



Prof. Dr. Manfred Kittel, Director of the Foundation, presented a draft proposal to the Board of Trustees of the Foundation at a meeting on 25 October 2010. These recommendations provide guidelines for planning the exhibition. All Board members welcomed the draft as a good basis for consultation. The Advisory Board will discuss the proposal, possibly with additional input from external experts. The Board of Trustees of the Foundation will take its final decision at a future meeting.

Proposal for the Work of the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation and for the Planned Permanent Exhibition

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Introduction

Europe was marked by wars and totalitarian dictatorship for much of the twentieth century. The National Socialist regime caused the suffering of millions and created deep divisions between nations and peoples in Europe. Post-war generations in Germany have to assume responsibility for this part of German history and to engage with it. The dialogue with our European neighbours on this history – both at an academic level and between citizens – is driven by mutual understanding. It aims to enable joint remembrance and commemoration and thereby promote reconciliation and partnership in Europe.

The *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* will chart the history of the sixty to eighty million expellees and refugees who were displaced from their European homelands in the twentieth century as a result of war and dictatorship and experienced great physical and emotional suffering. At the end of World War Two and in the years that followed, around fourteen million Germans had to leave their homes in the former Eastern provinces of Prussia and the German settlement areas in Central and Eastern Europe. These expulsions took place in the wake of National Socialist policies and crimes and the horrific war unleashed and waged by this regime. In the western zones of occupation and the newly-founded Federal Republic of Germany, the expellees had to establish a new life from scratch, sometimes without the support of the citizens of their new homeland. In the Soviet zone of occupation and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) their experiences were taboo. The Foundation will commemorate the integration of refugees and expellees in East and West German society up to 1990, their role in post-war reconstruction and their willingness to contribute to European reconciliation.

The work of the *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* centres on the tragedy of flight and expulsion as well as the remembrance and commemoration of this period of history. Its objective is to denounce expulsions as a violent political measure that is unjust whenever and wherever it occurs. The Foundation is guided by the principle of universal human rights.

The resolution establishing the Foundation gives it the task of “keeping alive the memory of flight and expulsion in the twentieth century against the historical background of World War Two and the National Socialist policies of expansionism and extermination and their consequences”. The Foundation will fulfil this objective

through national and international cooperation with academic institutions, museums and memorial sites, expellee organisations, survivors and other groups affected by flight and expulsion. The *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* will carry out its work in dialogue and consultation with other countries, thereby echoing the sentiments of the Polish publicist Jan Józef Lipski: “We must tell each other everything.” This approach will foster a spirit of reconciliation. As the German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated in a speech on 18 September 2006, “without [this spirit of reconciliation] there can be no appropriate or worthy commemoration of the suffering caused by flight and expulsion and, above all, no common future in a peaceful Europe.”

Germans are conscious of their responsibility for the crimes of the National Socialist regime, which included the establishment of the concentration and extermination camps, the murder of six million Jews, around half a million Sinti and Roma and of further victim groups, and the unleashing of World War Two in Europe. Central and Eastern Europe – particularly Poland and the Soviet Union – were at the geographical centre of the expansionism and the extermination policy of the National Socialist regime. These territories suffered the highest number of casualties and the most widespread devastation during World War Two. For decades after the war, relationships between East and West Germany and their East European neighbours were extremely strained. Tensions were heightened in the West as a result of the Cold War and in the East they were masked by the state-prescribed policy of “socialist friendship”.

For this reason, both state and citizens must continue to confront this darkest period of Germany’s twentieth century history and to commemorate the victims. The German government’s national memorial site concept (*Gedenkstättenkonzeption*), which was renewed in 2008, pays particular attention to this aspect and stresses that historical knowledge and academic research should form the basis of all forms of remembrance. The *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* is committed to these principles, which reject any attempt to play off competing interpretations of history against each other or to relativise National Socialist crimes.

A joint confrontation with the past in a European context and with respect for the perspective of different groups will help pave the way towards reconciliation and permanent friendship. The work of the *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* will contribute towards a peaceful and unified European future.

1. Purpose of the Foundation

Remembering Expulsions – Denouncing Expulsions – Deepening Reconciliation

The past few years have seen a renewed focus on those who lost their homelands, and in many cases their lives, at the end of World War Two. The flight and expulsion of some fourteen million Germans along with the extensive territorial losses sustained after the war are among the most fateful episodes in German history. This historical rupture “must become a central feature of national memory” (Karl Schlögel). 1945 also saw the disappearance of “emotional landscapes” (Horst Bienek), which for many centuries had been just as much an integral part of Germany as regions such as Swabia or Mecklenburg. The historic German provinces in Central and Eastern Europe have been lost as a result of National Socialist policy. However, in the words of the author Günter Grass, nowhere does it state that “the cultural heart of these provinces and towns must [also] be forgotten”. The history of flight and expulsion and the cultural legacy of the regions affected are a part of national identity and of the unified culture of remembrance in Germany.

On 19 March 2008, the German government agreed on a preliminary concept for an exhibition and documentation and information centre in Berlin dealing with forced migration, flight and expulsion in the twentieth century. The aim of this new institution is to recall and denounce the injustice of expulsions. It is designed to further the spirit of reconciliation and Germany’s efforts to promote understanding between nations.

Following the decision by the German government, the *Federal Foundation Flight, Expulsion and Reconciliation* was set up as a dependent foundation regulated by public law on 30 December 2008 with the law establishing a German Historical Museum Foundation. The *Foundation Flight, Expulsion and Reconciliation* is affiliated with the German Historical Museum in Berlin. The foundation’s committees were appointed in 2009 and expanded with a new law passed on 19 June 2010. A planning team for the exhibition and information and documentation centre was also established in September 2009. Following renovation, the Deutschlandhaus near the former Anhalter Bahnhof railway station in Berlin will provide the location for the exhibition and documentation and information centre.

