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The Discourse on Forced Migration and European Culture of Remembrance*

The project of a ‘Centre against Expulsions’ proposed in 2000 by the German Union of Expellees in order to commemorate the fate of some 12 million Germans who fled or were forced to leave Central and Eastern Europe in and after 1945 caused a fierce Polish-German media controversy. This had a fourfold result: (1) The governments in Warsaw and Berlin together with those in Bratislava and Budapest agreed in 2004 to found a ‘European Network Remembrance and Solidarity’ in order to deal with the tragic history of Europe in the twentieth century in a manner that fostered some consensus; (2) the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe proposed to set up a ‘European Remembrance Centre of Victims of Forced Population Movements and Ethnic Cleansing’ in 2005; (3) in 2007, the Polish government decided to found a ‘Museum of the Second World War’ in Gdansk with the aim of putting the Polish view of recent history into a European context; and in 2008 the German government erected a federal Foundation ‘Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation’ in Berlin which was given the task of designing a permanent exhibition on the fate of the expelled Germans, again in the context of the history of twentieth-century Europe. Whereas more often than not the national memories of Germans, Poles and other Europeans clash over the Second World War and its consequences, the very fact that in Central Europe a bilateral or multilateral discourse on these sensitive topics is feasible is a remarkable post-1989 improvement.

keywords: forced migration, culture of remembrance, expulsion, ethnic cleansing, Europeanizing

(1) A Change of Paradigm: Outlawing Ethnic Cleansing

In their recent book *No Return, No Refuge. Rites and Rights in Minority Repatriation*, Howard Adelman and Elazar Barkan propose a new periodization of the twentieth century based on legal and public definitions and perceptions of forced migration: 1900–1945 when “the right to expel” was considered an international norm; 1945–1992 when under Cold War conditions ethnic cleansing was outlawed; and 1992 to the present, when reversing ethnic cleansing

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was declared a duty of the international community.¹ In doing so, Adelman and Barkan underline a striking shift of paradigm in the moral evaluation of ethnopolitically motivated and state-induced forced migration. What up to 1945 was euphemistically labeled ‘population transfer’ and was perceived as a legal means with which to homogenize a nation-state ethnically now was condemned as a crime against humanity, even as genocide.² “The strange triumph of human rights” identified by Mark Mazower³ had, however, no immediate impact on the new political realities in postwar Europe. In 1945 and the years to follow Germans were expelled from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, Poles from the Soviet Union, and Macedonians from Greece. Ukrainians were resettled by force within Poland, Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians were deported to Siberia, and so on. The foundation of India, Pakistan and Israel as independent states in 1948 had similar and numerically even larger consequences. In 1974, Cyprus was divided along ethnic lines under the eyes of the United Nations. In the following year, the postwar ethnic separation of the inhabitants of Trieste and its hinterland was legalized by the Italian-Yugoslav Treaty of Osimo. And as late as 1989, the communist regime of Bulgaria succeeded in driving more than 300,000 Turkish-speaking citizens out of the country without facing major international protest.⁴

According to Adelman and Barkan, however, the wars in ex-Yugoslavia in the 1990s, represented a turning point. Not only was ethnic cleansing condemned, but it was declared a duty of the international community to reverse it (see Dayton 1995 and Rambouillet 1999).⁵ The paradigm shift was complete.

1 Howard Adelman and Elazar Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge. Rites and Rights in Minority Repatriation* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2011), vii.

2 Stefan Troebst, “Vom Bevölkerungstransfer zum Vertreibungsverbot – eine europäische Erfolgsgeschichte?” *Transit. Europäische Revue* 36 (winter 2008/09): 158–82.

3 Mark Mazower, “The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933–1950,” *The Historical Journal* 47 (2004): 379–98. Cf. also Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed., *Moralpolitik. Geschichte der Menschenrechte im 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010).

4 For two balanced overviews cf. Philipp Ther, *Die dunkle Seite der Nationalstaaten. “Ethnische Säuberungen” im modernen Europa* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011) and Piotr Madajczyk, *Czystki etniczne i klasowe w Europie XX wieku. Szkice do problemu* [Ethnic and Class-based Cleansings in Twentieth Century Europe. Problem Outlines] (Warsaw: Instytut studiów politycznych PAN, 2010). See also Detlef Brandes, Holm Sundhaussen and Stefan Troebst, in cooperation with Kristina Kaiserová and Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, eds., *Lexikon der Vertreibungen. Deportation, Zwangsaussiedlung und ethnische Säuberung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne–Vienna–Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2010).

