

## Residential Camps in Wilhelmsburg

Those who came to Wilhelmsburg to work between 1955 and 1973 as a result of the so-called recruitment agreements generally lived on the island in close proximity to their workplace. In the summer of 1960, however, the surrounding companies employed no more than 40 people – Spaniards and Italians. They generally didn't have their own apartments.

### 30 DM for a Bed

Employers were obligated to provide housing. Some companies therefore housed their workers in camps and barracks in the immediate vicinity or directly on the company premises. This was the case on Neuhöfer Damm, on the site of the former Frank'sche Werft (Frank Shipyard). Some of them worked for the nearby Howaldt Shipyard. In the fall of 1960, its former assembly hall was considered "Hamburg's largest residential center for foreigners." By now, 600 Spaniards were living under one roof here; in the neighboring building, there was a canteen and additional accommodations for several dozen Italians. A bed cost 30 DM a month, which was deducted directly from the wages by the shipyard where the men were employed.

At the same time, 24 Italian women moved into stone barracks on the grounds of the wool combing mill. Four women to a room. According to the local press, about 2,000 more colleagues from Italy, Greece, and Spain were expected by the spring of 1961.

### Accommodation in Cinemas and Guest Houses

According to statistics from 1970, Hamburg employers provided 226 dormitories, 198 rental apartments, and 162 barracks for "guest workers." In addition, there were cinemas, guest houses, and hotels. In 1971, Wilhelmsburg reported 12 accommodations for 1,162 people. The Housing and Health Office continuously monitored these. In practice, however, far more migrant workers lived in the district, some already with their families. In the residents' register, they are listed as "foreigners" rather than "guest workers." It is impossible to determine an exact number.

### A Law for Dignified Living

In 1972, Wilhelmsburg had three large dormitories: one on Korallusstraße, operated by the Federal Railway; another on Kurdamm by the Wilhelmsburg Savings and Building Association; and the DWG dormitory at the Hafenbahn. It wasn't until 1973 that a law decreed that housing for "foreign workers" should be of the same quality as that for Germans. However, many workers continued to live on the factory premises of Wilhelmsburg's many companies.

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