

Migration to Süderelbe

Places of arrival and residence

... rising population

In the Süderelbe region, which comprises the rural communities of Cranz, Neuenfelde, Francop, Neugraben, Fischbek and Altenwerder, which were incorporated into the Hamburg city area in 1938, as well as the district of Moorburg, the population has more than quadrupled since 1938 to around 57,000 inhabitants today.

According to the definition of the Federal Statistical Office, about half of them have a "migration background", some with very moving biographical stories.

Whether as a result of armed conflict or changing economic, ecological or political conditions, basic human needs such as shelter, food, participation, access to education and others must be met.

Displaced persons after the war

Immediately after the end of the Second World War, the British military administration set up two camps for displaced persons (DP camps) in the barracks of the former forced labour and concentration camp satellite camp in Falkenbergsweg (Neugraben) and the former prisoner-of-war camp in Rostweg (Fischbek).

The "displaced persons" were former forced labourers and concentration camp prisoners, who were unable to return to their home countries or move to countries of their choice such as the USA, Canada or Australia. They lived here from 1951 onwards, then designated as "stateless foreigners", under the administration of the Hamburg social welfare authority, some of them until the 1960s.



Marta Kusyk worked as a Ukrainian forced labourer in Hamburg in the "Vegetarian Restaurant" from 1944 onwards. After the war, she was housed in the DP camp at Falkenberg. There she married her husband Michail Beresiuk. Their son Stephan was born here in 1947. The family's request to emigrate to Canada was not granted. They lived in the camp until the end of the 1950s. Photos: Stephan Kaiser



Barracks camp "Küçük Istanbul"

In 1967, the Sietas company had a barracks camp built a few hundred metres east of the shipyard site, on the Neuenfelder Fährdeich, to house the Turkish "guest workers" it had recruited. The workers themselves called it "Küçük Istanbul" – Little Istanbul. Each barracks measured 12 square metres and housed two people, serving as their living, sleeping and living space. This "legendary Germanistan", as director Yüksel Yavuz calls it in his film "Mein Vater der Gastarbeiter" (My Father the Guest Worker), existed until 2006.

1986. Life in the barracks camp known as "Little Istanbul". Girls play in the snow. At this time, around 800 of the approximately 2,000 employees at the Sietas shipyard are Turkish nationals. Photo: Anne Bornholdt



The settlement was demolished in 2006. By 2023, all that remained of it was the asphalt access road and the barracks building of the heating plant. Photo: Ulrich Raatz

Pavilion villages for ethnic German repatriates

In the summer of 1991, one of the first of 18 Hamburg pavilion villages was opened in Rehrstieg (Neuwiedenthal) for the immigration of ethnic German repatriates from the collapsing Soviet Union, asylum seekers and civil war refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the urging of a local citizens' initiative, only German-speaking ethnic German immigrants ("Russian Germans") were housed here in Rehrstieg until the end of 2004.



In the 13 years since it was established, around 4,000 people have been supported in their relocation in the 40 buildings of this pavilion village, which is managed by the state-owned company Pflegen & Wohnen.
Photo: Uwe Michelau



In the new housing estate built on the site of the former pavilion village, nothing reminds us of the resettlement process.
Photo: Ulrich Raatz

Welcome to 2015

An improvised temporary shelter for refugees was set up in September 2015 in the vacated OBI hardware store on Geutensweg (Neugraben-Fischbek) in response to the influx of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and Eritrea. Shortly afterwards, two residential shelters were built in the neighbourhood, one of which still exists today.



2015: 300 camp beds were set up in the hardware store, which had been empty for months. Distance to the right and left: 60 cm. Privacy: zero.
Photo: Walter Marsand



The use of the residential accommodation "Am Röhricht" is to be extended until 2028 due to continuing high demand.
Photo: Michael Wedler

Places to stay?

Although there are hardly any traces of these temporary accommodations left in the cityscape, they were important starting points for a changing Hamburg.



The camp complex on Falkenbergsweg. The barracks in the lower part of the camp were the forced labourers' camp. From 1943 onwards, the barracks on the right-hand side of the picture were used to house Italian military internees, and from 1944 onwards, inmates of the concentration camp's satellite camp. Photo: Stephan Kaiser

Written by:

Stephan Kaiser, Nils Steffen
Geschichtswerkstatt Süderelbe
Cuxhavener Straße 400, 21149 Hamburg
Geschichtswerkstatt-suederelbe.de