5 Adelman and Barkan, *No Return, No Refuge*, 74–96. Cf. also Troebst, “Vom Bevölkerungstransfer zum Vertreibungsverbot”; Holm Sundhaussen, “Von ‘Lausanne’ nach ‘Dayton’. Ein Paradigmenwechsel bei der Lösung ethnonationaler Konflikte,” in *Europa und die Europäer. Quellen und Essays zur modernen europäischen*

Its most visible result was the concept of a Responsibility to Protect, which legalizes under strict conditions humanitarian intervention, even in its military form,⁶ a new doctrine in international public law that experienced a breathtaking ascent within the span of a mere decade, as marked, for instance, by UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (2011) on a no-fly zone over Libya, which was based on this principle.

(2) *A German "Centre against Expulsions"*

The international prohibition of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo in 1999 had a profound impact on reunited Germany. In party politics, the new red-green government of Gerhard Schröder and Joschka Fischer now faced at least two dilemmas. They had to explain to their own supporters Germany's active participation in NATO's air raid campaign against Slobodan Milošević's rump-Yugoslavia and they had to come up with an explanation as to why in their view the expulsion of more than 900,000 Kosovar Albanians in 1999 was not comparable to the expulsion of some 12 million Germans from the communities of their birth in the second half of the 1940s. This was the hour of the Christian-democratic backbencher and newly elected president of the Federation of Expellees (*Bund der Vertriebenen, BdV*), Erika Steinbach. Together with her social-democratic ally Peter Glotz she set up a foundation called "Centre against Expulsions" (*Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen*) and demanded the support – including the financial support – of the federal government and parliament. Steinbach proposed to found the center in the form of a museum in Berlin, "in the historical and geographical vicinity" of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe then still under construction.⁷ What was intended as a provocation of the Schröder-Fischer government and as a purposeful violation of the rules of German political correctness had a two-fold effect. On the national level, it triggered a heated debate on Germans not solely as perpetrators but now also as

Geschichte. Festschrift für Hartmut Kaelble zum 65. Geburtstag, eds. Rüdiger Hohls, Iris Schröder, Hannes Siegrist (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2005), 409–14; and Rainer Münz, "Das Jahrhundert der Vertreibungen," *Transit. Europäische Revue* 23 (2002): 132–54.

6 Gareth Evans, *The Responsibility to Protect: Ending Mass Atrocity Crimes Once and For All* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2008); Christopher Verlage, *Responsibility to Protect. Ein neuer Ansatz im Völkerrecht zur Verhinderung von Völkermord, Kriegsverbrechen und Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck Verlag, 2009); James Pattison, *Humanitarian Intervention and the Responsibility to Protect: Who Should Intervene?* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

7 Philipp Ther, "Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen," in *Lexikon der Vertreibungen*, 736–39, 736.

victims. On the bilateral level it started a bitter controversy with Polish politicians and media representatives, and also was met with harsh criticism in the Czech Republic, where the new German victims' perspective was interpreted as means of relativizing German war crimes. This is not the place to discuss these national and bilateral polemics and the fears and suspicions that lay behind them, a task that has been undertaken with diligent thoroughness in recent years.⁸ Instead I will examine the institutional consequences of inner-German and Polish-German discussions and their spillover effects on actors on the European level.

(3) From the "Visible Sign" in Berlin to the Federal German Foundation *Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation*

In Germany, the institutionalization process initiated by the private foundation "Centre against Expulsions" in 2000 resulted in 2008 in the creation of a state-funded institution under the federal roof: *Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung*

