

DOCUMENT BOOK VIII, BUELOW
BUELOW DOCUMENT No. 308
EXHIBIT No.

18 January 1948

To the Counsel,

Dear Sir,

I have only just received your letter; I hope it will not be too late for this statement and that it will prove of assistance to Herr von BUELOW.

I do not know whether I have employed the customary formulae of deposition, if not kindly have this statement retyped with the proper formulae and returned to me for signature.

Until Easter my address is the following:

Hotel Beau Site,
Crans sur Sierre Canton du Valais,
S u i s s e .

Please give my regards to Herr von BUELOW and, with my compliments, I remain

dear Sir, Yours

Prince R. de MERODE

I, the undersigned, Prince Richard de MERODE, residing at 184 rue Washington, Brussels, Belgium, state the following facts on my honor:

1. After being arrested at Stavelob on 2 August 1944, without papers, and suspected of taking part in the resistance, I was taken to the fortress of Liège and a week later, on 9 August 1944, deported to the camp "Dechenschule" at Essen.

2. Life at "Dechenschule" was very hard. We were dressed in blue garments striped with yellow, which afforded insufficient protection, and forced to long working hours, up to 10 hours a day. Work in the Kommandos to which I belonged was not hard in itself, though we were not allowed to sit down. On the other hand, other Kommandos were very tiring, especially in view of the prevailing undernourishment.

Food was entirely insufficient: 300 grammes of bread with a very small piece of margarine and 2 portions of soup a day. These two soups, which were usually distributed simultaneously on our return from work, contained only water, cabbage, beets or potato-skins. Camp-life was also very hard; we got up at half past four, there were endless roll-calls, it was forbidden to smoke and to send news home. Apart from the general staff of the camp, who were often brutal with the detainees, the guards were such wretched creatures that crutches would have suited them better than guns. But there were certainly exceptions, and I, personally, know one who used to beat the detainees if they did not work.

3. On 23 October 1944, there was a heavy air raid resulting in many deaths and injuries among the detainees. What became of the injured I do not know. The camp shelter, a trench covered with a thin layer of earth, was inadequate, but at the time of the raid a deeper shelter was under construction.

4. Two days after the air raid, Herr von BUELOW came and expressed his sympathy for our misfortune. He gave us to understand that it was not Krupp's fault that we were prisoners. His speech was conciliatory and he seemed very moved. He announced to us that the camp was being transferred to Oberhausen where we would be much better off.

5. That same day, or the next day, the greater part of the camp left for Oberhausen. I stayed at Essen with a number of volunteers to bury the dead and attend to the removal of what remained of the camp. We also helped to clear civilian dwellings.

On 26 October there was another heavy raid, after which - against our will - we had to work to release German civilians. I, myself, was sent with three comrades to push a hand-cart loaded with food for the Germans which had been left in our area where time-bombs had been dropped.

6. At Oberhausen, the food was decidedly better, at least in comparison with Dechenschule. Soon after our arrival at this camp, I felt ill with bronchial pneumonia. A comrade, Mr. Eugene Decoene, Chateau d'Assenois, par Dibret (Belgium), who was engaged on clearing Krupp's offices, had an opportunity of speaking to Herr von BUELOW, and told him in what state I was. The latter made inquiries and had me examined by a doctor. Soon afterwards an ambulance took me and two fellow-workers to the Krupp hospital at Altenhof.

7. At the hospital I was treated like all German workers, and attendance and food were good. Herr von BUELOW came to see me there and said that he would try to find me lighter employment once I had recovered. He also promised to find out in what way my family could be informed of what had happened to me.

On about 5 December the hospital was almost completely

destroyed by an air raid. Probably in consequence of further intercession by Herr von BUELOW, I was then taken to the convalescent home at Lintorf, where I was treated equally well.

8. On about 22 December a cousin of mine, Prince von Arenberg, who had been informed by me, from Lintorf, of my precarious state of health, came to fetch me. I left for Munich and, from there, wrote to Herr von BUELOW to thank him for his intervention, to which I certainly owe my life. Until my liberation I worked as stable hand in a stud for thorough-breds at Heimathausen near Starenberg.

Written at Brussels, on 18 January 1948
Prince Richard de MERODE.