinates grovels before his own superiors. In this, Kaltenbrunner was being true to type. However, in his case and in that of many other Nazis, there were other factors as well. It will be recalled that, when he was young, Ernst had seen his country destroyed. He had seen the comfortable middle class existence which his family had enjoyed dislocated. He had had


\(^{7^7}\)Ibid.
to struggle and work to get his law degree. Then, when he got it, it was next to worthless, because the depression had pretty well destroyed all opportunity for a career for a young, fledgling attorney. His whole world had been ripped loose from its moorings and sent swirling out into the unknown. Adolf Hitler and his party seemed like a heaven-sent opportunity. Here was a man of hypnotic presence, speaking the words which Kaltenbrunner felt, damning those things Ernst abhorred. The NSDAP offered a haven of security in the storms of the late twenties and early thirties. It offered the semblance of an ideology—an ideology which exalted service to the overarching state. It extended the prospect of a better life, a more secure life. Kaltenbrunner, in his own slow way, opted for that life. The SS also had much to attract Ernst, for it gave him a chance to dominate others to his heart's content. It offered symbols, pageantry, action, a sense of power. Kaltenbrunner, Eichmann, Höss, and many others could not resist the temptation.

Indeed, it should be kept in mind that the "core of the Party and of the SS" was formed by socially nondescript people, frustrated in their efforts to achieve a certain status. These unemployed young people, students, disaffected intellectuals, in short, these déclassés, were some of the raw material upon which Hitler exercised

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78 Bullock, Hitler, p. 159.
79 Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, p. 42.
Kaltenbrunner was at one time or another in each of these categories. This, coupled with his own domineering nature, made him a natural supporter of the Nazis.

Once in the National Socialist movement, Ernst's rise was rapid, partly due to his own ability and partly to his having been in the proper place at the proper time. During this period of thirteen years (1932-1945) which saw Kaltenbrunner rise from recruit to chief of the Security Police, certain additional facets of his nature came into prominence. One of these was his craving for ever greater power, which became particularly evident after his appointment as head of the Reich Security Head Office in 1943. This desire can be seen in the way in which he entered into the struggle for influence that was always raging within the Nazi regime. With Bormann's help he ingratiated himself with the Führer and slowly came to be as much of a threat to the Reichsführer as his predecessor Heydrich had been. He fought with von Ribbentrop for control of "Operation Cicero." He struggled with Canaris for authority over the foreign intelligence network. In brief, he was out to get as much power and influence as was humanly possible. In this, as in so much else, he was typical of the National Socialist leadership as a whole.

One other aspect of his personality which developed after 1932 was his fanatic devotion to Hitler and the Nazi regime. This fanaticism can be seen in three incidents, two of which occurred

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81 Ibid.
82 Kogon, The Theory and Practice of Hell, p. 296.
in 1944 and one in 1945. In the first, Kaltenbrunner returned to Berlin after a visit to Mauthausen concentration camp and spent a good part of the first conference with his office heads held after his return regaling them with stories of the camp and noting with pride that he had helped to found it when he had been a higher SS and police leader. Kaltenbrunner actually believed in his work.

Again in 1944, he addressed a meeting of party officials in these words:

Germany must take care that the eastern peoples and a major part of the Balkan and Danube States be compelled to die out through sterilization and annihilation of the leadership classes of these nations. However, in order to assure leadership by the German people and at the same time increase the German population, all German women married and unmarried up to the age of thirty-five must be compelled if they do not already have four children to produce at least four children by acceptable pure racial German men. It does not matter whether such men are married. Families which already possess four children must furnish their men for this action.

This is an almost perfect statement of National Socialist racial thinking, and it was made in 1944—after the Normandy landings and the July 20 plot.

Finally, on April 24, 1945, just six days before Hitler's death, Kaltenbrunner had dinner with Dr. Hans Bachmann, the Secretary General of the International Red Cross, after a conference they had held on the question of supplying foodstuffs to Jews still

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85 Affidavit of Gerdus (Doc. No. 3462-PS), Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression, Vol. VI, p. 162. Kaltenbrunner took his own advice, since he had two children by his mistress.
incarcerated in concentration camps. Over dinner, Kaltenbrunner gave a lengthy explication of, and apologia for, the National Socialist Weltanschauung, which somewhat surprised Dr. Bachmann. Indeed, it would be astonishing if one did not realize the fact that the chief of the Security Police was a man who firmly believed in the Nazi world view. Even so these three incidents retain a certain aura of surreality about them.

Another facet of Kaltenbrunner's nature which really came to light after he joined the party was his opportunism. Indeed, this trait sometimes even got the upper hand over his fanaticism, as in the case of the Vlassov movement, where he supported a group he did not believe in, in order to sabotage the plans of a personal enemy. It can be seen again in his attempt to open peace negotiations—a plan nipped in the bud by his meeting with the Führer. Kaltenbrunner often vacillated between a policy of fanatical adherence to National Socialist ideals and a blatant opportunism. This led to very unstable and often contradictory actions, which make it very difficult at times to follow his train of thought even approximately.