8 Paweł Lutomski, "The Debate about a Centre against Expulsions: An Unexpected Crisis in German-Polish Relations?" *German Studies Review* 27 (2004): 449–68; Agnieszka Łada, *Debata publiczna na temat powstania Centrum przeciw Wypędzeniom w prasie polskiej i niemieckiej* [The public debate on the topic of the founding of a Centre against Expulsions in the Polish and German press] (Wrocław: ATUT, 2006); Philipp Ther, "Erinnern oder aufklären. Zur Konzeption eines Zentrums gegen Vertreibungen," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 51 (2003): 36–41; Claudia Kraft, "Die aktuelle Diskussion über Flucht und Vertreibung in der polnischen Historiographie und Öffentlichkeit," *Zeitgeschichte-online*, accessed December 17, 2012, http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/sites/default/files/documents/vertreibung_kraft.pdf; Jan M. Piskorski, *Polacy i Niemcy. Czy przeszłość musi być przeszkodą* [Poles and Germans. Is the Past Bound to Be an Obstacle?] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2004) (German translation: *Vertreibung und deutsch-polnische Geschichte. Eine Streitschrift*. Osnabrück: Fibre, 2005); idem, *Wygnańcy. Migracje przymusowe i uchodźcy w dwudziestowiecznej Europie* [The Ones Driven Out. Forced Migrations and Flight Movements in Twentieth Century Europe] (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 2011); K. Erik Franzen, "Diskurs als Ziel? Anmerkungen zur deutschen Erinnerungspolitik am Beispiel der Debatte um ein 'Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen' 1999–2005," in *Diskurse über Zwangsmigrationen in Zentraleuropa. Geschichtspolitik, Fachdebatten, literarisches und lokales Erinnern seit 1989*, eds. Peter Haslinger, Franzen K. Erik and Martin Schulze Wessel (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2008), 1–29; Mathias Beer, *Flucht und Vertreibung der Deutschen. Voraussetzungen, Verlauf, Folgen* (München: C. H. Beck, 2011); Maren Röger, *Flucht, Vertreibung und Umsiedlung. Mediale Erinnerung und Debatten in Deutschland und Polen seit 1989* (Marburg/L.: Herder-Institut, 2011). See also the Polish documentations by Paweł Licicki and Jerzy Haszczyński, eds., *Pamięć europejska czy narodowa. Spór o Centrum przeciwko Wypędzeniom* [A European Memory or a National One? The Controversy on the Centre against Expulsions] (Warsaw: Rzeczpospolita, 2003); Piotr Buras and Piotr M. Majewski (eds.), *Pamięć wypędzonych. Grass, Beneš i środkowoeuropejskie rozrachunki. Antologia tekstów polskich, niemieckich i czeskich* [The Memory of the Expelled. Grass, Beneš and Central European Retributions. An Anthology of Polish, German and Czech Texts] (Warsaw: Centrum stosunków międzynarodowych, 2003); and Zbigniew Mazur, *Centrum przeciwko wypędzeniom (1999–2005)* [The Centre against Expulsions (1999–2005)] (Poznań: Instytut zachodni, 2006).

[Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation]. The first step in this direction was a resolution by the federal parliament of July 2002 entitled “For a European-oriented Centre against Expulsions”.⁹ By trying to hijack the Steinbach-Glotz initiative, and at the same time by ‘Europeanizing’ it, the red-green government attempted to defuse what was perceived as a bombshell planted by the expellees’ organization beneath the foundations of reunited Germany’s relations with its Eastern neighbors. Steinbach’s and the BdV’s activities were considered particularly detrimental to Berlin’s relations with Warsaw, since again in 2000 leading expellee representatives had founded a *Preussische Treuhand* [Prussian Trust, or Prussian Claims Society, Inc.], modeled on the Jewish Claims Conference. It aimed at restitution of and compensation for property lost by expellees in what was now Poland.¹⁰

Notwithstanding German governmental and parliamentary counter-measures, the appearance of the “Centre against Expulsions” and the “Prussian Claims Society, Inc.” on the political scene and their material demands caused a massive wave of public outrage in Poland in 2003. Polish-German media polemics now reached a level which led the two presidents of state, the post-communist Aleksander Kwaśniewski in Poland and the social democrat Johannes Rau in Germany, to take common action. In October 2003 they released in Gdańsk/Danzig a joint declaration calling for “a sincere European dialogue” on “all cases of resettlement, flight and expulsion”. The declaration emphasized the importance of the “spirit of reconciliation and friendship” and enjoined participants to avoid “claims on compensation, mutual accusations and presenting the other side with balance sheets of crimes and losses”.¹¹

The result of their initiative was the German-Polish foundation of a Central European-wide cooperation network dealing with the delicate topic of expulsions and ethnic cleansing in twentieth-century Europe, as the Bundestag had demanded in 2002. This network was negotiated in 2004, and in the following year its form was fixed in a quadrilateral agreement by the ministers of culture of

9 Beschluss des Deutschen Bundestages “Für ein europäisch ausgerichtetes Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen“, Berlin, July 4, 2002. In: Stefan Troebst, ed., *Vertreibungsdiskurs und europäische Erinnerungskultur. Deutsch-polnische Initiativen zur Institutionalisierung. Eine Dokumentation* (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2006), doc. No. 10, 67.

