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POSTWAR NEGOTIATIONS: THE FIRST GENERATION OF TURKISH “GUEST
WORKERS” IN WEST GERMANY, 1961-1973

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This dissertation explores the immigration of Turkish “guest workers” to West Germany in the 1960s and 1970s and focuses on the decision making of workers who actively shaped new lives in West Germany, as they dealt with the emerging permanence of their situation. The frequently mismatched interests of the German employers, Employment Bureau Officials, dorm managers, and employers, and of the Turkish workers themselves, highlight the personal as well as institutional negotiations inherent in the guest worker process. Significantly, the immigration of Turkish guest workers to West Germany during the years 1961-1973 now stands at the center of several topical discussions about Germany’s postwar ethnic relations, on citizenship in the new Europe, and of Muslim communities’ integration in Europe. Turkish guest workers are necessarily a part of the central issues of German and European social, political, and cultural history after 1945, especially in the context of debates concerning “who are Europeans?” and “what makes Europe?”

The sources for this dissertation include Turkish-language sources, including oral history interviews, as well as German sources in addition to an *alltag* or everyday-life approach to consider the individuals involved. I explore the entire process, examining,

for example, interactions between low-ranking German officials and average Turkish workers during the pre-departure application process in Turkey; in a workers' dormitory, as captured in the surveillance records of the dorm manager; and in the workers' own labor organizing. I reveal a breakdown of the streamlined, orderly process that published workers' instructional manuals, the media, and politicians portrayed. Comparing these published accounts with workers' own versions and with memos and records not meant for the public eye demonstrates that there was no standardized guest-worker application, housing, or experience. Additionally, at every step workers achieved modifications and negotiations that reveal ways in which male and female workers were able to maintain a sense of self within a highly controlled and regulated process. In sum, the thesis gives an entirely new picture of the textured and variegated spaces of the lives of individual Turkish guest workers within West Germany's specific postwar history.

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DEDICATION

For my parents

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Introduction: Postwar Negotiations and Economic Miracles

In May 2003 I met Filiz, an ethnic Turkish woman and former guest worker, at the Kreuzberg Museum in the heart of “little Istanbul” in Berlin. Outside, cars with pumping stereos, children playing and shouting “*Anne!*” (or “mom” in Turkish), and aggressive bicycle bells provided the background noise. We sat in between the exhibitions on a Monday, the Museum’s usual *Ruhetag* (day of rest), and Filiz began to tell me how she started a new life in Germany almost 40 years ago. Her smile and hearty laugh preceded almost everything she said. Short-haired and wearing a sleeveless sweater, Filiz seemed like an exception to what some Germans might consider a typical ethnic Turkish woman: in addition to German and Turkish, she once spoke Greek, is not religious, is divorced, and lives on her own. I was not the first person to interview Filiz about her experiences as a guest worker, and she started by telling me with great annoyance about a recent interview with a Japanese journalist.¹ “Why didn’t you leave?” the journalist had asked, “If your contract was for a year, why didn’t you go home?”² She had resentfully replied, “Why should I leave? I like it here!”³ The journalist’s persistent questions and Filiz’s indignant response are both at the heart of the guest-worker experience: Why and how did guest workers come to West Germany? What were the expectations on both sides? What conditions made workers stay or return?

¹Filiz told me that she found out after the interview with the Japanese journalists that they were researching a story about labor migration in order to comment on Japan’s current debate about whether or not to accept unskilled foreign labor as a response to labor shortages. For more information on the situation in Japan see Masatoshi Muto, “Japan: The Issue of Migrant Workers” in *The Politics of Migration Policies: Settlement and Integration, the First World into the 1990s*, ed. Daniel Kubat (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1993) 348-352.

² Interview with “Filiz,” Berlin 2003.

³ Ibid.

However, such considerations of the guest-worker experience, as well as of the origins of the program and the role it played in the postwar period, have recently been overshadowed, or even eclipsed, by contemporary conversations about ethnic minorities in Europe, about citizenship and xenophobia in Germany, and, most recently, about the nature of contemporary Islam. Over the years, the term “Turks” (*Türken*) has replaced “foreigners” (*Ausländer*), after replacing “guest workers” (*Gastarbeiter*), as the “Others” of West German society.⁴ Studies on guest workers and ethnic minorities in Germany produced in post-reunification Germany have discussed xenophobic violence against immigrant communities and commented on headlines, such as the arson of a hostel for asylum-seekers in Rostock in August of 1992 or photos of the graffiti “*Türken Raus!*” [Turks Out!].⁵ During this violence, asylum seekers, eastern European refugees, and long-term members of the Turkish population became conflated.⁶ Moreover, the term “Turks” has implied a fictionally homogeneous community, as well as the status of being forever foreign.⁷ There are now three generations of ethnic Turks living in Germany,

⁴ Anthropologist Jenny White points out that particularly after German reunification in 1990, the term *Ausländer* became increasingly synonymous with “Turks” and even expanded after reunification to also include *Aussiedler* or political refugees from Eastern Europe, Jenny B. White, “Turks in the New Germany” *American Anthropologist* 99 (4): 754-769, 762; See also, Ruth Mandel, “‘Fortress Europe’ and the Foreigners within: Germany’s Turks,” in *The Anthropology of Europe: Identity and Boundaries in Conflict*, eds. Victoria A. Goddard, Joseph R. Llobera, and Cris Shore (Oxford: Berg, 1994) 133-124; For a discussion on the evolving public discourse of the terms “guest worker,” “foreigner,” and “foreign fellow citizen,” see also Rita Chin, *The ‘Guest Worker’ Question in Postwar Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 14-15.

⁵ More than 5,000 attacks against foreigners were reported in Germany in 1992 alone, Senate von Berlin (1994): 33, 78-79, quoted in Jenny White, “Turks in the New Germany,” see also Andreas Goldberg “Status and Problems of the Turkish Community in Germany” (Essen: Zentrum für Türkeistudien, 1996).

⁶ Foreign journalists also accused the German police of “subtle racism,” saying that they were taking xenophobic violence too lightly, see “Police Under Fire in German Unrest,” *The New York Times*, 27 December 1992.

⁷ The Turkish community in Germany, especially in Berlin, is far from unified; ethnic, religious, and political cleavages have carried over from Turkey, see Jenny White, “Belonging to a Place: Turks in Unified Berlin” *City and Society* 1996; idem, “Turks in the New Germany” *American Anthropologist* 99 no. 4 (1997): 754-769, where White writes, “The 2 million Turks in Germany are a disparate community [who] identify not only with Turkishness but also or even primarily with their social class, with a particular regional or non-Turkish ethnic origin, or with a transnational creole ‘third culture,’” in “Labor to Culture:

with varying degrees of fluency in either language and with widely disparate lifestyles. Levent Soysal has written, “Turks in particular appear as perpetual guest workers, arrested in a state of cultural and social liminality In public, popular, and scholarly discourses, Turkish migrants appear, at best, as relentless advocates of revitalized Turkishness or Islam, or, at worst, as essentially unassimilable agents of foreignness.”⁸ Recently, reporting on ethnic minorities in Europe has focused specifically on Muslim minorities, encouraging scholars, policy makers, and journalists to approach immigration to Europe from a mindset mired in contemporary debates, flattening diverse foreign populations into fictional wholes and losing sight of individuals like Filiz.⁹ In this study of Turkish guest workers, by contrast, I intend to highlight the particular lives of men and women in the years before the word “Turks” became synonymous with all foreigners, with all guest workers, and most recently with a homogeneous and conservative Muslim community.¹⁰ The effect of the recent press coverage is that it skews the perception of Turkish worker away from both the realization that these workers were *recruited* and also away from the fact that members of this community had particular histories as they made a new life in Germany.

The literature of postwar migration and that of Muslim minorities in Europe has yet to mix with the literature on “race” in Germany; nor have these literatures worked together to offer new post-war understandings of what it means to be “German” or “not

Writing Turkish Migration to Europe” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2/3 (Spring/Summer 2003): 491-506, here 493.

⁸ Levent Soysal, “Labor to Culture: Writing Turkish Migration to Europe,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2/3 (Spring/Summer 2003): 491-506, here 493.

⁹ According to the *Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, a main result of the labor migration of the 1960s was the development of a large Muslim population in Germany, which numbers 3 million today and prompted the establishment of accompanying religious organizations, which, especially since September 11, 2001, which have been politically misinterpreted.

¹⁰ See for example, Richard Bernstein, “Germany Deports Radical Long Sought by Turks,” *New York Times*, 13 October 2004.

German” after 1945.¹¹ Because the Nazi genocide tainted the concept of “race” in Germany with a specific historical association, its use waned in the postwar period, especially during discussions of guest workers in West Germany.¹² Even as scholars have consistently connected West German attitudes toward foreigners to Germany’s Nazi experience, guest workers’ “difference” has remained unarticulated.¹³ For ethnic Turks living in Germany, while their “non-Germanness” has not been racialized, their “Otherness” has nevertheless remained palpable, most recently, through ethno-religious and cultural definitions. For example, in discussions of Turkey’s potential European

¹¹ For studies on race, specifically of those of African descent in West Germany, see Heide Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Tina Campt and Michelle Maria Wright eds., Special Issue on “Reading the Black German Experience” *Callaloo* 26 no. 2 (Spring 2003); Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); May Opitz, Katharina Oguntoye, and Dagmar Schultz eds., *Showing Our Colors: Afro-German Women Speak Out*, trans. Anne V. Adams (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986); Panikos Panayi, *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany* (New York: Longman, 2000). For studies on Muslim minorities in Europe see, Valerie Amiraux, “Restructuring Political Islam: Transnational Belonging and Muslims in France and Germany,” in *Transnational Political Islam: Religion, Ideology, and Power*, ed. Azza Karam (Sterling, VA: Pluto, 2004); Katherine Pratt Ewig, “Legislating Religious Freedom: Muslim Challenges to the Relationship between ‘Church’ and ‘State’ in Germany and France,” *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 129, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 31-54; Sigrid Nökel, *Die Töchter der Gastarbeiter und der Islam: zur Soziologie alltagsweltlicher Anerkennungspolitiken. Ein Fallstudie* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2002); Hanns Thomä-Venske, *Islam und Integration: Zur Bedeutung des Islam im Prozeß der Integration türkischer Arbeiterfamilien in die Gesellschaft der Bundesrepublik* (Hamburg: Rissen, 1981); Werner Schiffauer, *Die Gottesmänner: Türkische Islamisten in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000); Wolfgang Ritsch, *Die Rolle des Islams für die Koranschulerziehung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Cologne: Rahl-Rugenstein, 1987); “West Germany,” in *Muslims in Western Europe*, ed. Jorgen S. Nielsen, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992) 23-38; James Helicke, “Turks in Germany: Muslim Identity: ‘Between’ States,” in *Muslim Minorities in the West: Visible and Invisible*, eds. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane I. Smith (New York: Altamira, 2002); Jeroen Doomernik, “The Institutionalization of Turkish Islam in Germany and the Netherlands: A Comparison,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 18, no. 1 (1995, Jan): 46-63.

¹² In her study on Guest Worker literature and the political discourse surrounding guest workers, Rita Chin quite rightly comments that the terms race and ethnicity were seldom used in West German political discussions about the “guest worker question,” see *The ‘Guest Worker’ Question*, 15-16; This does not mean, however, that ideas of race disappeared in the postwar period. Karen Schönwälder has pointed out that some West Germans connected the treatment of guest workers as a way to demonstrate a moving away from the recent past, see “West German Society and Foreigners in the 1960s,” in *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, eds. Philipp Gassert and Alan Steinweis (New York: Berghahn, 2006) 115-116.

¹³ Ulrich Herbert writes that Germany’s Nazi experience affected West German cultural responses to foreigners, especially because the guest worker programs began just ten years after the end of World War II, see *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany, 1880-1980: Season Workers, Forced Laborers, Guest Workers*, trans. William Templer (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1990).

Union membership German historians, such as Jürgen Kocka, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, and Heinrich August Winkler have pointed out that Turks could not be “European” due to deeply-engrained cultural differences, introducing an ethno-cultural definition of the otherness of Muslims within a Christian-defined Europe.¹⁴

In 2005, *Der Spiegel* ran an article with the headline, “The Death of a Muslim Woman: ‘The Whore Lived like a German.’”¹⁵ The article described a young mother, whose brother shot her at a Berlin bus stop, accusing her of besmirching the family’s honor by “living like a German,” by “trying to break free and live a Western lifestyle.” *Der Spiegel* noted that the killing was not an anomaly, but just one of five “honor killings” to occur in Berlin in 2005. The article questioned how such terrible events could happen “in the heart of Europe” and ultimately blamed these events on “serious flaws of the nation’s 1960’s immigration policies.” The article commented, “The [guest-worker] program brought thousands of Turkish workers to Germany, but provided no real means of integrating the Muslim Turks or helping them understand Western concepts like

¹⁴ In discussions of Turkey’s potential European Union membership, some German historians have pointed out that Turks could not be “European” due to deeply engrained cultural differences, introducing an ethno-cultural definition of the otherness of Muslims within a Christian-defined Europe. Mehmet Mihri Özdoğan writes, “Historians, who are actually known for being liberal, such as Hans-Ulrich Wehler, and also Heinrich August Winkler and Jürgen Kocka, base their arguments on supposed unbridgeable cultural differences between Muslim lands and Christian Europe The quintessence of their argument is: if one is not a European one cannot become one,” in Mehmet Mihri Özdoğan, “Zum EU-Beitritt der Türkei: Grenze der Erweiterung oder Grenze der Vernunft?” *Werkstattgeschichte* 37 (2004): 93-99; See also, Jürgen Kocka, “Wo liegst du, Europe,” *Die Zeit*, 2 Dez 2002; Hans-Ulrich Wehler, “Das Türkenproblem,” *Die Zeit*, 12 September 2002; Heinrich August Winkler, “Grenzen der Erweiterung. Die Türkei ist kein Teil des ‘Projekt Europe,’” *Internationale Politik* 2 (2002):59-66; idem., “Europa am Scheideweg,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 Nov 2003; Dirk Schumann, “Is the EU Complete Without Turkey? Opportunities and Challenges for Europe’s Identity and the Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union and the United States,” *GHI Bulletin* 34 (spring 2004): 190-192; The World Press Organization reported on Turkey’s EU prospects thusly, “Some said that even if part of Turkey is in Europe, this does not cancel the reality that Turkey lacks European roots in its culture and traditions,” in “The International Press on Turkey’s European Union Membership Bid, Comment and analysis from London, Dubai, Beirut, Frankfurt, and Istanbul,” 8 Oct 2004 [journal online]; available from <http://www.worldpress.org/Europe/1951.cfm> ; internet; accessed 25 June 25 2008.

¹⁵ “The Death of a Muslim Woman,” *Der Spiegel*, 2 March 2005.

individualism, human rights, and equality.”¹⁶ This quote is troubling in many ways. The guest worker program was certainly *not* part of an “immigration policy,” at least not according to West German officials at the time. This historical disremembering is as faulty as the assumption that ideas of individualism, human rights, and equality are inherently “Western.” What then were the 1960s policies on guest workers? How did Turks come to West Germany and under what circumstances? What were the initial interactions between West Germans and Turkish guest workers like?

In order to address this historical amnesia, this dissertation examines the experience of Turkish guest workers before departure, and on the way to West Germany, as well as daily life once in West Germany. The West German officials involved and the attempts they made to control and regulate guest worker immigration, as well as their failures to do so, also play a central role in this narrative. The key contribution of this dissertation is to demonstrate the steps that workers and officials alike took to make the stay in West Germany more permanent. This project provides the historical background of the immigration of 865,000 Turks to West Germany from 1961 to 1973 and the foundation of today’s population of more than 2 million ethnic Turks in Germany.¹⁷ My goal is to demonstrate the ways in which guest workers negotiated the process on their

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ At the time of the official end of recruitment in 1973, there were 2.6 million foreign nationals registered within the social services system in West Germany, see Rita Süßmuth, Klaus J Bade, Christoph Kannengießer, Gerd Landsberg, Heinz Putzhammer, and Gert G. Wagner eds., *Migration und Integration-Erfahrungen nutzen, Neues wagen: Jahresgutachten 2004 des Sachverständigenrates für Zuwanderung und Integration*, Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (Nürnberg: Sachverständigenrat für Zuwanderung und Integration, 2004) 94-95. By 1990, West Germany had 5,242,000 foreign nationals (migrants claiming permanent resident status), and France had the next highest number of foreigners at 3,597,000, see Stephen Castles and Mark J. Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, 3d ed. (New York: Guilford Press, 2003) 81. In 1989, the total number of Turks in West Germany was 1,612,600, see Eva Kolinsky, “Non-German Minorities in Contemporary German Society,” in *Turkish Culture in German Society Today*, eds. David Horrocks and Eva Kolinsky (Providence: Berghahn, 1996) 83. Three-fifths of Germany’s current foreign population stems from the “application countries” of the guest worker program of the 1950s and 1960s, see *“Migration und Integration-Erfahrungen nutzen, Neues wagen*, 94-95.

own terms, exerted control, and created spaces in ways not previously recognized. Turkish guest workers' perspectives, which have long been missing from historical studies, are the focus of this study.¹⁸ By focusing on individual agency, I hope to recontextualize Turkish migrants as decision makers rather than “victims” or “social problems.”¹⁹ These immigrants do not fit neatly into historical narratives about postcolonial Muslim migrants, as their relationship with their host country as well as their citizenship status was very different.²⁰ The details of everyday life reflect larger life decisions, provide the background for labor movements, and point to an answer to the question so many journalists, migration scholars, and former workers like Filiz have asked: at what point does home no longer mean the place left behind? Workers' first-hand experiences also complicate scholars' assumption that only economic factors motivated migration.

Postwar Negotiations

The guest worker program was part of a postwar period characterized by migration. From the late 1940s through the early 1970s, Western Europe was the site of multiple population movements, as ethnic Germans, refugees, and displaced persons moved across Europe, as de-colonization spurred migration from Africa, Asia, and the

¹⁸ Initially historians of foreign labor in Germany did not consider the perspective of the workers or use Turkish or other non-German sources to explore migration history. These important pioneering works consider guest workers within studies of either foreign labor in Germany or migration in or out of Germany since the nineteenth century instead of considering the specificity of the postwar period. See for example, Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany*; Klaus Bade, *Deutsche im Ausland – Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 1993).

¹⁹ Studies focusing on the victimhood of Turkish minorities include titles such as Michael Kuhlmann and Alwin Meyer, *Ayşe and Devrim: Wo gehören Wir hin?* (Göttingen: Lamu Taschenbuch, 1983) and Rita Rosen, “Ausländische Frauen: Ignoriert, im Stich Gelassen, Unterdrückt,” *Informationsdienst zur Ausländerarbeit* 4 (Jan, 1980): 20-27.

²⁰ Early social science studies offer important initial investigations, statistics, and logistical data of guest worker immigration to West Germany, see Nermin Adaban-Unat ed., *Turkish Workers in Europe, 1960-1975: A Socio-Economic Reappraisal* (Leiden: E. J Brill, 1975); Stephen Castles and Godula Kosack, *Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); Ali S. Gitmez, *Dişgöç Öyküsü* (Ankara: Maya Matbaacılık, 1979).

Caribbean to France and Britain, and as foreign laborers migrated from northern Africa and Europe's periphery to Western Europe.²¹ At the same time that other European countries were abandoning their colonies, West Germany fostered closer relations with European colonial powers, continuing to support Portugal and its colonial polices. West Germany also continued close economic, military, and trade relations with the apartheid government of South Africa even after South Africa was expelled from the British Commonwealth in 1961.²² These actions provided the context in which West Germany, as well as other Western European nations, became increasingly dependent on cheap, imported labor to sustain continued economic growth. The number of migrant laborers from Southern Europe, North Africa, and Asia grew explosively during these years, rising from 279,000 in 1960 to 1,314,000 in 1966. Such large numbers and their sustained growth make the presence of non-Germans a major aspect of West German postwar history, especially during the 1960s, long before politicians began debates about German citizenship and rights for asylum seekers.

