



Refugee boat, approx. 2011



A very warm welcome to the Museum of Contemporary History

Germany is a country of immigration. Stop and think for a moment: Are there immigrants in your school class or among your friends? Do you yourself come from a different country or were your parents, grandparents or great grandparents born outside your home country? People from different countries and cultures have shaped our society in the Federal Republic of Germany from the very beginning. But what did they experience?

Discover for yourself!

Map on the last page

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1

**Flight and
expulsion**



The Second World War ends in 1945. Millions of people have lost their home country. Many are dead or missing, families torn apart. Refugees, expellees and those returning from the war find a largely destroyed country or cannot return home.

- a** Beside the wooden barracks you can see a handcart which a family took with them when they fled. What would you take with you if you had to leave your home forever? Draw it in to the handcart!



- b** The barracks serve as a transit camp* for refugees and expellees. What impression does it make on you? Put a circle around the words which describe your impressions and add your own.

shabby luxurious bright large
scary colourful small comfortable
dark drab cramped simple

.....
*A transit camp is where refugees live before they can be housed in flats or other accommodation.

- c** Refugees often spend years in camps. In one refugee camp a mother sews a Confirmation dress for her daughter. Find the object and tick the right answer:

what is the dress made of?

☐ curtains

☐ gauze bandages

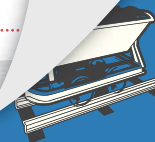


- d** What occasion is so important to you that you wear special clothes?

.....

.....

.....





2

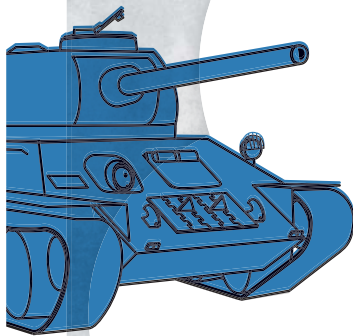
Escape from the GDR

A Communist dictatorship emerges in the eastern part of Germany when the GDR (German Democratic Republic) is founded in 1949. Oppression and violence make a lot of people dissatisfied.

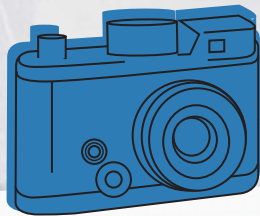


Between June 1952 and May 1953 alone, 300,000 East Germans flee to West Germany, which was founded as the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949.

- a** On 17 June 1953, hundreds of thousands of people in the GDR demonstrate against the dictatorship. Soviet tanks end the uprising. Put yourself in the shoes of the demonstrators. How do you feel when you stand facing the tank?

