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## ‘Expulsion’ in German historical policy — consequences for Polish-German relations

The ‘flight and expulsion’ (*Flucht und Vertreibung*) of Germans was one of the constant sources of controversy and confrontation between Poland and Germany after WWII, as was the recognition of the western border of Poland. In Poland the term commonly in use for this phenomenon was ‘population transfer’ or, alternatively, resettlements and displacements, and in the propaganda of Polish People’s Republic a particular focus was placed on the perceived dangers coming from the unions of *Landmannschaften*, which operated in Germany, and their territorial claims based on the ‘right to homeland’ (*Recht auf Heimat*).

During the entire period of the Cold War, the history of Germans from Central-Eastern Europe was a matter of great interest in West Germany — efforts were made to gather documentation, eyewitness reports, and other types of evidence. ‘Expulsion’, a large research project carried out in 1951–1961, resulted in a multi-volume publication on the subject; around 400 local and regional museums opened in various federal *lands* up to the time of unification.<sup>1</sup>

The newly-formed Federal Republic of Germany considered the care and social integration of the so-called ‘expellees’ as one of its main goals, and a dedicated Federal Ministry for Displaced Persons, Refugees and War Victims oversaw local organisations of the expellees and the preservation of their cultural heritage.<sup>2</sup>

In the beginning of the 90s, once the Oder-Neisse line was finally accepted by unified Germany as the border with Poland, it seemed that these controversies were finally put to rest. Especially, since Polish-German cooperation grew in many areas and historians from both countries worked together on academic publications

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<sup>1</sup> E. Fendl, “Zur Ästhetik des Verlusts. Bilder von Heimat, Flucht und Vertreibung”, *Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Volkskunde der Deutschen des östlichen Europa*, vol. 12, Münster 2010, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> See E. Hahn, H.H. Hahn, *Die Vertreibung im deutschen Erinnern Legenden, Mythos, Geschichte*, Paderborn 2010, p. 436. The Ministry was created in 1949 and closed in 1969, its remit transferred to the Ministry of the Interior.

on the displaced Germans (e.g. Włodzimierz Borodziej and Hans Lemberg); the numerous Polish studies published adopted a perspective that differed significantly from previous approaches.<sup>3</sup>

However, the issue of ‘expulsions’ returned in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as a result of Germany’s new historical policy and the institutionalisation of memory. Instead of, as previously, focusing on the Nazi past primarily through the lens of direct blame apportioned to Germany, the new approach emphasised the remembrance of German casualties of war. The project Centre Against Expulsions Foundation initiated in 2000 by the Federation of Expellees and its president at the time, Erika Steinbach, played a particularly prominent role and led to a transnational memory conflict. The controversies surrounding these ideas influenced not only German-Polish relations, but German-Czech relations as well.<sup>4</sup>

The aim of this paper is to show the importance of the memory of expulsion in German historical policy, the main reasons for the controversy between Poland and Germany, and to offer predictions as to the future directions of this debate.

## The problem of ‘expellees’ in Germany

In contrast to ‘refugee’ — a term that is clearly defined in conventions and international law — the term ‘expellee’ is subject to a number of interpretations. There is no consensus either in scholarly debate, or in political practice, as to its remit. The definition currently adopted by the UN encompasses victims of civil wars, domestic military conflicts, infringements of human rights or natural disasters, who have been forced to leave their place of abode, but who are not moved beyond national borders.<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that before the inception of the Federal Ministry for Displaced Persons, Refugees and War Victims, the term most commonly in use was ‘resettlers’ (*Umsiedler*), and the official language favoured ‘deportations’ (*Ausweisung*).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Bernadetta Nitschke, Edmund Nowak, Stanisław Jankowiak, Piotr Madajczyk, Danuta Berlińska, Jerzy Kochanowski, Leszek Olejnik, Witold Stankowski, Zenon Romanow, Beata Ociepka and others. See *Niemcy w Polsce 1945–1950. Wybór dokumentów*, eds. W. Borodziej, H. Lemberg, Warsaw 2000–2001; B. Nitschke, *Wysiedlenie ludności niemieckiej z Polski w latach 1945–1949*, Zielona Góra 1999; E. Nowak, *Cień Łambinowic*, Opole 1999; W. Stankowski, *Obozy i inne miejsca odosobnienia dla niemieckiej ludności cywilnej w Polsce w latach 1945–1950*, Bydgoszcz 2002; B. Ociepka, *Deportacja, wysiedlenie, przesiedlenia. Powojenne migracje z Polski i do Polski*, Poznań 2001; and many others.

