

NOTES & REFERENCES

Photos

Some of the photos shown here depict forced labourers posing individually or in groups in front of the camera. These photos were possibly taken without the consent of the photographed persons. Many of the companies that employed forced labourers commissioned (group) photos for documentation, which represent a distorted reality. This should be kept in mind when looking at the photos today.

Gender-sensitive language

In the exhibition, we strive to use gender-appropriate language. If only the masculine or feminine form is used, the groups of people mentioned are in fact exclusively men or women.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

Voluntary labour force

In the first years of the war, workers were recruited from countries that were occupied by the Germans early on – Belgium, France and the Netherlands – for German companies, often under false promises. Although some of them initially went to the German Reich voluntarily, they found themselves in a different situation after a short time. From 1942 on, compulsory labour was enforced, and entire cohorts were forcibly recruited from the affected countries. A return to the countries of origin was no longer possible from this date on at the latest.

Eastern Workers

After the attack on the Soviet Union, millions of people were deported from there to the German Reich for forced labour. They were called "Eastern Workers". People from the Soviet Union were considered "mortal enemies" in Nazi Germany and were subjected to particularly strict and arbitrary regulations. Even minor infractions of the rules could result in being sent to a concentration camp.

Displaced Persons

The term "Displaced Persons" (DP) refers to those who had been deported from their homes and were still in Germany at the end of the war. After liberation, they were housed in so-called "DP camps" from which they were to be returned to their countries of origin as quickly as possible. In some cases, this was done against the will of the people concerned: Especially for the Soviet DPs, the so-called 'repatriation' proved to be dangerous. They were suspected of being deserters or collaborators in the Soviet Union and were subject to numerous repressions; many were even arrested and put in prison camps and labour camps again.

Arolsen Archives

The Arolsen Archives (formerly the International Tracing Service) is a documentation center for the history of Nazi persecution. The world's most comprehensive archive on the victims and survivors of the Nazi regime contains documents on forced labour, various victim groups, displaced persons and on migration after 1945.