

'Remain silent and stay alive'

Dear Editor:

President Kurt Waldheim of Austria appears to be the target of world opinion.

A self-appointed panel of historians has cleared the president personally taking part in any war crime.

The Austrian people themselves swept him into office in spite of the propaganda directed against him. It is the case, I suggest, if the Austrians wish him out of office they themselves will save. Certainly, outside panels should not force him to relinquish his post. I don't very much if those people who lived outside Nazi Germany during the war years knew anything of what conditions were like in that country. How the Nazi Party controlled every face of people's businesses and lives.

If Kurt Waldheim was aware of the Concentration Camps, deportations and so on, what could he personally have done about it? Absolutely nothing!

If he had protested to his senior officers in strong terms concern-

ing these matters, there's no doubt he himself would have been either shot or put in prison as a traitor to the cause. Everyone, not only in the Armed Forces but civilians too, had to toe the line or else.

Personally, I was in Germany immediately following the war. I was posted there as a civilian to assist in the administration of local government according to democratic forms. This was in February, 1946.

Part of the re-organization consisted of the process of denazification of all former Party members. This extended all the way down to bank tellers and clerks.

If any employees didn't belong to, or refused to belong to the Nazi Party, they were immediately dismissed with no opportunity of being re-employed again.

Not only were they let go but undoubtedly their activities were watched by the local Gestapo.

The same policy was applied in the German Armed Forces. Any

dissent against State policy could lead to imprisonment in a Concentration Camp or even death.

So what was one to do under such circumstances — protest vigorously and be eliminated or keep one's mouth shut and stay alive?

Many of us remember the attempt to assassinate Hitler in July, 1944. As a result, hundreds of conspirators were hung on meat hooks, garrotted, tortured and shot. So much for protests.

It's a tragedy that people should ask why Kurt Waldheim did not protest when they're unaware of conditions that existed at that time.

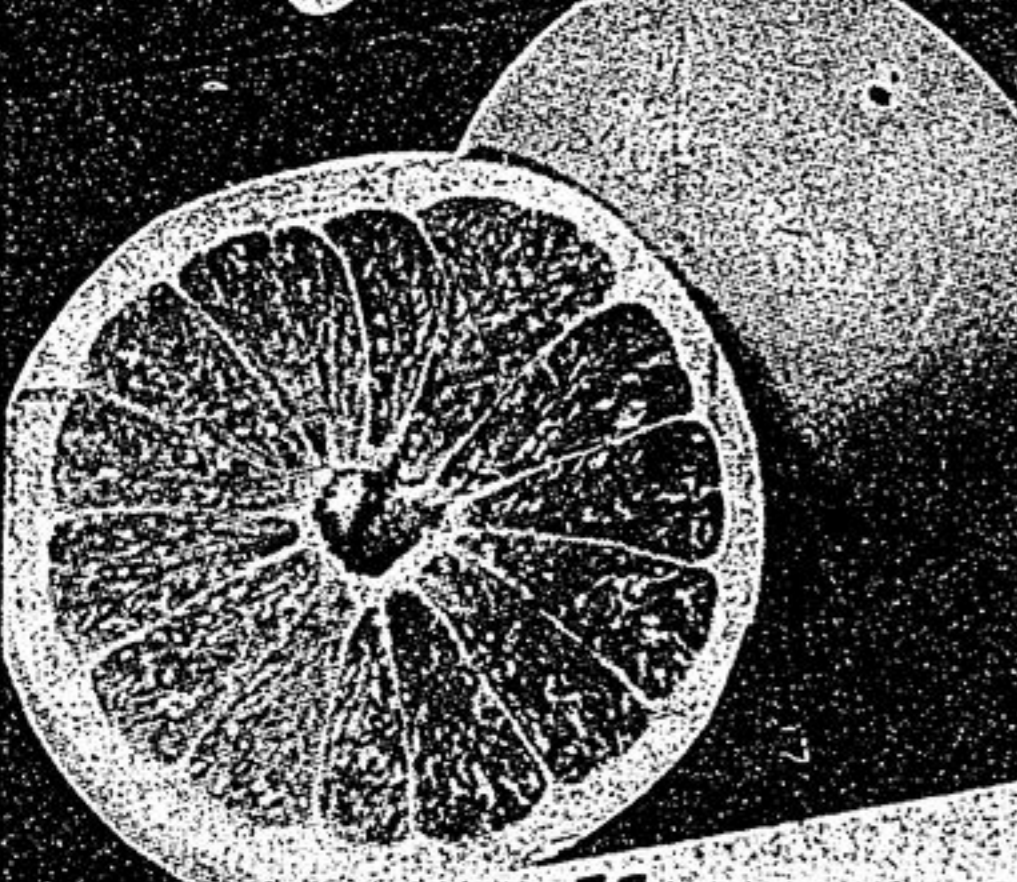
Germany then was a police state, a military dictatorship, not a democracy where one's entitled to protest without fear of imprisonment.

Sincerely,
Adam Johnstone,
R.R. 31, Stouffville

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