10 Cf. the English-language website <http://www.preussische-treuhand.org/en/index.html>, accessed December 17, 2012.

11 Pressemitteilung des Bundespräsidialamts, 29 October 2003: “Bundespräsident Johannes Rau und der Präsident der Republik Polen, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, haben heute in Danzig eine gemeinsame Erklärung abgegeben“. In: Troebst, ed., *Vertreibungsdiskurs*, doc. No. 22, 99–100.

Poland, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia.¹² The rationale of Berlin and Warsaw was that this network would provide a counterweight to the negative effects of the national—and nationalist—“Centre against Expulsion”. However, federal elections in Germany in 2005 led to a replacement of the red-green coalition government by a black-red one, while in Poland already in 2004 as a result of the elections to the Sejm the government of socialists and peasants had been replaced by a conservative one. Both developments changed things considerably. The network project now was politically downgraded in both Berlin and Warsaw. In the coalition treaty of German Christian-democrats and social democrats of November 2005 the foundation of another institution, alongside the network, was mentioned: “A visible sign in Berlin in order to remember the wrongs of expulsions and to outlaw expulsion forever.”¹³

In combination with the coming to power of the government of the Kaczyński brothers’ Law and Justice party, this new German initiative led to a standstill in Polish-German relations. The result was that both projects, the European network and the cryptic “Visible Sign”, stagnated. Yet even with the new liberal Tusk government in place in Poland two years later, little progress was made. While Warsaw reluctantly agreed to a revitalization of the European network, it refused to participate in any way in the “Visible Sign”. Thus, Christian as well as social democrats in Berlin decided to pursue it as a national project of Germany, without the participation of neighboring states. In March 2008, the coalition partners agreed to turn “the visible sign against flight and expulsion” into a federal foundation attached to the German Historical Museum (*Deutsches Historisches Museum*) in the capital of united Germany.¹⁴ The new institution was tasked to set up a permanent exhibition in the Deutschlandhaus Building in downtown Berlin, as well as a documentation and information center. On December 30, 2008 by a special law the Foundation Flight, Expulsion,

12 Stefan Troebst, “Das Europäische Netzwerk Erinnerung und Solidarität. Eine zentraleuropäische Initiative zur Institutionalisierung des Vertreibungsgedenkens 2002–2006,” *Zeitgeschichte* 34 (2007/1): 43–57. Cf. also idem: *Vertreibungsdiskurs*, docs. No. 21–58, 95–242.

13 “Gemeinsam für Deutschland. Mit Mut und Menschlichkeit”. Koalitionsvertrag von CDU, CSU und SPD, Berlin, 11. November 2005. In Troebst, ed., *Vertreibungsdiskurs*, doc. No. 51, 228.

14 Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien: “Sichtbares Zeichen gegen Flucht und Vertreibung”: Ausstellungs-, Dokumentations- und Informationszentrum in Berlin, Berlin, March 19, 2008, accessed December 17, 2012, http://www.sfvv.de/sites/default/files/downloads/konzeption_bundesregierung_2008_sfvv.pdf.

Reconciliation was erected.¹⁵ In late 2009, still during the foundation's build-up phase, a fierce conflict broke out between the Federation of Expellees on one side and the new Christian-liberal Merkel-Westerwelle Government on the other. The apple of discord was the personal participation of Steinbach on the new foundation's board of trustees. This resulted in June 2010 in an amendment of the law on the foundation, and only by 2011 was the process of founding the new institution at least in legal and organizational terms completed, without Steinbach on the board of trustees.¹⁶

According to this law, the purpose of the Federal Foundation Flight, Expulsion, and Reconciliation is "to preserve the memory of flight and expulsion in the twentieth century in the spirit of reconciliation." Its focus is on "flight and expulsion in the historical context of World War II and the National Socialists' policies of expansion and extermination and their consequences." Thereby, "flight and expulsions of the Germans shall be presented within the general context of forced migration in twentieth-century Europe."¹⁷ The following modes of operation are listed: a permanent exhibition; temporary exhibitions; documentation, in particular of ego documents and oral history sources; popularization of research; and cooperation with national and international institutions.¹⁸

