



British passenger steamer *Arcadia* moored at "Overseas Bridge". In the foreground elevated electric railway station "Baumwall" as well as small port launches and tug-boats.

# Hamburg Rebuilds

Badly damaged during the war, the city's reconstruction program is restoring it to its former importance as a world port.

Prime bombing target during World War II was the city of Hamburg with its extremely important port facilities. From constant pounding, both the city and harbor were reduced to shambles. Extent of the destruction is revealed by the fact that in 1945 the port was reduced to about 20% of its 1939 capacity with damage amounting to almost £50,000,000. Roughly 90% of the harbor's sheds, 79% of the cranes, 67% of the warehouses and 68% of the dockside railways were leveled. In the waters of the harbor, 3,000 wrecks closed it to most traffic as surely as if a sea wall had been built across the entrance. If this were not enough, damage to the city itself was extensive. About 288,000 homes (more than 50%) were destroyed. Industries were put out of commission and public buildings were either completely wrecked

or badly scarred. This was Hamburg's condition at the war's end. A smoldering ruin of twisted, broken steel and useless hulks.

An outsider viewing the port at the end of 1945 would never have believed that it could be restored. But industrious, hard working Hamburgites refused to resign themselves to thoughts of the job being insurmountable. They rolled up their collective sleeves and went to work. Today the city is a vastly different place. Once more Hamburg is an important world port.

In 1955 Hamburg was busy. For the first time since the war, cargo through the port exceeded the top pre-war year of 1936. A study of this 1955 business reveals 23,000,000 tons handled, about 1,000,000 more than the previous high, representing goods of virtually all types.



View from port of St. Michael's Church, one of Hamburg's landmarks.



During 1955, ships from 41 countries called, as against 27 during the previous banner year. Now there are 206 regular services compared with 185 in 1936. And foreign departures of 212 showed a considerable increase over the previous high year's 150. Almost all the countries on both sides of the "Iron Curtain" were represented, for geographically, Hamburg is in an ideal location and has the facilities to service them all. It is even expected that when commerce between the east and west increases, this port will capture a larger and larger share.

The job of bringing Hamburg back to its present importance has been a staggering one. The city had to start with practically nothing and then build, build, build. It is a tribute to the city fathers' planning that with roughly 60% of the pre-war port facilities now available, traffic is greater than ever before. At present, quayside sheds cover approximately 5,000,000 sq. ft., or about 66% of their former area; warehouses provide some 4,000,000 sq. ft., or 52% of the former total; roughly 58% of the cranes (889) are now in service and 280 miles or almost 100% of harbor-side railways have been repaired. Obviously the

Scene in Hamburg's South-West-Port.





Hamburg's Harbor is big and very busy.

reconstructed facilities are very modern, designed for rapid loading and unloading of ships. These and other measures have helped to increase the port's capacity to such an extent that Hamburg is once more noted for its quick turn-around.

Synonymous with the rebuilding of Hamburg is the rebirth of the Federal Republic's merchant fleet. At present this is about half its pre-war size with another 1,000,000 grt needed to serve the nation adequately. Since shipbuilding is an intimate part of the city's economic life, its largest shipyard, Deutsche Werft AG (see *The Compass*, July 1954) is important. Severely damaged, the yard has worked its way back to a point where it was able to turn out new buildings last year valued at £35,000,000, roughly 56% of which was for the German Merchant service. Other shipyards, namely Howaldtswerke A.G., Stütcken-Werft, and the recently rebuilt Blohm and Voss Werft, have also added their share toward the economic rehabilitation of Hamburg.



Passenger ships at the Auguste-Viktoria-Quai of Kaiser-Wilhelm Harbor. In the background, the Howaldt shipyard.



One of freight and passenger vessels of Hamburg-South-America Steam Navigation Company, which was built after war, leaving Hansa-Hafen port.

Shipbuilding is not the only large industry in Hamburg, even though it employs a good portion of the available industrial workers. Other industries such as engineering, electric engineering, chemicals, oil, rubber, etc., are similarly represented. During 1955 these industries, including shipbuilding, turned out goods totalling £584,000,000 of which £67,000,000 worth were exported. These figures are a firm endorsement of the truly remarkable job the city has done, rising from the ashes of destruction to become one of the most important towns in Western Germany.

Any report on Hamburg's reconstruction would be incomplete without a mention of rebuilding in the town itself. At the war's end, the city had about 267,000 livable dwellings, less than half its previous number. Through an investment of £150,000,000 about 154,000 houses and apartments have been built to help relieve the critical dwelling shortage. Public buildings, too, have



Kaiser-Wilhelm-Harbor with *Italia* in background.

been rebuilt and repaired to the tune of £942,000,000. All in all, it can truthfully be said that one-third of the present day Hanseatic Town of Hamburg has been reconstructed.

In spite of this remarkable record over the past ten years, Hamburg is not resting on its laurels. In order to continue holding its present place, work is going on or is in the planning stage to make it a more modern port than it is now. In addition, overseas connections are constantly being developed in hope of capturing more and more traffic. On the whole, the city and port are in excellent condition tradewise, so it can look forward with confidence to a future bright with prospects of trade and business increases.

Take-over of cargo into lighters for further transport through inland shipways.