The guest worker program was also part of Western Europe at the time that it split between East and West, as Cold War alliances developed, and as the Western industrial and capitalist model of production became a key part of West Germany's new national

²¹ Atina Grossman writes that in the immediate postwar period, all of war torn Europe became an "a moving stream of humanity" in which twenty million people were on the move. In addition to seven million displaced persons, some eight million ethnic Germans also arrived in West Germany from Soviet-dominated territories in the late 1940s; See Atina Grossman, *Jews, Germans, and Allies: Close Encounters in Occupied Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) 131-182; Between 1947 and 1954, a million North Africans entered France; between 1962 and 1965 alone, 111,000 migrants entered France; between 1956 and 1961, 115,000 immigrants entered Britain; and, an estimated 5.5 million to 8.5 million people of European origin returned to Europe from colonial posts. For more on post-colonial immigration see "Postimperial Europe, 1947-1980," in *Europe in the Contemporary World: 1900 to the Present*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (New York: Bedford St Martin's, 2007) 498-553; "Decolonization and Immigration in Britain and France" and "Post-war European Society: A Consumer Society and Welfare State," in *Europe Since 1945: A Concise History*, eds. J. Robert Wegs and Robert Ladrech, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1996, 2006) 98-99, 139-172.

²² Young-sun Hong, "The Third World in Two Germanys in the 1960s," Unpublished Manuscript (Lecture delivered at Rutgers University on March 28, 2005).

identity. The building of the Berlin Wall, a Cold War maneuver, spurred the expansion of the guest worker program. Furthermore, West European countries continuously relied on extra-European labor to shore up their industry against the Eastern Bloc. Ideas of “East” and of “Asia” continuously changed throughout the twentieth century, including due to the Cold War. After 1989 former “Soviet Central Asia” began to be considered as prospectively “European.” Yet, Turks, who stand at a crossroads of East and West have become increasingly considered “Eastern” as reporting on Muslim populations has evolved after September 11, 2001.

The guest worker program was also part of West Germany’s and also Turkey’s economic, social, and cultural reconstruction. The Turkish Republic’s decision to participate in guest-worker programs with Western European countries, which came on the heels of a “modernizing” revolution in 1961, which was itself an attempt to continue the “westernizing” project that was the foundation of the Turkish Republic.²³ Turning to Western Europe as a way to secure a financial future was just one part of Turkey’s forty-year path of “Westernization,” started in the 1920s with the founding of the Republic.²⁴

²³The Brookings Institute conducted a study of the 1960-61 Turkish Revolution and stated “the roots of the revolution lay ‘deep in the history of the westernizing reform program of Kemal Atatürk, who founded the Turkish Republic in 1923. Underlying all the Atatürk reforms were the issues of secularism, of rapid social change versus the status quo In 1960 it was widely felt in Turkey and abroad that the government of the Democratic party leaders, President Celal Bayar and Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, had strayed far from the path of the Atatürk revolution, and it was to return Turkey to democratic, secular politics that the armed forces took power on May 27, 1960,” see Walter F. Weiker, *The Turkish Revolution 1960-1961: Aspects of Military Politics* (Washington, D.C: The Brookings Institution, 1963) 2.

²⁴ Pope explains Turkey’s “modernization” thusly:

Today, Turkey attributes everything that is deemed modern in the state to Kemal [Atatürk]. His radical reforms are well known: [Atatürk] abolished the caliphate and declared Turkey a secular republic (1923), . . . he forbade the fez and any attire remotely connected to Islam in favour of the hat and the Western suit (1925); he replaced Islamic law by the Swiss civil code and Mussolini’s penal code (1926); he introduced the Latin alphabet (1928) while launching a country-wide literacy campaign; and he forced everybody to take a surname (1934). . . With a few strokes of his pen, this conservative and religious country, which was 80 per cent rural. . . was ordered to become a modern Western state.

Indeed, throughout the twentieth century, Turkey took numerous steps, in the words of the Young Turks, to “follow the path traced by Europe”²⁵ Historian of Turkey Erik Jan Zürcher has argued that, even though Turkey is located geographically more than 90% in Asia, it is a creation of “Europeans,” who shaped the country after their own image, referring here to the elite band of educated men who formed the modern republic in the 1920s.²⁶ Indeed, throughout the twentieth century, Turkish officials took steps to align Turkey with the “West” more closely, including gaining membership in the Council of Europe in 1949, with NATO in 1952, with the OECD in 1961, with the OSCE in 1973, and in 1999, in the G20 industrial nations. In 2005, Turkey began negotiations for full membership in the European Union as well. The “West” also turned to Turkey as an ally throughout the twentieth century, as when the United States extended the 1947 Truman Doctrine to include Turkey in order to secure the Bosphorus Straits. In many ways, the bi-lateral agreement between Turkey and West Germany fit in with Turkey’s twentieth-century trajectory, just as it fit into West Germany’s postwar economic recovery.

However, despite Turkey’s “estern” historical trajectory, historians of the postwar period have not considered the Turkish Republic as a participant in the Western bloc’s postwar economic recovery, partially because of Turkey’s ill fit into the available categories of “Eastern,” “Western,” “European,” or even as part of the “Third World.”²⁷ Narratives of Western modernity have assumed that modernization only occurs in nation-

Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey (Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press, 1997, 2004) 62.

²⁵ In the words of the Young Turks, “we followed the path traced by Europe” quoted in Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: New Oxford University Press, 1961).

²⁶ Erik Jan Zürcher, “How Europeans adopted Anatolia and Created Turkey,” *European Review* 13(2005): 379-394.

²⁷ The Turkish Republic was a NATO member since 1950, making it technically a part of the “Western Bloc;” however, its slow economic growth and culturally-Muslim population cause many to think of the country as “Eastern,” despite Cold War political alliances.

states that have been constructed as “Western.”²⁸ However, I would argue that the post-war guest worker program was a part of the Turkish Republic’s “modernizing” efforts, whether or not scholars recognize Turkey as possessing “Western modernity” or considered it a part of the “Western Bloc” (Turkey’s NATO membership aside).

In 1961, after the 1960 military coup, the new Turkish government turned to Western Europe to modernize and westernize Turkey through guest worker programs with Western European countries. Designers of the Turkish “Five Year Plan for Economic Development” thought the bi-lateral “guest worker” arrangement with West Germany would be not only be a logical solution to the high unemployment rate, but also a way to strengthen ties with Western Europe.²⁹ Turkish policy-makers expected the guest-worker arrangement to help develop poor regions, alleviate unemployment, train workers who would later develop Turkish industry, and, through wage remittance and personal investment, invigorate the Turkish economy.³⁰

Therefore, on October 30, 1961, officials signed the agreement between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of Turkey, and the German Federal Employment Office opened the liaison branch in Istanbul. By the end of 1961, 7,000 Turks were in West Germany. The agreement between Turkey and West Germany was a

²⁸ Historian Young-sun Hong writes, “By decoupling or dissociating sovereignty from territoriality, transnationalism forces us to rethink those narratives of Western modernity that viewed the territorial nation-state as the primary site of progress, Eurocentric opposition between ‘traditional’ community and ‘modern’ nation-state, place-based subaltern experience and state-guided productivist modernization and development, between the West and all of those people who were believed to lack those constitutive features of Western modernity (or at least who were constructed as lacking them),” H-Net forum on transnational history, Young-Sun Hong; See also, Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978).

²⁹ Abadan-Unat, *Politics* 310.

³⁰ The OECD reported that in 1965 Turkey had received \$70 in remittances from workers abroad: “An unforeseen and costless source of foreign exchange developed over the last few years, through migration of Turkish workers to foreign countries. . . . Over the longer-run perhaps as important as the foreign exchange earnings will be the technical and general know-how the Turkish thus acquire,” “Turkey: 1965-1966,” *Economic Surveys by the OECD* (1966): 45.

special case, in that for the first time, the German government was paying social benefits to citizens of another country without a social security system. All foreign workers legally employed were entitled to the same pay for the same work as West Germans and to full welfare and social rights, such as child benefit payments for children left behind in Turkey. In addition to the agreement with West Germany in 1961, the Turkish Republic also signed accords with Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands in 1964; with France in 1965; and, in 1967, with Sweden.³¹

Historians, contemporaries, and social scientists commonly refer to the postwar period in Europe as the period of *Wirtschaftswunder*—the Economic Miracle—due to increased production in industrialized countries. After initial years of crisis, Western European governments increased expenditures and budgets to improve infrastructure, updated machinery and older factories, improved in productivity and efficiency, and saw an increase in international trade and consumer spending on an ever-expanding range of goods. In the case of West Germany, prewar investments in industry and armaments meant that factories were already relatively up-to-date; in 1945, 55 % of the total industrial plant capacity was at most only ten years old, while only 17% of industrial plants in West Germany had been destroyed during the war.³² In short, transportation and house, not industry had been destroyed in the war.

³¹ For a complete history of the drafting of the bi-lateral plans, see “Deutsch-türkische Anwerbevereinbarung” in Karin Hunn, *‘Nächstes Jahr Kehren wir zurück . . .’ Die Geschichte der türkischen ;Gastarbeiter’ in der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein 2005) 29-70; Karen Schönwälder, *Einwanderung und ethnische Pluralität. Politische Entscheidungen und öffentliche Debatten in Großbritannien und der Bundesrepublik von den 1950er bis zu den 1970er Jahren* (Essen: Klartext 2001); Aytac Eryılmaz and Mathilde Jamin, eds., *Fremde Heimat, Eine Geschichte der Einwanderung aus der Türkei / Yaban, Silan olur. Türkiye’den Almanya’ya göçün tarihi* (Essen: Klartext, 1998).

³² Herbert points out that it was the devastation of the transportation network that crippled the West German economy in 1945 and 1946 not the destruction of industrial plants; industrial capacity had been expanded during the war and left intact. Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany*, 194-195.

Across Western Europe economies grew at historic rates, and between 1950 and 1973, German GDP per head more than tripled in real terms.³³ The postwar drive toward growth as well as the labor shortage spurred West Germany and Western Europe to invest in importing foreign labor, which became part of a general trend of mass migrations during the 1950s and 1960s. Furthermore, the 1961 construction of the Berlin Wall and the accompanying ban on *Republikflucht* (fleeing the Republic) put a stop to the hundreds of thousands of refugees and expellees flowing into the West via Berlin.³⁴ Refugees from the Eastern Bloc provided a crucial daily and seasonal labor supply to West Berlin and to West Germany, which the Berlin Wall cut off. *Ostvertriebene* (expellees) and refugees comprised nearly 20% of West Germany's population in 1960, contributing heavily to the labor force. However, the wall's construction alone did not prompt guest worker programs—guest worker arrangements between West Germany and other countries had been in full swing since 1955. Furthermore, West Berlin did not have large-scale recruitment efforts until 1964, since East Germans closely observed West Berlin, they did not want to appear to be in need of foreign labor.³⁵

Postwar events in both West Germany and Turkey prompted the guest worker agreement. Before the economic miracle, the Federal Republic of Germany, newly founded in 1949, experienced an economic crisis in 1950. In West-Berlin, for example, immediately after the Soviet blockade of Berlin, which threaten the food and fuel supply

³³ Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005) 324-355.

³⁴ Frederick Taylor, writes that the Berlin wall resulted in the guest worker agreement between Turkey and West Germany, "Robbed of the previous supply of new labour for its booming industries by the sealing off of the East, in October 1961 West Germany took the radical and farreaching step of signing a treaty with Muslim Turkey, allowing for Turkish 'guest workers' to fill vacant jobs, in *The Berlin Wall: A World Divided, 1961-1989* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006) 345.

³⁵ Faruk Şen notes that in 1964 West Berlin recruited more Turkish women than men, see Faruk Şen, "Berlin's Turkish Community" in *The Spirit of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Dieter Dettke (New York: Berghahn, 2003) 130-144, here 133.

to the western sector, was lifted, 40% of the population was unemployed. In 1955, the West German economy expanded for the first time since the end of the Second World War, prompting extreme labor shortages across West Germany. At the same time, under the new Adnan Menderes government in the 1950s, Turkey experienced a push to mechanize agriculture, resulting in widespread poverty among small farmers and rapid and widespread migration into cities and metropolitan centers. In 1954, Prime Minister Menderes visited West Germany to strengthen the bi-lateral economic relationship between West Germany and Turkey, and, as a result, in 1955 officials signed the German-Turkish Economic Agreement and the German-Turkish Cultural Agreement in Ankara.

Before 1961, the founding year of the formal, state-sponsored arrangement between the two countries, West Germany and Turkey had been experimenting with guest-worker style arrangements with positive results.³⁶ In the mid-1950s, German private businessmen and semi-official labor recruiting institutes began making requests for immigrant workers, and, in 1956, the Institute of World Economy at the University of Kiel made one of the first official requests for immigrant workers from Turkey when they solicited the Turkish Foreign Affairs Ministry and requested volunteer migrants for vocational training. A report from the German Federal Employment Office in October 1956 about Turkish agricultural interns reported that the Turkish workers were “very orderly and hardworking and so far have shown no problems. The Turk appears to be . . .

³⁶ For a history of Turkish labor migration to West Germany before 1961, see Nermin Abadan-Unat, “Turkey: Late Entrant into Europe’s Work Force,” in *The Politics of Migration Policies: Settlement and Integration, the First World into the 1990s*, ed. Daniel Kubat (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 1993) 310.

completely able to fit in and be useful.”³⁷ These initial positive results with unproblematic workers, however, are long forgotten, and this pre-1961 migration phase was strikingly different from the subsequent period that has since come to represent all of Turkish out-migration to Europe in popular memory.

Despite the guest-worker migration’s central role within both post-war migration movements and economic expansion, in the historiography of postwar Europe and of West Germany in particular, guest-worker immigration remains peripheral to other discussions of the Allied Occupation, the Cold War, and the division of Germany. Indeed, guest workers have yet to receive their own historical treatment and have thus far been conceptualized as part of the fields of migration, minority studies, and literary studies of “minority literature” (*Ausländerliteratur*).³⁸ In a situation that mirrors their lived reality, Turkish guest workers have remained in a historical no-man’s-land: they are excluded from contemporary German history because of their status as “non-Germans”

³⁷ “Bericht des Westfälisch-Lippischen Landwirtschaftsverbandes e.V., Kreisverband Soest” an BAVAV, 10. Nov 1956, BArch, B 119/ 3070.

³⁸ An exception to this would be Karin Hunn, *‘Nächstes Jahr kehren wir Zurück . . .’ Die Geschichte der türkischen ‘Gastarbeiter’ in der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2005); For a complete historiographical survey of Turkish migration, see Nermin Abadan-Unat and Neşe Kemiksiz eds., *Türkische Migration 1960-1984 Annotierte Bibliographie*, Zentrum für Türkeistudien, trans. Kirkor Osyan and Claudia Schöning-Kalender (Frankfurt am Main: Dağyeli Verlag, 1992); For bibliographic information for migration and integration in Europe, see Jochen Oltmer and Michael Schubert, *Migration und Integration in Europa seit der Frühen Neuzeit: Eine Bibliographie zur Historischen Migrationsforschung* (Osnabrück: Institut für Migrationsforschung und Interkulturelle Studien, 2005); <http://www.imis.uni-osnabrueck.de/BibliographieMigration.pdf>. For more on *Gastarbeiterliteratur*, see Aras Ören, *Please, No Police*, trans. Teoman Sipahigil (Austin: Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas Austin, 1992). Aras notes that the term *Gastarbeiterliteratur* is not only offensive but also a misnomer in that it is written mostly for intellectuals and is read by few workers, xxiii. See also, Chin, *The ‘Guest Worker’ Question*; Arlene Akiko Teraoka, “*Gastarbeiterliteratur*: The Other Speaks Back,” in *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*, eds. Abdul R Jan Mohamed and David Lloyd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) 297-8; Leslie Adelson, *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature: Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Antje Harnisch, Anne Marie Stokes, and Friedemann Weidauer, *Fringe Voices: An Anthology of Minority Writing in the Federal Republic of Germany* (New York: Berg, 1998); Ayhan Kaya, *‘Sicher in Kreuzberg’ Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 2001).

and excluded from contemporary Turkish history because they left.³⁹ Furthermore, German historiography has often situated the guest-worker program within a larger history of troubling uses of foreign labor within German history, noting continuities with Germany's dark past or has situated guest-worker migration within a longer trajectory of immigration in nineteenth and twentieth century Germany.⁴⁰ Few studies specifically address how guest-worker migration is distinct from other periods in Germany's history.

Yet the guest worker program was quite different from previous eras of foreign labor in Germany: not only was guest-worker immigration voluntary, but these workers were also officially *invited* guests.⁴¹ Historians of migration in West Germany stumble when they come to guest workers. On the one hand, scholars group guest workers

³⁹ History of Modern Turkey either do not mention guest worker migration or do so only with fleeting references. Compare, Nicole Pope and Huge Pope, *Turkey Unveiled: a History of Modern Turkey* (Woodstock and New York: Overlook, 1997, 2004). The military coup of 1960 and the execution of Ex-premier Menderes overshadow all over national events at the time. For an argument challenging using a solely a national prism to view the history of national working classes see, Eric Hobsbawm, "What is the Workers' Country," in *Workers: Worlds of Labor*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). Hobsbawm writes, "both immigration and emigration have a bearing on the history of national working classes," p. 53.

⁴⁰ Compare Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany*; Klaus Bade, *Ausländer, Aussiedler, Asyl in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*; Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn, "Guest Workers and Policy on Guest Workers in the Federal Republic: From the Beginning of Recruitment in 1955 until its Halt in 1973" in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) 187-218; Klaus J. Bade, *Auswanderer, Wanderarbeiter, Gastarbeiter: Bevölkerung, Arbeitsmarkt und Wanderung in Deutschland seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts*. In two volumes (*Referate und Diskussionsbeiträge des Internationalen Wissenschaftlichen Symposiums "Vom Auswanderungsland zum Einwanderungsland?" an der Akademie für Politische Bildung Tutzing 1982* (Ostfildern: Scripta Mercaturae, 1984); idem, *Population, Labour, and Migration in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Berg, 1987); idem, *Deutsche im Ausland—Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (München: Beck, 1993); Panikos Panayi, "The Age of Mass Migration: Germanies After 1945," in *Ethnic Minorities in Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Germany* (New York: Pearson, 2000). John Kulczycki differentiates Polish workers from guest workers, both of whom were "foreign workers in the Rhine-Ruhr Region," saying, "though foreign to the Ruhr, [Polish worker] were Prussian subjects and German citizens and therefore had the same legal status as German workers (quite unlike the more recent *Gastarbeiter* of Germany)," in John Kulczycki, *The Foreign Worker and the German Labor Movement: Xenophobia and Solidarity in the Coal Fields of the Ruhr, 1871-1914* (Oxford and Providence: Berg, 1994) 2.

⁴¹ The play on the term "guest" has yet to include ideas of Germany as a host or as one who extended an invitation; this will be discussed in the first chapter, see Stephen Castles, "The Guests who Stayed: The Debate on 'Foreigner Policy' in the German Federal Republic," *International Migration Review* 19 (1985): 517-34.

together with other post-war migration movements and term them “problematic” in terms of integration issues in contemporary West Germany.⁴² On the other hand, scholars also argue that people often forget or do not acknowledge the deep roots of immigration and foreign worker programs in Germany, that date back to the *Kaiserreich*, from the 1870s, in order to argue that Germany is indeed a country of immigration.⁴³

Postwar bilateral guest worker agreements worked under the assumption that, on the one hand, West Germany would get cheap labor and, on the other, partner countries would get relief from pressure on their domestic labor markets through regulated emigration and the expected transfer of wages back to the home country.⁴⁴ However, not just nation-states made the decisions about guest worker programs or postwar immigration. Individual choice, ambition, and opportunity are all inherent in any

⁴² See for example, Klaus Bade, “From Emigration to Immigration: The German Experience in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries” *Central European History* 28, no. 4 (1995): 526-527; Ulrich Herbert, *Geschichte der Ausländerpolitik in Deutschland* (München: Beck, 2002) 232-249.

⁴³ Karin Hunn, “Irgendwann kam das Deutschlandfieber auch in unsere Gegend . . . : Türkische Gastarbeiter’ in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – von der Anwerbung bis zur Rückkehrförderung” in *Geschichte und Gedächtnis in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft: Migration zwischen historischer Rekonstruktion und Erinnerungspolitik*, eds. Jan Mott and Rainer Ohliger (Essen: Klartext, 2004) 73; Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn, “Guest Workers and Policy on Guest Workers in the Federal Republic,” in *Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany*.