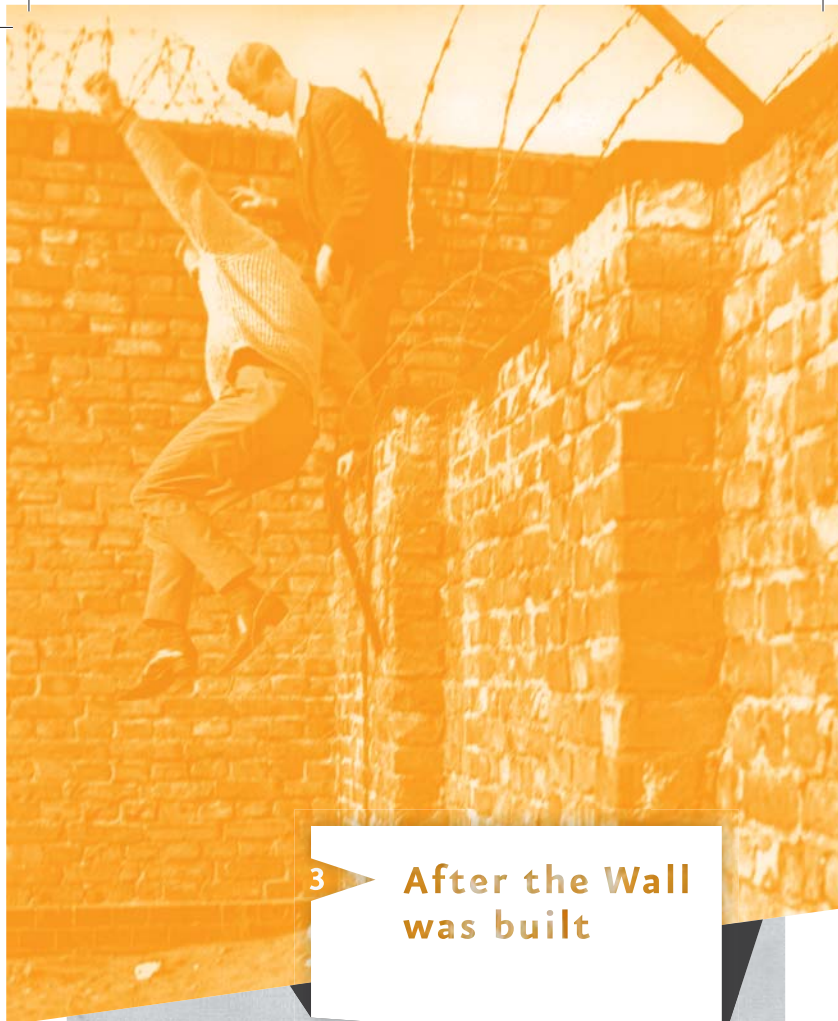


- b** Journalists are not allowed to report freely in the GDR. Find the camera with which a West German journalist secretly takes photos of the events. How does he conceal it?



- c** Oppression, violence and lack of freedom are some of the reasons for the exodus from the GDR. What other reasons do you know for people fleeing their country? Think for example of the refugees who are currently leaving their homes.





3

**After the Wall
was built**



To close off the one remaining escape route to the West, the GDR government builds a wall through the centre of Berlin in August 1961. Anyone now attempting to escape risks his or her life.

- a** The Synowzik family also fled to the West. After escaping through the sewers from East to West Berlin, they pose outside the airport before flying to the Federal Republic of Germany.



What impression do the people in the photo make on you? How much luggage are they taking with them for their new life in the West?

Give your evaluation on the scale.

a lot

little

b How do you think people now flee from their home country? How do they get to Germany?





4

„Komm ein bisschen mit nach Italien ...“

(“Come and see a bit of Italy...”,
Caterina Valente)

In 1955, the Italian family Giacomel opened this ice cream parlour in Hamburg. They have to get used to the German language and culture. Germans also have to get used to the new immigrants.



a Where do you encounter influences from other countries in your everyday life?

Three blank white rectangular boxes for writing, stacked vertically. Each box is outlined with a thick green border. The boxes are positioned on a background of horizontal wooden planks.

- b** Imagine a father and daughter entering an Italian ice cream parlour like this one for the first time in the 1950s and meeting the ice cream salesman Angelo Giacomel. What might they be thinking? Complete the thoughts in the speech bubbles.

Giacomel: I wonder whether
my guests...

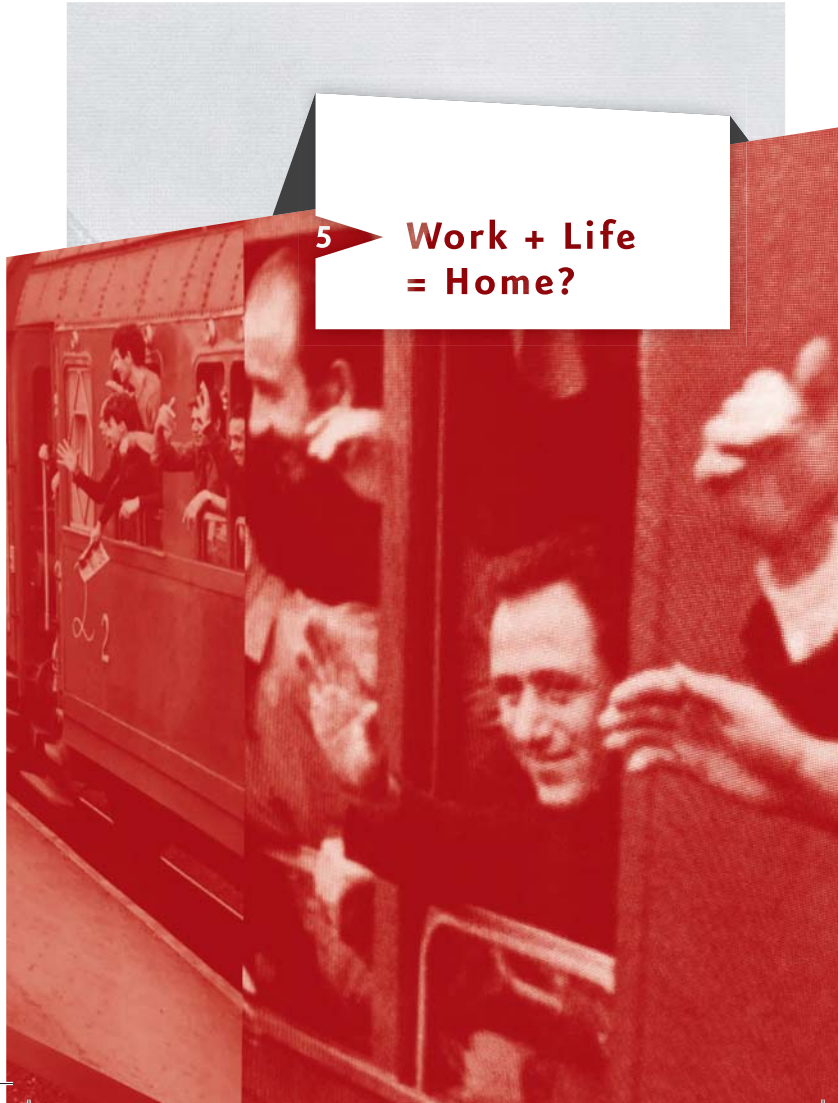
Father: I wonder whether
the ice cream salesman...