Up to the present day, the foundation has been riddled by political and structural problems. The decision-making body is the 21-member Board of Trustees, which draws on the expertise of a 15-member Advisory Council, while alongside these 36 mandate holders and a director, a staff consisting of only seven people is in place. Also, the reconstruction of the Deutschlandhaus Building has not yet begun, and the same goes for the systematic acquisition of objects for the exhibition. And finally, the all-German Board of Trustees with its six seats for representatives of the Federation of Expellees on the one hand and the international Advisory Council with members from Poland, the US, Hungary and Switzerland on the other hold rather divergent views on how the wording of the law on the foundation should be interpreted and turned into practice. This goes in particular for the causal link between Nazi aggression

15 Abschnitt 2, Unselbständige Stiftung "Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung", Gesetz zur Errichtung einer Stiftung "Deutsches Historisches Museum" (DHMG), Berlin, December 30, 2008, 4–7, accessed December 17, 2012, <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bundesrecht/dhmg/gesamt.pdf>.

16 See the foundation's website: <http://www.sfvv.de>, accessed December 17, 2012.

17 Flyer "Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung/ Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation," Berlin 2010, accessed December 17, 2012, http://www.dhm.de/sfvv/docs/Faltblatt_SFVV.pdf.

18 Ibid.

and the expulsion of Germans, as well as for the percentages of the German versus the European dimension in the planned permanent exhibition. On the other hand, the new foundation has a comfortable budget, and within three to five years it will possess an attractive high-tech museum building in the very center of Berlin, and it is entitled to organize international conferences, grant fellowships, build up a specialized library, publish books, and so on. Thus it has the potential one day to become a renowned center of research and scholarly exchange on forced migration processes of European-wide and perhaps even global significance.

(4) Dividing Lines in the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly on the Remembrance of Forced Migration

In September 2003, at the peak of open German-Polish polemics over the BdV's "Centre against Expulsions" and shortly before the Gdańsk Declaration by Kwaśniewski and Rau, the oppositional liberal Sejm deputy Bogdan Klich succeeded in winning over Central European and British members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe to file a motion for a recommendation on the establishment of a "Center for European Nations' Remembrance" under the council's auspices.¹⁹ This motion was explicitly directed against the Steinbach-Glotz project, with its focus on German expellees. It opted instead for "a wide-reaching, multinational character" aiming "at commemorating the tragic experience of Europeans in the twentieth century."²⁰ In November 2003, a majority of deputies of the Polish Sejm supported Klich's initiative²¹, and in July 2004 the Council of Europe's Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population began to deal with the Polish proposal. However, in December 2004, when the committee's rapporteur on the issue, the Swedish left socialist Mats Einarsson, presented his report, it came as an unpleasant surprise for the

19 Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe: Establishment of the Center for European Nations' Remembrance under the auspices of the Council of Europe. Doc. 9945, September 30, 2003, Motion for a recommendation presented by Mr. Klich and others, accessed December 17, 2012, <http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewHTML.asp?FileID=10303&Language=EN>.

20 Ibid.

21 Uchwała Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 27 listopada 2003 r. w sprawie ustanowienia Centrum Pamięci Narodów Europy pod auspicjami Rady Europy (M. P. z dnia 15 grudnia 2003 r.) Decision of the Polish Parliament of November 27, 2003 on the Establishment of a Centre for European Nations' Remembrance under the auspices of the Council of Europe accessed December 17, 2012, <http://dokumenty.rcl.gov.pl/MP/rok/2003/wydanie/56/pozycja/867>.

Polish side. Not only did Einarsson shift the focus to “deportation, expulsion, transfer and forced resettlement”, he even changed the name of the institution-to-be-founded to “European Remembrance Center of Victims of Forced Population Movements and Ethnic Cleansing”.²² However, when in January 2005 the Parliamentary Assembly debated the recommendation, supporters could not persuade the two-thirds majority necessary to task the Committee of Ministers with the founding of the proposed center. The reasons for this were not so much Polish-Swedish discrepancies concerning profile and name as they were another line dividing the parliamentarians in Strasbourg. The French and the Russian delegations in the Parliamentary Assembly teamed up against the word “deportation” in the proposal. While from the French perspective, this term should be used exclusively for victims of the Shoa, the Russian deputies were strictly against any critical reassessment of mass deportations of Soviet citizens ordered by Stalin.²³ That was the end of the Polish initiative in its modified Swedish form. Attempts to revitalize it in 2005 and 2006 failed.

