

Moroccan and Polish Camps, *Cité Sainte-Suzanne*

The draft for the First World War decimated the local workforce, just as the arms industry's needs were increasing. Women and foreigners gained access to the factory. Out of a total of 2,600 employees in 1917, 465 were women, 160 children, 98 prisoners, and 614 foreigners. The 388 Moroccans made up the largest community, before the Belgians, of which there were 202.

Once peace returned, the lack of a local workforce could be felt. Workers arrived from everywhere: Bretons, Italians, Russians, Algerians, Portuguese. The Poles became the largest community. The first people to arrive were housed in bunkhouses before the construction, in 1945, of 45 permanent lodgings divided into barracks of 3 or 4 single workers each. This "Moroccan camp", which was converted into a youth centre under the Nazi occupation, was turned into a vocational college for boys (since knocked down) after the liberation of France.

The six buildings of the "Polish camp" which still exist today (67 lodgings), were built in 1930 and renamed *cités jardins* ("garden estates"); they bear witness to the contribution made by immigrants to our industrial history.

Legend

Part of a map showing the location of the Moroccan camp (since knocked down), on the edge of the canal (now the boulevard Maurice-Thorez), of the Polish camp and of the *cité Sainte-Suzanne*, Archives du Calvados, 5NUM41.

Legend

The Polish camp, built in 1930, now "*cité jardins*", rue Ambroise Croizat, photograph by François Decaens, 1987, Inventaire général de Normandie.

Legend

The architecture of the "group of 17 houses" of the *cité Sainte-Suzanne* (1926) marked a break with the regular lines of workers' housing estates that were structured in rows. Pierre Cofrier collection.