A Multi-Perspective Approach to Foster European Understanding

In December 2009, the German government published a report on funding for cultural projects in accordance with § 96 of the Federal Expellee Law. According to the report, “The collective confrontation with history continues to present diverse challenges.” The report also states: “Just like its European neighbours, Germany is addressing the history of National Socialism, totalitarianism, World War Two, flight, expulsion and forced migration. This process is increasingly taking place at a multinational level and thereby has renewed social, political and academic significance” in the context of European unification.

For this reason, the *Foundation Flight, Expulsion and Reconciliation* considers international and national responses to the aforementioned historical themes. A multi-perspective approach means that historical viewpoints can be presented “from all sides”. The representation of experiences and interpretations that differ from one European state to another, but also within states themselves, will give visitors the opportunity to consider events from various perspectives and to form their own conclusions. In addition, the exhibition will show political, social and cultural models for conflict resolution, for example a rigorous policy to protect minorities.

2. The History of Forced Migration in Germany and Europe

Flight and Expulsion of Germans

In Germany, the terms “flight and expulsion” are commonly used in tandem, but they stand for very different historical events. Most of the ethnic Germans in the Baltic States – along with other German-speaking minorities – were moved to annexed and occupied Poland in line with the enforced “resettlement” resulting from the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact. They only became refugees at the end of the war. Stalin had most ethnic Germans in Russia (*Russlanddeutsche*) deported to central Asia in response to the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. In 1944-45, millions of civilians from East Prussia, Pomerania, East Brandenburg and Silesia fled from the advancing Red Army. Hundreds of thousands of Germans were evacuated from Slovakia, Croatia and northern Transylvania from October 1944 onwards. Those who remained were often deported to the Soviet Union to work as forced labourers or lost their homelands as a result of the so-called “wild expulsions” that took place in the period between the end of the war and the Potsdam Conference of summer 1945. Around a million people in Czechoslovakia and the territories subsequently annexed to Poland were affected by these “wild expulsions”. These were not officially sanctioned and appeared spontaneous, although in reality they were often organised operations carried out ruthlessly by army units, new police units or revolutionary militia groups. The victorious Allied powers later authorised an organised policy of forced resettlement, whereby the remaining ethnic Germans were transported out of these territories, usually by train.

The experience of the Sudeten Germans after the war was largely determined by their relations with the state in which they had lived until 1945. The same was the case for the German minorities in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Rumania. Whilst almost all of the ethnic Germans living in Bohemia and the Danube Swabians (*Donauschwaben*) in Yugoslavia were expelled, Hungary and Rumania, which remained allied with Germany almost until the end of the war, adopted a different approach. Hence, the vast majority of Banat Swabians (*Banater Schwaben*) and Transylvanian Saxons (*Siebenbürger Sachsen*) in Rumania were able to stay in their homeland, although they were then subject to decades of communist repression, which compelled many to move to Germany. In contrast, around half of the ethnic Germans in Hungary (*Ungarndeutschen*) were expelled after World War Two, despite the fact that Hungary

had been a long-standing collaborator with the Nazi dictatorship. Suffering was particularly acute in the detention camps. Many did not survive the brutal conditions in these camps - particularly in the case of the Danube Swabians in Yugoslavia.

There were millions of victims of flight and expulsion in the territories stretching from East Prussia to the Banat. Germans in the west and centre of the country, but also German-speaking minorities in Western Europe, were spared this bitter fate.

Flight and Expulsion in the Context of National Socialist Expansionism and Extermination Policy

The flight and expulsion of the Germans took place against the background of the National Socialist policies of expansionism and extermination and the consequences of these policies. When Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP came to power in 1933 the ideology of a *Volksgemeinschaft* based on political and racial criteria became state doctrine. The initial result was that so-called “racial” minorities such as Jews, Sinti and Roma, along with those who did not conform to the political ideology of the Nazis, were excluded, stripped of their rights and expelled. Of the more than 500,000 Jews living in Germany at the beginning of 1933, around 180,000 saw no other choice but to leave the country by 1938 as a result of persecution and the gradual removal of their means for existence. A further eighty thousand Jews managed to flee before the outbreak of war in 1939.

The period following the break up and annexation of Czechoslovakia in 1938-39 and the German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 saw widespread “ethnic cleansing”, expulsions and resettlement, which led to the repression, expulsion and murder of Polish citizens. Moreover, occupied Poland was at the epicentre of National Socialist crimes committed primarily against the Jews and the Sinti and Roma. These crimes initially involved expropriation and deportation to the ghettos but were to end with systematic murder. The invasion of the Soviet Union, crimes against the civilian population and the brutal treatment of prisoners of war all showed the increasingly radical approach to warfare and occupation policy adopted by the National Socialists after 1941. The National Socialists’ ultimate goal of “Germanisation” and the enslavement of Eastern Europe was laid out in the *Generalplan Ost* (General Plan East). This plan envisaged mass expulsions. The German war of extermination was responsible for the deaths of millions of people from Central and Eastern Europe.

European Dimensions

The German government's 2008 preliminary concept states the objective of documenting "the flight and expulsion of the Germans from the former Eastern provinces of Germany... against the background of European expulsions in the twentieth century". This underlines the need to address another significant historical aspect: the political option of carrying out large-scale expulsions, which was formalised by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. Backed by the international community, this treaty enabled the violent "population exchange" between Greece and Turkey, which affected almost two million people.

Prior to this, the "long nineteenth century" had seen "ethnic cleansing" in the Balkans, which was primarily directed against Muslims. Millions of Muslims were expelled as a result of the Serbian uprising against the Ottoman regime in 1804, the Greek War of Independence from 1821 and the Balkan Wars in 1912-13. The historian Michael Schwartz has described World War One as "the definitive catastrophe in terms of the radicalisation and expansion of ethnic 'cleansing' in large parts of Europe". A further "catastrophe" was that which befell the Armenians in 1915-16, beginning with expulsion but classed by most international scholars as genocide.

