

From the Testimony of Salek Orenstein about Deceiving the Red Cross at Buchenwald

One day, again, SS coming also with one of the lager supervisors, also a national some sort of, Dutch (?) I think. "Twenty boys, we need twenty men to go to clean up a certain place." They took us to the old section because Buchenwald was actually designed in such a way that was the old lager and the new lager. The units used to come in, of course, later on at seventy thousand people, so I was told, I haven't counted them. The building, one story high. Very nicely arranged. I think most of it was wood because they had a lot of wood there and they said the following: You've got to clean up all the basins, all the toilets, the taps, the waists (?) that you can see yourself, but you must not use the water from the taps under any circumstances. Otherwise you've had it." Everybody had to bring a bucket - we were given buckets, all sorts of brushes and everything else - and it's got to be cleaned like mad. The reason being, I was told later on. We only heard the news actually in "kinderlager" where I was. The Count Bernadotte is supposed to visit Buchenwald as representative of the Red Cross. And apparently the Germans are negotiating to release a certain amount of prisoners in lieu of money....Particularly he was more interested in getting out women...

Now I'm going back to the cleaning. So cleaned, polished everything. The floors immaculate, everything. I don't know what's come over me. I was standing at the sink and I was doing six of them at a time. I kicked the bucket and the bucket fell over. Can you imagine? I thought that's the end of me. The water, I thought to myself, never mind, to hell with them and we'd open a tap, get some water. I opened a tap, not a drop. Having worked, of course, you know, for ammunition and having worked with machines I had a look underneath. None of the plumbing was connected up to any form of supply. None whatsoever! This was an arrangement of showing how prisoners are being treated, how well, of course, they are being supervised in cleanliness. They come in the morning, they brush their teeth, I don't know. This was for the benefit of the Red Cross, so I've been told. I wiped the floor. I've done

everything I could. I had the experience already how to look after myself - not so easy. And I was already a hardened - what you call here a hardened criminal? - I was already a hardened, of course, you know, "lagermensch" and I knew what to look for and how to help myself in case of need. I came back. we went back again actually in the morning. So the "lagerfhrer", at that time the "blockfhrer", if anyone comes out: "How was it? Okay?" I told him. He said: "Shut up! I don't want to hear it. No water? What are you talking about?" He knew. "If you ever repeat to anyone, out you go. You won't survive a minute. Keep your mouth shut. Don't know. You haven't seen. You cleaned. You've done everything what you were told and you've done so, to the letter."

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