

## Clearing the Concentration Camp



*Liberated prisoners at the Wöbbelin "reception camp" on 2 May 1945.*

In summer 1944, the SS began clearing the concentration camps close to the front. The prisoners and the production facilities classed as *kriegswichtig* (important to the war effort) were transferred to numerous new satellite camps deep inside the Reich. When the concentration camps inside the Reich were also cleared in spring 1945, the state had hardly any reception camps left at its disposal. Nevertheless, the SS tried to keep the prisoners under their control for as long as possible. The closing down of the Neuengamme concentration camp complex started on 24 March 1945 with the clearance of the satellite camps in the Emsland region on the Dutch border. In early April, the camps in the Weserbergland region, in Wilhelmshaven, Hanover, Braunschweig, and Salzgitter were cleared. The last camps to be disbanded were the satellite camps in Bremen and Hamburg.