



Information Centre about Forced Labour in Hamburg

Forced labour of concentration camp prisoners

From 1944 onwards, the company started to use Polish Jewish women from the concentration camp in Sasel (Hamburg) who had to do the heavy labour of rubble clearing and build concrete slabs for temporary housing under the worst conditions. However, the legal proceedings in the Curio-House by the British occupying power in 1946 against the guards of the concentration camp, convicted only one civilian, Emil Brunns. He was accused of maltreating several prisoners on his construction sites and had to serve a sentence of three years. Nonetheless, Emil Brunns, as well as others, were allowed to continue their business in prison so that his business and profits could transfer safely into the new German state.



Photo: Concentration camp survivor Matla Rozenberg, 1946, WBG-archive

Forced labour information centre

Our exhibitions inform about the living and working conditions of the Dutch forced labourers in this camp and document the suffering and hardship of the Polish Jew Matla Rozenberg. She was prisoner of the concentration camp Sasel and forced to work for the Company Kowahl & Bruns in 1944. We also provide an overview of the extent of forced labour in Hamburg.

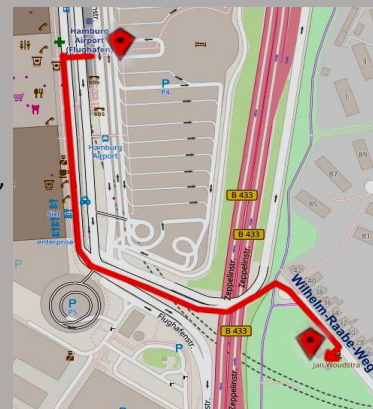
Opening times: Every 1st Sunday of the month, 14:00 – 17:00.

Zwangsarbeiterbaracken am Flughafen Fuhsbüttel

Wilhelm-Raabe-Weg 23,
22335 Hamburg

Only a 5-minute walk
from the Hamburg Airport
tube station (S1).

Willi-Bredel-
Gesellschaft - Ges-
chichtswerkstatt e.V.
Arbeitsgruppe Zwangsarbeit, Tel. 040 591107
www.bredelgesellschaft.de



Information Centre about Forced Labour in Hamburg

Two barracks of the forced labour camp of Kowahl & Bruns were preserved in 1998, thanks to the initiative of the Willi-Bredel-Gesellschaft. The *Geschichtswerkstatt* (History Workshop) has preserved the barracks in their original condition as far as possible. The buildings have been open to the public since 2008 and are classified as historical monuments.



Photo: Historical Monument since 2008, WBG-archive

"When the Germans noticed that their advertisements for working in Germany remained unsuccessful, they thought of something new. They took away my family's Stammkarte (a type of ID). Without this card, my parents and us ten siblings could not get any food. I was therefore forced to go to Germany to work. Apart from Sundays, I worked at a lathe at Röntgenmüller with very little food, which mostly contained of a root vegetable soup".

Report of Dutch former forced worker Theo Massuger 2000



Forced labour in Hamburg

Theo Massuger was one of about 500,000 workers from occupied countries who were forced to work in Hamburg during World War II. He recounts his experiences from Fuhlsbüttel in this exhibition. Forced workers from occupied Poland and the Soviet Union as well as Italian military internees were subject to significantly harsher living and working conditions compared to “foreign workers” from Western Europe. Concentration camp prisoners in particular were badly treated, being forced to live and work under terrible conditions. As Hamburg was a centre for the armament industry, there were roundabout 31,000 “foreign workers” living in 280 camps in Spring 1942 already. In 1944, about 70,000 forced labourers lived in approximately 1,500 camps. Ohlsdorf and Fuhlsbüttel alone had eleven camps in 1943, accommodating 1,200 people.”



Photo: Former Dutch forced worker Theo M., 2000 WBG-archive

Company Kowahl & Bruns

One of these residential camps for forced workers was built by Kowahl & Bruns, a landscape and horticulture company. The firm was owned by two active NSDAP members: Garden designer Fritz Kowahl and merchant Emil Bruns. The main purpose of the company was to camouflage the airport in Hamburg, as well as other cities in Germany, Poland and France. Moreover, the company camouflaged the arms in-



dustry, produced concrete slabs to build temporary housing and shelters, and cleared rubble and debris. By 1944, the number of workers at the company had risen to 2,000, of which only 100 belonged to the company.

Photo: Dutch forced workers at the camp, 1944, WBG-archive

Forced labour camp Fuhlsbüttel

The camp of Kowahl & Bruns, located in Wilhelm-Raabe-Weg, was built to accommodate 144 forced workers. It comprised of two housing blocks, one sanitary barrack and one administrative barrack for the camp management. The buildings were constructed from barrack type IV of the *Reichsarbeitsdienst* (Reich labour service). 18 forced workers had to share a non-insulated room of 12m² and had to sleep in bunk beds.

The camp was predominantly inhabited by Dutch forced workers who had to work six days a week at Röntgenmüller (today part of the Philips-conglomerate). In addition, there were Italian military internees and forced workers from France and Belgium.

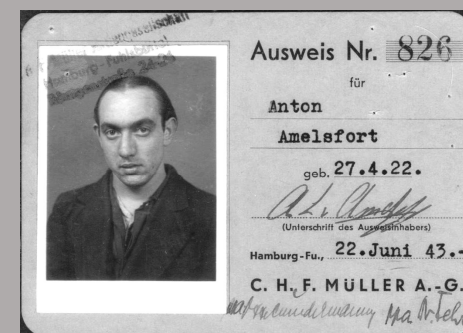


Photo: company ID Anton Amelsfort, 1943, WBG-archive