

## Reinhold Jäger

### Actioner- Sales and Business Administrator

Reinhold Jäger was the youngest brother of Franz Jäger. He was only 7 years old when his father passed away in 1902. At his father's death bed Franz promised that he would take care of his brother, a promise he kept. Reinhold went to school in Suhl, trained as an Actioner and studied business administration.

He worked in his brother's company until the hard times during the Weimer republic and lack of orders forced him to leave. He got a job at the Simson factory and eventually became the manager of the hunting gun department. There he also met Sophie and married her. They had two children, Jochen and Ellinor. Ellinor is the last member of the Jaeger family living in Suhl today (as of the 1960's?).

When the Nazis came to power, they gave the Jewish Simson family a hard time, put them in jail and finally disowned them. Reinhold Jäger remained faithful to them, which also made his life difficult. During World War II Reinhold was put in charge of Security at the renamed Simson factory, the "Gustloff Werke". One of his responsibilities was the foreign laborers. When the American troops left and the Russians arrived, he was arrested and taken to the Concentration Camp at Buchenwald, which he did not survive. He had helped the foreign laborers as best he could and was definitely not a Nazi, but he was unable to convince the Russians of that.



Reinhold and his family were also regular guests at the Jaeger house and participated in the Kaffeeklatsches on many a Sunday secretly discussing the latest news from the BBC, which was heard on Franz's forbidden wireless, an offense that was a one-way ticket to a Concentration Camp.

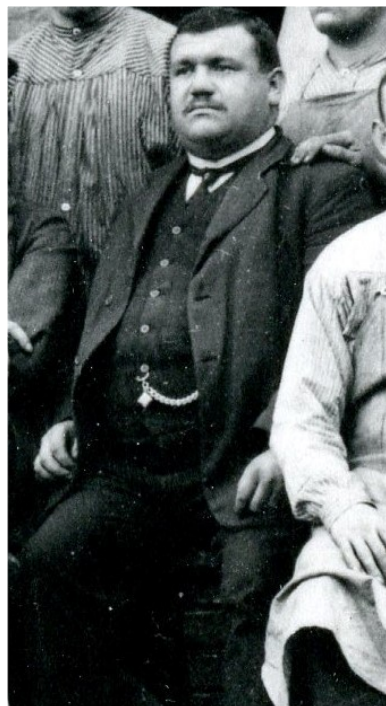
## **Reinhold's story in his own words**

*Note: his story was written in German and a translation was done by Google Translate. I edited it but tried to remain as close as possible to his original text.*

On July 6, 1945, I was taken into protective custody by the German Criminal Police and was in the local court prison until August 21st this year. On August 21st, I was released by the Russian Police. About the reason of the arrest and my opinion on it I will report at the end of these remarks. First, I would like to make the following comments about my past work and political past:

On January 2, 1921, I joined the company Simson & Co. in Suhl and worked there until April 3, 1945. Most recently I was head of the sales department for private appliances, until the outbreak of the War, head of the sales department for hunting and sporting weapons. The owners of the Simson Company were Jews. From 1921 to the beginning of February 1933, I was a member of the Simson Company and a member of the Suhl Rifle Manufacturer Association. With the growth of the Hitler party, the Simson Company was exposed to numerous hostilities, which also transferred to me and the aforementioned association. For example, on Oct. 19, 1932, the association made a request to remove me from the board. After rejecting the application, it was tried by an insult lawsuit to make it impossible for me to remain in the Association. The trial ended on January 13, 1933, in my favor. My representative was the Jewish Lawyer Dr. Fachenheim, of Halle a.S., who had made a name for himself as a representative in Halle's communist processes.

Proof: files that are in my possession.



*Reinhold Jaeger circa 1920 at his brother Franz Jaegers factory*

After the so-called Takeover, the attacks against me not only continued but were intensified. At the beginning of February 1933, I was expelled from the Association of Suhl Gun Manufacturers.

Since 1918 I had spent my time in Democratic circles which now became a burden to me. In 1933 my friends were the brothers Mannheimer, Hugo Rehbock, Levor and others which were all Jews, as well as the cigar dealer Georg Eckard, an old SPD man with whom I had a close friendship until his death.

Witness: Mr. Hugo Rehbock, Suhl, Poststrasse. Besides my sister-in-law Fanny Jaeger, Suhl, Mr Rehbock is the only Jew still living in Suhl from that time, I am friends with him today.