⁴⁴ The guest worker phenomenon was not, however, solely a West German affair. For East German examples please see Jan C. Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger, and Patrice Poutrus, eds., *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR.: Zu Historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland* (Berlin, 2003); Lothar Elsner and Maria Elsner, *Zwischen Nationalismus und Internationalismus: Über Ausländer und Ausländerpolitik in der DDR, 1949-1990*. (Rostock, 1994); “Migration im Kalten Krieg” in *Normalfall Migration*, eds. Klaus Bade and Jochen Oltmer, (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2004) 95; Sandra Gruner-Domić, “Beschäftigung statt Ausbildung. Ausländische Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen in der DDR, (1961-1989)” in *50 Jahre Bundesrepublik – 50 Jahre Einwanderung. Nachkriegsgeschichte als Migrationsgeschichte*, eds. Jan Motte, Rainer Ohliger, and Anne von Oswald (Frankfurt am Main/ New York: Campus, 1999) 215-242; idem, *Kubanische Arbeitskräftemigration in die DDR 1978-1989: Das Arbeitskräfteabkommen Kuba-DDR und dessen Realisierung* (Berlin: 1997); “Soziale Strukturbildung durch Migration und Integration” in *Migration und Integration- Erfahrungen nutzen, Neues Wagen: Jahresgutachten 2004 des Sachverständigenrates für Zuwanderung und Integration* (Berlin: Sachverständigenrat für Zuwanderung und Integration, 2004); Dirk Jasper, “Ausländerbeschäftigung in der DDR,” in Marianne Krüger-Potratz, eds., *Anderssein gab es nicht: Ausländer und Minderheiten in der DDR* (Münster and New York: Waxmann, 1991) 151-189; Young-sun Hong, “The Third World in Two Germanys in the 1960s,” Unpublished Manuscript (Lecture delivered at Rutgers University on March 28, 2005); Jonathan R. Zatlín, “Scarcity and Resentment: Economic Sources of Xenophobia in the GDR, 1971-1989” *Central European History* 40 (2007): 683-720.

voluntary migration. “As I was looking out of the window of the train and noticing that we were crossing the border from Turkey into Bulgaria, I thought, I will return in 5 to 10 years a millionaire,” said Cahit, a Turkish man who arrived in West Germany in 1964.⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that even before arriving in West Germany, this worker had plans to stay longer than the two years stated in his contract. Another Turkish man, Murat, said that he came to West Germany as an official guest worker because of poverty and unemployment at home: “this is the main reason that everybody comes here, but some people lie about it. They say they did this, they did that....It’s all a lie. The only reason to go to [West] Germany, to go abroad is unemployment . . . A person with money in his pockets, doing well in his business, couldn’t stand the difficulties of a foreign land.”⁴⁶ A woman recalling her parents’ departure said:

I remember very well the day that my father left for Germany. . . People came to say goodbye to my father. . . My mother and I were alone in Ankara. . . . [When my mother joined him a year later] I was dropped off at my grandmother’s. It was the most painful day of my life. . . . In Turkey, everybody told us ‘your mother and father are sweeping up money from the ground in Germany.’⁴⁷

In each of these cases—a man looking to find riches, another looking to avoid hardship, and a family willing to endure separation in exchange for economic security—Turkish guest workers describe seeking their own “economic miracles” by going to West Germany. Yet despite the obvious economic reasons for going to West Germany, the decision to stay and create a new life there resulted from a series of negotiations along the way that extended beyond the economic.

⁴⁵ DoMiT Interview, “Cahit.”

⁴⁶ DoMiT Interview, “Murat,” Translation Pinar Gibbon.

⁴⁷ DoMiT Interview, “Aygül,” May 22, 1995; She ended up joining her parents in West Germany a few years later.

Postwar economic miracles were not just the history of West Germany or of the Marshall Plan, but also that of many migrants who sought new futures in Western Europe after 1945, presumably as short-term workers.⁴⁸ In June 1946, Italians left for work in Belgium. In Britain, immigrants arrived from the Caribbean and staffed the country's trains, buses, and municipals services. The Dutch government encouraged workers from Spain, Yugoslavia, Italy, Turkey, Morocco, and Surinam to take jobs in the Netherlands in textiles, mining, and shipbuilding industries. Indeed it was the individuals who were literally moving into and out of the constructed borders of "East" and "West," as much as officials who were engaged in postwar, "modernizing" projects of their own.⁴⁹ Across Western Europe, significant demographic changes occurred in the postwar era as nation-states and individuals turned to immigration and emigration as a way to secure better financial futures.

Additionally, post-war migrants negotiated their movements and their decisions to go and to stay as much as the government officials who governed them did. The individuals who were moving into and out of the constructed borders of "East" and "West," as well as the countries they represented, were engaged in postwar "modernizing" projects of their own. The physical border crossing of Turkish workers into Western Europe was a tangible symbol of the movement of Turkey's labor force and economy in the direction Turkish modernizers had hoped for—they were literally moving to the "West."

⁴⁸ For a comprehensive history of the "Economic Miracle" in Western Europe, including the Marshall plan see Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin 2005) especially pp 95-97, 125, 324-355

⁴⁹ For more on the will inherent in migration see, Dirk Hoerder, *Cultures in Contact: World Migrations in the Second Millennium* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002) xxi.

Turkish workers had a lot in common with other migrants in post war Western Europe. Once labeled as “Turks,” however, it was forgotten that Turks shared many experiences with guest workers coming from other countries. They had the same medical exam, received the same instructional booklets, rode on the same trains, lived in the same dormitories, worked the same jobs, and fought together with other nationalities for better working conditions and wages. This unified experience might explain the slippage in the literature between “guest workers and Turks.” Also, guest workers arriving in West Germany from the Turkish Republic, despite their differences, became uniformly “Turkish” and “Muslim”—or recognized as both instead of just “foreign”—mainly after 1973, when the Turkish population increased exponentially in comparison with guest workers from other countries. It is only rarely that cases of Turkish cultural considerations come to the fore, such as in considerations of diet (no pork). Much to workers’ dismay, in fact, their culturally-specific ideas of modesty and homo-social spaces were not considered during the medical exam, as will be seen in chapter one. At other times, as in gender relations, workers seem to behave in particularly “Turkish” ways, but it is hard to say which behaviors are “Turkish” versus “Mediterranean,” or even solely “Turkish,” considering the vast diversity—inter alia, linguistically, ethnically, religiously, and educationally—that characterizes Turkey and its extremely stratified society. Post-1973 events have made Turks the most visible guest worker population in West Germany, but this does not mean that one should assume that they stood out as a vastly different group during the years of recruitment. Turkish guest workers did not become the majority of guest workers until 1972. (See Table 1) Turkish guest workers were long a smaller portion of a larger population of foreign workers, a point which

emphasizes that Turks were not necessarily destined to become the largest population of foreign workers in West Germany.

Table 1. Foreign Workers in West Germany by Country of Origin as of January 1973

Country of Origin	1963	1964	1965	1966
Italy	216,593	215,367	25,380	304,371
Greece	89,419	124,566	164,125	186,005
Spain	97,465	114,355	149,146	167,501
Portugal	1,857	2,584	6,893	15,231
Yugoslavia	36,442	42,953	48,827	68,673
Turkey	22,054	44,953	94,975	133,000
TOTAL	668,969	764,230	952,461	1,126,593

	1967	1968	1969	1970
Italy	272,455	227,654	282,166	330,049
Greece	171,891	132,655	155,822	206,819
Spain	141,515	106,429	119,997	149,190
Portugal	19,035	16,745	22,107	32,802
Yugoslavia	90,035	84,805	148,439	296,970
Turkey	136,255	123,386	171,018	272,423
TOTAL	1,068,025	903,591	1,136,899	1,575,072

	1971	1972	1973
Italy	362,704	384,303	409,689
Greece	250,971	264,427	268,096
Spain	170,382	175,998	179,498
Portugal	47,387	57,180	69,019
Yugoslavia	415,461	434,893	466,128
Turkey	373,019	449,675	528,239
TOTAL	1,964,213	2,158,680	2,345,115

Source: Duncan Miller and İshan Çetin, *Migrant Workers, Wages, and Labor Markets*, (Istanbul University Faculty of Economics and Institute of Economic Development, 1974).

This study is an attempt to move away from the moralizing and from the predictability of post-colonial studies and studies of foreign workers in West Germany in which we think we know who the “good guys” and “bad guys” are. Instead, I hope to demonstrate the range of individuals involved and the mismatched interests at the state and everyday level that affected everyone involved. In which ways did the new Federal Republic of Germany deal with its recent past and define its relationship with ethnic minorities for its future through the guest worker program? In short, how did West Germany extend the invitation? What did Turkish applicants think while they were riding on the train from Turkey to West Germany? What did West German officials

think about these workers as they saw them after arrival in the Munich train station? What were the initial years of the guest worker program like—the years when officials and employers still considered guest workers “solutions” not “problems”? Finally, what steps did workers take to build more permanent lives in Germany, including how they reached the point, despite negative experiences, to say, as Filiz did, “Why should I leave? I like it here.”

The story of foreign workers in West Germany was not as predictable as contemporary scholars might think. There were also words of welcome, as well as big dreams and plans—but what happened to them? “Up until now, [foreign workers] have been in an experimental phase that has led to positive experiences on both sides. But how should it continue?” asked a contemporary immigration scholar.⁵⁰ “It was a bit surprising when the millionth worker was greeted in 1964. This act was the start of the question on the part of all interested parties, if an extended influx of workers was desired, and if so, what could be done for them.”⁵¹ This study demonstrates the prehistory of today’s ethnic Turkish population in West Germany and how they began relationships with West Germany—with West German authorities, employers, with individual dorm managers as well as women at bars—as well as the futures they envisioned for themselves in West Germany. Knowing how West Germany extended its invitation to its foreign guests changes how we think about why and how these guests arrived and when their relationship with West Germany actually began, affecting, in turn, their sense of belonging.

Study Overview

⁵⁰ Giacomo Maturi, “Die zweite Phase der Ausländerbeschäftigung in der Bundesrepublik” (Heidelberg: Heidelberger Verlagsanstalt und Druckerei GmbH, undated) DoMiT Archive 424 SD.

⁵¹ Ibid.

Like today's ethnic minorities in Western Europe, the first generation of Turkish guest workers was not a unified group; they came from different places, had different education and skill levels, and had different family situations.⁵² (See Table 2). For this study, the "first generation" refers to those who were born in Turkey and came to West Germany as formal applicants of the bi-lateral guest worker program during the years 1961-1973.

Table 2. Turkish Workers by Region of Origin in Turkey

Region:	1967		1968		1969	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Marmara (incl. Istanbul)	3,154	43.6	9,953	24.0	19,949	20.3
Central Anatolia (incl. Ankara)	1,156	16.0	9,536	23.0	23,384	23.8
Black Sea Coast	782	10.8	5,983	14.1	15,790	16.1
Aegean	798	11.0	8,161	19.7	23,382	23.8
Eastern Anatolia	722	10.0	4,095	9.9	7,797	8.0
Southern Anatolia	621	8.6	3,722	9.0	7,840	8.0

Source: Miller, Duncan and İshan Çetin. *Migrant Workers, Wages, and Labor Markets*. Istanbul University Faculty of Economics and Institute of Economic Development, 1974.

I focus on the first generation of Turkish guest workers in specific case studies to demonstrate the constant negotiations involved in the guest worker experience, to demonstrate how relationships between West Germans and Turkish workers began, and to show the initial efforts that officials of both countries made. The scope of this particular project is to examine the first generation of Turkish guest workers who were

⁵² For contemporary comparisons and studies of urban and village life in Turkey, see Nuri Eren, *Turkey Today and Tomorrow: An Experiment in Westernization* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1963); John Kolars, *Tradition, Season, and Change in a Turkish Village* NAS-NRC Foreign Field Research Program Report No. 15 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); Walter F. Weiker, *The Turkish Revolution 1960-1961: Aspects of Military Politics* (Washington, D.C: Brookings Institution, 1963); Joe Pierce, *Life in a Turkish Village* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1964) ; Robert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow, eds., *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964); Denis Hills, *My Travels in Turkey* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964); Paul Stirling, *Turkish Village* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1965); non-Turkish sociologists from the United States and from England conducted these studies providing a useful look at how Turkish life was perceived from the outside in the 1960s.

recruited by West German employers during the years 1961-1973 and who then stayed on in Germany to form today's population of over two million ethnic Turks.⁵³ This first generation included male and female guest workers. An International Labor Migration Project report stated that the proportion of Turkish female workers abroad increased from 5% in 1960, to 16% in 1970, and to 22.4% by 1972.⁵⁴ Though their percentage was small, this did not make their migration negligible.⁵⁵ Despite making up only a small percentage, women guest workers were in high demand and West German employers recruited them heavily. This exodus of Turkish women, starting in the 1960s, was unparalleled, unprecedented, and produced major changes, including newfound economic independence for Turkish women, the replacement of extended family networks by nuclear families, and new marital strains and conflicts.⁵⁶ It is important to note that these women were not spouses following their husbands to Germany but workers with contracts. (However, family members also followed employed relatives and spouses in Germany.) (See Table 3)

Table 3. Turkish Women Guest Workers in West Germany 1960-1973

Year:	1961	1962	1963	1964	1966	1967
	46	504	2,476	5,022	9,611	3,488
	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973
	11,302	20,711	20,624	13,700	16,498	28,839

⁵³ Studies on populations of former Turkish guest workers who returned to Turkey after having worked in West Germany would be a useful counter weight to this project.

⁵⁴ Kudat, Ayşe and Ali Gitmez, *Emigration Effects on the Turkish Countryside: A Representative Study of Settlement Units*, International Labor Migration Project, (Berlin: International Institute for Comparative Social Studies of the Science Center Berlin, May 1975).

⁵⁵ Previous studies emphasize that Turkish women did not play a significant role in guest worker migration, because they did not come in large numbers until after 1973. Karin Hunn and Ulrich Herbert write, "The history of guest workers in the 1960s is a history of men," in "Guest Workers and Policy on Guest Workers in the Federal Republic;" See also Karin Hunn, *Nächstes Jahr*; However, I find that women guest workers did play significant roles, see Monika Mattes, *Gastarbeiterinnen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Anwerbepolitik, Migration und Geschlecht in den 50er bis 70er Jahren* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005).

⁵⁶ Abadan-Unat, 331.

Source: Monika Mattes. 'Gastarbeiterinnen' in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Anwerbepolitik, Migration und Geschlecht in den 50er bis 70er Jahren. Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2005. 39.

In fact, most of the Turkish workers in the early 1960s traveled alone, without their spouses, children, or extended family. Furthermore, for the most part this group of Turkish workers was traveling to West Germany for the first time, many with little knowledge of the German language, people, or customs, an aspect that set guest workers apart from former colonial subjects who were traveling to colonial metropolises. The education levels and hometowns varied widely among Turkish guest workers. Lastly, this first generation of Turkish guest workers was distinct from populations of both ethnic Turks and Kurds who emigrated to West Germany and Western Europe in general after the 1980 military coup in Turkey. Up to 300,000 Turkish citizens came to Europe as either refugees or political asylum seekers at this point and made claims on the West German state that were quite different from those of the invited guest workers.⁵⁷ Such refugees and asylum seekers were at the center of entirely different debates occurring within the German parliament, regardless of the fact that the general population did not necessarily recognize this group as distinctive.

Chapter Outline

The first chapter of the dissertation looks at how West Germany extended its invitation to potential Turkish guest workers in Turkey and discusses applicants' first encounters with their future "hosts." This first chapter explores the beginnings of the guest worker process, starting with the application procedure in Turkey, and argues that

⁵⁷ For more information on asylum-seekers in West and East Germany see, Klaus J. Bade and Jochen Oltmer, "Migration im Kalten Krieg" and "Einwandererbevolkerung und neue Zuwanderungen im vereinigten Deutschland seit 1990" in *Normalfall Migration* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2004) 52-132.

despite strict, bureaucratic procedures—presented in detailed instruction manuals⁵⁸ and German employment office memos—workers were able to make modifications and negotiations within the process, often by relying on networks of friends and family. As in subsequent chapters, I use the Turkish perspective, as revealed in oral history interviews, not only to access workers’ experiences and concerns about the labor agreement, but also to look for the ways in which the workers attempted to maintain agency within a strict, bureaucratic, and at times dehumanizing process.⁵⁹ Inherent in oral history is a shift in the focus and perspective of knowledge production as well as access to exactly the kinds of experiences that are less likely to survive—those that are more personal, local, and unofficial.⁶⁰ This chapter positions the beginnings of the guest worker arrangement in Turkey, at least a full year before arrival in West Germany; focuses on the frustration, confusion, and bureaucracy of the preliminary plans; and demonstrates how employers, government officials, and workers set up initial relationships with one another.⁶¹

⁵⁸ The 1964 manual, “*İşçi olarak Almanya’ya Nasıl Gidiler?*” located in the National Library in Ankara, is an example of the instruction booklets that were available to Turkish workers before departure.

⁵⁹ The oral history interviews are an archived collection of the Documentation Center and Museum for Migration in Cologne (DoMiT). During the years 1994-1997, DoMiT co-workers interviewed ethnic Turkish men and women who live in Germany. Former workers were selected from different areas of Germany, were asked the same questions, and where both men and women. The interviews were conducted in Turkish and are archived as audio files at DoMiT in Cologne. A small selection has also been transcribed and of this selection, a selection has also been translated into German. I worked with both Turkish and German versions.

⁶⁰ For a useful discussion on oral history as a primary source, see Paul Thompson, “The Voice of the Past,” in which he writes, “oral history is not necessarily an instrument of change; it depends upon the spirit in which it is used. Nevertheless, oral history certainly can be a means for transforming both the content and the purpose of history. It can be used to change the focus . . . and open up new areas of inquiry; . . . it can give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place,” in *The Oral History Reader*, eds. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (London and New York: Routledge, 1998) 21-29; here 22.

⁶¹ While scholars have discussed the politics of the application, such as the different versions of the agreement, they have yet to address what was involved in the year-long application process or how workers themselves interpreted it. See Monika Mattes, *Gastarbeiterinnen in der Bundesrepublik: Anwerbepolitik, Migration und Geschlecht in den 50er bis 70er Jahren*; Karin Hunn, ‘*Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück . . . ,Die Geschichte der türkischen ,Gastarbeiter’ in der Bundesrepublik*. Klaus Bade,

The second chapter considers the transportation from Turkey to Germany—the train ride that most workers had to take. In this chapter, I argue that applicants became guest workers long before arrival in West Germany. West German officials negotiated with the national rail administrations in Turkey, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and with German Rail in an attempt to organize a smooth transition to West Germany, an attempt that was ultimately unsuccessful.⁶² Because they were unsuccessful, West German Employment officials' concerns and efforts were unseen by workers, who took away from the trip to West Germany another negative experience with German officials, as well as the feeling of being treated as second-class citizens long before arrival.

The third chapter of the dissertation analyzes workers' everyday lives after their arrival in Germany, specifically in guest-worker dormitories. In this chapter, I follow the daily rounds of the house manager as he comments in his journal in great detail on the happenings of the dormitory. In this chapter, workers' reactions, as well as the notes of an external auditor, speak in tandem with the meticulous records of the dorm manager. Life in the dormitory was ultimately a power struggle manifested in the relationships between dorm managers and residents and the clashes of their varied perspectives. Ultimately, despite how closely dorm managers monitored residents, in addition to their lack of private space, both male and female workers were able to exert control over their daily existence in West Germany by ignoring rules to create active social lives.

The fourth chapter focuses on Turkish guest workers' experience in the work place and in turn their activism for workers' rights. This chapter discusses the beginnings

Rita Chin, Ulrich Herbert, and Ray Rist all narrate the history of guest workers after arrival in West Germany; See Chin, *The 'Guest Worker' Question*; Ray Rist, *Guest Workers in Germany: The Prospects for Pluralism* (New York: Praeger, 1978).

⁶² Officials were concerned with the Nazi connotations of the term "Transport" and discussed alternative terms for trainloads of Turkish workers.

of foreign worker-based labor movements that no longer distinguished among foreign workers by nationality and included the first signs of solidarity among foreign and native-born workers in West Germany. This chapter takes as a case study the Pierburg Strike, in which foreign women and German women banded together to protest against their gendered lower “wage group” as well as other strikes in which Turkish workers played a primary role. I argue in this chapter that through labor organizing foreign workers signaled a commitment to broader participation in West German society and a longer-term commitment to life in West Germany than previously recognized. It was also precisely this type of labor organizing and raised consciousness that made employers question if guest workers would become “problems” instead of “solutions” in the future.