<sup>4</sup> See M. Mazurkiewicz, *Spór o pamięć. Polityczne następstwa powojennych wysiedleń Niemców w pozimnowojennych relacjach polsko-niemieckich i czesko-niemieckich*, Opole 2015.

<sup>5</sup> See S. Angenendt, “Flucht und Vertreibung”, p. 2, [http://www.berlin-institut.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/handbuch\\_texte/Angenendt\\_Flucht\\_Vertreibung.pdf](http://www.berlin-institut.org/fileadmin/user_upload/handbuch_texte/Angenendt_Flucht_Vertreibung.pdf) (access: 10.05.2017).

<sup>6</sup> E. Hahn, H.H. Hahn, op. cit., p. 436.

The term 'expulsion' was officially introduced into German law by the Act on the Matter of Refugees and Expellees (*Gesetz über die Angelegenheiten der Vertriebenen und Flüchtlinge* — Bundesvertriebenengesetz; BVFG) of 19.05.1953, which is still in force today. However, after 1990, the act was amended to include the word 'formerly' (*ehemals*) in relation to the territories of former German Reich. According to Article 1, 'expellees' are:

persons of German citizenship or ethnicity who resided in the eastern territories of the German Reich located formerly under foreign administration or in areas that were outside the German Reich as of 31.12.1937, who as a result of the events of World War II lost their place of abode due to expulsion, particularly exile or flight.<sup>7</sup>

The second paragraph of Article 1 mentions also those who had to flee because of racial or political persecution by the Third Reich, who were displaced during the war on the basis of treaties of territories that did not belong to Germany or relocated from occupied territories. This included refugees from the Soviet occupation zone and former East Germany, and also homeland expellees (*Heimatvertrieben*) and ethnic German resettlers (*Spätaussiedler*).<sup>8</sup> The wording and contents of this legal document alone suggest just how varied and complex this part of German society used to be and still is.

As E. and H.H. Hahn emphasise, the crucial thing is that the above-cited Act was supposed to, in the first instance, aid the integration of expellees and their inclusion in the economic and social life of their new homeland. At the same time, however, the Ministry, aided by a number of specialised research institutes, used this Act as part of a larger propaganda to 'illustrate and emphasise both at home and abroad the weight of the problem of refugees'.<sup>9</sup>

Because the term 'expulsion' has negative connotations in Germany's historical policy, Polish researchers and politicians currently use such terms as 'deportation', 'displacement' or 'resettlement'. This choice emphasises that the actions were not retaliatory in nature, though of course the suffering of individuals and the injustice of collective punishment are not negated, but rather were a direct result of the war begun by the Third Reich and of the decisions made in Potsdam.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Gesetz über die Angelegenheiten der Vertriebenen und Flüchtlinge (Bundesvertriebenengesetz — BVFG) vom 19.05.1953; Zuletzt geändert durch Art. 10 G v. 20.11.2015, <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bvfg/BJNR002010953.html> (access: 14.05.2017).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Spätaussiedler are persons of German descent and their own descendants from the territories that used to belong to the Third Reich within its borders as of 30.12.1937. Up until the 90s they were predominantly from Central-Eastern Europe, later from the former USSR.

<sup>9</sup> E. Hahn, H.H. Hahn, op. cit., p. 437.

<sup>10</sup> E. Bojenko-Izdebska, "Polityki historyczne w Polsce i Niemczech i ich wpływ na aktualne problemy w stosunkach między oboma krajami", [in:] *Nowa rola międzynarodowa Niemiec*, ed. E. Cziomer, *Krakowskie Studia Międzynarodowe*, nr 4, Kraków 2006, pp. 362–363. In this article

Due to space constraints, it is impossible to show all the forms and functions of how the memory of displacement has been cultivated in the 40 years of the Federal Republic of Germany, but it is important to stress that in the German Democratic Republic the issue was considered closed at the very beginning of the state's existence. Despite the fact that East Germany had considerably larger numbers of refugees and resettlers in proportion to its population (officially called 'new citizens' (*Neubürger*) or 'resettlers'), they were not given any opportunities to organise themselves and did not enjoy any privileges, in contrast to their counterparts in West Germany. But the memory of the past was present in the literature produced in East Germany, particularly in the works of such authors as Christa Wolf, Franz Fühmann, Harald Gerlach, Ursula Höntsch-Harend and others.<sup>11</sup>