Daughter: I like
being here, because...



5

**Work + Life
= Home?**

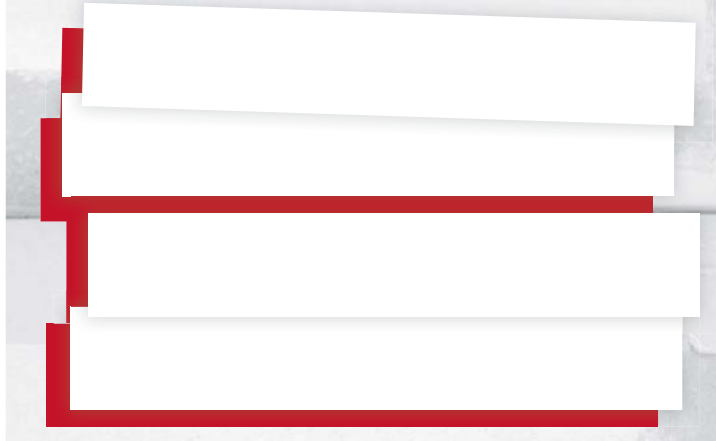




Since 1955, West Germany has been recruiting foreign labour as so-called "guest workers" for its growing industry. Both sides initially assume that the men and women will soon return to their country of origin.

a Guido Messer designs the sculpture “The Foreigner” in 1982. Describe the man’s posture and facial expression.


b The title of this station is “Work + Life = Home”. What does home mean for you? Do you have more than one home country?




The response area consists of four overlapping white rectangular boxes with red borders, arranged vertically. The top box is the smallest, and each subsequent box below it is slightly larger and shifted to the right, creating a cascading effect. These boxes are placed over a background image of a textured, light-colored surface, possibly a wall or a piece of paper.

- C** Imagine you are a “guest worker” travelling to Germany in 1964. Your family in Spain would like to know how you are. Complete the letter below. Gather some ideas by looking at the photos on the front and back of the wall panels.


Dear Family,

My journey to Germany 



My accommodation 

The work 

I have to work a lot, but when I have some spare time 

I most miss 

I hope to see you all again soon!

