

FORCED LABOR IN THE VIER- UND MARSCHLANDE REGION

In the region of the Vier- und Marschlande alone, around 2,500 civilian forced labourers and prisoners of war were put to work. This does not include the tens of thousands of concentration camp prisoners in the Neuengamme camp. There were more than 25 camps for foreign workers. In most cases, between 20 and 70 people were housed there. Sometimes the camps consisted of specially erected wooden barracks, sometimes innkeepers made their dance halls or bowling alleys available for makeshift accommodations.

The treatment

Polizei Hamburg
17. (21.) Bz., (1.) Bz. / Hamburg-Kirchwerder, den 10. März 1946.
Tel. 1 21275

Se
17. Polizeirevier.

1.) In Bereich des Polizei-Postens Kirchwerder 1 sind folgende russische Kriegsgefangenenlager gewesen:
Hamburg-Kirchwerder, Kibelsch 294 und
Hamburg-Kirchwerder, Kibelsch 319.

2.) Verwalter dieser beiden Lager war der jetzige Bezirksbauernführer Hermann F o r s t e r, geb. 22.12.1899 in Kirchwerder, wohnhaft in Hamburg-Kirchwerder, Kibelsch 318.

3.) Nachfolgende Arbeitgeber im Bereich des Pol. Postens Kirchwerder 1 hatten folgende beschäftigt:

Kaustadt	Kibelsch 272	1 Russen	Schmidt	Kibelsch 374	1 Russen
Albers	" 273	" "	Peters	" 377	" "
Elln	" 274	" "	Johannsen Südseite	207	1 Russen
Hackmann	" 275	" "	Quarweg	"	" "
Tiemann	" 276	" "	Gewölbe	" 210	" "
Garbre	" 277	" "	Bamber	" 211	" "
Franke	" 278	" "	Timm	" 212	" "
Tiemann	" 279	" "	Birgmann	" 213	" "
Vilmscherr	" 280	" "	Putzmann	" 214	" "
Lepp	" 281	" "	Putzmann	" 215	" "
Vilmscherr	" 282	" "	Horste	" 242	" "
Albers	" 283	" "	Putzmann Durchsicht	2	2 Russen
Tiemann	" 284	" "	Tiemann	" 14	" "
Garbre	" 285	" "	Garbre	" 15	" "
Garbre	" 286	" "	Putzmann Person-	202	1 Russen
Weg	" 287	" "	weg	"	" "
Harber	" 288	" "			
Gladelater	" 289	" "			
Dummetter	" 290	" "			
Wahl	" 291	" "			
Meyer	" 292	" "			
Franke	" 293	" "			
Löttem	" 294	" "			
Grohe	" 295	" "			
Wiese	" 296	" "			
Wahl	" 297	" "			
v.Haus	" 298	" "			
Wahl	" 299	" "			
Dummetter	" 300	" "			
Weg	" 301	" "			
Albers	" 302	" "			
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There were foreign workers on almost every farm. Their treatment was left up to the owners, and the memories of those persons concerned vary.

Jerzy Gałeczki, who was forced to work at the Hamburg Horticultural Experimental Station in Fünfhausen at the age of 14, reports: "No one instructed us [...]. We were beaten until we could do it properly."

Galina Unton, on the other hand, a forced labourer at a Kirchwerder vegetable farm, praised the humane treatment she received from the German bosses.

A list of the police from 1946 shows the distribution of the forced labourers on the individual farms (Staatsarchiv Hamburg)

Contacts with Germans

There were also personal contacts between Germans and forced labourers on the farms. In some cases, the friendships that were made at that time survived the war. Inge Rathmann from Altengamme reports that in the autumn of 1945 she attended the wedding of her former Polish forced labourer in the Wentorf DP camp.

Some of the forced laborers stayed. The Pole Zygmunt Sobalski was a forced labourer on a farm in Fünfhausen. After liberation, he continued to work on the farm and lived in Vierlande until his death in 1987.

During the war, intimate relationships between foreign workers and Germans were punishable. Consequently, a young woman from Altengamme, aged 16, had to stand trial in November 1943 because she was expecting a child from a prisoner of war.



Zdzisław Levy came to a farm in Allermöhe as a 13-year-old. He is shown on the right along with the Polish forced labourer of the neighboring farm and the farmer's children. (KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme)

Not all bad?

Often the conditions in the countryside were better than in the factories in the city. Access to food was easier, for instance. Nevertheless, the prisoners had been forcibly taken from their home countries and had to obey the strict rules of the Germans.

KL: Weimar-Buchenwald

Häftlings-Personal-Karte

HEIM-Nr.: 27960

Fam.-Name: Kowalska Oberstellt am: 13.9.44 an KL: Buchenwald

Vorname: Marianna am: Buchenwald an KL: Buchenwald

Geb. am: 7.6.35 in: Jankow an KL: Buchenwald

Stand: Kinder am: Buchenwald an KL: Buchenwald

Wohnort: Hamburg-Curslak 37 an KL: Buchenwald

Strasse: Zimmergärtchen am: Buchenwald an KL: Buchenwald

Religion: r.k. Staatsang: Polen am: Buchenwald an KL: Buchenwald

Wohnort d. Angehörigen: Mutter: Anita Hofel Jankow, K. Goczno Kanski am: Buchenwald an KL: Buchenwald

Eingewiesen am: 16.2.44 am: Buchenwald an KL: Buchenwald

durch: Stapel Hamburg 20 1294 am: Buchenwald an KL: Buchenwald

in KL: Ravensbrück am: Buchenwald an KL: Buchenwald

Grund: Pol. Verb. Entlassung: am: durch KL:

Verstraft: am: durch KL: mit Verfügung v.:

Strafen im Lager: Grund: Art: Bemerkung:

Personen-Beschreibung: Größe: 164 cm Gestalt: rechtl. Gesicht: bräunl. Augen: braun-blau Nase: stark gebogen Mund: mit kleinen Wunden Ohren: mit kleinen Wunden Zähne: 13-teil. Haare: schwarz Sprache: polnisch

Bes. Kennzeichen: Merkmal: 1 Wunde u. Narbe

Charakt.-Eigenschaften:

Sicherheit b. Einsatz:

Körperliche Verfassung: H.S.-Foto Nr. 443

23.8.44 200.000

The smallest offenses could be severely punished. Marianna Kowalska, a Polish woman who worked on Rosa Eggers' farm in Curslack, was accused of receiving stolen goods and handed over to the police. She was sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp in February 1944 and later to a satellite camp of Buchenwald concentration camp.

Prisoner card of Marianna Kowalska from Buchenwald concentration camp. The last place of residence is given as "Hamburg-Curslak 37". (Arolsen Archives)



Gerd Reimers with a Soviet prisoner of war on his father's farm in Altengamme. (Kultur- und Geschichtskontor)



Everyday life in the countryside: A farm in Reitbrook with reference to the POW labor detachment 1137 of Stalag XA Schleswig. (Kultur- und Geschichtskontor)