After unification, this group of East Germans was also given the status of 'expellees', and the federal government paid out a one-off compensation for lost property. Already in 1990 local organisations of expellees started forming spontaneously and were later incorporated into old West German organisations.<sup>12</sup>

In the 90s and at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a debate took place on the necessity to commemorate the displaced in the recent history of post-war Germany. The most common arguments were those which appeared in the book *Vertreibung der Vertriebenen?* ('The Expulsion of Expellees?') authored by the historian Manfred Kittel.<sup>13</sup> He analysed the presence of displaced and expelled in the public memory of the German nation in the Federal Republic of Germany from 60s to the 80s. He concluded that their experiences were noticed, documented and commemorated only in the 50s, and in the 60s more attention was paid to the previously neglected crimes of national socialism. The problem was even more marginalised in the decade of détente (or relaxation) and the social-liberal coalition in the beginning of the 70s, and according to Kittel this marginalisation lasted until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup>

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the term 'expulsion' is given in quotation marks, unless it is used in proper names of institutions, in legal acts or in translations of documents.

<sup>11</sup> E. Hahn, H.H. Hahn, op. cit., p. 576.

<sup>12</sup> E. Bojenko-Izdebska, "Kontrowersje wokół utworzenia Centrum przeciwko Wypędzeniom — zmiany świadomości i tożsamości narodowej w Niemczech i Polsce", [in:] *Międzynarodowe implikacje procesu integracji europejskiej dla Polski i Niemiec*, eds. E. Cziomer, M. Czajkowski, Kraków 2004, p. 275; M. Stickler, "Vertriebenenintegration in Deutschland nach 1945 — Überlegungen aus Anlass von 60 Jahren Bundesvertriebenengesetz", Leipzig 2013, pp. 9–10, [http://www.vertriebene-in-sachsen.de/dateien/Rede\\_Stickler\\_Leipzig\\_2013-05-05.pdf](http://www.vertriebene-in-sachsen.de/dateien/Rede_Stickler_Leipzig_2013-05-05.pdf) (access: 1.07.2017).

<sup>13</sup> M. Kittel, *Vertreibung der Vertriebenen? Der historische deutsche Osten in der Erinnerungskultur der Bundesrepublik (1961–1982)*, München 2007. He was the director of the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation in the years 2009–2014.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 184–185.

## From the Centre Against Expulsions to the Berlin Documentation Centre of the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation (*Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung*)

The Centre Against Expulsions Foundation, which was set up by the Federation of Expellees in 2000 (though the concept first emerged in 1999), initiated a project to commemorate the refugees and displaced across Germany. Erika Steinbach, the president of the Federation and a former member of Bundestag from the CDU party strongly supported this project. Other main German political parties — CDU/CSU, SPD and FDP also supported the project, and Polish-German relations were once again dominated by the issue of expellees as a result of this discussion.

The debate on the Centre Against Expulsions was at the centre of the Polish-German controversy in both political and media discourse. The origins of the controversy lay in the very idea of creating the centre, which, according to the Polish side of the conflict, would represent history in a subjective and decontextualised way from an exclusively German point of view. There was also a considerable resistance to situating the centre in Berlin, where a monument to honour the memory of Jews murdered in WWII was concurrently being built. In Poland, these actions were seen as an attempt to portray the victims of the Holocaust and of the expulsions as somehow equal, whilst at the same time neglecting to mention Polish victims and maybe even placing the blame on their shoulders. It was clearly emphasised, however, that Germans were not being denied the right to remembrance, but that this right could not mean changing history.<sup>15</sup> The controversy was at its most intense during the years 2002–2004.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, alternative propositions were being presented. The most prominent was the initiative put forward by Christine Weiss, the State Minister for Culture and the Media in the coalition government of SPD and Alliance 90/The Greens, in collaboration with Polish historians. As a result of this initiative, in 2005, the ministers of culture from Germany, Poland, Slovakia, and Hungary created the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS), with headquarters in Warsaw (Romania joined in 2014). The purpose of this network is to ‘research, document and promote the study of modern history, particularly in the areas of dictatorial regimes of the 20th century and their consequences, the fate of the victims of wars, invasions and forced migrations, nationalist, racist and ideological repressions, and the ways in which European societies opposed and fought

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<sup>15</sup> E. Bojenko-Izdebska, “Polityki historyczne...”, p. 362 ff.