This historical background, which also includes the ruling practices of the European colonial powers, is essential for an understanding of forced migration. As well as recounting the causes, process and consequences of German flight and expulsion, these aspects being a focus of the Foundation's work, the exhibition will also address the European dimensions of the theme. Up to eighty million Europeans were affected by forced migration in the twentieth century, above all those in the east and south-east of the continent. People lost their homelands and often their lives because they either belonged to or were classed in a certain ethnic group or because they were regarded as political opponents.

The exhibition will give an overview of more than thirty ethnic groups which have been the victims of expulsion in Europe. Some of these examples of forced migration will be covered in detail. The exhibition will not only point out the common features of the individual expulsions but also the sometimes fundamental differences between them. Scholarly comparisons will be used to enhance knowledge and avoid wrongly equating the individual expulsions. The exhibition will document the Greek-Turkish "population exchange" in the early 1920s and the expulsion of more than 1.6 million

Poles from and within the territories of western and central Poland annexed and occupied by Nazi Germany. It will also chart the “ethnic cleansing” that took place during the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The latter not only confirmed the continued relevance of the theme, but also led to a new awareness in Germany.

Ethnopolitical Expulsions and Genocides

The Foundation has the task of addressing the flight and expulsion of Germans and other instances of ethnically and politically motivated forced migration in twentieth century Europe. The euphemistic term “ethnic cleansing” is now commonly used to describe such forced migration. Unlike politically or religiously motivated expulsions, “ethnic cleansing” is primarily carried out because of the ethnic background of the victims. War is often a catalyst for “ethnic cleansing”, the characteristics of which include the targeted use of violence and mass rape as a means to instigate flight and expulsion, and the eradication of the cultural legacy of the victims.

The work of the Foundation takes account of the fundamental difference between “ethnic cleansing” and genocide. “Ethnic cleansing” stems from the aim to remove a population group from a certain territory. In contrast, the perpetrators of genocide do not just seek to remove the group but also to murder as many members of this group as possible. However, throughout history many incidences of “ethnic cleansing” have had features in common with genocide, even if genocide was not the original intention. In other words, the perpetrators have assumed that mass deaths may occur as a result of “ethnic cleansing”.

The clear analytical distinction between “ethnic cleansing” and genocide and between expulsion and extermination is an essential feature of the planned exhibition and information and documentation centre.

3. Location, Pedagogical Remit and Target Audience

The planned exhibition and documentation and information centre will be housed in the “Deutschlandhaus” in Berlin, a listed building dating from the 1920s. Berlin is a particularly appropriate location for the work of the Foundation on account of its geographical position, its history and the large number of memorial sites in the city. The former Anhalter Bahnhof railway station, which is opposite the Deutschlandhaus, was the starting point for many of the deportations of Jews from Berlin to Theresienstadt (Terezín) from 1942 onwards. The headquarters of the Gestapo, SS and Reich Security Main Office were in the direct vicinity (this area now housing the Topography of Terror exhibition). From 1960, the Deutschlandhaus was used for several decades as a meeting point in West Berlin for expellee organisations from different regions (*Landsmannschaften*) as well as the Federation of Expellees. The history of the Deutschlandhaus will be included in the exhibition as an example of how the expellees were integrated into German society after 1945.

The Foundation aims to reach a broad audience. Its role is to provide information about the flight, expulsion and integration of Germans during and after World War Two, as well as about other instances of forced migration, particularly in twentieth century Europe. The target audience includes those directly affected by these events along with their families, as well as German and foreign visitors to Berlin. Forced migration is a major issue in the countries of origin of many visitors. The exhibition will be presented in various languages and additional facilities such as audio guides will be produced for visitors from Central and Eastern Europe.

The Foundation has an important pedagogical remit in view of the historical and current significance of forced migration. The exhibition and the documentation and information centre will be designed with teachers, pupils and students in mind. Educational programmes, seminars and workshops for adults will also be available. In addition, special provision will be made for school groups with pupils from families which have considerable experience of (forced) migration and integration into the society of a new country.

Alongside the permanent exhibition, the *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* will put on regular temporary exhibitions. These will address current developments or

provide more detail on various historical aspects. The history of Germans in Eastern Europe and their co-existence with their Central and East European neighbours will also be documented in the temporary exhibitions. This theme will be developed in cooperation with the regional museums funded under Article 96 of the Federal Expellee Law (which relates to the preservation of the cultural legacy of expellees and refugees).

A learning and information centre will be established, taking account of the fact that knowledge of the themes presented will vary from one visitor group to another. The centre will use modern museological methods to present the causes, process and consequences of forced migration. It will also provide an appropriate and respectful environment for individual reflection. The aim is to create a “Place of Living Remembrance” that encourages dialogue, warns against a repetition of the past, informs and contributes to understanding between nations.

4. The Documentation and Information Centre

The documentation and information centre is a central element of the Foundation's work. This centre will give visitors the opportunity to research the topics of flight, expulsion and forced migration in more depth.

The documentation and information centre will include an open access reference library. The library will establish its own collection in cooperation with the Martin Opitz library in Herne, a specialist library dealing with the former German Eastern provinces and settlement areas in Eastern Europe. The library will house German and foreign-language titles on forced migration. The special collection from the Deutschlandhaus, which has been stored by the German Historical Museum since 1999, will be incorporated into the documentation and information centre.

The documentation and information centre will have the task of sourcing, compiling and analysing specialist materials, including written and audiovisual testimonies from Germany and abroad. This will involve collating and displaying existing reports as well as running testimony projects relating to the issues covered in the permanent exhibition and the work of the Foundation. The aim is to develop a digital testimony archive.

