

## INTRODUCTION

Over 13 million people were forced to perform forced labor in the German Reich during World War II. In Hamburg, up to 500,000 people worked for companies and state institutions located here. Prisoners of war, concentration camp inmates and so-called civilian workers from all over Europe, almost all of them forcibly displaced, were deployed throughout the city. These were not only adults, but in many cases also young people or children.



The large number of conscripted workers not only enabled the further expansion of the local armaments industry. They also ensured the continued existence of numerous other small and large businesses - during the war and beyond: some of these businesses still exist today. Throughout Hamburg, there were approximately 1,500 different camps for the accommodation of forced laborers. These were either organized by the factories or organized by the German Labor Front. In most cases, the living conditions in these camps were inhu-

mane. In agriculture, the forced laborers were often housed directly on the farms, which at least facilitated access to food. The pay for forced labor was very low, and medical care was usually inadequate.

With this exhibition project, several history workshops and other local history research institutions in Hamburg would like to raise public awareness of some of the sites of forced labor. Among other things, the close cooperation between state institutions and large and small private companies in the housing and employment of forced laborers will be shown. Many topics and places related to forced labor in Hamburg cannot be covered here due to lack of space. Nevertheless, it becomes clear that forced labor did not take place far from the civilian population, but was omnipresent in the cityscape. The exhibition is also intended as an impetus for further work in the city districts. In particular, on-site research can make hitherto little-noticed sites of forced labor visible.



Photos:

Top: Group photo in the forced laborers' barracks at the *Valvo-Röhrenwerke* (KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuen-  
gamme)

Displaced Persons at *Lager Zoo* (Imperial War Museum London)