<sup>16</sup> On the general of the controversy surrounding the Centre and the evolution of the project see, among others, Z. Mazur, *Centrum przeciwko Wypędzeniom (1999–2005)*, Poznań 2006; M. Mazurkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 185–228.

totalitarian regimes'.<sup>17</sup> However, the network did not replace the Centre Against Expulsions, but though it has had some ups and downs, the most crucial thing is that it still functions today.<sup>18</sup>

The Federation of Expellees eventually departed from its initial idea of a purely German narration and attempted to make the project more 'European' by showing the fates of German people in the context of forced deportation of the entire 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as inviting both German and foreign experts to sit on the council for the Centre.<sup>19</sup> A travelling exhibition of the Foundation in August 2006 called *Forced Migration. Flight and Expulsion in Twentieth-Century Europe* aimed to bring this pan-European character into focus. It showcased the history of forced migrations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century showing the history of Armenians, Jews, Poles, Germans, and post-war displacement in former Yugoslavia. However, the exhibition caused a number of protests and was met with criticism, especially from the Polish and Czech governments. Juxtaposing together tragedies which happened on such incomparably different scales and for such different reasons (e.g. ethnical cleansing or after-effects of war) was particularly controversial.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, as a result of a political compromise, according to the coalition agreement of 2005, in March 2008 the great coalition government of CDU/CSU-SPD authorised the project 'Visible Sign Against Flight and Expulsion' (*Sichtbares Zeichen gegen Flucht und Vertreibung*).<sup>21</sup> Though the description of the project contained promises of cooperation with the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, current experience shows that it is the German historical vision which plays a pivotal role in how the project is carried out.

The Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation is responsible for implementing the project and it will comprise a permanent exhibition and a documentation and information centre, whilst also organising temporary exhibitions. It will be housed in the Berlin Deutschlandhaus, and its legal supervision will be carried out by the German Historical Museum (*Deutsches Historisches Museum* — DHM). The main mission of the institution is to 'to keep alive the memory of flight and expulsion in the twentieth century in the spirit of reconciliation and in the historical

<sup>17</sup> The statute can be found at: [http://enrs.nowybip.pl/statut#\\_ftn2](http://enrs.nowybip.pl/statut#_ftn2) (access: 6.06.2017) and more information on the Network itself are available at: <http://www.enrs.eu/pl/47-articles/62-europejska-siec-pamiec-i-solidarnosc> (access: 6.06.2017).

<sup>18</sup> S. Troebst, "Das Europäische Netzwerk Erinnerung und Solidarität", *Zeitgeschichte* 34. Jg., January/February 2007, pp. 43–57.

<sup>19</sup> E.g. the late Hungarian Nobel prize winner Imre Kertész, the Hungarian writer György Konrád, the Czech political scientist Rudolf Kučera. In: *Menschen auf unserer Seite*, <http://www.zg-v.de/zgv/menschen-an-unserer-seite/> (access: 6.06.2017).

<sup>20</sup> E. Bojenko-Izdebska, "Polityki historyczne...", p. 356; M. Mazurkiewicz, op. cit., pp. 204–205.

<sup>21</sup> Konzeption "Sichtbares Zeichen gegen Flucht und Vertreibung" Ausstellungs-, Dokumentations- und Informationszentrum in Berlin, [http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/\\_\\_\\_Anlagen/BKM/2008-04-09-sichtbares-zeichen-konzeption-barrierefrei.property=publicationFile.pdf](http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/___Anlagen/BKM/2008-04-09-sichtbares-zeichen-konzeption-barrierefrei.property=publicationFile.pdf) (access: 8.06.2017).



context of the Second World War, National Socialist expansion and extermination policy, and their consequences'.<sup>22</sup>

Initially, there was considerable disagreement regarding the election of members for the Board of Trustees, particularly the controversial appointment of Erika Steinbach. In the end, after both internal pressures and voices from abroad, Steinbach decided to resign in return for allowing a higher number of members from the Federation of Expellees to sit on the council. After the Bundestag ratified the appropriate bill, the Foundation finally began its activities in 2009 and the works on adapting Deutschlandhaus as the headquarters began in 2013.<sup>23</sup>

The Board of Trustees consists of three members nominated by the federal government, four who are nominated by the Bundestag, six representatives of the Federation of Expellees and two representatives each from the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church. The new board was elected on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015 and the institution is managed by a director.<sup>24</sup>