In the end, few got what they expected from the guest worker agreement. Nothing went according to plan—not for the authors of the Turkish Five Year Plan, not for the West German officials of the Federal Employment Bureau, and not for the West German employers. It is unclear why guest workers decided to stay in West Germany after having such negative experiences during the application process, during the trip to West Germany, and after arrival both at home and at work. However, it is clear that Guest workers were not simply victims of poor situations, and they did not simply bide their time in West Germany either. Guest workers crafted new lives, adjusted their expectations, and some had successes and some had failures, but all engaged in personal negotiations with their situations. When E.G. Ravenstein wrote the “Laws of Migration” in 1885, he spoke in terms of flows, currents, waves and aquatic imagery, writing about “the stream of migrants passing from one country into another . . . [and of the] eddies and

shallows in such a current”⁶³ Yet today’s population of ethnic Turks in Germany did not “flow in” to Germany, riding a wave. This population evolved through individual negotiations of a long, tedious process, including negotiations of constantly evolving relationships and plans for what they hoped to gain in West Germany. Understanding ethnic Turks’ present in Germany requires rediscovering their past.

⁶³ E. G. Ravenstein, *The Laws of Migration*, papers 1 and 2 (New York: Arno, 1976) 287.

CHAPTER ONE: RSVP: The Application Process

In 1964, the Director of the West German Federal Employment Agency, Anton Sabel, went to Istanbul to celebrate the departure of the 10,000th worker from Turkey, three years after the official program had started. Sabel wanted to thank Turkish workers publicly for helping West Germany, saying, “We are thankful for all the relief to Germany that the Turkish workers’ departure allows. We are trying to shorten the waiting period.”⁶⁴ Sabel also wanted to assure the newly-departing Turkish workers, as well as the greater Turkish public, that workers in West Germany were leading comfortable and prosperous lives, that they had the same rights as West German workers, and (perhaps as a bonus) that the surplus of women in West Germany meant that a German girlfriend was a possibility.⁶⁵ One Turkish newspaper reported Sabel saying, “many foreign workers are marrying German girls.”⁶⁶ Significantly, Sabel, a West German official, is opening suggesting a more permanent life in West Germany, through marriage to a German girl—sending a mixed signal at a time when workers are supposed to be temporary.

For those who had been considering applying for the opportunity to travel to West Germany to work, or who had been wait-listed, Sabel’s news was encouraging—encouragement that workers needed to sustain them through the tedious application process, which was bureaucratic, expensive, and offered few guarantees. At the heart of Sabel’s message was the sentiment that he was trying to sell work in West Germany to potential workers by describing it as a “comfortable, prosperous” life, by pointing out

⁶⁴ “1964 yılının 10 bininci işçisi Almanyaya gitti,” *Cumhuriyet*, 17 Mart 1964.

⁶⁵ “Almanya’ya on bininci işçi gitti,” *Dünya*, March 17, 1964. At this point there were currently two million more women than men in West Germany.

⁶⁶ “1964 yılının 10 bininci işçisi Almanya’ya gitti” *Cumhuriyet* March 17, 1964; See also “76 Günde 10,4000 İşçi Gitti,” *Milliyet*, 17 Mart 1964.

that workers had the same rights as Germans, that they were helping West Germans, and, lastly, by offering the possibility of German women as potential partners. Regardless of the positive press, at the time of Sabel's visit in 1964, over 150,000 Turkish workers were already waiting to leave for West Germany.⁶⁷ In the period between 1961 and 1973, the German Liaison Office in Turkey processed on average more than 50,000 workers per year, meaning around 160 were chosen from between 180 to 200 interviews.⁶⁸

The German and Turkish employment offices set up an elaborate, orderly application procedure for the processing of the large and steady stream of potential Turkish workers. Yet workers' recollections, as well as memos from the employment offices, reveal several areas in which this application process broke down. Poor planning, miscommunication, and cultural insensitivity plagued applying to the program. Nevertheless, Turkish applicants found ways to navigate a confusing and overly bureaucratic process, even bending rules if need be, offering evidence of the control that applicants were able to exert in a situation in which they could easily be exploited. It is not that the West German officials provided a "right" way of doing things, and that the Turkish applicants tried to get around it, but rather that all involved set their own terms and then worked within them, negotiating the process on their own terms where possible.

Despite official attempts to standardize the application process, there was great variation and constant modification. For some workers, applying was tedious and lasted many years—years of appointments, long lines, repeated examinations, and frustration in general. At the same time, other workers skipped exams and were able to speed through the process. Published application guidelines described a bureaucratic, orderly process;

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Mathilde Jamin, "Fremde Heimat: Zur Geschichte der Arbeitsmigration aus der Türkei" in *50 Jahre Bundesrepublik*, 153.

yet according to interviews with former workers, these published guidelines were hardly representative. Moreover, the inconsistencies, between the Turkish Employment Office's published instructions and former workers' accounts, reveal a mismatch of intentions and agendas. The application procedure rarely resembled policy makers' detailed plans.

How Does One Go to Germany to Work?

Working in Germany began in Turkey. According to printed instructions, a potential worker's first step was to contact one of the German Liaison Offices, which were only located in the capital of Ankara or in Istanbul and later at a location on the Aegean coast, Izmir, and Zonguldak as well. (See Image One).

Image One. Map of Turkey with German Liaison Offices marked, clockwise, from left to right, Izmir, Istanbul, Zonguldak [a town on the Black Sea coast], and Ankara.



All applicants had to apply in person at an official branch of the Employment office, which meant a time-consuming and expensive trip for many, especially those living east or south of Ankara in this country of 302,535 square miles. The Liaison Office exclusively controlled recruitment, taking over from earlier, less formal programs and processes, and it developed an extensive application procedure to screen, process,

and place potential workers.⁶⁹ The majority of officially-recruited applicants, approximately 70% of workers who applied, were accepted, and had the Liaison Office arrange their transportation to West Germany through either the Istanbul or Ankara branch.⁷⁰ Approximately 640,000 Turkish men and women applied at either the Istanbul office (from 1961 - 1973) or, additionally, at the Ankara office (from 1963 - 1967).⁷¹

For workers wishing to go to West Germany through the official channels, they had a lot of bureaucracy ahead of them. To guide workers through the process, the Turkish Employment Office published guidelines in Turkish, such as the booklet, *How Does One go to Germany to Work? Living Conditions in the Federal Republic of Germany*.⁷² Despite the subtitle, the booklet focused solely on the ins and outs of the application procedure in *Turkey* and asserted the absolute authority of the Employment Office. In fact, to emphasize their control over the process, the guide opened with the preface that it was forbidden to find a job from a private person or office. Other orientation materials included phrases of welcome in their titles, such as “*Hallo Mustafa: A Heartfelt Welcome to Germany*.”

More than just instructional booklets, orientation materials were also a way for West German officials to present the new West Germany as a host to potential workers.

In *Hallo Mustafa*, the author noted that guest workers would be living and not just

⁶⁹ In an extended version of this manuscript, I plan to discuss in more detail workers who travel to West Germany through unofficial channels.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 79-99. There were also a significant number of Turkish workers who went to West Germany via the so-called “Second Path” (unofficial channels) such as traveling with a tourist visa. Statistics on unofficial travel are hard to calculate, though there are plenty of references to them in both West German officials notes as well as in interview with former workers who openly admit coming to West Germany as tourists and then looking for work after arrival. Some were only able to work “under the table.” I will discuss workers who came illegally in an expanded version of this text.

⁷¹ Karin Hunn, *Nächstes Jahr*, 79.

⁷² İş ve işçi bulma Kurumu Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları, *İşçi Olarak Almanya'ya Nasıl Gidiler? Federal Almanya'da Yaşma Şartları*, no. 28 (Ankara: Mars Matbaası, 1963), National Library Ankara; The same guidelines for the application procedure are also outlined in “Bericht: Dienstreise vom 14.29. Oktober 1961,” BArch B 119 / 3077 I.

working in West Germany, emphasizing contact with Germans: “I know that you had concrete goals as you left your homeland for the foreign. You want to earn money . . . But one also *lives* in the period when one is toiling away . . . One looks around and sees fellow men, who also see, notice, greet and speak to him or her.”⁷³ Another passage emphasized that guest workers should not feel alone or excluded in Germany, “Your rambles through our towns are like visits in a zoo or in a museum for you. You were alone. Perhaps you are still alone. But you should not feel alone. Today I want to welcome you. We work and live side by side.”⁷⁴ Despite such words of welcome and concern there was little evidence of formal steps taken by those who ordered such booklets to address feelings of loneliness and to address integration in West German society or “working and living side by side.” Like Sabel’s suggestion of marrying a German girl, the booklets also imply a more permanent life in West Germany, with their focus on social lives and social inclusion, especially with the statement that one “also lives in the period when one is toiling away.”

Instructional manuals ran counter to today’s ideas about the false planning of the guest-worker program, the integration of guest-workers, and of the lack of long-term considerations. Camaraderie was a focus of the welcome to Germany in *Hallo Mustafa*: “We want to be good friends. We are not just fellow citizens of the world, also of this small Europe, that we all want to rebuild in peace together, simply because we belong together. . . We are at home in Europe: we are neither foreign nor guests.”⁷⁵ The message of being “at home in Europe” as a fellow European, peacefully rebuilding stands

⁷³ Dr. Giacomo Maturi, Willi Baumgartner, Stefan Bobolis, Konstantin Kustas, Vittorio Bedolli, Guillermo Arrillage, Sümer Göksuyer, eds, illustrations, Richard Haschberger, *Hallo Mustafa! Günther Türk arkadaşı ile konuşuyor* (Heidelberg: Dr. Curt Haefner Verlag, 1966) 4, emphasis mine.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 5.

in stark contrast to later developments in which policy makers emphasized that guest workers could not achieve European citizenship or societal integration. Additionally, such a comment on European solidarity as an inherent part of the guest worker program would prove to be an opinion not reflected in guest-worker housing or in future labor relations or legislation, but it remains indicative of the initial spirit of the early years of the guest worker programs. Additionally, although instructional manuals rarely discussed the length of guest workers' stay in West Germany, *Hallo Mustafa* did comment that workers' stays could be more permanent:

I want to tell you something in good faith that you have probably already noticed: good workers are needed here; you are needed, and most likely not just for this year. Here you can start something and if you are tenacious and a little bit adaptive you can make plans for the long term, and you will certainly not be eternally a foreigner or a guest, but known as an equal and esteemed colleague.⁷⁶

Such messages of European unity and of long-term plans in West Germany conflicted with the messages of both the lengthy application process that scrutinized “non-Europeans” and of the guest-worker program’s rotation principle. The German-Turkish agreement of October 30, 1961 stated that Turkish workers would be in West Germany for two years. However, already in 1962, officials considered striking the limitation on the stay in West Germany, citing orientation costs and problems with integration in the factory.⁷⁷ In the September 30, 1964 revision of the agreement, officials jettisoned the rotation clause and no other limit on the stay in West Germany was included in the contract.⁷⁸ Equally important, ideas of a permanent stay might also offer clues as to what

⁷⁶ Ibid, 6.

⁷⁷ Barbara Sonnenberger, “Verwaltete Arbeitskraft: die Anwerbung von ‘Gastarbeiter’ in den 1950er und 1960er Jahren” in *Migration Steuern und Verwalten*, ed. Jochen Oltmer, IMIS Schriften 12 (Göttingen: Hubert & Co, 2003) 145-176, here, 160; See also Jamin, “Die deutsch-türkischen Anwerbevereinbarung von 1961 und 1964” in idem and Aytac Eryilmaz, eds., *Fremde Heimat*, 69-82, here 82.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

applicants traveling to West Germany might have had in mind about their future homes and their plans there.

In order to orient foreign workers in West Germany, instructional booklets also focused on German history and society. In the case of *How Does One go to Germany to Work*, the cover features great buildings, great mountains, and a great thinker, highlighting the positive aspects of German history and society (See Image Two).

The booklet, *Would You Like to Get to Know Germany?* has a cover image of women and men in traditional dress dancing a folk dance (see Image Three), and begins with a brief introduction to German history, from the Holy Roman Empire through both World Wars.



Image Two. “How Does One Go To Germany to Work? Living Conditions in the Federal Republic of Germany” *Source:* İş ve İşçi Bulma Kurumu Genel Müdürlüğü Yayınları No 28 (Ankara: Mars Matbassı, 1963) DoMit, 637 SD.

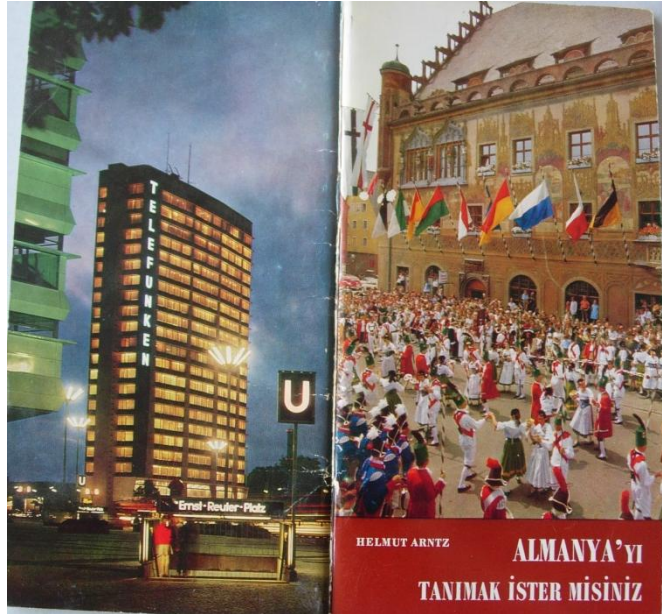


Image Three. Would You Like to Get to Know Germany?

Source: Helmut Artz, *Almanya'yı Tanımak istersiniz?*
 Wiesbaden: Wiesbadener Graphischer Betriebe, 1965.
 DoMiT, 977.

Booklets addressed issues in Nazi Germany in elliptical fashion, intimating a continuity of democracy and self-determination even in the Third Reich. When discussing the interwar period, *Would You Like to Get to Know Germany* vaguely stated, “The Saar Basin that was to be subject to an international administration under the League of Nations in 1919, was returned to Germany following a plebiscite in 1935.”⁷⁹ In a similar fashion, *Today's Germany*, covers topics such as history, prices, tourism, and

⁷⁹ “1919 yılında Milletler Cemiyet’in kontrolü altında milletlerarası bir idareye tabi tutulmuş olan Saar Havası 1935 yılında yapılan bir plebisit neticesinde tekrar Almanya’ya iltihak eder.” 1935 is perhaps better known as the year of the introduction of the Nuremburg Laws, which sought to give legal validity to racial discrimination and introduced categories of full and partial citizenship. 1935 was also the year of clear breaches of the Treaty of Versailles by Germany, including a rearmament program, introduction of conscription, and the existence of a German air force. Needless to say, this single, one-sentence description of the interwar period and rise of Hitler was lacking in a troubling way.

social life, and features a cover image of centuries-old architecture (See image Four). A note from the publisher on the inside cover points out that the “Federal Government of Germany” called for its publication, underscoring the role that the West German government played in attempting to orient foreign workers for life in West Germany. While helpful on matters such as German history and culture, as well as, in some cases, providing information on prices, wages, and social services, such orientation booklets could offer little to prepare workers for what their lives as guest workers would be like upon arrival in West Germany.



Image Four. “Today’s Germany”
Printed in 1957, with the publisher’s information is also the note
“published at the insistence of the Federal Government
of Germany.” *Source:* DoMiT, K05 052.

Overwhelmingly, paperwork dominated becoming a guest worker. A potential worker's first step was to contact the Federal Employment Office, where he or she would fill out the necessary paper work, which included listing a profession, education level, and (for men) whether or not military service had been completed. The result of this paper work was receipt of a 'worker's card,' an appointment date, and a placement number. Since all applications had to be done in person, applying for someone else was not allowed. However, applying in person also meant that workers had to travel to one of the Employment Office branches in either Istanbul or Ankara—a time-consuming, expensive trip. One former worker, Adil, recounted that he had to borrow money to be able to travel to Ankara once he got his appointment: "We had no money. I went to the village merchants . . . and asked them to loan me 100 Lira. No one gave me the money. I friend of mine managed to get the money for me so that we could go to Ankara."⁸⁰ For workers who were unemployed, application expenses would have been extremely difficult to secure. For employed applicants, taking time off to meet appointments and procure documents was equally difficult.

In addition to application fees (for, inter alia, the medical exam, the passport application, and postage), travel to Istanbul and room and board along the way had to be considered as well. (West German employers only covered the cost of the trip to West Germany from Istanbul.) The trip to Istanbul could take up to eight days in some cases. The total cost of the application procedure was on average 181 Turkish Lira or about \$13 dollars in 1963.⁸¹ This was not a small price to pay for a Turkish worker in the early 1960s. To put the application costs in perspective, the wages listed for a Turkish male

⁸⁰ DoMiT Interview 28, "Adil" June 22, 1995.

⁸¹ *İşçi*, 15.

worker were hourly rates of between 2 and 2.8 DM and for female workers an hourly wage of between 1.50 and 1.70 DM.⁸² In other words, a woman would have to work about 32 hours in West Germany or 128 hours in Turkey⁸³ to earn the amount equivalent to the application fees.

Adil's experience of borrowing money to be able to go to the Employment Office was fairly common. In her 1964 study of Turkish guest workers, Turkish social scientist Nermin Abadan-Unat found that workers typically paid for travel to the Ankara or Istanbul Employment Offices by borrowing money or by selling off their belongings.⁸⁴ Furthermore, applicants had to stay in hotels or pensions during the 10-12 days of bureaucracy. After the application was completed, the wait was not over: the typical period between the date of application and the departure date was between one and three months.⁸⁵ As applicants flooded employment offices, delays in the application process resulted from the beleaguered and understaffed offices. A memo to the Federal Office of Employment noted that the staff was overwhelmed, lacked office space, and at best could hope to reduce the period between signing the contract and placement to six to eight weeks.⁸⁶ Therefore, because offices were simply overwhelmed, waiting for the Employment Office to process one's application was a common and expensive part of the trip to West Germany. The German Liaison office did not collect data on applicants' trips from their hometowns and villages to Liaison office branches, and workers' recollections provide only a vague sense of the costs involved in applying. However, for

⁸² *İşçi*, 30-31.

⁸³ In his study, Aker writes that workers in Germany earned four times as much as they did in Turkey, Ahmet Aker, "A Study of Turkish Labour Migration to Germany," Institute of Foreign Policy Research: The Johns Hopkins University Bologna Center School of Advanced International Studies, no 10, (July 1974) 28.

⁸⁴ Abadan-Unat, 57.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ 1. Okt 1968 BArch B 119 / 3073.

some the costs of applying must have been insurmountable, especially considering the loss in wages for those already employed.

Published guides emphasized that workers had little say over their placement. Employers' demands determined the direction of causation: the Employment Office was not looking for jobs that matched workers' skills, but rather for employees who matched the jobs offered. Candidates could either list one single profession or state that they were open to any profession. If the latter was the case, however, they would have to take the work assigned to them, and they would be forfeiting their rights to protest if they later found a job in Germany that better suited their education and vocational training. One had to select carefully which profession to list, since it would determine one's departure order. If two workers applied on the same day, a worker who had a profession that was currently in demand would be given priority and sent first.⁸⁷ "Additionally," the booklet states, "Germans might be looking for a specific age, education level, and work experience."⁸⁸ In other words, applicants who matched specific, requested descriptions would be given priority as demand arose. Consequentially, workers might have tried to list what they hoped would be a more desired profession, but picking the wrong profession could potentially trap an applicant in an endless waiting process as jobs were continuously opened and filled—a process that offered little transparency for applicants. Workers were, therefore, at the mercy of the market-driven demands of German employers, creating a frustrating, helpless or hopeless situation for many who might be left waiting for years.

⁸⁷ *İşçi*, 5.

⁸⁸ *İşçi*, 9.