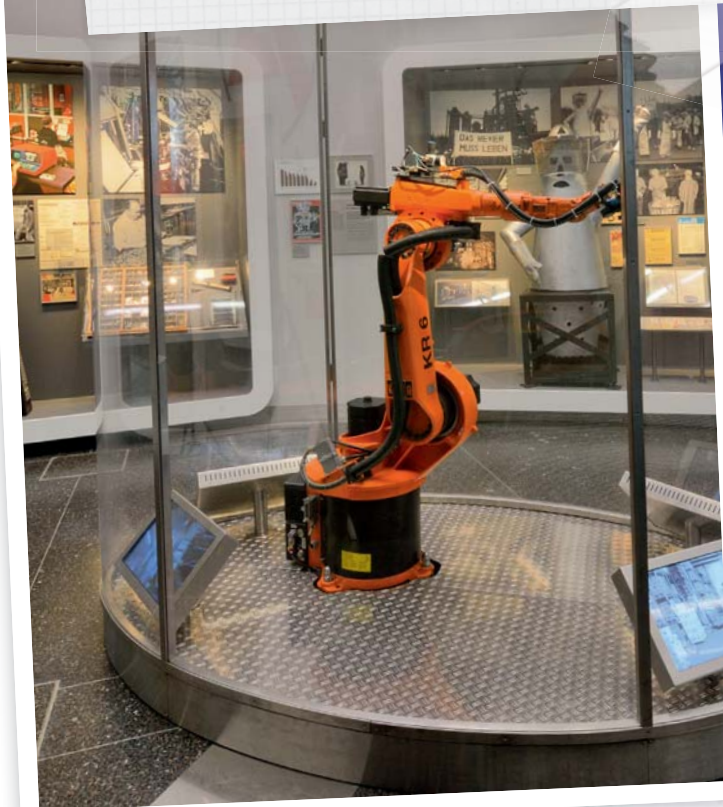
Yours 





6 No work

In the 1970s, "guest workers" are no longer recruited. Economic crises and changes to the working environment lead to high unemployment.



a On the screens you can see manufacturing in several factories before and after automation. What has changed in each case? What does “automation” mean in this context?

b Robots like this KUKA model perform repetitive mechanical activities and jobs which pose a health and safety risk. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using robots in industry for companies and their employees?

Advantages:	Disadvantages

Disadvantages

- c** Unemployment also affects a lot of people who have come to Germany as “guest workers”. What consequences do you think this has for them? Tick the boxes you think apply.



They can afford less.



They have less contact with German colleagues.



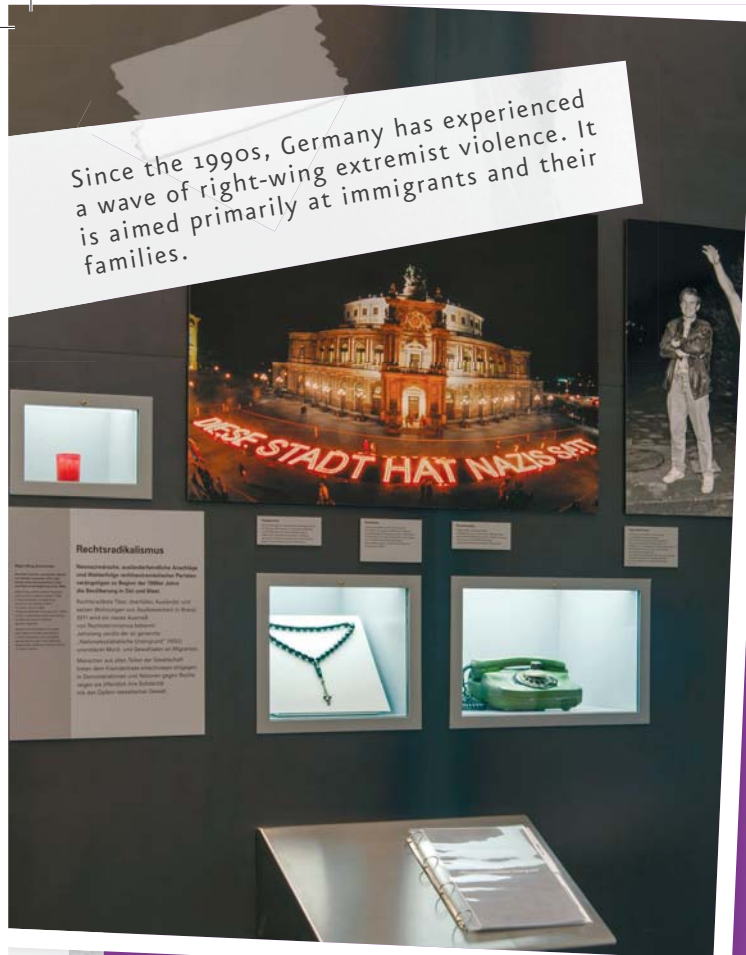
They do not feel happy in Germany.