The Advisory Council (*wissenschaftlicher Beraterkreis*) comprises fifteen renowned scholars from Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Czech Republic, USA, and Poland. In the past, Krzysztof Ruchniewicz and Piotr Madajczyk were members of the council, but they resigned in 2015 as a sign of protest against the nomination of a director whom they considered to be unqualified, and several other members followed suit. However, the true reason for their resignation, according to Ruchniewicz, was that 'The Council is really just a discussion board with no influence on the future direction, academic content and actions of the Foundation, in particular the shape of the future exhibition'.<sup>25</sup>

Due to complexity and high cost of the construction works the opening of the museum was delayed and Gundula Bavendamm, the current director, announced that it will now be opened towards the end of 2019.<sup>26</sup>

## Final concept of The Documentation Centre 'Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation'

On 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012, the Board of Trustees signed off on the final programme of the work of the Foundation and the guidelines for its permanent exhibition.

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<sup>22</sup> The original German can be found at: Bundesstiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung, <http://www.sfvv.de/de> (access: 8.06.2017) and the English language version can be found at: <http://www.sfvv.de/en/foundation> (access: 30.07.2017).

<sup>23</sup> More on this matter, see M. Mazurkiewicz, *op. cit.*, pp. 213–219.

<sup>24</sup> Bundesstiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung, <http://www.sfvv.de/de> (access: 8.06.2017).

<sup>25</sup> B. Schulz, "Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung. In die Mitte der Gesellschaft", *Der Tagesspiegel* 17.10.2016, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/stiftung-flucht-vertreibung-versoehnung-in-die-mitte-der-gesellschaft/14700678.html> (access: 20.06.2017).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

Subsequently, on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017, it presented an integrated concept which follows a thematic-chronological structure.<sup>27</sup>

According to this structure, the exhibition will comprise the following parts: 'The Age of Refugees — Forced Migrations in Europe,' 'Flight and Expulsion of Germans in the European Context' (1938–1948) and 'Expellees and Refugees in Germany after 1945'. The remaining parts of the exhibition will focus on the forced emigration of Jews after the National Socialists rose to power in 1938.<sup>28</sup>

The authors stress that the first part of the exhibition will aim to explain the causes, processes, extent, and consequences of forced migration in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main focus will be on ethnic cleansing, expulsion and flight in the context of wars and military conflicts in Europe from First World War, through Second World War, and up to the war in former Yugoslavia, that is from the beginnings of the twentieth century until modern times. This part of the exhibition will also cover the fates and experiences of refugees from Syria and Iraq, and it will be updated on a regular basis.<sup>29</sup>

The 'Flight and Expulsion of Germans in the European Context' will present the evacuations (managed by Wehrmacht), flights and 'expulsions', taking into account various war-related events and the moving war fronts. The introduction will consist of the plans of the Third Reich to colonise and germanise the occupied territories, the 'Generalplan Ost', the deportation of Polish Jews from Germany, the forced migrations of Poles from the territories absorbed by the Reich and settling therein of the Volksdeutsch from Southern Europe and the Baltic States, displacement and pacifying actions of Zamojszczyzna, and the activities of the SS in Yugoslavia, Hungary, and USSR. The second part will move on to Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam conferences, the flights and deportations of Germany from 1944 onward and the displacement of Germans from Central-Eastern Europe under the Potsdam agreements, including the policies of Polish and Czech governments at the time.<sup>30</sup>

The third part 'Expellees and Refugees in Germany after 1945' will illustrate the 'story of 12.5 million refugees, displaced and deported from homeland' who arrived in occupied Germany.<sup>31</sup> It will showcase the realities of post-war Germany and how the German civil administration, the Allies and the churches attempted to integrate the newcomers; it will also portray the initially negative attitude of local population towards the displaced due to war damages and shortages of resources. Further sections will be devoted to the actions of the German government and the

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<sup>27</sup> Bundesstiftung...