(5) The Quadrilateral European Network Remembrance and Solidarity

In late 2003, parallel to the Klich foray in the Council of Europe, the red-green government in Berlin and the socialist one in Warsaw agreed in principle on a bilateral initiative to counter the negative effects of the Steinbach-Glotz project on Polish-German relations. The new German Minister of Culture Christina Weiss and her Polish counterpart Waldemar Dąbrowski took the lead and came up with a design called “Visegrád + 2”. Visegrád stood, of course, for the four states of the Visegrád Group, i.e. Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, and “+ 2” meant Germany and Austria. The six agreed on a German proposal to discuss the establishment of what according to the German side was to be called the European Network on Forced Migration and Expulsions. Yet even in the first round of negotiations in April 2004 in Warsaw two major

22 Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe: Establishment of a European remembrance center for victims of forced population movements and ethnic cleansing. Doc. 10378, Strasbourg, December 20, 2004, Report by the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Population. Rapporteur Mr. Mats Einarsson, Sweden, Group of the Unified European Left, accessed December 17, 2012, <http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/XrefViewHTML.asp?FileID=10741&Language=EN>.

23 Délégation française à l'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe: 60. Jahrestag der Befreiung des Konzentrationslagers Auschwitz-Birkenau – Zentrum des Gedenkens oder Entstellung des Gedenkens. Strassburg, 24. January 2005 (Übersetzung PB 1/0170-05). In Troebst, ed., *Vertreibungsdiskurs*, doc. No. 41, 209–11, here 211.

problems arose. First, the Czech side openly tried to sabotage the project, and Austria retreated to the position of a mere observer. And second, the Polish side refused categorically to accept any reference to forced migration, ethnic cleansing, expulsion etc. in the name of the institution about to be founded. It instead insisted that *all* tragic events of the twentieth century in Europe should be dealt with, including the Second Boer War of 1899–1902 in British South Africa, and that the two totalitarianisms of Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union should be the focus.²⁴ In February 2005, finally, the four ministers of culture still in the boat, that is the German, Polish, Slovak and Hungarian ones, signed a letter of intent to found what now was called the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity²⁵, and in the summer of the same year the legal foundations were laid. That was, however, it, since, as mentioned above, the election results and ensuing political changes in Berlin and Warsaw put the network project on ice for years. Only in 2011 did the quadrilateral project become visible, with working bodies, a head office in Warsaw, a staff, conferences, publications, and so on. Today forced migration is one among many topics with which the network is preoccupied. According to its mission statement, the network deals with the “history of the twentieth century and popularization of historical knowledge in trans-national, European context. [It] wants to contribute to [the] creation of [a] community of memory which will take into consideration [the] different experiences of nations and countries of Europe. This kind of community of memory can be established only when all its members will accept the principle of solidarity as [a] basic and common rule for thinking and acting. Application of this principle means [acquainting] oneself with experiences of the others and [respecting] those who see and feel the past differently.”²⁶

(6) Two Side-Tracks: Prague and Brussels

As mentioned, the Czech Republic stayed out of all of the projects described above, and even tried to thwart their realization. The expulsion of the Germans from the Sudeten regions, in Czech *odsun* (meaning literally, and euphemistically,

24 For the heated debates during the negotiations on the founding of the network in 2004 see my reports in Troebst, ed., *Vertreibungsdiskurs*, docs. No. 29, 122–39, 35, 147–61, and 39, 169–85.

25 Absichtserklärung der Kulturminister Deutschlands, Polens, der Slowakei und Ungarns über die Gründung des Europäischen Netzwerks Erinnerung und Solidarität, Warsaw, February 2, 2005. In Troebst, ed., *Vertreibungsdiskurs*, doc. No. 45, 216–18.

26 European Network Remembrance and Solidarity: Idea, accessed December 17, 2012, <http://enrs.eu/en/about-us/ideas.html>.

“removal”), so far has been considered by all post-’89 governments in Prague as too sensitive a subject to deal with on bilateral, sub-regional or European levels. Accordingly, the topic is only addressed in local contexts. For instance, in mid-2012, the Municipal Museum of Ústí nad Labem in Northern Bohemia will open a permanent exhibition on the history and culture of the Germans in the Czech lands that will also cover their expulsion,²⁷ including the brutal killing of several dozens, if not hundreds of Germans in Ústí and then Aussig on July 31, 1945.