The documentation and information centre endeavours to work in close cooperation with the *Lastenausgleichsarchiv* [an archive dealing with the compensation paid by the Federal Republic to individuals for loss and damage sustained during and immediately after the war] in Bayreuth, which has a unique collection. Visitors to the Deutschlandhaus will be able to research these materials from Bayreuth and some information will be available in digital form, for example eye-witness reports on flight and expulsion, the so-called *Gemeindeseelenlisten* [lists of the Germans living in certain areas, from which they were later expelled] from the collection of documents on Eastern Europe (*Ost-Dokumentation*), materials related to the Equalisation of Burdens Law (including *Feststellungsakten* [files determining provisions for compensation] and documentation from the *Heimatauskunftsstellen* [offices established to provide information about expellees], index cards and other materials (such as correspondence) from the church's missing persons tracing service. A collection of approximately two hundred thousand historic photographs from the Bayreuth archive showing towns, communities and people in the former German

settlements and provinces in Eastern Europe will also be made accessible to visitors. Visitors will – subject to archive regulations – therefore be able to establish what information is available in the *Lastenausgleichsarchiv* on a certain place of origin, person or event. There are also plans to digitise archive materials from the former GDR concerning the history of the expellees.

In addition, the Foundation aims to forge close links with international museums, research institutes and universities. The international symposium in September 2010 entitled “Flight, Expulsion and ‘Ethnic Cleansing’. A Challenge for the Work of Museums and Exhibitions Worldwide”, organised by the Foundation in conjunction with the International Association of Museums of History and the German Historical Museum, was a first step towards such cooperation.

The documentation and information centre will be responsible for disseminating research findings in its own publications as well as for running a varied programme of events including meetings with survivors, representations of flight and expulsion in literature and film, panel discussions and academic conferences bringing together national and international experts.

5. The Permanent Exhibition

Many aspects associated with flight, expulsion and reconciliation provoke diverse and often subjective perspectives and viewpoints. For this reason, the exhibition aims not only to present facts but also to provide a forum for reflection and discussion. Where diverging opinions exist, these will be clearly presented. The Foundation is committed to presenting information that is historically accurate, reflects scholarly opinion and takes account of the latest research findings. It is also important that the content of the exhibition is unambiguous and verified and that it is analysed and presented in accordance with museological principles.

The exhibition seeks to present the themes using methods that not only provide visitors with information and new insights but also allow them to experience and understand history. It will do so by presenting exhibits in a stimulating way, presenting objects and themes in an objective and non-emotional fashion and providing a broad range of interactive facilities.

The exhibition will display authentic exhibits which have the capacity to arouse the curiosity and interest of visitors. It will employ features commonly found in cultural and historical exhibitions such as three-dimensional exhibits, posters and other printed materials, documents, photographs, audiovisual testimony, and in some cases also artistic responses to the theme. At the same time, the Foundation plans to make extensive use of multimedia resources in order to clearly illustrate complex aspects such as the routes taken by the refugees and expellees or the shifting of borders.

Structure of the Exhibition

The exhibition will consist of an introduction (“prologue”), a room providing the geographical context, and a series of thematic sections presented in chronological order and supplemented by case studies and personal narratives.

Prologue

The prologue to the exhibition will use testimony to introduce visitors to the themes of flight, expulsion and the loss of homeland and present these often dramatic events from the perspective of the expellees. The aim is to show what it is like for individuals to lose their homes in violent circumstances and to have to make a new start in unfamiliar surroundings. The examples will relate to expulsions throughout the twentieth century.

Geographical Context

The living history presented in the prologue will be followed by a room presenting an overview of facts and geographical information related to flight, expulsion and forced migration. This first room will aim to provide a complete account of expulsions in the twentieth century and of the successive disappearance of ethnic minorities. This could be presented interactively with graphics showing the process of ethnic homogenisation in Europe in sequence, but also the option of finding out about each ethnic group concerned.

In addition, there will be an interactive map on the floor showing the historic regions in Central and Eastern Europe where Germans lived for many centuries. This will give a visual impression of the areas concerned. Visitors can walk over the different sections of the map in order to “visit” the different regions and learn about their history, culture and ethnic composition through additional visuals and text.

Chronological Sections

The chronological sections will form the central thread of the exhibition. These will chart the historical events fundamental to the theme of forced migration in the twentieth century as well as addressing the ideological motivation behind the associated political decisions and the consequences of these decisions for different peoples in Europe. Forced migration in the twentieth century will be examined primarily with reference to German history and its international context.

The chronological sections will be structured as follows:

- 1) The End of World War One and National Self-Determination
- 2) Majority and Minority Groups in the Interwar Years
- 3) *Volksgemeinschaft* and *Lebensraum* as Key Features of National Socialist Ideology
- 4) World War Two:
 - War and Genocide
 - The Flight of German Civilians
- 5) The Expulsion of Germans and the Post-war Configuration of Europe
- 6) Arrival and Integration of the German Expellees in East and West Germany
- 7) After 1989: Towards a European Culture of Remembrance?

Sections Four, Five and Six form the main focus of the exhibition.

Case Studies

Case studies from individual towns and regions will be included in the chronological sections to shed further light on the themes presented. These specific examples will illustrate the complex nature of the problems, conflicts or radicalisation at the time. The case studies will be selected from different regions so as to reflect the variety of historical landscapes in Central and Eastern Europe.