<sup>28</sup> Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung, *Konzept für die Dauerausstellung*, Berlin, Juni 2017, p. 6, [http://www.sfvv.de/sites/default/files/downloads/2017\\_Konzept\\_Dauerausstellung\\_sfvv.pdf](http://www.sfvv.de/sites/default/files/downloads/2017_Konzept_Dauerausstellung_sfvv.pdf) (access: 7.07.2017).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 15–16.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 24–28.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 40.



most important bills, the history of the 'expellee' organisations, their individual experiences and fates, as well as the attitudes towards this social group in the history of Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic.<sup>32</sup>

The document discussed above does not discuss in more depth the remaining planned parts of the exhibition, such as the fate of Jews, and it is less comprehensive than the previous draft from 2012. In its conclusion, the authors emphasise the importance of war in former Yugoslavia as a catalyst in reviving the memory about the displacement of Germans. It also makes connections with the current refugee crisis from 2015 and the resulting, widely different reactions — fears, prejudice, but also empathy and the willingness to help. The document stresses that flight and expulsions create global challenges for German society even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>33</sup>

## Conclusions

There are some visible differences between the most recent plans for the project as compared to earlier drafts, particularly in specific conceptual parts of the exhibition. For instance, the 20<sup>th</sup> century is no longer referred to as the 'century of expulsions', a moniker that was heavily promoted by the Federation of Expellees. Instead, the phrase 'century of refugees and forced migrations' is used. However, the term 'expulsions' still forms an integral part of the exhibition. The historical facts contained in the most recent draft suggest that a much wider historical context has been adopted. However, it is hard to evaluate the project itself just on the basis of the proposed draft, as it is difficult to establish just what role each part of the exhibition will play and in what proportions, and it is still possible that the concept will be altered. Controversies amongst the members of the Board of Trustees and the Academic Council may suggest that even amongst German historians there are considerable differences of opinion. The voices of former Polish members of the board and the reasons for their resignation also give ground to withholding any final assessment.

The document itself is only around fifty pages long, so it is difficult to say how and in what way the exhibition will present the German totalitarian regime of the Third Reich. The approach taken will be crucial for a final assessment, as the main point of dispute in the drawn-out memory conflict was whether to present the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as an era of forced migrations or an era of totalitarian regimes.

It also remains to be seen whether the historical policies of Poland and Germany will come closer together as a result of this initiative. That is of course disregarding for the moment the current state of mutual relations in which several

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 40–46.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

new contentious issues have arisen, both historical (such as the question of war reparations) and current (relocation of refugees, services in the common market, energy policy, etc.). The differing points of view and visions for the future of the crises-ridden European Union also have a considerable influence on the current relations between the two countries. These considerations have pushed to the side the activities of the Centre Against Expulsions (even though the Federation of the Expulsed is still interceding), as well as the Berlin Centre, which aims to bring the issue of the ‘expellees’ back to its rightful place in public memory.

At present, the Polish media do not devote a lot of time to the subject, though the press did cover the official ceremony of topping out the Berlin Documentation Centre in October 2016. The story stressed the absence of Poles in the initiative already in the headline and later focused on the controversies amongst the foreign academics who make up the Advisory Council.<sup>34</sup>

Undoubtedly once the Centre finally opens, the controversies and debates may well return. For now, however, it is still in the future.

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<sup>34</sup> P. Jendroszczyk, “Berlińskie muzeum wypędzeń bez udziału Polaków”, *Rzeczpospolita* 20.10.2016, <https://www.rp.pl/Swiat/310199862-Berlinskie-muzeum-wypedzen-bez-udzialu-Polakow.html> (access: 7.07.2017).

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## ‘EXPULSION’ IN GERMAN HISTORICAL POLICY — CONSEQUENCES FOR POLISH-GERMAN RELATIONS

### Summary

After the Second World War constant controversies and confrontations between Poland and Germany were provoked, in addition to question of the recognition of Poland’s western border, by the “flight and expulsion” (*Flucht und Vertreibung*) of Germans — described as “population transfer” by the Polish side — and the activity of homeland associations.

In the early 1990s, after the final recognition of the border and in view of the growing collaboration in many fields, it could seem that the controversies were resolved. However, the problem of “expulsions” returned in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a new German historical policy and institutionalisa-

tion of remembrance. The change was symbolised by the Centre Against Expulsions project of 2002. In the end the German Bundestag adopted a resolution establishing a documentation centre of the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation in Berlin. In 2017 the centre presented a concept for a permanent exhibition. Its opening is planned for 2019.

The controversies surrounding both projects have had an impact on the Polish-German relations and have revealed the differences in historical policies of the two countries.

**Keywords:** expulsions, refugees, forced migrations, displacement, Centre Against Expulsions, Documentation Centre Flight, Expulsion Reconciliation, German historical policy, national memory, Polish-German relations.