The new Platform of European Memory and Conscience set up recently in Prague by the European Parliament with the support of the Commission and the Council does not mention forced migration or ethnic cleansing in its program.²⁸ It concentrates exclusively on what are called “totalitarian crimes” committed by “Nazism, Stalinism, fascist and communist regimes” and thus resembles the Klich initiative in the Council of Europe of 2003. However, the EU’s planned House of European History which is to be opened in Brussels in 2014 will address the topic. The programmatic outline for this museum, which was written in 2008 by a group of historians and museum experts from all over Europe, states: “The end [of *World War II* – *S. T.*] triggered mass migrations on the European continent. With 12 to 14 million refugees and displaced persons – primarily from areas in what had been eastern Germany – Germany provided the largest group”.²⁹ However, the revised concept of the exhibition of 2012 has not yet been made public, and the founding director, the Slovene expert on museums Taja Vovk van Gal, has made only cryptic statements, such as the following: “[The House of European History] is not about exhibiting a European mosaic of countries, but about displaying a reflexive European history, also including

27 In Ústí nad Labem entsteht das erste Museum der Geschichte und Kultur der Deutschen in den böhmischen Ländern, no date [2011], accessed December 17, 2012, <http://www.collegiumbohemicum.cz/de/clanek/238-in-usti-nad-labem-entsteht-das-erste-museum-der-geschichte-und-kultur-der-deutschen-in-den-bohmischen-landern/>.

28 See the Platform’s website <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu> as well as European Parliament resolution of April 2, 2009 on European conscience and totalitarianism. Brussels, April 2, 2009, accessed December 17, 2012, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2009-0213+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>, accessed December 17, 2012. Cf. also Stefan Troebst, “Gedächtnis und Gewissen Europas? Die Geschichtspolitik der Europäischen Union seit der Osterweiterung,” in *Strategien der Geschichtspolitik in Europa seit 1989. Deutschland, Frankreich und Polen im internationalen Vergleich*, ed. Etienne François et al. (Göttingen, forthcoming).

29 Committee of Experts. House of European History: *Conceptual Basis for a House of European History*. Brussels, October 19, 2008, accessed December 17, 2012, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/745/745721/745721_en.pdf.

dark chapters such as colonialism and armed conflicts.”³⁰ It will be interesting to see at the museum’s opening, which is scheduled for July 2014, whether the “dark chapter” of forced migration will also be included.

(7) *Three ‘Europeanizing’ Effects*

Any attempt to institutionalize the memory of forced migration in Europe is obviously a difficult and at times frustrating task. There seem to be too many divergent, even conflicting narratives and perspectives on one and the same forced migration process, not to mention the urge to forget other, similar processes. Still, three ‘Europeanizing’ phenomena in the protracted and intertwined debates and attempts at institutionalization outlined above should not be underestimated.

First, the inner-German discourse on how a national institution devoted to the memory of the victims of expulsion led within a few years to the adoption of a European perspective, even on the side of organizations representing expellees. This may initially have been a tactical move, but by now it would be impossible to retreat behind this line. An important turning point in this development was the exhibition “Erzwungene Wege. Flucht und Vertreibung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts” (Forced Paths: Flight and Expulsion in Twentieth-Century Europe) by Steinbach’s “Centre against Expulsion” in Berlin in 2006.³¹ Here the expulsion of Germans from East-Central Europe was put into the context of nation-state driven ethnic purification in Europe from World War I to NATO’s intervention in Serbia on behalf of the Albanians of Kosovo. It is

30 Bodil Axelsson: Museums between National and European Identities. In: *eunamus. European National Museums*, January 30, 2012, accessed December 17, 2012, <http://unfoldingeunamus.wordpress.com/2012/01/30/museums-between-national-and-european-identities>; Cf. also Wolfram Kaiser, Stefan Krankenhagen and Kerstin Poehls, *Europa ausstellen: Das Museum als Praxisfeld der Europäisierung* (Cologne–Vienna–Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2012), 35–38, 58–59, 80–84, 147–51; Claus Leggewie, *Der Kampf um die europäische Erinnerung. Ein Schlachtfeld wird besichtigt* (München: C. H. Beck, 2011), 46–48, 72, 182–88, 216–19; and Włodzimierz Borodziej, “Das Haus der Europäischen Geschichte – ein Erinnerungskonzept mit dem Mut zur Lücke,” in *Arbeit am europäischen Gedächtnis. Diktaturerfahrungen und Demokratieentwicklung*, eds. Volkhard Knigge et al. (Cologne–Vienna–Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2011), 139–46.