Historical and political conflicts offer material for the case studies, for example the dispute over whether Upper Silesia belonged to German or Polish territory after 1918 or over the killing of ethnic Germans in Bydgoszcz (Bromberg) in September 1939, an event which continues to provoke controversy. However, another option is to document lesser known aspects, for example the role of the new socialist town of Stalinstadt, founded in 1953 (and renamed Eisenhüttenstadt in 1961). This was a destination for expellees from various parts of the GDR, who came here to make a new start. The debate over a proposed memorial to remember crimes against expellees in the Czech town of Postoloprty (Postelberg), where a mass murder of Germans took place in 1945, is another possible case study that shows a gradual coming together of formerly entrenched views after 1989.

The situation in the Polish town of Łódź from 1940-44 is a suitable case study for Section Four of the exhibition. Following its annexation to the Third Reich,

Litzmannstadt – as the Germans named it – became the central transit point for ethnic Germans (*Volksdeutsche*) resettled from Bessarabia, Bukovina and the Baltic States. The “Central Immigration Office” in Litzmannstadt was responsible for carrying out “racial” or “genetic” screening to check that those concerned were of “German blood”, for naturalising the “ethnic German” families and for assigning them a new place of residence. A number of resettlement camps were established in Łódź.

In March 1941 alone, there were thirty four thousand ethnic Germans in these camps awaiting a decision on their resettlement applications. Expulsions of Polish civilians were carried out by the “Central Office for Resettlement”, also located in Łódź from 1940, in order to accommodate the ethnic Germans in the region. At the same time, one of the largest mass ghettos on Reich territory was established in Łódź. The Jews of Łódź were forced to move to this ghetto, but from October 1941 it also became a destination for mass deportations of Jews from the cities of Vienna, Prague, Frankfurt, Berlin and Hamburg. The Łódź ghetto served the aims of National Socialist extermination policy, not only by using Jews and Sinti and Roma for forced labour but also in its role as a transit point on the way to the extermination camps. These almost simultaneous developments in Łódź illustrate the interplay between National Socialist ideology, military aggression, population policy and extermination.

The individual case studies aim not only to describe events but also to place them in their historical context and, where appropriate, to point out their later significance. As work progresses on the permanent exhibition, many suitable places or events for the case studies will emerge. Some further possible examples will be outlined in the description of the chronological sections below.

Personal Narratives in the Exhibition

A third approach is to present personal experiences of flight, expulsion and forced migration and how individuals have dealt with them since. This approach will form an important element of the exhibition, with a particular focus on the victim perspective. Those affected by the dramatic circumstances of flight and expulsion still find it difficult to overcome the trauma of their experiences decades later.

However, the experience of violence, separation, loss and of having no fixed roots has also had a major impact on subsequent generations. The *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* aims to gather as much testimony as possible for the documentation

and information centre. Selected examples will also be presented in audiovisual form in the exhibition.

The Chronological Sections

1) THE END OF WORLD WAR ONE AND NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

World War One has been described by the historian George F. Kennan as the “great seminal catastrophe of the twentieth century” and it is also regarded as a catalyst for “ethnic cleansing”. The political map of Europe was completely redrawn in the aftermath of World War One. The treaties of Versailles, St. Germain, Neuilly, Trianon und Sèvres signed at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 and the collapse of the tsarist regime in the chaos of the Russian Revolution drew a line under the age of multinational empires. New nation states were founded, whilst others regained sovereignty or saw considerable territorial or population gains.

The right to national self-determination proclaimed at the end of World War One was only partially implemented and in some cases was nothing but a sham. Whilst some peoples were granted the right of self-determination, others were refused it. Millions of Europeans now found themselves in state structures where they felt excluded. Faced with repressive measures and displacement, a million Germans from the former German territories ceded after the war decided to move to the Germany.

Along with Germany, a number of countries attempted to challenge the status quo, which sometimes led to new wars or violent conflict. The newly established League of Nations hoped to establish a number of measures for peaceful conflict resolution, including an active protection of minorities, referenda and the creation of mandates under international administration. However, all of these measures proved difficult to implement. The Treaty of Lausanne, ratified by the League of Nations in 1923 in order to put an end to the war between Greece and Turkey, supported the “population exchange” between Muslims living in Greece and the Greek Orthodox residents of Turkey and thereby gave international sanctioning to the policy of breaking up ethnic groups.

Themes:

- Forced Migration from the Early Nineteenth Century to the end of World War One
- The Peace Treaties at the End of World War One

- The Dissolution of Multinational Empires and the Transformation of Europe
- The League of Nations and the Problem of Ethnic Minorities
- German and Hungarian Challenges to the Status Quo

Possible Case Studies:

- The German-Polish Dispute over Upper Silesia, 1919-22
- The Polish-Lithuanian Dispute over Vilnius after 1918
- The “Asia Minor Catastrophe”: The “Population Exchange” between Greece and Turkey

2) MAJORITY AND MINORITY GROUPS IN THE INTERWAR YEARS

Following the overview of inter-state conflict, this section will focus on how majority and minority groups co-existed on a day-to-day basis in the newly established states. By way of example, those Germans who decided not to emigrate to Germany were faced with the issue of whether and how they should become integrated in the new states. Their responses, which ranged from loyal cooperation to open rejection, also depended on the extent to which the new states granted them rights as a minority group. The fledgling political systems of these nation states often regarded ethnic minorities with suspicion or even stepped up their nationalist or repressive tendencies. As in the years preceding World War One, ethnic conflicts were bound up with and intensified by religious and social issues.

In many cases, the German minorities changed their political allegiances. The longstanding Austrian-German communities in Bohemia and Moravia were to become “Border Germans or Germans abroad” (*Grenz- und Auslandsdeutsche*), who soon looked not to Vienna but to Berlin for political support. New collective identities also emerged. Hence, during this period the German minority in Czechoslovakia finally adopted its own identity as “Sudeten Germans”. Yet the conflict with minorities did not just affect Germans but also many other European nationalities.