Finally, two other traits needed to be mentioned. The first is Kaltenbrunner's callousness and lack of feeling. It will be remembered that he cared little for human life and was virtually incapable of love. This was partly his bully attitude and partly his training in the SS. The former has already been explained; the latter might

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86 Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, p. 634.

87 Cf. the comments of Felix Kersten (Himmler's personal physician), after examining Kaltenbrunner, as quoted in Schellenberg, The Schellenberg Memoirs, p. 373.
be illustrated by quoting from a statement by Joseph Kramer (a concentration camp commandant), which pretty well sums Kaltenbrunner's attitude as well. When asked about killing eighty people by gassing them, Kramer replied: "I had no feelings in carrying out these things because I had received an order to kill the eighty inmates in the way I already told. That, by the way is how I was trained." That was the way all SS men were trained, including Kaltenbrunner.

Hannah Arendt once remarked that "the ideal of 'toughness'...was nothing but of myth of self-deception, concealing a ruthless desire for conformity at any price." This leads one to the second of these traits of Kaltenbrunner. He was a conformist: he conformed to the mores of the organization to which he belonged and to which he had given his life. He had no existence outside of that organization and when it was destroyed, his world collapsed as well.

Hence, Ernst Kaltenbrunner was both an individual and a type. He had personal quirks, but, on the whole, he was much like many of the higher SS and police leadership. He was bully, slave, fanatic, opportunist, conformist; he was tough, unfeeling, weak, sentimental, and grovelling. He was, in short, very human.

This is what is so very frightening about the Nazi era. Its worst excesses were not perpetrated by madmen or ghouls, but rather by ordinary, common-place, run-of-the-mill men like Kaltenbrunner. This is what Miss Arendt has called "the banality of evil" and in

88 Kramer, as quoted in Shirer, The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, p. 982.

89 Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, p. 175.
the case of Kaltenbrunner, the SS, and the police, it is quite true. Had there been no World War I, no depression, no Hitler, etc., Kaltenbrunner might have lived and died as a small-town Austrian lawyer. Had there been no lack of Austrian SS leaders, he might have remained an obscure SS man in Upper Austria. However, these are the "if's" of history. The historian cannot get too involved in them or he will lose sight of what did happen. What occurred was that ordinary men became monsters without ever really changing their personalities. Kaltenbrunner was no Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He was no ogre. He was a man serving a party and a dictator to the best of his ability and participating in the liquidation of several million people at the same time. The same thing has occurred in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China—in short, wherever a totalitarian regime has existed. This is one of the dangers of such systems—they create a new morality which sanctions vast destruction in the name of higher law, or necessity, and ordinary men fall in with the system and operate it with bureaucratic efficiency. The historian should examine such men and regimes with clinical detachment. More such investigations are needed. This study has been an attempt to further such examinations.
## COMPARATIVE RANKS OF THE SS, GERMAN ARMY, AND UNITED STATES ARMY

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THE REICH SECURITY HEAD OFFICE

CHIEF: DR. ERNST KALTENBRUNNER

OFFICE I (PERSONNEL AND ORGANIZATION)

OFFICE II (ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE)

OFFICE III (SD-INLAND): DR. OTTO OHLENDORF

OFFICE IV (GESTAPO): HEINRICH MÜLLER, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE SIPO AND SD

OFFICE V (KRIOPO): ARTHUR NEBE

OFFICE VI (SD-FOREIGN): WALTER SCHELLENBERG

OFFICE VII (IDEOLOGY)

N. B. Only those office heads who are mentioned in this study have been listed.
SS HEAD OFFICES

REICHSFÜHRER-SS: HEINRICH HIMMLER

SS HEAD OFFICE: GOTTLIEB BERGER

REICH SECURITY HEAD OFFICE: REINHARD HEYDRICH (ERNST KALTENBRUNNER)

HEAD OFFICE ORDER POLICE: KURT DALräGE

PERSONAL STAFF, REICHSFÜHRER-SS: KARL WOLFF

SS ECONOMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE HEAD OFFICE: OSWALD POHL

SS PERSONNEL HEAD OFFICE

SS COURT

SS OPERATIONS HEAD OFFICE

SS SERVICE HEISSMEYER

STAFF HEAD OFFICE, REICH COMMISSIONER FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF

GERMANNOM

HEAD OFFICE FOR THE WELFARE OF VOLKSDEUTSCHE (ETHNIC GERMANS)

RACE AND SETTLEMENT HEAD OFFICE

N. B. Only those office heads mentioned in this thesis have been
noted.
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**THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST REGIME**


**THE NAZI REPRESSIVE MACHINERY**


BIOGRAPHIES