31 Cf. the catalogue *Erzwungene Wege. Flucht und Vertreibung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts. Eine Ausstellung der Stiftung Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen*. Potsdam: Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen, 2006; as well as Michael Wildt, “Erzwungene Wege. Flucht und Vertreibung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts”. Kronprinzenpalais Berlin. Bilder einer Ausstellung, *Historische Anthropologie* 15 (2007/2): 281–95; Joachim von Puttkamer, “Irrwege des Erinnerns. Die Ausstellung ‘Erzwungene Wege’ im Berliner Kronprinzenpalais,” in *Couragierte Wissenschaft. Eine Festschrift für Jürgen John zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. Monika Gibas, Rüdiger Stutz, Justus H. Ulbricht (Jena: Glaux Verlag Christine Jäger, 2007), 174–90; and Tim Völcker, *Flucht und Vertreibung im Museum. Zwei aktuelle Ausstellungen und ihre geschichtskulturellen Hintergründe im Vergleich* (Münster: LIT, 2008).

somehow disappointing (though not surprising) that the BdV representatives on the board of trustees of the new federal foundation are currently trying to ‘de-Europeanize’ and ‘re-Germanize’ this project.

Secondly, the debate on the expulsion of the Germans from Europe’s Eastern half has initiated something of a discursive chain reaction, at least in Germany and Poland. The Polish *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*-argument, according to which the expulsion was the consequence of the German attack of 1939 and five years of occupation, terror, mass killings, forced resettlement and enslavement, led in Germany to broader knowledge of German crimes in World War II and put Poland on the map of German culture of remembrance. Now next to Auschwitz, Treblinka and Majdanek (as focal points of the Holocaust) and the massacres of Lidice, Oradour, Distomo and Marzabotto, the murder of millions of Poles in annexed and occupied Poland has also become part of collective memory. Parallel, in Poland the perception that rabid and lethal anti-Semitism was not something exclusively German waned in light of publications on the pogroms led by Poles against Jews in Jedwabne in 1941 and Kielce in 1946. One example of this is the Polish historical atlas “Resettlements, Expulsions and Flight Movements 1939–1959. Poles, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians. Atlas of the Polish Lands”, published in Warsaw in 2008.³² The decision to set the fate of occupied Poles, murdered Jews, expelled Germans and forcibly resettled Ukrainians in one and the same historical context constituted a minor sensation in Poland, and accordingly the atlas sold extremely well. Yet even more surprising was the positive reaction by German readers, among them many expellees and even their functionaries, when a German translation of the Polish atlas was published by a Catholic German publishing house in 2009.³³ Obviously, Germans and Poles by now have realized that their recent histories are not only closely interconnected, but that there are, in the words of a Polish journalist, “baffling parallels, despite all differences, between both countries”.³⁴

Thirdly, despite all national emotions in Polish-German debates, and occasionally even jingoism, ethnic slander and hate-speech on either side, the mere fact that two national societies in Central Europe engaged in an intense

32 Hryciuk, Grzegorz et al., *Wysiedlenia, wypędzenia i ucieczki 1939–1959. Polacy, Żydzi, Niemcy, Ukraińcy. Atlas ziem Polski* [Resettlements, Expulsions and Flight Movements, 1939–1959. Poles, Jews, Germans, Ukrainians. Atlas of the Polish Lands]. (Warsaw: DEMART, 2008).

33 Grzegorz Hryciuk et al., *Illustrierte Geschichte der Flucht und Vertreibung. Ost- und Mitteleuropa 1939 bis 1959* (Augsburg: Weltbild, 2009).

34 Adam Krzemiński, “Deutsch-polnische Tage,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, no 54, March 3, 2012, 3.

public transnational discussion of one of the most sensitive and painful topics of their recent history is remarkable in itself. This hardly has British-Irish, Hungarian-Romanian or Russian-Latvian parallels, and probably not even a French-German one. At the same time, this exceptional Central European debate is followed with interest in a number of other European societies, which also have endured experiences of forced migration, including Finland, Italy or Bosnia and Hercegovina, for example.

The institutionalization of the memory of forced migrations is still in progress, and the German Federal Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation in Berlin, as well as the quadrilateral European Network Remembrance and Solidarity in Warsaw, no doubt have their organizational flaws and structural weaknesses. At the same time, both new institutions have a decidedly ‘European’ design, deal boldly with the historic burden of long-standing conflict, and have solid budgets. This in and of itself represents a remarkable achievement in a Europe which, in the process of Eastern enlargement, has discovered the need for a common memory as an important element of its identity policy. Also, the current focus on forced migration has the potential to stimulate productive competition with other conflictual realms of memory, such as genocide or colonialism, but also positive ones, like human rights, multiculturalism or the process of European integration.

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