Workers' recollections, however, do not mention placement numbers or procedures or even order at all. Instead, they recall chaotic scenes and confusion at the employment office and at the departure point, where a man used a megaphone to shout instructions to thousands of workers waiting in line. According to one former worker, Erol, instead of calling the name of workers with appointments the man with the megaphone called company names. "The Bremen something factory," Erol paraphrased, "to the dockyards, . . . to Opel in Rüsselheim, to Volkswagen in Wolfsburg, to Mercedes, and so on and so forth."⁸⁹ Moreover, even successful assignment was not always sufficient. Even though Erol had already been assigned a position at Siemens and was ready and waiting to leave, Siemens management did not take him, because they had apparently already filled their personnel quota. Erol had quit his job, traveled to Istanbul, and gone through a yearlong application process, only for Siemens to turn him away at the point of departure. Erol's example points out that employers were also working around procedures, which mandated that workers be selected based on their skill-set, their place in the waiting list, and other decisions that were to be made by the German Liaison office selection committee.

How to go to Germany does not address cases like Erol's; in fact, it does not mention quotas at all. Indeed, the booklet is concerned with the West German employers not the applicants: the authors warned that the application process would take about a month's time and that one should not give up on it and "*disappoint the wishes of the German employer*, especially without prior notification."⁹⁰ Much to the dismay of people like Erol, there were no comments in the instructional booklets about ways in which West

⁸⁹DOMIT Interview 22 "Erol" October 12, 1995.

⁹⁰ *İşçi*, 14, emphasis mine.

German employers might frustrate applicants. However, it was not just West German employers who subverted the official application process: once in West Germany, workers and employers could work together through a process called “nominated appointment” (*Namentliche Anforderung*) in which workers convinced employers to hire friends or family members by requesting them by name, regardless of their standing in the waiting list.⁹¹

The Liaison Office had the ultimate control over appointments and had little patience for those unable to comply with their rigid regulations. Applicants who traveled to West Germany through unofficial channels as tourists often had visa problems because of not working with the Liaison office, as was the case with Ms. Arikan who traveled to West Germany as a tourist and found a job only to be fired for not having a work visa.⁹² Furthermore, the Employment Office noted that it would not be held responsible if, after having received a letter of appointment, it was found that a worker had failed his or her medical exam, did not have the profession required, had not or could not obtain a passport, had been convicted, or had left the country in an illegal way.⁹³

Though instructional booklets might not have had much information about future employers, they did offer clues as how employers and the German recruiters perceived Turkish applicants. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the published directives display the point of view of the German employers with their wants and needs in mind. Instructional

⁹¹ Nürnberg, Weicken, “Tätigkeit der Deutschen Verbindungsstelle in der Türkei und der Deutschen Kommission in Griechenland,” 17. Mai 1968 BArch, B 119/ 3074, notes problems with nominated appointments, pointing out that requested relatives are not always “ready for departure; 4,700 applicants were reported to be nominated applicants between October 18 and November 22, 1969, BArch B 119/ 4031.

⁹² Landesarbeitsamt Baden-Württemberg an BAVAV, 23. Jan 1963, BArch B 119/ 3071; in this case the State Employment Office in Stuttgart is petitioning the Federal Office on her behalf for a work visa.

⁹³ *İşçi*, 8.

booklets were filled with admonishments based on stereotypes of a Turkish mentality, in which the authors discouraged tardiness, stated that criminals need not apply, and emphasized that bribery would not be tolerated. Unlike the scene Erol described, the published instructions provide a bureaucratic and systematic path to Germany. They state that to find open positions, workers had to go to the German Liaison Offices in Turkey where “committees of qualified members” would select workers through a precise and systematic process.⁹⁴ Apparently, German employers would first communicate their wants and needs to the Federal Employment Office, whose employees would then notify the various branches in Turkey. Second, “a committee of at least two people” would consider candidates to see if they matched the “desired age, education, and experience requested by the German employer.”⁹⁵ Third, candidates who matched were then sent letters of invitation, and, fourth, within ten days of receiving the letter of invitation, candidates had to report to the local employment office. If applicants did not report within ten days, they would risk losing their place and would have to start the application process over again from the beginning. Assuming workers followed these steps, to lose one’s place would have been extremely frustrating considering the personal expenses of travel and application fees. Yet the extremely limited advance warning often made it impossible for workers to make the deadline. Finally, an additional committee, of at least “three staff members from suitable bureaus of the Employment Office,” would determine the particular position assigned to a potential worker by taking into consideration the wishes of the German employers, whether or not the candidate had the

⁹⁴ *İşçi*, 8-9.

⁹⁵ *İşçi*, 6.

appropriate age, education, skill-level, physical build, and even “personal appearance and attitude.”⁹⁶

Determining personal appearance and attitude added an element of the subjective to the application process, one that implied West Germans’ interpretations of potential Turkish workers’ character. “Those considered inappropriate,” the instructional guide warns, “will not be chosen and the referral process will be stopped. The selection committee’s decision is final.”⁹⁷ For example, a criminal record would prevent a potential applicant from being eligible. The booklet notes that persons proven to have committed any of the following crimes would not be considered, because they were “inexcusable”: embezzlers, thieves, pickpockets, bribery, rapists or “any persons convicted of other such ‘disreputable’ crimes.”⁹⁸ Therefore, the employment office sought to have workers who were not only skilled in a desired profession, but also of a presumed moral character. Although the committee had no basis on which to make such judgment, the booklets also warned against other registers of moral and cultural deficiency. For example, tardiness was not acceptable, as this cartoon, from *Hallo Mustafa* makes clear. (See Image Five.)

⁹⁶ *İşçi*, 9.

⁹⁷ *İşçi*, 9.

⁹⁸ *İşçi*, 4.



Image Five: “Don’t be Late!” *Hallo Mustafa*, 9, DoMiT, 424-431.

Above all, bribery would not be tolerated: the authors strictly note that the services of the Employment office were free and that officers would not take money from Turkish workers seeking employment nor from German employers looking for workers. How prevalent a role bribery or harassment might have played is not clear; however, the fact that both Turkish publications and German internal memos mention bribery demonstrates that officials were greatly concerned. Turkish and German authorities’ attention to bribery could either be considered as playing on stereotypes or as an awareness of a certain Turkish cultural sensibility—a recognition that such practices took place in Turkish bureaucracy and were simply an aspect of a different bureaucratic system, even if they were at odds with those in West Germany. (See Image Six)



Image Six, Heinz von Harassowski, Director of the German Liaison Office in Istanbul (1970-1976) checking a passport for authenticity.
 Source: Jamin and Eryılmaz eds., *Fremde Heimat*, p 125.

An October 1961 report from the German Employment Office implied that bribery was a commonplace occurrence in Turkey: “Bribery does not evoke a moral dilemma for Turks, they do not have any moral qualms [about it]. Whoever lets himself be tricked is considered the dummy.”⁹⁹

Printed instructions warning against tardiness and bribery actually did signal a bit of cultural awareness on the part of West German officials. Bribery and barter were somewhat common aspects of Turkish bureaucracy at the time. Indeed, in interviews, former workers talked openly about the role of bribery during the application process. For example, Hasan, who went to work at Ford in 1962, said that when his blood was taken during the medical exam, he gave the man 50-60 Lira to “make sure it was clean.”¹⁰⁰ Another worker, Adil, recalls that he went to a man in his village and asked

⁹⁹ Dr. Keintzel, “Bericht über Erkundung der Anwerbemöglichkeiten von türkischen Bergleuten für den deutschen Steinkohlenbergbau in der Türkei. Dienstreise vom 14.- 29. Oktober 1961” BArch B 119/ 3077 I, 9.

¹⁰⁰ DoMiT Interview, “Hasan,” June 22, 1995.

him to come up with a letter stating that he had worked for him for two years.¹⁰¹ Another man, Mehmet, who was injured in the military and had lost the use of his hands, had his friends “harass” a German doctor. This German doctor had previously told Mehmet that no one would possibly hire him in such a condition, but later (after the alleged “harassment”) the doctor signed off on a forged medical record. As a result, Mehmet made it all the way to West Germany, but his employer subsequently fired him when he discovered that Mehmet could barely use his hands.¹⁰²

Erol noted when describing his medical exam that the men in line helped one another, sharing, for example, urine samples if someone knew of a problem; another man had friends fashion fake tooth fillings for him from bottle tops. Moreover, despite the detailed application procedure outlined in published instructions, another former worker had a friend set up his application for him within only a week's time with the help of a forged document:

. . . [A] friend . . . told us that if any of us wanted to go to Germany, he could arrange it; he knew someone who could send us there. I didn't quite believe what he said, but at the same time I wanted to go to Germany. He took us to the Employment Office . . . [then] the man he knew took me to the German Liaison Office . . . The people working there knew about my friend's friend, and they welcomed us. This guy told the civil servant working there to send me to Germany. They said, ‘Your wish is our command.’ They immediately filled out an application with an old date on it, and I signed it. I got my invitation within a week and started doing the paperwork.¹⁰³

In this case, neither an applicant number, an assessment of his moral character, professional abilities, age, nor general appropriateness mattered; he was connected. In short, for many workers the printed instructions were false, irrelevant, ineffectual, or ignored at some point. Significantly, workers' ability to ignore or modify instructions or

¹⁰¹ DoMiT Interview, “Adil”

¹⁰² DoMiT Interview, “Mehmet,” June 27, 1995.

¹⁰³ DoMiT Interview, “Mehmet,” October 9, 1995.

call on networks of friends and family for help is evidence of how they manipulated the situation instead of simply being manipulated by it. Especially in the extremely exhaustive and invasive medical exam, workers willingly helped one another negotiate the application process, despite the dizzying list of requirements and bureaucracy published instructions outlined. The medical exams also highlight that there were two very different institutionalized bureaucracies at work here that presented a cultural clash.

Appointment through official channels was an involved, multi-step process, at least according to published literature. Workers who were accepted via the official channels would receive a letter of appointment, which provided the first and only information about their future work in Germany—the name and location of the position, the hourly wages, the amount of deductions for taxes and health insurance, information about overtime wages, yearly vacation and social help, whether or not room and board would be provided, and, if applicable, what deductions from wages would be made to cover these costs.¹⁰⁴ Even though the published instructions state that information about assignments in Germany would be given in detail, it was, however, unlikely that applicants knew much about their placement in advance. Second, workers who accepted these conditions then had to provide additional paperwork: proof of a clear criminal record, proof of small pox vaccinations, birth certificates, passport pictures, and letters of recommendation from previous jobs.¹⁰⁵ They also needed to obtain a passport, visas (for Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, which they would pass through on the train), foreign currency (in Deutsche Mark or US Dollars), and a physical. For workers who had never left the country before, obtaining a passport meant having an original copy of the birth certificate,

¹⁰⁴ *İşçi*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ *İşçi*, 8.

a certificate of completion of the military service, a completed passport application, and the application fee—documents that they may or may not have had or been able to find or afford. Obtaining the necessary documents could not have been an easy task: one could only get a passport from Ankara or Istanbul.¹⁰⁶

Additionally, the initial medical exam had to be performed at an official state hospital and consisted of the following tests: blood work, examination of a stool sample, and an X-ray. Moreover, the entire cost of the exam was to be paid by the worker, according to the official hospital prices. To thwart bribery, only exams done in the official, state offices were acceptable. Another doctor from the German Liaison Office, who studied the applicant, keeping in mind Germany's "climate" and the "working conditions" of the potential applicant, then reviewed the initial medical exam.¹⁰⁷ In the published instructions, once applicants had collected all of the necessary documents and examinations, they would sign a contract where their place of employment, salary, overtime rates, social welfare, and a description of the type of work to be done would be, according to the published instructions, "plainly stated."¹⁰⁸ Lastly, applicants who had completed all of the steps in the application process were to proceed to the departure location in Istanbul where, on departure day, tickets, which German employers were to pay for, were distributed to workers for departure to Germany. In sum, the published instructions outlined a detailed, systematic, and tedious process for the path to West Germany.

Despite these explicit instructions, however, there were many bumps on the road to West Germany. In fact, few cases resembled the detailed, published advice. First, the

¹⁰⁶ "Bericht: Dienstreise vom 14. – 29. Oktober 1961" BArch B 119/ 3077 I, 4.

¹⁰⁷ *İşçi*, 11.

¹⁰⁸ *İşçi*, 12.

language barrier provided a constant source of confusion. An October 30, 1962 memo from the Federal Employment Office notes that workers' contracts were not clearly translated into Turkish from German, leading to misunderstanding and conflict.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, the contract itself had a confusing layout. It had two columns, with writing in German on one side and in Turkish on the other. West German employers did not know Turkish and would only fill out the German side of the contract, leaving the Turkish side blank.¹¹⁰ The result was that Turkish workers who could not read German had no idea what they were signing: "As a result of this omission the guest workers cannot have a clear idea about the working conditions offered to them."¹¹¹ This memo came a full year after workers had been signing contracts without knowing what awaited them upon arrival in West Germany, especially in terms of wages and job descriptions.

Also, sociologist Abadan found that workers signed their contracts in groups of ten within 10-15 minutes. The short period in which worker signed their contract meant that, in her opinion, the workers were not given sufficient information about the location and nature of their jobs.¹¹² Moreover, the majority (59%) of workers Abadan surveyed left for West Germany within two days of signing their contracts, limiting their ability to find out more about their assignments and make departure plans. Travel costs were an additional point of contention: Turkish authorities wanted the contracts to clearly state that German employers were to pay for the trip between Istanbul and the city of employment, and that they could not deduct this cost from employee's wages at a later date. They note that confusion on this point had "quite rightly [caused] much

¹⁰⁹ An BAVAV Nürnberg, 30. Okt. 1962, BArch B 119/ 3071 II.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Abadan, 58.

discontentment among the guest workers,” implying that, up until this point, German employers had been trying to deduct travel costs from workers’ wages.¹¹³

Moreover, even ten years after the initial agreement between Turkey and West Germany, delays were still common in the application process. In a 1970 memo from the Federal Employment Office to a West German company, officials wrote that it was difficult to get the workers picked out, contracts signed, and workers sent on their way in a speedy fashion; and, they suggested that it would be simpler for everyone to take care of the paperwork with one contract, at one time, and to have workers travel en masse instead of being arranged singly.¹¹⁴ Confusion, delays, and problems on both sending and receiving ends not only slowed the application process, they also offer evidence that the detailed instructions issued to applicants were a fiction.

Turkish applicants and West German and Turkish officials all dealt with application problems by bending rules and skipping application procedures, often of necessity. There is evidence that West German employers simply ignored rules that did not suit them—just as Siemens abandoned Erol at the departure point. One former worker, Rezmi, noted that while waiting at the departure point in Istanbul, he was one of 180 workers who were simply handpicked by a BMW representative.¹¹⁵ Contrary to the official warnings to not “disappoint German employers” by backing out without proper notification, cases like Erol’s and Rezmi’s, in which employers picked workers like livestock, led to resentment among workers who had endured the long application process. West German employers were obviously not held to the same standards, and workers noticed. Erol remarked that the Turkish government sold its workers to Europe

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ BA Der Präsident, an Firma Klaus Esser KG, Düsseldorf, 24. Aug 1970, BArch B 119/ 3041.

¹¹⁵ DoMiT Interview, “Remzi.”

like “cattle at the market,” and that it made him think about how “black slaves were smuggled from Africa.”¹¹⁶ Even a West German employer’s association noted that the recruitment of guest workers in Istanbul was like a “slave market.”¹¹⁷ Erol was perhaps additionally bitter because the round-up point for departure, the Vinegar Seller’s Station, is located across from a busy Golden-Horn harbor in Istanbul—an extremely public, and potentially embarrassing, place to be on display for employers’ selection.

The Turkish Employment Office expressed concerns over procedures to the German Liaison Office. Officials constantly debated guidelines through letter exchanges. In the case of the medical exam, the Turkish side resented the follow-up exam by a German doctor, which they considered a “sign of surveillance and mistrust.”¹¹⁸ The Turkish side wanted to be more independent from the German Employment Office in the processing of workers. Furthermore, the Turkish Office apparently complained that the medical exam was too expensive for the uninsured, to which the Germans retorted: “The German side has no control over the fact that the applicant has to pay for the examination in the hospital, which, for uninsured workers, can cost up to 200 Turkish Lira.”¹¹⁹ Moreover, Turkish Labor Administration had originally planned for there to be 17 different Employment Offices, diversely spread throughout every region of Turkey.¹²⁰ Their German counterparts, however, found this unacceptable and logistically difficult. As a result, they requested and were successful in having the number of bureaus reduced to four: Izmir, Ankara, Istanbul, and Zonguldak, with centrally-located Ankara being the

¹¹⁶DoMiT Interview, “Erol.”

¹¹⁷ Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände Köln Oktober 1969, BArch B 119/ 4036 I.

¹¹⁸“Bericht: Dienstreise vom 14. – 29. Oktober 1961” BArch B 119/ 3077 I, 3.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 4.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 5, “Als ich darum bat, in diesem Verteilungsplan Einblick zu nehmen, mußte ich zu meinem Entsetzen feststellen, daß die Zentralstelle in Istanbul [sic] die Aufträge des deutschen Bergbaus auf insgesamt 17 türkische Arbeitsämter über die ganze Türkei verteilt hatte.”

eastern most location. This logistical decision surely negatively affected the initial goal of helping the impoverished regions (which were mostly East of Ankara) through the guest-worker program, in addition to adding to the cost of traveling to the employment offices from more remote eastern regions. In sum, the modifications and negotiations, which resulted from interactions between different employment offices, in addition to the exchanges between the officials and the workers, broke down the streamlined, orderly appearance of the application process that the published manuals, the media, and politicians suggested.

In the end, despite their concern Turkish officials were able to wield extremely little control over the application process, especially the selection of workers. For those who were not accepted for either failing the medical exam or not having the skills necessary, returning home was not always feasible. 90% of the applicants had applied anonymously and were unskilled. The West German Employers Associated noted with concern, a harsh reality was in store for those who were rejected.¹²¹ They commented, “those who have saved up for years and sold all of their goods down to the last goat in order to go to Germany, the praised land, are now, after the necessary rejection, thrown back to zero if they have to return home.”¹²² Workers took a leap of faith when applying to work in West German, they were unable to rely on their government to guide them through the process, and they also could not rely on published instructions to make applying easier either.

THE MEDICAL EXAM

¹²¹ Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände Köln Oktober 1969, BArch B 119/4036 I.

¹²² Ibid.

Though just one part of a larger application, former workers talk about the medical exam more often than any other aspect of the application. The medical exam was an extremely negative experience for most applicants. More than simply a visit to the doctors, many applicants experienced the physical as a deeply personal violation at the hands of a foreign man, who was speaking in a language that they did not understand. In interviews, almost all workers recall the exams as uncomfortable and even strange. Perhaps workers wished to express their greater anxiety about the move to West Germany through a description of this initial violation in a semi-public space. According to historian Matilde Jamin, the experience of the medical was at the very least a culture shock in which workers were interviewed in a group, together, in their underwear by doctors and translators, without consideration for having male doctors for men and female doctors for women; both men and women were present.¹²³ In short, the psychical was a disconcerting experience considering Turkish cultural consideration of modesty.¹²⁴

However, none of the discussions in the Employment Office files mentions handling problems with cultural norms of modesty that such exams might threaten. In other words, they did not discuss what potential workers would think of such exams or how to address potential problems that might arise. Cultural norms (different from those of western Europe) about modesty made having such a private exam in a group setting or undressing in front of a member of the opposite sex, or even in front of just a stranger, an extremely personal if not traumatic experience for many potential workers. For most, the procedures were unfamiliar, especially for the women applicants, who were about 30% of

¹²³ Jamin, *50 Jahre*, 158

¹²⁴ Werner Schiffauer, *Die Migranten aus Subay: Türken in Deutschland Eine Ethnografie* (Stuttgart, 1991) 30, quoted in Jamin, *50 Jahre*.

all Turkish applicants. One woman, Filiz, who left Turkey for Berlin in 1964, recalled her medical exam thusly:

. . . [The] things they did were very strange. . . . The women were all together in one room in just their underwear. We were almost naked and went to the examination like this. They didn't have extra changing booths. We waited inside of a big room all in a line, we were almost naked . . . The doctor was a man and the translator was a woman. . . I didn't really have a problem with the doctor being a man. A doctor is a doctor whether he is a man or a woman. If the doctor had been a Turk, we might have been more relaxed. The translation took a long time.¹²⁵

Filiz mentioned twice that they were "almost naked," because they were in their underwear, showing a different idea of "naked" than that found in West Germany. She also pointed out that the doctor's foreignness made them even more uncomfortable.

