

## The Clearance of the Main Camp

On 20 April 1945, more than 4,000 Scandinavian prisoners were rescued from the main camp as part of the "White Buses" operation. Immediately afterwards, almost 10,000 prisoners were taken to Lübeck on goods trains. However, the main camp was used as a site for executions until the very last minute. On 21 and 23 April, the SS murdered 58 men and 13 women who had been taken to the Neuengamme camp from Fuhlsbüttel police prison for execution. Twenty children who had been used for "medical" experiments were taken to the cleared Bullenhuser Damm satellite camp in Hamburg and murdered there.

While all this was going on, a 700-man-strong work commando had to "clean up" the camp during the last days of April. In a concerted operation, the SS made them cover up the traces of the crimes committed at Neuengamme. All files were burned, the huts were cleaned of dirty straw and vermin, and the flogging trestle and gallows were disposed of. The last prisoners and SS men left the camp on 2 May 1945.

*What is going to happen to us? The most fantastic and contradictory rumours and opinions are going around.*

Paul Weissmann, former prisoner from Germany, 1945.

*Dr Trzebinski [...] asked for doctors' reports and death records [...], had them put into sacks and burned.*

Emil Zuleger, former prisoner from Germany, 1946.

*Around 50 people were sent from Fuhlsbüttel to Neuengamme to be executed there. I don't know who they were.*

Max Pauly, Commandant of Neuengamme concentration camp, in a statement made in the course of the preliminary proceedings before the British military tribunal in January 1946.

*It would not have occurred to me to order such measures, especially not during the last days of this insane war. All the more so because, since February 1945, I had been doing everything in my power to avoid further bloodshed.*

Statement by Count Georg Henning von Bassewitz-Behr made during the preliminary proceedings before the British Military Tribunal in April 1946.

*On 29 April 1945 at 8 a.m., we were put into SS uniforms, led out of the camp, and ordered to attack the English, who had crossed the Elbe at Lauenburg.*

Hans G., former prisoner from Germany, undated statement.