German politicians used the issue of minorities to contest the Treaty of Versailles and in the attempt to redraw Germany’s eastern border. Before 1933, they used diplomacy to try and achieve these aims, but the period after 1933 saw the increased use of threats and ultimately military force.

Themes:

- Policies towards Minorities in European States
- Cultural and Political Organisations of the German Minorities
- New Loyalties and Identities among “Border Germans and Germans Abroad”
- The German Minorities as a Pawn in German Foreign Policy
- Politics and Society in the Prussian Provinces of Eastern Europe

Possible Case Studies:

- The Sudeten Germans as a Political Issue
- The Increasing Romanian Influence in Bukovina
- The Hungarians Abroad (*Auslandsungarn*)

3) *VOLKSGEMEINSCHAFT* AND *LEBENSRAUM* AS KEY FEATURES OF NATIONAL SOCIALIST IDEOLOGY

In terms of war, racial policy, population displacement and mass murder the National Socialists were largely motivated by delusions of superiority – both at a domestic and international level – and the desire to eradicate certain groups. This section examines the development of the *völkisch* and racist elements within National Socialist ideology and how these elements became concrete measures by 1938.

The entry to power of the NSDAP in 1933 marked a decisive break with the past as the ideology of a *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community) characterised by racist elements became state doctrine. In the first instance, this doctrine led to the exclusion, deprivation of rights and expulsion of minority groups such as Jews and Sinti and Roma as well as “undesirable” political groups.

The new order that the National Socialists envisaged for Europe went way beyond a revision of the decisions taken at the Paris Peace Conference and laid out in the Treaty of Versailles. The National Socialists often drew on the results of *Ostforschung* (“Research into the East”) to justify their objectives. Back in the Weimar Republic, German scholars had established an ideological framework which classed broad areas of Eastern Europe as “German national and cultural territory” (*deutschen Volks- und Kulturboden*) and asserted that the Slav majority in these areas was culturally less developed.

Citing Hans Grimm, Hitler defined the Germans as a “people without space” (*Volk ohne Raum*) which had to acquire “*Lebensraum* in the East” through the biological expansion of the (Aryan) German race. At an early stage, Hitler expressed the conviction that “Germanisation can only relate to territory, not to people”. As a result, a “space without people” (*Raum ohne Volk*) was needed for this “people without space”.

Themes:

- The Policy of Exclusion and Expulsion in Nazi Germany after 1933
- The Tradition of *Ostforschung* (“Research into the East”)
- *Lebensraum* Ideology

Possible Case Studies:

- Germanisation Policy in Masuria after 1933
- Flatow (Złotów): The End of a German-Jewish Community in Posen-West Prussia

4) WORLD WAR TWO

- WAR AND GENOCIDE

1938 was a turning point in many respects. The 1938 Munich Agreement sanctioned the National Socialist “annexation” of the Sudetenland, which was followed by the occupation of the so-called “rump” of Czechoslovakia. In the same year, seventeen thousand Jews with Polish passports were expelled from Germany during the November pogroms.

This “prologue to extermination” (Jerzy Tomaszewski) was followed by mass expulsions and resettlements in the wake of the German invasion of Poland. Over the next six years of the German occupation, these measures led to the murder of up to six million Polish citizens. The start of the racially and ideologically motivated war of extermination against the Soviet Union in summer 1941 marked the increased radicalisation of the National Socialists’ wartime conduct and occupation policy. The ultimate objective of “Germanisation” and enslaving Eastern Europe was formulated in the General Plan East (*Generalplan Ost*). It was presumed that millions of Soviet prisoners of war would die as a result. Millions of Soviet civilians fell victim to

excessively violent anti-partisan operations, the Nazi occupation policy focusing on ruthless exploitation and the deprivation of rights, and the later “scorched earth policy”. Occupied Poland was at the epicentre of the National Socialist genocide. The process of expropriation, deportation and ghettoisation culminated in the systematic murder of six million European Jews (some three million of whom were Polish citizens) as well as half a million Sinti und Roma. Auschwitz (Oświęcim) symbolises the breakdown in civilisation brought about by the National Socialists.

In accordance with the Hitler-Stalin Pact of August 1939, a number of officially agreed resettlement programmes were carried out. These affected Baltic Germans along with Germans from the regions of Volhynia (Ukraine), Dobrudscha (Bulgaria), Bukovina (Ukraine/Rumania) and Bessarabia (Moldova/Ukraine). However, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Stalin punished various ethnic groups collectively by having them deported to Central Asia. The deportees included Germans from the Volga and Black Sea areas as well as Chechens, Ingush (from the North Caucasus) and Crimean Tatars.

- THE FLIGHT OF GERMAN CIVILIANS

The Soviet army reached the German border in summer 1944 following the collapse of the German front. A wave of panic ensued as people became aware of the atrocities committed by the Red Army. Millions of Germans abandoned their homes, many of them dying at the hands of Soviet troops, as a result of the war or because of the ordeal of fleeing in the extremely harsh winter of 1944-45. Others committed suicide for fear of capture by the Red Army. There were mass rapes of women and girls.

The actual circumstances surrounding the flight of German civilians differed from region to region. The Red Army first reached German territory in East Prussia in mid-October 1944. After reclaiming the village of Nemmersdorf (Majakovskoje), the Wehrmacht established that a massacre of civilians had taken place there. The Nazi leadership manipulated this shocking revelation in an irresponsible fashion, calling on civilians to hold out rather than making efforts to evacuate them. At the same time, the soldiers of the Red Army, who had been gradually reclaiming the villages and towns of their completely devastated country over the previous two years, were instructed by their leaders to take reprisals.