When asked what other women thought of the medical exam, Filiz recalled:

. . . I have to point out that, because we were from Istanbul, we were more relaxed and it was to our advantage. In the later years, those coming from Anatolia had a different lifestyle. . . . There were women [not from the city] who were seeing a doctor for the first time . . . So I couldn't say it was the same as what they experienced. We were more comfortable.¹²⁶

Filiz's comments highlight the gendered aspects of the examination, which must have been extremely difficult for women who had never been to a doctor before and most likely had never worn a bathing suit or been seen in public in less than full dress, which might have been the case for women from Anatolia, the interior of Turkey.

The Turkish Branch of the German employment office also noted that women who came from Anatolia were different. Authorities specifically stated that Anatolian women needed to have their medical exams immediately to determine if they were

¹²⁵ DoMiT Interview, "Filiz," August 15, 1995.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

“suitable.”¹²⁷ One former woman worker who came from a small village and had previously worked in a cotton field applied together with a friend from her village. She noted that her friend was not chosen, because she was illiterate, so she had to continue the application process on her own.¹²⁸ Female workers remained in high demand—a demand that was exacerbated by the fact that many of the female applicants were in fact deemed “unsuitable” during their medical exams.¹²⁹ It is interesting that both Filiz and the German Employment officials had the same stereotype about women coming from Anatolia—that they were different. Yet these Anatolian women were there in the same employment office as the women from Istanbul, making the same westward trip and traveling alone, even if they had entirely different reasons for going.¹³⁰

The medical exam was not necessarily easier for male applicants, who often describe the exam as invasive. One worker said that he had to get completely naked in order to have his genitals examined. He noted that he was uncomfortable being examined together with twenty-five people in one room where all of them had to take off all of their clothes.¹³¹ Another male worker recalled his medical exam as intrusive and difficult:

They had us take off our pants and made us bend over so they could examine our anuses with their fingers. . . . [There was a] German doctor, Turkish doctor, and of course there was a translator. *Was it difficult for you?* Of course it was difficult. I almost changed my mind and decided not to go to Germany when they

¹²⁷ BAVAV Türkei, Der Direktor, Istanbul, An BAVAV, Nürnberg, 12. Aug 1970 BArch B119/4031.

¹²⁸ DoMiT Interview 18.19 “Almanya’ya yalnız gelen bir anne ve kızı.”

¹²⁹ BAVAV Deutsch Verbindungsstelle in der Türkei and BAVAV Nürnberg, “Anwerbung und Vermittlung türkischer Arbeitskräften ach der Bundesrepublik Deutschland; hier: Wochenbericht für die Zeit 29.8.1964-4.9.1964,” 4. Sept 1964 BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹³⁰ Karin Hunn writes that some Anatolian women were “forced” or at least highly encouraged by their families or spouses to sign up to be guest workers in *Nächstest Jahr*; see also Jamin, *50 Jahre*; DoMiT Interview 18.19, “Mother and Daughter.”

¹³¹ DoMiT interview, “Erol.”

had me take off my pants and made me bend over, but a girl came up to me and said that there was nothing wrong with what they had been doing. . . . ¹³²

The woman who reassures him suggests that he and the men with him thought the exam was not a normal or typical procedure. He does not comment on what he thought of the woman's presence when he was in such a vulnerable, exposed state. He goes on to comment on how strict the medical exams were, pointing out that the slightest problem would mean failing: "People who had both high and low blood pressure failed the checkups. Anyone who had signs of infirmity or who had more than three cavities failed. They didn't care if you were tall, big-framed or not."¹³³ Strikingly, in light of such a careful medical exam, the same man also says that employment officials did not test his technical skills at all, implying that the medical exam was much more important than how vocationally qualified he might be. West German officials gave these medical exams priority over vocational exams—whether it was fear of overburdening the West German health care system, a desire for the strongest workers, or a more biased view of Turkish healthcare—but it does suggest that they thought something was at risk with these workers. Furthermore, despite otherwise detailed instructions on all other parts of the application, workers did not know what to expect from the medical exams at all and most were surprised and extremely uncomfortable when doctors crossed the boundaries of their personal modesty.

Because few instructional booklets mentioned the medical exams, workers were not necessarily prepared in advance with ideas of what to expect. Some instructional booklets came with illustrations, as was the case with *Hallo Mustafa*.¹³⁴ Here the

¹³² DoMiT interview, "Mehmet."

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ *Hallo Mustafa*,

medical exams, as well as, potential housing arrangements and social life were presented in cartoon form in addition to text. The illustrations in the booklet, however, did not resemble anything like what workers would actually encounter in Germany or during the medical exam before leaving Turkey. Image Seven A is the portrayal of the medical examination in the booklet—a light-hearted health examination with an at-ease, whistling patient face to face with a smiling doctor.¹³⁵ Significantly, this doctor and patient are both male and standing alone. The patient has his pants on, or at least pulled-up, and the doctor is examining his chest. In contrast, Image Seven B is a photograph taken in Istanbul in 1973 of a medical examination in progress.¹³⁶ It is unclear if the photograph was an actual examination in progress or if the photographer staged it. However, unlike Image Seven A, it shows a more typical examination with several undressed men collected in one room, waiting in a bent posture with a woman doctor looking on.

¹³⁵ *Hallo Mustafa*, 25.

¹³⁶ This photo was taken from the museum catalogue: *40 Jahre Fremde Heimat - Einwanderung aus der Türkei in Köln. 40 Yıl Almanya - Yaban, Silan olur*, Ausstellungskatalog, hrsg. von DoMiT, zweisprachig (deutsch-türkisch), Köln 2001.



Image 7A

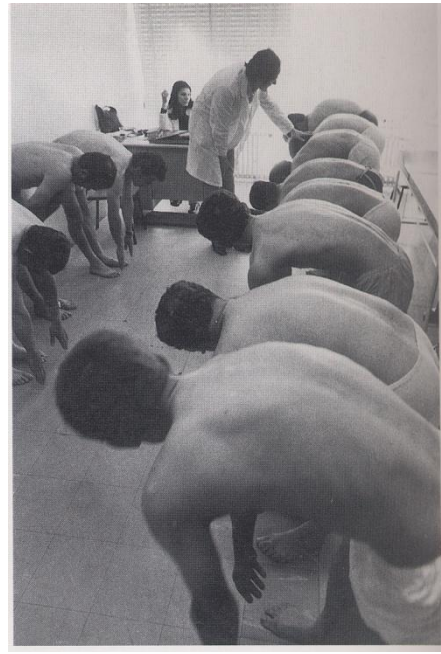


Image 7B

Image Seven. The Medical Exam A) in *Hallo Mustafa*, 26 B) in Jamin and Eryılmaz eds., *Fremde Heimat* 125, photo, Jean Mohr, Genf.

By July of 1971, the medical examiners of the German Liaison Office were examining more than 700 applicants per day.¹³⁷ It is doubtful the experience of the medical exam improved with such a high volume of exams taking place. The very personal aspects of the medical exams and the complete lack of acknowledgement of the gendered differences of the application and transport of workers were all glaring omissions in published instructions. Instructional booklets had little information to offer about what this experience was like.

In spite of the difficulties of the application process, a lack of clear information, and, for many, the extreme discomfort of the medical exam, the guest-worker program remained immensely popular for years, with more applicants than officials could process. At the end of 1970, the Federal Employment Bureau reported that 94,167 Turks, 20,036

¹³⁷ Jamin, *50 Jahre*, 153.

of whom were women, left for West Germany.¹³⁸ All together, 316,436 foreign workers entered West Germany in 1970. However, the statistics of the number of Turkish guest workers who entered West Germany were always just the tip of the iceberg, because they never represented those who were waiting for departure. In 1970, almost one and half million Turkish workers were waiting to go to West Germany.¹³⁹ According to a study by Istanbul University, published in 1974, at any point in the application process, over 300,000 applications piled up yearly while placements remained under 100,000 a year.¹⁴⁰ By July 1973, the last year of official recruitment, approximately 750,000 Turks had emigrated to West Germany through the legal channels set up by the Federal Employment Bureau.¹⁴¹

In 1970, Turkish social scientist, Ahmet Aker conducted a study of Turkish workers leaving for Germany in which he determined that the best-educated, skilled, and fittest workers were departing Turkey.¹⁴² In his study, Aker outlined all of the positive outcomes that Turkish government officials had cited as a reason to participate in the program, and then disputed them. First of all, he disproved the idea that the country was exporting its unskilled, unemployed workers. Instead, Aker found that all applicants had an education beyond elementary school in a country in which the literacy rate was only

¹³⁸ Übersicht über die Anwerbung und Vermittlung ausländischer Arbeitnehmer nach der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Nürnberg, 22. Dez 1970, BArch B 119 4031.

¹³⁹ Aker 1; Istanbul University published a study that reported 1.25 million people were on the waiting list in 1974, See Duncan Miller and İshan Çetin, *Migrant Workers, Wages, and Labor Markets: Emigrant Turkish Workers in the Federal Republic* (Istanbul University Faculty of Economics, Institute of Economic Development, 1974) 4, IISG.

¹⁴⁰ Miller and Çetin, 4.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ahmet Aker, "A Study of Turkish Labour Migration to Germany," Institute of Foreign Policy Research: The Johns Hopkins University Bologna Center School of Advanced International Studies, no. 10, (July 1974); this study, conducted from 1970-71 was based on a random sample of 590 Turkish workers who were one week from their departure date and had already finished all of the required paperwork.

about 55%.¹⁴³ Additionally, the average age of the sampled workers was 29.5 years, an age when workers are old enough to have gained technical skills and experience, while still young enough to be at their productive peak. Moreover, most applicants were already employed—over 90% were still employed up to three weeks before their departure. Aker concluded that there was a general de-skilling occurring among workers who left semi-skilled industrial sectors in Turkey to do unskilled manual labor in Germany.

He also found that workers were not able to reinvest in the Turkish economy. the personal savings and workers' remittances were not enough to establish a large-scale industrial enterprise in Turkey without entering into a partnership or corporate arrangement. Moreover, such partnership arrangements often had tragic results: "entering into partnerships with locally established entrepreneurs has often led to the liquidation of the returning [worker's assets] and the evaporation of his savings through fraudulent bankruptcies engineered by the more experienced established partners."¹⁴⁴ In short, in light of such evidence, the Republic of Turkey stood to gain little from the guest-worker process. While Turkey was hoping to "export its excess unemployment," it actually exported its best workers and, like many workers, reaped few tangible benefits quickly. Many of Turkey's highest trained workers worked at low-level jobs in West Germany. Few West German employers capitalized on the vocational training required in the application process.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 4.

¹⁴⁴ Aker, 19.

The migration to West Germany was also part of a larger East to West migration in Turkey that was leaving the Eastern most regions poorer and more desolate than before, in direct conflict with initial aims of the agreement:

[Turkey's] poorer regions seem to be acting as training grounds for labour that will then seek employment in richer areas—a task they are least equipped to do and can least afford. Turkey is to Germany what the poorest Eastern- and Middle Anatolian regions are to the west and southwestern regions of Turkey—a training ground for labour to be exported of skills that are already of short supply within the region itself.¹⁴⁵

Furthermore, Aker's study was not the only cautionary study released in Turkey about the guest worker program. University of Istanbul economists, Duncan Miller and İshan Çetin, concluded in 1974 that the emigration of workers from Turkey led to a high rate of labor turnover, crippling industrial expansion, causing more harm than good:

Many urban industrial employers especially in Istanbul are warning government officials that their labor force turnover rates have become intolerable and, unless stopped, will soon be inimical to industrial expansion. Employers faced with the task of replacing experienced workers either must accept lower productivity and/or pay the cost of additional worker training. Indeed, for far too long it has been assumed that emigration is a costless 'windfall gain' to Turkey. Like any other economic phenomenon, there are costs and benefits, both social and private.¹⁴⁶

Yet despite such cautionary reports from contemporary social scientists, the migration of workers to West Germany had become a movement that Turkish government officials could not stop and one that West German officials had trouble regulating.

In addition to academics' negative reports, the Turkish press also increasingly criticized workers' poor conditions and treatment in West Germany, as early in the program as 1962.¹⁴⁷ Yet, even if those back home could not see tangible results of

¹⁴⁵ Aker, 7.

¹⁴⁶ Miller and Çetin, 10-11.

¹⁴⁷ "In der türkischen Öffentlichkeit wird in letzter Zeit häufiger die Lage der türkischen Arbeiter in der Bundesrepublik neben wenigen positive Stellungnahmen zunehmend kritisiert. Hierbei wird

success or of failure of foreign workers in Germany—even as late as ten years after the program started—literally millions were waiting for their turn. Turkish workers made up their minds to go to West Germany. Whether or not they decided based on media reports, information published by the Employment Office, or due to or even in spite of what they might have heard about life in West Germany, the decision was theirs. In most cases the opportunity to make more money—Turkish workers could expect to earn in Germany four times as much as what they could in Turkey—trumped other concerns.¹⁴⁸ The bilateral ‘guest-worker’ agreements set up migration to a nation that was vastly more prosperous than the one from which the migrants came. Therefore, it is important to examine what, if any, responsibility government agencies on both sides had to address the implications of this financial inequality, not to mention, the potential problems different cultural norms, religious traditions, and huge language barriers could cause.

Despite officials’ plans for an orderly application process, poor planning, a lack of acknowledgment of cultural differences, and unrealistic expectations all plagued the application process. Workers’ recollections as well as memos from the West German and Turkish employment offices reveal several areas in which the application process broke down. However, within this process, Turkish applicants not only worked around the rules, but also around expected behavior to exert control over a seemingly inflexible process. This detailed look at the application process sets the stage for an analysis, in subsequent chapters, of the daily negotiations of the guest-worker arrangement on the way to West Germany and after arrival. I will continue to illuminate the tensions

besonders auf die Verhältnisse in Nordrhein-Westfalen verwiesen. In diesem Zusammenhang wird die Entsendung eines Sozialattachés an die türkische Botschaft in Bonn von einigen Zeitungen empfohlen,” Schmidt, Auswärtiges Amt, Bonn, an den Herrn Bundesminister des Innern, Herrn Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, Bonn, 30. März 1962, BArch B 119/ 3071 II.

¹⁴⁸ Aker, 27.

between the process as it was planned versus how it was lived—between the ideal and the reality—in the next chapter about travel to and arrival in West Germany and the first impressions of a new life.

CHAPTER TWO: On the Road to West Germany: Transportation and the Transnational Construction of a “Guest Worker”

On Saturday June 28, 1969, a reporter from the Austrian newspaper *Salzburger Nachrichten*, Werner Kobes, boarded the “Hellas-Istanbul Express,” more commonly known as the “Guest-worker Express,” when it stopped in Salzburg while en route to West Germany from Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey.¹⁴⁹ The train primarily carried Turkish guest workers, but it also picked up traveling vacationers in Yugoslavia and Greece on the way to West Germany. Kobes wanted to experience the train ride to answer the following questions: “Is [guest worker transportation] really as bad as reported?” “Is it a cattle transport [meant] for people of the civilized 20th century?” “Is it the case, in all honesty, that no ‘normal’ traveler would dare to ride on this train?”¹⁵⁰ His adventure began at 3am in the early-morning haze of the Salzburg Central Train Station, as the train rolled into the station already an hour late. When Kobes boarded the train, or at least when he attempted to board, he found pyramids of luggage, large piles of trash, and passengers of all ages, from small children to an elderly blind man, who were trying to find places to rest comfortably, even in the passageways between the cars. Kobes’s report and his questions highlight the various ways guest-worker transport was problematic logistically and, with the reference to “cattle transport,” historically.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ *Salzburger Nachrichten* is known as a center-right, Christian Liberal paper.

¹⁵⁰ “Notbremse im Hellas-Istanbul Express,” *Salzburger Nachrichten*, 17, 28. Juni 28, 1969 BArch B 119/ 4030.

¹⁵¹ The reference to “cattle transport” could suggest that some were scrutinizing West Germany’s organization of foreign workers’ transportation by train in light of Germany’s recent past. West German and German Rail officials continued to use terms like “Transport” to refer to guest-worker transportation, even though, for some, the term had a negative and historically-loaded connotation, because it was the same term used to describe trains traveling to concentration and extermination camps.

Foreign workers' train transportation to West Germany occurred at a crucial moment in the postwar construction of West Germany identity, and West German officials had every intention of providing an orderly, unproblematic trip for these foreign workers. However, even the best-laid plans broke down, as the sorry state of the "Hellas-Istanbul Express" was doubtless not the orderly transition to West Germany that government officials had in mind. Furthermore, poorly organized train rides with substandard conditions deeply influenced traveling guest workers' initial impressions of West German authorities and of the guest-worker program itself long before they arrived on the shop floor.

At 6:33pm on September 26, 1961, the first official group of Turkish guest workers arrived at the Munich Central Station—a group of 68 workers, headed to the Ford Factory in Cologne.¹⁵² The German Liaison office in Istanbul planned the trip with precision, noting two weeks before its departure that the group would arrive in Belgrade at 11:30pm, leave Belgrade at 12:45am, and arrive in Munich at 6:33pm. The escort for the trip, Mr. Ibrahim Etzer, reported, "the trip from Istanbul to Munich passed without particular incidence. The stop at the border and customs stations did not take more than the usual time."¹⁵³ However, this initial trip was not representative of the many that followed. From 1961 to 1973, around 866,000 Turkish workers came to West Germany; up until 1970, three-fourths came by officially-organized train "transports."¹⁵⁴ Different

¹⁵² This is largely cited to be the first transport of Turkish guest workers to West Germany organized by the German Liaison Office, however, unlike later group-trips, it was organized by the Fäustel Travel Agency in Istanbul, BAVAV Holjewilken Nürnberg 14. Okt 1961, BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁵³ Ibid. The term escort is a translation of the term *Transportbegleiter*. Though the file does not mention if Mr. Ibrahim was paid, it is likely that he was also a traveling guest worker, who took on the task of escort for a nominal fee and was chosen for German language ability.

¹⁵⁴ Jamin, "Fremde Heimat," in *50 Jahre Bundesrepublik*; see also idem, "Die deutsche Anwerbung, Organisation und Größenordnung," in *Fremde Heimat*, 207-231; Workers were also able to apply to arrive in West Germany privately, and some firms also organized flights for workers; for

agencies and national train administrations shared, or attempted to share, the responsibility of guest-worker transportation with limited success, and, as the number of traveling workers increased, organization between agencies suffered. The guest worker program was a transnational project in a Cold War context that involved multiple border crossings and multiple bureaucracies, resulting in many areas of miscommunication, ignored commitments, and general confusion, of which traveling workers ultimately bore the effects. In addition, as with the application process, printed instructions proved irrelevant and the lack of functional execution resulted in an unexpectedly negative experience. Such off-putting associations with West German authority figures and with the continuing process of “becoming a guest worker”—from the medical exam to the trip to West Germany to poor housing arrangements and ill-treatment at work—would have serious repercussions in terms of labor relations down the road.¹⁵⁵

Although West German officials debated every aspect of worker transportation from the food supplied to the number of train seats, these plans rarely came to fruition, as many of the everyday aspects of guest-worker travel fell into the hands of those who often put their own interests first. In short, workers’ travel proved simply out of the control of the various bureaucracies involved and especially proved to be out of the control of the West German officials. In the end, despite officials’ attempts to have an orderly transition to West Germany, Mr. Kobes’s negative description was an accurate portrayal. Additionally, as the Austrian journalist’s expose revealed, the trip to West Germany was visible to people who were not part of the program, adding to the pressure

information on flights see BAVAV Nürnberg, 19. Mai, 1965 BArch B 119/ 4031; see also BAVAV Türkei, 31. Jan 1972 BArch B 119/ 4029.

¹⁵⁵ I discuss guest worker housing arrangements in chapter three, and activism and labor relations in chapter four.

West German officials felt to address problems with workers' transportation.¹⁵⁶ As a result, guest-worker transportation was a site of constant negotiation—between multiple government agencies and, for traveling workers, between their goals and the realities of their situation. Regardless of the planning involved, traveling guest workers, who were not privy to officials' plans, experienced only the realities of the trip and its myriad problems, leading many to feel like they were second-class citizens on a “cattle transport.”

