



## The White Buses

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Culture



In Kruså, on the road to Aabenraa, just a little way uphill, there is a statue of the Swedish Count, Folke Bernadotte. It symbolises a particularly moving piece of contemporary history.

On 20 and 21 April 1945, an armada of 200 Danish white buses arrived in Kruså and Padborg.

They contained 4,000 Danes and Norwegians, being delivered straight out of the Neuengamme concentration camp in Germany. This convoy - the culmination of an evacuation of Danish and Norwegian concentration camp prisoners - was impressive in every way. Since December 1944, the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs had already been able to evacuate prisoners from German concentration camps in small transports. This had been made possible by the intensive efforts of the Danish Foreign Ministry. From March 1945, the transports were coordinated with the Swedish Red Cross. Its vice-president, Count Folke Bernadotte, in secret negotiations with SS Reichsführer Himmler, had achieved that Danish and Norwegian prisoners could be collected in Neuengamme for evacuation. From here, they were to be taken to neutral Sweden and to the Frøslev Camp near Padborg. Between March and the end of April 1945, about 6,000 Scandinavian prisoners from German concentration camps were transferred to Neuengamme. They arrived in several convoys as passengers on the white buses to both Denmark and Sweden. Kruså and Padborg were the first stopovers on the way to safety for all those rescued.



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