



Waiting in line, 1961
© Deutsches Historisches Museum



Woman sleeping in the
waiting room, 1956
© Landesarchiv Berlin

Flight in Divided Germany

The Refugee Center Museum provides information about flight and emigration from the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The museum is located at the historical site in the former main building of the refugee center that opened in 1953.

Between 1949 and 1990 around four million people left the GDR for West Germany. Some 1.35 million people passed through the reception center on the west side of Berlin where they received food and housing. The Western Allies from the United States, Great Britain and France questioned them about the situation in the GDR and their reasons for fleeing or emigrating. To receive a residence permit for West Germany and West Berlin, new arrivals had to go through an elaborate process. The reception center served as a link between their old life in the GDR and the new life they aspired to in West Germany.

Contact

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Opening Hours

Tuesday–Sunday: 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (closed on Mondays)

Free admission

The building is wheelchair-accessible. Further Information on accessibility is available on our website.

Public Tours (in German)

Flight in Divided Germany

Every Sunday, 3 p.m.

Let's walk around! Exploring the site's past and present on the outdoor grounds

Every Sunday, 11 a.m.

€3.50/€2.50 per person

Advance registration is not necessary

Nepomuck and Bärlühpf–Stories about flight for children

Every last Sunday, 2 p.m., for children aged eight and older, free admission, registration is required

Educational Offers

- In nine languages, easy-to-understand German and for language students
- Talks with contemporary witnesses
- Workshops, project days and simulations

All offers are available on our website.

Public Transport

S-Bahn station: Marienfelde

Bus station: Erinnerungsstätte Marienfelde

Impressum

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Exhibition, Photo: Kerstin Klupsch, 2017

Development of the Grounds since the Fall of the Wall

The reception procedure for refugees and emigrants from the GDR was discontinued on July 1, 1990. Marienfelde, however, continued to operate as a reception center for repatriates from Eastern Europe and the (former) Soviet Union. Since 1964 the site had been a point of contact for them on their way to the West. As their numbers diminished, the grounds acquired a new purpose: Since 2010 the building has served as temporary housing for people fleeing crisis and war zones in and outside of Europe. In its special exhibitions, educational programs and public events, the Refugee Center Museum addresses stories of migration that extend beyond the German-German context.



Outside 1, 1961
© Landesarchiv Berlin



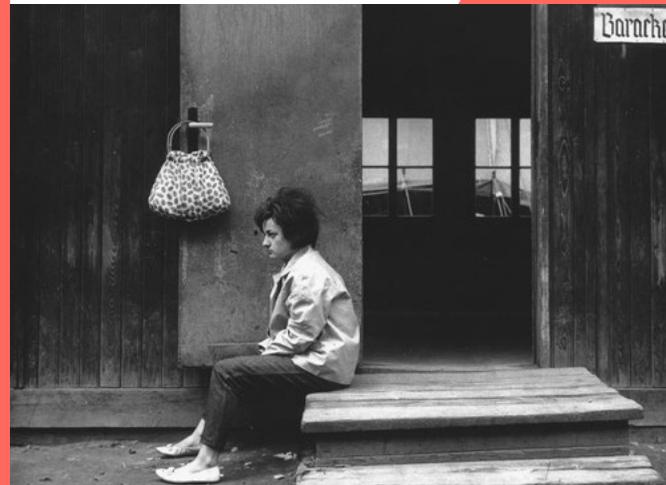
Outside 2, 1960
Photo: Horst Siegmann
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The Exhibition

Located at the historic site, the permanent exhibition documents the causes, process and consequences of German-German flight. It spans the period beginning with the decision to leave the GDR to the arrival in West German society. More than 900 objects are on display, including many original documents, photographs, and personal possessions of refugees and emigrants. Media stations provide an in-depth look at their biographies as they relate to larger political developments. A replica of refugee housing with original furniture from the 1950s gives an impression of the living conditions in the reception center.



Stamps in the exhibition, 2017
Photo: Andreas Tauber



Waiting woman in front of a barrack of the Refugee Center, 1961
Foto: Jacoby, © ullstein Bild – Jacoby