After 1933 I remained in contact with the Simson family and my Jewish friends as long as possible. In 1933/34 I visited the Simson family in Berlin several times and in 1934 wrote an expert opinion for Simson in legal processes against him. In 1935 I visited the Simson family in Berlin on the day on which Mr. Arthur Simson had been released from Police Custody (the next day he left for Switzerland to avoid further harassment by the Nazis). Witness: Mr. Willie Vierling, Blaustrasse, Suhl, who was also there at that time.

Because of the above processes, I was in 1933 at the Company Simson advised to join the Nazi Party. The party and its divisions were out of the question for me. In consultation with Mr. Arthur Simson, I promised at that time to support him in the factory, as long as I possibly could. In August 1933 I registered with the "Stahlhelm". Shortly thereafter, the "Stahlhelm" was pressed against the wall by the Nazis and finally disbanded. With the younger members, I joined the SA on November 5, 1933, and because of my SA affiliation automatically became part of the party (Nazi?) in October 1937.

I did not take much active part in the SA service.

Even after integration into the SA, I continued to communicate with my previous friends. In 1934, I was reprimanded by the then Storm Leader because it had been reported to him by a woman that I was still in contact with the Jewish Mannheimer family. In 1937, I was attacked in a local restaurant by the manufacturer Walther in Zella-Mehlis who said that I was still the liaison officer of the Simson family. The same statement was made by Walther in 1940 on the occasion of a joint business trip. In fact, until the outbreak of the war, I occasionally received news about the Simson family then living in America and exchanged greetings through a gentleman residing in Wurttemberg.

I have never had any functions either in the party or the SA. Since 1934 I was a riot leader in the SA. In circles of the NADAP I never wronged(?).

In 1941 (or 42), the then military defense officer of the Gustloff- Achterberg- was called back to the Army service. The manager of the plant gave me his job on the grounds that the position could not be filled due to lack of staff, and I was not being fully utilized in my private equipment department. My objection that I am not fit for this activity was rejected. After the War regulations over the employment service went into effect, I was forced to take over the office of the Abwehrbeauftragter in addition to my previous activity. By way of explanation, I add that every defense contractor employing more than 20 workers had to name a defense officer. In about 80% of the companies, this activity was carried out by the managing director, often exercised by the owner himself. Only in the larger companies was the managing director able to hire another person. In the capacity as Abwehrbeauftragter I was subordinated to plant protection. The plant guards were uniformed and had administrative duties. They were obliged as auxiliary officers of the order police.

While working as a defense officer, I did not care about political issues. The political man of the enterprise was the Ortsgruppenleiter of the NADAP of Suhl, Wunderlich, who was employed in the work as the personnel manager. He was personally responsible for all German and foreign employees. The Auslanderlager was under his duty, who was also the head of the payroll office.

The work of the plant protection consisted essentially in the maintenance of the order and exercise of control on the yard and the entrances. In the Auslanderlagern the camp leader had the police force. As far as security officers in the Auslanderlagern used the police or patrol service were subordinate to the camp leader for the duration of this activity. The punishment of all members of the allegiance was exercised personally by the operator, even in cases where it was the smallest operating sentence of RM 1.-. The operator also made a personal decision when operational misconduct by the members of the detention team was to be referred to the relevant police station. An exception to this was made by refugees reporting aliens, which was simultaneously passed on from the payroll office to the employment office and the Gestapo. There has never been a flogging in the factory. The operator has held anyone responsible who has committed any wrongdoing in this regard. As far as I could judge from my work, the foreigners were judged fairly. This was always recognized by the foreigners, the last time that, when the American troops were trying to arrest the plant manager, the Russian women in the Kiev plant depot stated "Man Good" to the operator, thus preventing his arrest. During my work at the plant about 6000 people were employed, including at least 3000 foreigners. I have not

been attacked from any side. After the American invasion, I showed myself daily on the street and did not hear any unfriendly word from the many foreigners I met.

I only entered the office of the Gestapo once. This happened at the beginning of January this year, when my sister-in-law, Fanny Jaeger, Friesenstrasse, Suhl, a Jew, had been ordered to report to the Gestapo for shipment to a Concentration Camp. After an unsuccessful interview with the former Ortsgruppenleiter, I went to the head of the Gestapo office- Zenker- and asked him, with consideration for the age of my sister-in-law (69 years) and the corresponding frailty to refrain from her removal. I was energetically and unkindly turned away and my sister-in-law was taken by a Gestapo officer to Erfurt on the following day and from there to the Theresienstadt camp, from which she returned in June of this year.