For weeks the route between the frozen Vistula Lagoon and the Vistula Spit was the only intact link to the West. Marines evacuated up to two million refugees and brought them to safety in harbours in the West as part of a sea rescue mission. However, tens of thousands of refugees on board the “Goya” or “Gustloff” died when these ships were torpedoed and sank. During the flight from Pomerania, the slow convoys of refugees from farms and rural communities were attacked by the Red Army. East Brandenburg saw the highest proportion of casualties out of all the East German regions because most people fled at a much later stage. The flight from Silesia took place under different circumstances but also saw extensive losses because the Breslau (Wrocław) fortress was not evacuated until late in the winter of 1945. The flight of the civilian population from the German settlements in south-eastern Europe varied from region to region, as was the case with the Eastern provinces of Prussia.

Themes:

- The Munich Agreement
- Danzig (Gdańsk), the “Corridor” and the German Invasion of Poland
- The Annexation and Occupation Policy of the Third Reich
- The Resettlement of the *Volksdeutsche* and Nazi Population Policy
- German Minorities and Nazi Wartime Strategy
- The General Plan East (*Generalplan Ost*)
- Deportation, Ghettos and the Holocaust
- The Liquidation of the Concentration and Extermination Camps and the Death Marches
- The Hitler-Stalin Pact and Soviet Expulsion Policy
- The Trudarmija (“Workers Army”) for Deported Ethnic Germans from Russia (*Russlanddeutsche*)
- Flight of the Germans from Eastern Reich Territory
- Flight of the Germans from the Settlements in South-Eastern Europe
- Mass Rape

Possible Case Studies:

- Bydgoszcz (Bromberg) in September 1939
- Łódź: A Centre for Resettlement and Ghetto Policy
- “Operation Zamość” and Nazi Expulsion Policy
- The Flight of Germans via the Vistula Lagoon in East Prussia

5) THE EXPULSION OF GERMANS AND THE POST-WAR CONFIGURATION OF EUROPE

With the turn in the course of the war at Stalingrad in early 1943, the Allies began to formalise plans for post-war Europe. These plans were initially discussed at the Tehran Conference at the end of 1943 and then at Allied meetings in Yalta and, after the war, in Potsdam.

Following the experience of the German occupation regime and extermination policy, the territorial reconfiguration of Central and Eastern Europe, which involved shifting Poland's borders westwards, followed a different approach to that adopted after World War One. The international community lent its support to extensive expulsions as part of this process. Poland and Czechoslovakia were particularly fearful of a threat to state sovereignty from the strong German minority in these territories. The right of self-determination and the protection of minorities were replaced by a policy aiming to separate ethnic groups and to create ethnically homogenous nation states. The Allies were fully aware that there would be expulsions as a result, particularly of millions of Germans from Central and Eastern Europe. The Potsdam Agreement describes these as "transfers" which were to be carried out in an "orderly and humane manner".

The expulsions varied widely from region to region, but most took place in traumatic and inhumane circumstances. They began with the so-called "wild expulsions", which were intended to set a precedent prior to the Potsdam Conference, and were followed by organised expulsions based on the provisions agreed at the conference. These "wild expulsions" were often accompanied by extreme violence and forced deportations, as well as the establishment of detention and labour camps in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

Stalin had a major influence over the reconfiguration of borders in post-war Europe and the Soviet sphere of hegemony now stretched as far as the River Elbe. The expulsion of Germans also facilitated the formation of communist governments. The population of Central and Eastern Europe was subject to Stalinist terror. The repression of political freedom in this area lasted right up to 1989.

Themes:

- Allied Plans for Post-War Europe
- Expulsions and Crimes
- Forced Deportations and Labour Camps
- Stalinist Rule in Central and Eastern Europe

Possible Case Studies:

- Postoloprty (Postelberg): Violent Crimes against Sudeten German Civilians
- The Łambinowice (Lamsdorf) Camp in Silesia
- Forced Deportations from Transylvania and the Banat to the USSR
- The East Prussian *Wolfskinder* (Orphans) in Lithuania
- Wrocław (Breslau) and Lviv (Lemberg) in 1945: Loss of Homeland and Population Exchange in two European Cities
- Rijeka/Fiume: The “Exodus” of Italians from Istria

6) ARRIVAL AND INTEGRATION OF THE GERMAN EXPELLEES IN EAST AND WEST GERMANY

Millions of Europeans, including Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Finns and many others, lost their homelands as a result of World War Two and the post-war configuration of Europe agreed by the Allies. Up to fourteen million German refugees and expellees had to leave their homes in the course of forced resettlements. Upon arrival in the four zones of Allied occupation, they were confronted with unfamiliar surroundings and had to live in shelters and barracks. Their everyday lives were dominated by exclusion, hunger, deprivation and the search for relatives. This was also the case for millions of “displaced persons” and prisoners of war who had been liberated from the Germans and were now waiting to be repatriated or to emigrate abroad.

The foundation of East and West Germany brought about two differing approaches to the integration of German expellees. In the West, they were integrated through the “economic miracle” and by maintaining traditions from their homelands, whilst in the East they were forced to assimilate into society and there was no public discussion of their experiences.

The process of economic, social and political integration varied widely in the two German states and by no means ran smoothly. Nonetheless, millions of expellees contributed to the “economic miracle” in the Federal Republic thanks to emergency aid from the state and compensation for losses sustained during and after World War Two (*Lastenausgleich*). Against the background of the Cold War, West German political parties initially tried to win the votes of the expellees. Ultimately, the expellee issue was to polarise the dispute over the treaties signed in the 1970s between East and West Germany and West Germany and its East European neighbours (*Ostverträge*) and it has been a thorny issue in German politics ever since. From the 1970s, the history of German flight and expulsion was increasingly marginalised in West German society. In the GDR, expellees were often subject to reprisals from the state, especially if they met up with their compatriots.