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, train travel had come to represent modernity and progress, as well as represent ideas of leisure and class status. For these travelers, however, train travel had an instructive impact. By negotiating the substandard conditions on the trains, applicants began coming to terms with their new status as “guest workers” long before arrival. In a way ironically similar to how travel had once stood for economic and cultural privilege a century before, these workers' train travel, as a symbol for the guest-worker program as a whole, represented the new economic status of their host country, West Germany.¹⁵⁷ As former colonial subjects traveled to metropolises in this same period to negotiate their insider and outsider status within certain borders, guest

¹⁵⁶ At the time, guest-worker transportation received a lot of press coverage. A BBC film crew even traveled with Turkish workers from Istanbul to West Germany in order to make a documentary about the trip. The filmmakers noted, “to be able to travel with the Turkish workers on their train was one of the most important factors in the success of the film. Only then could we really observe first-hand the realities of the men leaving their country for a new job and life in Germany. . . . We were highly impressed with the handling of vast numbers of potential and actual workers . . . The film promises well and will be shown here in October,” Sue Pugh, BBC TV, London, to Herr Karl Maibaum, Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, Nürnberg, 7 June 1973 BArch, B119/ 4029; see also, Deutsche Botschaft, Ankara, an das Auswärtige Amt, Bonn, “Stellungnahme der türkischen Presse zu dem Ausgang der Gespräche der deutschen-türkischen gemischten Kommission” which mentions the growing amount of Turkish press coverage Turkish guest workers in Germany are receiving, especially, because apparently, in comparison Italy and Spain, this program is the first time that a large number of ethnic Turks have emigrated out of the country, den 16. Mai 1968 BArch B119/ 3074.

¹⁵⁷ See Angela Woollacott, “‘All This Is the Empire, I told Myself’: Australian Women’s Voyages ‘Home’ and the Articulation of Colonial Whiteness” in *American Historical Review* 102, no.4 (October 1997): 1003-1029.

workers also transitioned during this trip into participants in “industrialized Western Europe.”

The train trip to West Germany is significant, because like the application process, it was an important part of the relationship between guest workers and West German authorities before arrival. It is not that workers chose to come to West Germany despite poor conditions, because they could not have known in advance what the conditions on the train would be like. Rather, the fact that guest workers chose to stay in West Germany despite previous negative experiences—during the application process and the train ride—demonstrated workers’ commitments to their original goals of success. Furthermore, the train ride was also a homogenizing process, in which workers of different backgrounds, as well as those choosing to travel to West Germany as “tourists,” all endured the same trip and treatment. Upon arrival, these individuals also stepped off the train as homogenized “guest workers” in the eyes of the West Germans receiving them. Proponents of “New Labor History” have argued for a move away from the “shop floor” in order to understand the development of working-class experience.¹⁵⁸ In this case, the three-day train ride to West Germany was a crucial step in the development of a particular, classed experience.

Guest-worker transportation to Western Europe has yet to be the focus of scholarly study.¹⁵⁹ Instead, photos of guest workers after arrival in West German train

¹⁵⁸ See David Brody, “The Old Labor History and the New: In Search of the American Working Class” in *Labor History* 20 (Winter 1979): 111-26; in this classic essay, Brody asks labor historians to look beyond the workplace to capture the American working-class experience; see also E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Vintage, 1963) which argues that class is a cultural formation. While “new labor history” is no longer “new,” its application to Turkish guest worker remains novel.

¹⁵⁹ For a comparison of train travel of the Bracero Program, a guest worker arrangement between the US and Mexico, see Barbara A. Briscoll, *The Tracks North: The Railroad Bracero Program of World War II* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999); Briscoll’s study reveals similar problems in arranging

stations often accompany studies about guest workers.¹⁶⁰ The association of guest workers with arrival in West Germany implies that one first became a guest worker *after* arrival, ignoring the preceding parts of the process—parts that heavily influenced initial impressions and relationships. After a brief introduction to the multiple borders involved in the guest-worker process, this chapter will contrast the planning involved, the detailed instructions workers received, and the conditions on the train as workers remembered them in order to shed light on the period when applicants transitioned into guest workers—in transit.

Border Crossings: The Transnational Context of Guest-Worker Transportation

The Cold War provided the background for the border-crossings within the guest-worker process, just as it provided the constructed borders between “East” and “West.” During the Cold War, trans-national projects helped to define nation-states, for example, through interventions in the “third world”¹⁶¹ or through the importation of “foreigners” as temporary workers, as seen in East Germany’s recruitment of workers from socialist allies in the developing world, and, in the case of Western Europe, through both former

transportation for workers from Mexico to the United States, including delays, miscommunications, and even workers traveling in boxcars, instead of the passenger wagons that US officials had ordered, p. 88.

¹⁶⁰ Karin Hunn, *‘Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück . . .’ Die Geschichte der türkischen ‚Gastarbeiter‘ in der Bundesrepublik*, has the cover photo “Türkische Bergleute bei der Ankunft im November 1961 Düsseldorf,” and Rita Chin, *The Guest Worker Question in Germany* has a cover photo of Armando Rodrigues at the Cologne-Dietz train station, receiving a motorcycle as a prize for being the millionth guest worker; Klaus J Bade and Jochen Oltmer eds., *Zuwanderung und Integration in Niedersachsen Zeit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Osnabrück: Universitätsverlag Rasch, 2002) has a cover photo of a train station as well.

¹⁶¹ For interventions in and connections with the Third World and its effect on the construction of post-war nation states, see Young-sun Hong, H-Net Forum “Transnationalism”; Katrina Hagen, “Internationalism in Cold War Germany” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, Seattle, forthcoming); Quinn Slobodian, “Radical Empathy: The Third World and the New Left in 1960s West Germany” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, forthcoming); Jennifer Hosek, “Cuba and the Germans: A Cultural History of Infatuation” (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2004); Belinda Davis “What’s Left? Popular Political Participation in Postwar Europe” *American Historical Review* 113, no. 2 (April 2008): 363-390.

colonial subjects' immigration and guest-worker programs.¹⁶² The transnational character of guest-worker transportation made organizing the trip to West Germany extremely difficult. West German officials had to organize and transport workers through other countries and by negotiating with different administrations, customs officials, and food and water suppliers.

International cooperation was not a hallmark of guest-worker transportation. The German Employment Office in Istanbul sought to arrange guest workers' travel together with German Rail, Turkish Rail, Yugoslav Rail, and Bulgarian Rail administrations. German Rail was either unable or unwilling to supply trains that could travel from Istanbul all the way to Munich.¹⁶³ Additionally, Turkish Rail could not supply trains that went directly from Istanbul to Munich nor could Yugoslavian Rail provide trains that went directly from Belgrade to Munich.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, according to an international agreement, each national rail administration would commit a certain number of cars for

¹⁶² East Germany recruited foreign workers on a much smaller scale, for example, only around 3,500 workers in 1966 from socialist allies in the developing world. By the 1980s, more than 90,000 Vietnamese, Cubans, Mozambicans, Algerians, Angolans, and Namibians had come to the GDR. See, "Migration im Kalten Krieg" in Klaus Bade and Jochen Oltmer, *Normalfall Migration* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2004) 95; Sandra Gruner-Domić, "Beschäftigung statt Ausbildung. Ausländische Arbeiter und Arbeiterinnen in der DDR, (1961-1989)" in *50 Jahre Bundesrepublik*, 215-242; idem, *Kubanische Arbeitskräftemigration in die DDR 1978-1989: Das Arbeitskräfteabkommen Kuba-DDR und dessen Realisierung* (Berlin: Arbeitsheft des Berliner Institute für Vergleichende Sozialforschung, 1997); "Soziale Strukturbildung durch Migration and Integration" in *Migration und Integration-Erfahrungen nutzen, Neues Wagen: Jahresgutachten 2004 des Sachverständigenrates für Zuwanderung und Integration* (Berlin: Sachverständigenrat für Zuwanderung und Integration, 2004); Jan Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger, Patrice Poutrus, eds., *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR: Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland* (Berlin 2003); Dirk Jasper, "Ausländerbeschäftigung in der DDR," in *Anderssein gab es nicht: Ausländer und Minderheiten in der DDR*, ed. Marianne Krüger-Potratz (Münster and New York: Waxmann, 1991) 151-189; Young-sun Hong, "The Third World in Two Germanys in the 1960s," Unpublished Manuscript (Lecture delivered at Rutgers University on March 28, 2005); Jonathan R. Zatin, "Scarcity and Resentment: Economic Sources of Xenophobia in the GDR, 1971-1989" *Central European History* 40 (2007): 683-720.

¹⁶³ Ibid. German Rail officials mention that they would have to have a guarantee from Turkish Rail that they would be exempt from certain fees in order to arrange transportation. However, there are only vague references to what these fees are for and what amount they are.

¹⁶⁴ Weicken, Nürnberg, April 1962, BArch B 119/ 4035.

particular portions of the trip.¹⁶⁵ In theory, workers would travel part of the trip in one wagon and then change to another car in another country's station until they reached West Germany.¹⁶⁶

While the exact logistics of the international cooperation involved in guest worker transportation from Turkey are not clear from the Employment Bureau records, the problems inherent in such arrangements are. Because of the different agencies involved, there was simply no standardized process by which West German Employment Bureau officials were able to arrange guest-worker transportation or even guarantee that arrangements could be carried out as planned. In one case, a train traveling from Istanbul to Munich stopped in Belgrade, where workers poured out of the train as soon as it stopped, despite instructions shouted from a megaphone to stay on the train. As a result, twelve Turkish workers were left behind when the train continued on shortly thereafter.¹⁶⁷ In another case, 60 workers ended up scattered through a train among passengers who were not guest workers, and a translator had to use a megaphone to "try to round them up."¹⁶⁸ Furthermore, officials could rarely guarantee reserved seats, leading to frustration on the three-day trip.¹⁶⁹ Workers, especially women, often reported

¹⁶⁵ "Notbremse im Hellas-Istanbul-Expres"; BAVAV Türkei, Istanbul, den 13. Juli 1964, an BAVAV Nürnberg, BArch B 119/ 4031.

¹⁶⁶ BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, 12.9.1961, BArch B 119/ 4035; See also, BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg 6. Sept 1963, „Anwerbung und Vermittlung türkischer Arbeitnehmer, hier, Wochenbericht,“ BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁶⁷ Ref. Weicken, "Bericht des VAm Krusch über die Dienstreise nach Belgrad zwecks Beobachtung eines Sonderzug-Transportes Istanbul- München," BArch B 119 / 4035.

¹⁶⁸ Ref Ia6, Weicken, Nürnberg, April 1962 BArch B 119 / 4035.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid; Officials mention paying the cost of seat reservations, however, it is unclear if they did so for every departing train; See BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, 12. August 1963 BArch B 119/ 4035; see also BAVAV Türkei, an BAVAV Nürnberg, 23. August 1963 BArch B 119/ 4035; Another memo mentions that it was not possible to reserve seats for non-German trains: "Platzkarten können nicht ausgegeben werden (kein Platzkartenverfahren mit Jugoslawien, Griechenland und der Türkei). Für eine ordnungsgemäße Durchführung der Transporte (für alle Kräfte sind Plätze in einem Wagen vorhanden) müssen Wagen der Deutschen Bundesbahn eingesetzt werden." Ref Weicken, Nürnberg, April 1962, BArch B 119/ 4035.

having to stand in the trains due to a lack of reserved seats.¹⁷⁰ “Fight scenes over reserved seats” was the headline of *Rheinische Post* in 1965 about a train in which traveling vacationers and foreign guest workers came to blows over reserved seats.¹⁷¹

As various rail administrations reneged on commitments, West German officials could not secure enough train cars, causing delays that were then passed on to traveling workers.¹⁷² By 1964, it was common to expect delays and notes such as the following were familiar: “the Yugoslavian train cars that were meant for today’s planned departure did not arrive again.”¹⁷³ Moreover, even trains that did arrive as planned still had problems. For example, sometimes arriving trains had 14 wagons and other times only 12; and, seating capacity could vary between 824 and 912 seats, making precise planning about the number of workers who could depart impossible.¹⁷⁴ Unable to coordinate with other rail administrations, West German officials could not be sure if planned transports could actually take place.¹⁷⁵ Significantly, West German officials were not the ones who determined when or whether guest workers would depart.

¹⁷⁰ Landesarbeitsamt Südbayern an BAVAV Nürnberg, 11.Dez. 1961 BArch B 119/ 4035; BAVAV Nürnberg, Weicken, März 1962 BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁷¹ “Prügelszenen um reservierte Plätze: Bundesbahn ist ratlos: Gastarbeiter blockieren Urlauberzüge” *Rheinische Post* No. 188, Samstag 14. August 1965 BArch B 119/ 4031.

¹⁷² BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg 1. April 1964 BArch B119/ 4035.

¹⁷³ BAVAV Nürnberg, 13. April 1964, BArch B 119/ 4035; See Also, Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände, Köln, an die Mitglieder des Ausschusses ‘Ausländische Arbeitskräfte,’ 30. Okt 1969 BArch B 119/ 4036 I, which notes that working with Yugoslavian rail caused particular problems.

¹⁷⁴ “Die beiden Leerzüge sind pünktlich eingetroffen. Sie führten allerdings einmal 14 und das andere Mal nur 12 Wagen mit. Infolge Verspätung des fahrplanmäßigen Yugoslaviexpress konnten die Sonderzüge erst um 21 [Uhr] bereitgestellt werden. BAVAV Deutsche Verbindungsstelle in der Türkei, An den Herrn Präsidenten der BAVAV Nürnberg; 24. Juli 1964; Betr: Anwerbung und Vermittlung türkischer Arbeitskräfte nach der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, hier Wochenbericht für die Zeit vom 17.-23.7.1964; BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, “Betr: Transportangelegenheiten” 1. April 1964, BArch B119/ 4035.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

Problems with arranging workers' timely departure from Istanbul continued for years.¹⁷⁶ As late as January 1970, the Employment Bureau noted that trains were arriving in Istanbul with fewer than the desired number of cars and that promised train cars were not supplied along the way to West Germany. When workers had to change trains, but found no cars waiting for them, it could result in a "catastrophe," in which workers were required to press into already full cars and stand the rest of the way to Munich.¹⁷⁷ In another case, Yugoslavian rail employees took Turkish workers out of their designated cars in Belgrade and distributed them in the remaining cars, so that German officials had to search for them individually on the train platform in Munich.¹⁷⁸ Additionally, the Yugoslavian police tried to use a guest-worker train for their own purposes, stopping a train and insisting that two Yugoslavians be taken on to Zagreb, even though the train was already full.¹⁷⁹ The West German Employment Bureau commented with frustration that officials of the other countries through which the workers were passing were "not innocent" in causing problems.¹⁸⁰

When the Employment Office requested more train cars from the Turkish Rail Company, they replied that they simply did not have extra cars to spare for the transport of workers to West Germany, as their extra train cars "were meant for tourists and not

¹⁷⁶ Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände, Köln, "Tätigkeit der Deutschen Anwerbekommissionen in Istanbul, Athen und Belgrad," 30. Okt. 1969 BArch B 119/ 4036 I.

¹⁷⁷ BAVAV to Prof. Dr. jur. Dr. Ing. Oeftering des Vorstandes der Deutschen Bundesbahn, "Transportangelegenheiten ausländischer Arbeitnehmer," 19. Januar 1970 BArch B 119/4031; See also Ref. Weicken, Holkewilken Nürnberg, März 1962 BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁷⁸ Landsarbeitsamt Südbayern an BAVAV Nürnberg 11. Dez 1961 BArch B 119/ 4035; See also Ref. Weicken, Holkewilken Nürnberg, März 1962 BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁷⁹ "Während der Fahrt durch Jugoslawien verlangte die jugoslawische Bahnpolizei an einer Haltestelle die Mitnahme von zwei Jugoslawen in dem Sonderzug bis nach Zagreb. Das jugoslawische Zugbegleitpersonal weigerte sich und suchte Unterstützung bei der Transportleitung. Die Polizei bestand darauf, die zwei Personen mitfahren zu lassen; Sitzplätze wurden nicht in Anspruch genommen." Ref. Weicken, Nürnberg, 11. Nov. 1963, BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁸⁰ "Die Eisenbahnverwaltungen der Durchfahrtsländer [sind] nicht unschuldig" Ibid.

workers.”¹⁸¹ Either foreign rail administrations were uninterested in supporting the guest worker process or their hands were tied due to local economic concerns.¹⁸² In any case, no rail administration was willing to offer their best trains or enough cars: “German Rail knows the intolerable conditions of certain Balkan trains only too well . . . For months they have attempted to have the train administrations in Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey contribute additional cars.”¹⁸³ It is not clear why the train administrations of Turkey, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia repeatedly failed the Employment Bureau. After all, Yugoslavia was also involved in a guest worker program with West Germany. Ultimately, the German Liaison Office in Istanbul found that it simply could not rely on the various train administrations, regardless of any arrangements they might have made, hindering attempts at organized travel for guest workers.

Employment officials could not just blame foreign rail administration, German Rail also failed to offer consistent support for guest-worker travel. In one case, just a month after the first official group had arrived in Munich, a train arrived with thirteen Turkish women guest workers, two of whom had their small children with them.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Ibid; See also BAVAV Türkei to BAVAV Nürnberg, 3. Jan 1962 BArch B 119/ 4035; Deutsche Bundesbahn Oberbetriebsleitung Süd, Stuttgart, an Generaldirektion der Österreichischen Bundesbahnen, Wien, Gemeinschaft der Jugoslawischen Eisenbahnen, Belgrade, Transportministerium Abteilung für internationale Angelegenheiten Sofija, Direction Générale des Chemins de fer de l’Etat hellénique Direction de l’Exploitation, Athènes, Direction générale d’Exploitation des Chemins de fer d’état de la République turque, Ankara, Direction de la 7e Région Exploitation TCDD Istanbul, 12. Dez 1963 BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁸² BAVAV Türkei to BAVAV Nürnberg, Betr: Anwerbung und Vermittlung türkischer Arbeitnehmer, hier, Wochenbericht, 6. Sept 1963 BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁸³ “Verbesserung im Balkan-Verkehr erst 1966? Die ausländischen Bahnverwaltungen können keine weiteren Züge übernehmen,” *FAZ* No 228, 1. Okt 1965, BArch B 119/ 4031; See also *FAZ* 29 Sept 1966.

¹⁸⁴ Franz Schaller, München, 30. Okt 1961, Betr. Beschwerde-Bericht über den Transport türkischer Arbeitnehmerinnen am 26.10.1961 von München Hbf. nach Minden/Westfalen. BArch B 119/ 3071 I; this was not an isolated case of female guest workers bringing children with them; see also, BAVAV der Präsident, Nürnberg, „Vermittlung kinderreicher Frauen“ 28. Juni 1965, BArch B 119/ 4029; Landsarbeitsamt Südbayern, der Präsident, an BAVAV Nürnberg, 11.8.1972 BArch B 119/ 4029; BA Nürnberg, an Landesarbeitsämter Südbayern, Nordrhein-Westfalen “Ärztliche Versorgung von Kindern

Apparently, this group of Turkish women had traveled from Istanbul to Munich without a travel escort, and the women were very upset that only five of them had seats for the long journey, resulting in “terribly swollen legs.”¹⁸⁵ When an Employment Bureau Official at the Munich train station noticed the women, he tried to help them onto their connecting train. The women had so much luggage with them, including large trunks, that they could not manage it themselves. However, when a German Rail official saw the large stacks of trunks on his train, he demanded that they get off the train and held up the entire train. An argument ensued and the Employment Bureau official pointed out to the German Rail official that the Employment Bureau had been arranging these types of transportation with German Rail for three years already. When the German Rail official finally allowed the train to move on, he noted that he would be filing an official complaint.¹⁸⁶ Apparently, the German Rail official did not know of any arrangements for guest-worker transportation, and, unlike the official report of the inaugural trip just a month before, these women’s trip suggests that there was no standard transportation procedure or monitoring. How had these women left Istanbul with their large trunks and small children unnoticed?¹⁸⁷ How was it that the same Liaison Office, which had such rigorous application procedures, allowed such haphazard travel to West Germany?

Organizing train travel with different national rail administrations was not the only trans-national aspect of guest worker travel. Foreign administrations also delayed guest-worker travel by providing political borders to cross. As much as Turkish and

ausländischer Arbeitnehmer bei der Ankunft der Sammelreisezüge in den Weiterleitungsstellen München und Köln,” 10 November 1972, BArch B 119/ 4029.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ The employer sent the women with the children back to Turkey, stating a lack of housing as the reason.