7 ➤ Right-wing violence



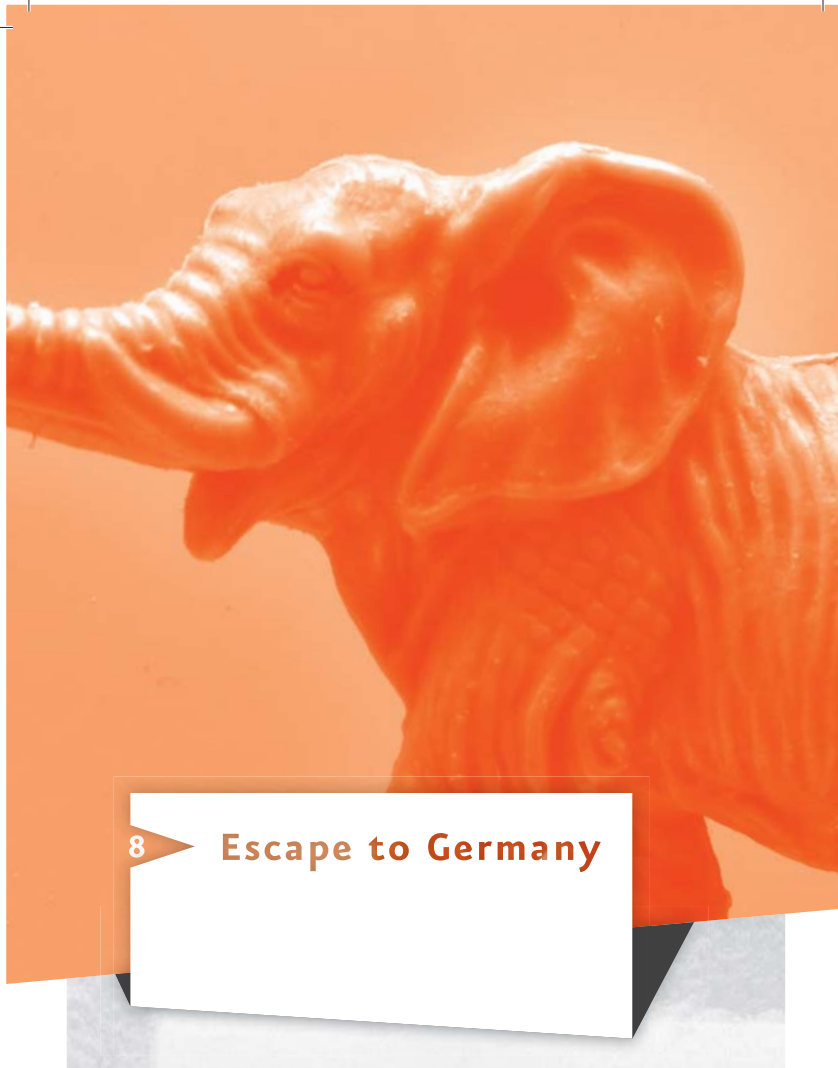
Since the 1990s, Germany has experienced a wave of right-wing extremist violence. It is aimed primarily at immigrants and their families.



- a** In 2011, it is revealed that members of the so-called "National Socialist Underground" are killing and injuring migrants and have remained undiscovered for years. In the display case you will find the prayer beads belonging to Enver Simsek, the first murder victim. Why do you think the museum has selected this object in particular for this topic?



b What questions would you like to ask the object?





In 2015, around 890,000 people flee terror and poverty in Africa as well as the civil war in Syria and travel to Germany via the Mediterranean and the Balkans.

- a** Ali Abdo, a cartoonist and illustrator from Syria, processes the experience of his flight to Germany in his cartoons. You can find one of them framed here in the exhibition. Interpret the cartoon. (Welcome refugee, thank you Germany).

What do you see?



How does he portray the dangers of his flight?

Why is Germany important to him?

- b** In exercise 1a you considered what you would take with you if you had to leave your home. Look around the exhibition: what does a young boy take with him on the dangerous journey? You can find the object in the display case.

Why do you think he chose this object?



- c** At the end of the exhibition you will see a boat. About 70 people sat crowded together in this boat as they fled from Africa to Malta. Put yourself in the position of one of the passengers. What goes through his or her head during the sea crossing?

I hope...

I am afraid...