During this period, the Churches instigated the first symbolic gestures of reconciliation between Poles and Germans. Many initiatives ensued, largely facilitated by the new *Ostpolitik* of West Germany [the policy of rapprochement with East Germany and Eastern Europe]. The expellees and their families were particularly committed to fostering good relations with their eastern neighbours. They took advantage of improved opportunities to travel to their former homelands and often established contacts and friendships with the people now resident there. Following the declaration of martial law in Poland in December 1981, many German expellees took part in relief campaigns for those repressed by the communist regime.

Themes:

- The Experiences of German Refugees and Expellees on Arrival in East and West Germany
- Economic and Social Integration
- The Stuttgart “Charter of German Expellees” (1950)
- The Experience of the “Displaced Persons”
- Finnish Integration Policy
- Political, Cultural and Religious Organisations Established by the Expellees and the History of the Federation of Expellees
- Tracing and Preserving German Cultures and Dialects from Eastern Europe
- The Impact of the Expellees on the Culture and Society of Post-War Germany
- The Expellees as a Political Issue
- Reconciliation Initiatives since 1965

Possible Case Studies:

- Waldkraiburg: An Expellee Town on the Site of a Former Explosives Factory
- Eisenhüttenstadt: New Hope for Expelled Workers
- Berlin: History of the Deutschlandhaus
- A Divided Village on the River Oder: Expellees on Either Side of the River

7) AFTER 1989: TOWARDS A EUROPEAN CULTURE OF REMEMBRANCE?

The fall of the Iron Curtain opened the floodgates for ethnic conflicts that had been kept repressed for a long time. With the war in the former Yugoslavia, flight and expulsion once again became a reality in Europe. In Europe, there were moves to work through the experience of expulsion that had happened many years previously and to reject the political uses of expulsion.

At the same time, the (re)establishment of sovereign national states raised awkward questions about the past. The initial focus was on addressing the experience of communist dictatorship. Longstanding taboos were lifted on issues such as the history of the former German cultural landscapes and expulsions from these areas. Biased national perspectives were challenged or dispensed with in the process. The remaining German minorities in these areas were officially recognised and able to speak publicly about their experiences.

Questioning the past also means questioning one's own identity. Current generations are increasingly adopting the rich heritage of the once multi-ethnic communities of Central and Eastern Europe that have long since disappeared. This heritage is regarded as a common legacy that needs preserving. The sentiment was echoed by the Rumanian Interior Minister Vasile Blaga at the "Homeland Days" (*Heimattagen*) of the Transylvanian Saxons and Banat Swabians in 2010: "I'd like to say that you are missed in Rumania."

Numerous regional projects such as the "Kreisau Foundation" or the Czech citizens' initiative "Antikomplex" make European memory and international confrontation with the past a European reality. Consideration of this multi-faceted and complex historical legacy opens up new opportunities for the future of Europe.

Along with German-Polish, German-Czech or German-Hungarian dialogue, there are moves towards reconciliation between other European nations such as Poland and the Ukraine or Hungary and Slovakia.

The examples of Kyrgyzstan, Darfur and the Democratic Republic of Congo confirm that whilst ethnically motivated expulsions may have reached their peak in the twentieth century, “ethnic cleansing” is still used in warfare and as a supposed method for conflict resolution. The permanent exhibition will conclude by examining current instances of expulsion in a global context and outlining the horrific consequences for the victims. It will thereby highlight the global injustice of “ethnic cleansing”.

Themes:

- German Minorities in Central and Eastern Europe Today
- Regional Initiatives
- “Ethnic Cleansing” in the Former Yugoslavia
- Political and Historical Debates and Conflicts in Germany and other Countries
- Forced Migration as a Global Phenomenon and Current Instances of “Ethnic Cleansing”

Possible Case Studies:

- Kreisau (Krzyżowa)
- Serbia (Danube Swabian Cemetery)
- Hermannstadt/Sibiu

6. Future Perspectives

By the end of World War Two, Berlin was the geographical centre of Germany. Trains to Breslau (Wrocław), Stettin (Szczecin), Gdańsk (Danzig) and Königsberg (Kaliningrad) left from Stettiner Bahnhof and Schlesischer Bahnhof, the historic names for the railway terminals in the east and north of the city. It used to be said in the German capital that true Berliners all originated from Silesia. The former German homelands in Eastern Europe – Silesia, Pomerania, East and West Prussia and Neumark (Brandenburg) – used to make up more than a quarter of German territory. These have long since vanished, along with the German linguistic enclaves in Iglau (Jihlava) and Gottschee (Kočevsko). Greek and Armenian life in Smyrna (Izmir) has disappeared as have the diverse communities in the former Polish town of Lviv (Lemberg), in Tscherniwzi (Czernowitz) – the home of Paul Celan – and in the Yiddish city of Vilnius (Wilna). The multi-ethnicity and cultural richness of these communities have been lost forever.

The end of the Cold War and of the ideological debates that ensued has provided new opportunities for a collective European memory. Poland now remembers Erich Mendelsohn, Joseph von Eichendorff, the Nobel Prize winners from Wrocław (Breslau) or Gerhart Hauptmann as a matter of course – and not without regional pride. Hannah Arendt once said: “In the way that I think and form opinions, I am still from Königsberg.” This points to a broader perspective: memory of the German communities in Eastern Europe is regarded as a part of European intellectual history and as an impetus for reconciliation.

The *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* also seeks to work towards this goal in dialogue with partners throughout Europe. It aims to encourage different perspectives and open academic debate, to provide information and a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences, to encourage consensus on the inhumanity and injustice of expulsions and in this way to contribute to understanding between nations in an enlarged Europe. At the same time, the Foundation seeks to contribute to future efforts to reject expulsions in any part of the world. In this context, the *Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation* is committed to the guiding principle of the German Constitution as stated in Article 1: “Human dignity is inviolable.”