German officials thought of the guest-worker arrangement as a bi-lateral agreement between just two nation-states, West German officials also had to contend with gaining Turkish workers entry to the other countries along the way. For example, from time to time, foreign police thoroughly searched guest-worker trains, reportedly looking for “refugees.”¹⁸⁸ The political borders between Turkey and West Germany highlighted the fact that these Turkish workers were not free to travel westward, but rather had to rely on West German officials to secure their permission, another step that clarified their new status as guest workers.

Unfortunately, foreign consulates were not setup to process quickly the paperwork necessary to secure travel visas for such a large population. At times, visa delays were so bad that they resulted in the cancelation of entire group trips.¹⁸⁹ In 1962, the Bulgarian and Yugoslavian consulates could only process 25 visas a day, creating a huge bottleneck of workers awaiting departure in Istanbul.¹⁹⁰ The visa delays caused problems to the point that up to three trains were being canceled a week—at the very time that the German Liaison Office in Istanbul was trying to increase the number of workers able to go to West Germany.¹⁹¹

However, the German Liaison office in Istanbul was not just concerned with the effects visa delays would have on their departure plans, but also how they would affect

¹⁸⁸ Ref. Weicken, Nürnberg, 11. Nov 1963 “Bericht des VAm Krusch über die Dienstreise nach Belgrad zwecks Beobachtung eines Sonderzug-Transportes Istanbul-München,” BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁸⁹ BAVAV Türkei to BAVAV Nürnberg, 12. April 1962 BArch BA 119/ 4035.

¹⁹⁰ BAVAV Türkei 12. April 1962 an BAVAV Nürnberg BArch BA 119/ 4035; See Also BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, 11. Okt. 1963 which notes that around 2,000 people were awaiting departure from Istanbul, BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁹¹ The German Liaison Office in Istanbul requested that special consideration be taken of the backed-up situation in Turkey because it could “affect the West German economy”: “Die Verbindungsstelle bittet daher im Hinblick auf die besonders gelagerten Verhältnisse in der Türkei, die Transporte von hier im Interesse der deutschen Wirtschaft so abfertigen zu können, wie sie anfallen.” BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, 12. April 1962 BArch BA 119/ 4035.

the workers themselves. When, due to missing cars or limited seating capacity, workers could not depart as planned, they were “sent home” and given a later departure date, which could be up to three weeks later.¹⁹² In some cases, workers had already traveled long distances to arrive in Istanbul for departure and had done so at their own expense, so it is doubtful that they could have truly traveled home, and officials knew this and reported it back to the Employment Bureau in Nurnberg.¹⁹³ West German officials at the Liaison Office in Istanbul were particularly concerned with those coming from Anatolia, noting that they could have already traveled up to 1,700 km to get to Istanbul and that they had a three-day trip ahead of them.¹⁹⁴ It is unclear what workers could do while waiting in Istanbul, and the Employment Bureau only offered nominal support in the amount of an extra food packet and a small amount of money in compensation.¹⁹⁵ In addition, if more than six weeks passed between the medical exam and the new departure date, a new medical examination was necessary for men; for women, a new exam including a pregnancy test was necessary after four weeks.¹⁹⁶ The repeated exams provided an example of the German Liaison Office attempting to hold onto its standards and regulations, even in the midst of disorganization.

The visa delays caused more than a bottleneck in Istanbul; they also affected workers’ ability to make transfers to their final destinations once in West Germany.

¹⁹²BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, “Betr: Transportangelegenheiten” 1. Apr 1964, BArch B119/ 4035.

¹⁹³ Some workers sold their land to come to West Germany, some worker reported owning up to 300 acres of land in Turkey before departure, Ali Gitmez, *Göçmen İşçilerin Dönüşü: Return Migration of Turkish Workers to Three Selected Regions* (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi İdari İlimler Fakültesi, 1977) 73, 85, 93.

¹⁹⁴ BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg 12. April 1962.

¹⁹⁵ Nürnberg 13. April 1964, BArch B 119/ 4035; See also BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg 4. Sept. 1964, BArch B 119/ 4035, where an official notes that 246 workers who could not depart were given 30 Turkish Lira apiece for room and board for three nights, costing the BAVAV an additional 7,380 Turkish Lira.

¹⁹⁶ BAVAV Türkei, BArch B 119/ 3020, cited in Karin Hunn, *Nächstes Jahr*, 93.

Workers would arrive in Istanbul on a Monday for departure, but their visas were typically not ready until Thursday or Friday. Leaving later in the week meant a problematic weekend arrival in Munich. Officials working at the Munich train station repeatedly requested that workers *not* arrive on the weekends, because, in addition to a lack of weekend train connections, employer representatives were often unreachable on the weekends and unable to receive the message that workers were on their way.¹⁹⁷

Delayed or weekend arrivals also meant that workers had to spend their first night in the Munich train station.¹⁹⁸ One official noted,

The trains that arrive in Munich extremely delayed have the result that foreign workers reach their end destinations after midnight. According to state-level employment office reports, this [late arrival] has led to great difficulties. . . I think it is necessary that the passengers who would reach final destinations after Munich between the hours of 1 and 5a.m. as a rule should spend the night in the transfer station. The frequent train delays call for a revision of the distribution of arrival and provisions.¹⁹⁹

In sum, workers ultimately bore the discomforts of the trips' disorganization, regardless of the cause.

West German employers were not indifferent to workers' transportation problems. Some West German employers grew impatient with train delays and the inability to plan around them, especially when workers arrived on weekends. Due to poor phone and telegraph connections between Turkey and West Germany, travel escorts could not let

¹⁹⁷ Weicken, Nürnberg, 13. April 1962 BArch B 119/ 4035; see also BAVAV, Nürnberg, "Übernachtung und Verpflegung von Transportteilnehmern in der Weiterleitungsstelle – Bahnhofsbunker – München," 11. März 1963 BArch B 119/ 4032.

¹⁹⁸ Ref. Weicken, "Vermittlung qualifizierter türkischer Arbeitnehmer nach der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Nürnberg, Notes that Saturday and Sunday arrivals mean that Turkish workers have to spend the night in the Munich train station, 13. April 1962 BArch B 119/ 4035.

¹⁹⁹ BAVAV, Nürnberg, "Anwerbung und Vermittlung ausländischer Arbeitnehmer nach der Bundesrepublik Deutschland; hier: Übernachtung und Verpflegung von Transportteilnehmern in der Weiterleitungsstelle – Bahnhofsbunker –München," 11. März 1963 BArch B 119/ 4032.

those in Munich know of exact arrive times or updated passenger lists.²⁰⁰ Additionally, trains arrived in Munich with delays of up to 13 hours, rendering plans West German employers might have made useless.²⁰¹ The Ford Company apparently complained that if the requested number of Turkish workers could not arrive as scheduled, they would recruit Italians instead, implying that these delays were specific to Turkish workers.²⁰²

Employers were also concerned about effects on traveling workers. In one case, a West German employer wrote an angry letter to the Employment Bureau, complaining that a train transport of guest workers who were bound for his factory had arrived in the middle of the night. As a result, the passengers had had to wait on an extra platform for an additional 18 hours, during which time they were apparently only offered a glass of tea and two rolls.²⁰³ “We believe that you will agree with us,” the company wrote, “that such occurrences do not present a good calling card for the Federal Republic of Germany”²⁰⁴ Most likely, Employment Bureau officials *did* agree that guest-worker transportation was not presenting a positive image of West Germany and its institutions, but, as so many factors of the trip lay outside of their hands, they remained unable to make meaningful improvements.

Despite appearances, Liaison Office officials who lived and worked in Istanbul showed concern and took note of applicants’ negative experiences. One West German official noted with apprehension that it was not a good idea to have the trains departing Istanbul early in the morning, because Istanbul did not have public transportation options

²⁰⁰ Ref. Dreyer, Nürnberg, den 1. März 1962, BArch B 119/ 4035.

²⁰¹ BA Präs. Stengl, an Prof. Dr.jur.Dr.Ing. e.h. Oeftering, 19. Jan. 1970 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁰² BAVAV Türkei an die Transportleitstelle für ausl. Arbeitskräfte, München, 13.10.1962 BArch B 119/ 4035.

²⁰³ Duinger Steinzeugwerk Muhle & Co an den Herrn Präsidenten der Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung Nürnberg, 20. Juli 1973 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

in the middle of the night—for example, the shared taxi (*dolmuş*) service, upon which many depended, did not run through the night, they noted.²⁰⁵ As a result, workers staying in an outlying part of Istanbul would have to leave their residences in the afternoon the day before their departure in order to arrive at the centrally-located Vinegar Seller's station in time. "In my opinion," one official noted in 1964, "it is not reasonable to have Turkish workers [leaving their homes] 8 to 10 hours early so that they then have wait at the train station an additional 13 to 15 hours."²⁰⁶ In short, West German officials were aware of how transportation problems affected Turkish guest workers, and they sought to address them where they could. Employment Bureau officials tried to keep the trip to West Germany organized by paying attention to detail where they could, such as in providing travel instructions, planning travel provisions, and organizing trip escorts. However, officials' inability to translate such attention to detail into practical implementation had calamitous consequences for traveling workers.

Attention to Detail versus the Realities of the Trip

The West German Employment Bureau carefully planned and debated every aspect of guest worker transportation from Turkey to West Germany, demonstrating a great deal of concern. Detailed travel instructions explained packing allowances and exact departure and arrival times. For example, the pamphlet, *I'm going to Germany*, stated that trains would depart to West Germany daily from the Vinegar Seller's Station in Istanbul at 1pm, the trip would last 44 hours, and the trains would arrive in Munich at

²⁰⁵ BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, 19. Feb 1964 BArch B 119/ 4035.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

8:30am.²⁰⁷ Also, *How to Go to Germany* stated the details of workers' packing allowances, down to how many olives and cheese (one kilo) and how many cigarettes (10 packs) they could pack.²⁰⁸ However, it is difficult to know how officials distributed these instructions, how many workers had access to them, and how many actually read them.²⁰⁹ Nevertheless, instructional materials did demonstrate how West German officials intended for the trip to West Germany to be—well-planned and under their control, which it ultimately was not.

The Employment Bureau also invested a great deal of time in providing the appropriate provisions for the trip. They calculated the calories of the provisions;²¹⁰ they had the provisions tested by a state laboratory in Munich for nutritional, satiation, and germ values;²¹¹ and, they compared different offerings of the various firms that were courting the lucrative deal of supplying the West German Employment Bureau.²¹² After

²⁰⁷ Münir Egeli, "Almanya'ya Gidiyorum" (Bonn: İnkılap ve Aka, 1962) 28. The pamphlet also lists departure days and times for air routes to West Germany, though until 1970, train travel was far more common.

²⁰⁸ *İşçi*, 16.

²⁰⁹ In her study of the conditions and problems of Turkish workers in West Germany, Abadan Unat noted that 58% of those she interviewed said that they did not read instructional materials before departure or after arrival. This statement makes it unclear if workers received the materials or if they were choosing to ignore them. Abadan-Unat, *Studie Über die Lage und Die Probleme der Türkischen Gastarbeiter in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Kurze Zusammenfassung*, Türkische Republik Ministerpräsidium Staatssekretariat für Wirtschaftsplanung, Ankara, 1964, 6.10.1964 BArch, B 119/ 3073.

²¹⁰ For example, an arrival packet in Southern Bavaria contained exactly 1,111.4 Calories. Landesarbeitsamt Südbayern, "Verpflegung der ausländischen Arbeiter in der Weiterleitungsstelle," 1963 BArch B 119/ 4032.

²¹¹ "Der Nähr- und Sättigungswert der Lebensmittel kann als ausreichend bezeichnet werden. Mit Ausnahme der Wurst keine Beanstandungen in hygienischer und qualitativer Hinsicht." Istanbul 13. Dez 1964, Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung, Deutsche Verbindungsstelle in der Türkei, An den Herrn Präsidenten der Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung; Betr: Transportangelegenheiten; hier: Reiseproviant; BArch B 119/ 4035.

²¹² BAVAV Nürnberg, "Bericht des VAm Krusch über die Dienstreise nach Belgrad zwecks Beobachtung eines Sonderzug-Transportes Istanbul-München," 11. Nov 1963 BArch B 119/4035; Istanbul, BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, "Reiseproviant," 13. Dez 1964 BArch B 119 / 4035, this memo noted that one firm was so eager to secure the deal with the Employment Bureau, they reportedly offered gold watches to officials and their wives.

the inaugural trip in September 1961, officials reported the travel provisions down to the gram:

150-200 grams cooked mutton, 150-200 grams ground beef meatballs, 100 grams baked mutton liver, 1 kilo Turkish bread, 1 pear, 1 apple, and 500 grams grapes, 2 small green cucumbers, and 20 olives, 60 grams cheese, 2 hard-boiled eggs, 2 tomatoes, 3 yeast pastries, rice-stuffed grape leaves, and, for drinking water, two 10 liter containers that could be filled.²¹³

The travel escort for the trip noted that the provisions should be more in the future and that it would be more appropriate to offer, instead of coffee, “a thinned yogurt drink” after arrival, referring to the common Turkish drink, *Ayran*.²¹⁴ (The yogurt drink was apparently relatively unknown, signified by several hand-written exclamation points next to the request.)²¹⁵ Cultural considerations of palate and dietary restrictions demonstrated West German officials’ commitment to addressing more than just the functional aspects of the trip to West Germany. Yet, at the same time, such attention to detail also seems inexplicable in comparison with alarming parts of guest worker travel that deserved more attention. Significantly, this attention to details suggests that had the trip been entirely under the control of the West German Employment officials, it might have been a very different experience.

On paper, officials also showed great concern about what was in workers’ baggage. In their internal memos, for example, German and Austrian customs officials were apprehensive about the threat of foreign sausages.²¹⁶ German Rail repeatedly

²¹³ BAVAV Nürnberg Holjewilken, “Anwerbung und Vermittlung türkischer Arbeitskräfte; hier Eintreffen der 1. Und 2. Sammelfahrt mit türkischen Arbeitskräften in München-Hbf,” 14. Okt 1961 BArch B 119/ 4035.

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ In interviews, former workers reported packing food for the trip that including the Turkish garlic-flavored sausage, *sucuk*, see DoMiT interview, “Filiz,” DoMiT Interview, “Metin,” DoMiT interview, “Yalcın,” See also BAVAV Nürnberg an BAVAV Türkei, BAVAV Griechenland, “Ungenehmigte Einfuhr von Fleisch- und Wurstwaren durch ausländische Arbeitnehmer,” BArch B 119/

requested that West German officials remind workers before departure, especially if they were Turkish, that they could not bring foreign meat products into West Germany.²¹⁷

Internal reports also reveal that custom officials threatened to stop and thoroughly inspect all trains at the border, which would take hours if guest workers could not curb their “unusually large amounts” of baggage and foodstuffs.²¹⁸ Yet often, such threats were idle: the reporter, Kobes, noted that an Austria customs official told him that it simply took too much time to “climb over the barricade of luggage in the aisles” and that the resulting delays would be “unbearable.”²¹⁹ In other cases, traveling workers tried to take advantage of the situation to smuggle goods past customs officials, though they were not always successful. Customs officials discovered tobacco, spirits, carpets, as well as huge sacks of potatoes and an entire train-compartment’s worth of tanned hides that guest workers were trying to bring with them.²²⁰ The amount of minutia in both travelers’ instructions and internal memos about guest worker travel seems misplaced considering that officials could not even guarantee all workers a *seat* on the train to West Germany.

The failure to implement regulations also caused myriad problems for traveling workers. Despite official packing allowances, stowing baggage en route was also a consistent problem, especially because workers often traveled on trains designed for local travel, such as the German “B3y” train, which could accommodate very little luggage.²²¹

4029; apparently the Minister for Nutrition, Farming, and Forestry wrote the Employment Bureau in Nurnberg to remind them that “the introduction of forbidden meat products” from Turkey and Greece should be stopped.

²¹⁷ Deutsche Bundesbahn Oberbetriebsleitung Süd, an BA Nürnberg, “Betref: Transporte neuangeworbener griechischer und türkischer Arbeiter nach Deutschland,” 15. 3. 1967 BArch B119/ 4029.

²¹⁸ BAVAV Nürnberg, an AÄ Südbayern, “Betr: Besuch der Weiterleitungsstelle im Hauptbahnhof München am 14. Januar 1963,” 24. Januar 1963 BArch B 119/ 4032.

²¹⁹ “Notbremse im Hellas-Istanbul-Expreß” *Salzburger Nachrichten* BArch B 119/ 4030.

²²⁰ BAVAV Nürnberg, an Herrn Präs. Landesarbeitsamtes Südbayern, München, 16. Jan 1962; Deutsches Zollamt Salzburg an BAVAV Nürnberg, 23. Nov 1967 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²²¹ Jamin, “Fremde Heimat,” in *50 Jahre*, 145-165.

West German officials who managed the departure from Istanbul did not necessarily enforce the official baggage guidelines. One official noted that, it was his policy to have passengers occupy fifty seats and leave twelve seats per car for luggage.²²² In his opinion, there was leeway in baggage storage, because “not every Turkish worker packed alike.” Workers coming from Anatolia, he explained, who were about 30% to 50% of passengers, tended to carry a bag or small sack, while only 40% of them carried a suitcase.²²³ On the other hand, workers from Istanbul apparently averaged two suitcases apiece.²²⁴ More than just causal about the regulations, this official was sympathetic to the fact that workers were attempting to pack clothes for an entire year. “Many of the Turks are in no position to spend the money they have earned in Germany for clothes,” he noted, “[especially] when they would rather use it to take care of their families in Turkey.”²²⁵ Not seeing any problem with the extra luggage, the official reported to the Employment Bureau in Nurnberg, “during my pre-departure inspection . . . I have never seen luggage in the aisles. Of course, whenever train cars are added in the countries that are passed through, it is possible that some of the passengers and their luggage have to be brought into the aisles.”²²⁶ Indeed, it was quite possible that passengers and luggage were “brought into the aisles,” as workers had to change trains and add passengers en route.²²⁷ Such haphazard plans for luggage storage, which seemed dependent upon who was

²²² BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, “Betr: Transportangelegenheiten, hier, Das zu reichlich mitgeführte Gepäck türk. Arbeitnehmer, Die Nutzung von Sitzplätzen zur Gepäckbeförderung, Die Verschmutzung der Sonderzüge,” 15. Mai 1964 BArch B 119/ 4035.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Trains also picked up traveling vacationers who had ample luggage as well. “Notbremse im Hellas-Istanbul-Expreß” *Salzburger Nachrichten*; See also BAVAV Deutsche Kommission in Griechenland, Der Direktor, “Transportangelegenheiten griechischer und türkischer Arbeitnehmer,” 8. Nov 1966 BArch B119/ 4029.

working at the train station, explain how Mr. Kobes found “pyramids” of suitcases when he boarded the train in Salzburg.

Another aspect of workers’ travel that officials attempted to regulate was passengers’ behavior on the trains. Employment Bureau officials distributed instructional booklets reminding passengers not to throw trash from train windows, to keep the toilets clean, and to be sparing with the water.²²⁸ They also warned passengers to stay on the train when it stopped along the way and not to get off to “get water or to go shopping,” to stay in their seats, to take care of their health during the trip, and not to damage the doors, by “shutting them violently,” or the windows, by boarding through them.²²⁹ Not surprisingly, such materials proved ineffectual and unrealistic, especially as it was often not the case that workers had appropriately-sized trash cans for such a long-distance trip or were able to “take care of their health,” considering the poor conditions on the train and the fact that travelers were advised not to leave the train to refill their water bottles—even though they were given the opposite advise elsewhere. In addition, officials hired travel escorts to accompany traveling workers and make sure that the trip ran smoothly, to handle the group tickets, to prevent passengers from throwing thrash from the windows, and to ensure traveling workers stayed in their assigned areas.²³⁰ The Employment Bureau in Nurnberg also wanted travel escorts to make sure that travelers behaved in a “disciplined” manner, paid attention to cleanliness, and insisted that escorts receive

²²⁸ BAVAV Nürnberg, “Bitte Sofort Lesen, Wichtige Hinweise für die Fahrt in die Bundesrepublik Deutschland,” undated, BArch B 119/ 4029.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg, 28. Jan 1966 BArch B 119/ 4035; BAVAV Nürnberg, an BAVAV Türkei, 20. Juli 1964 BArch B 119/ 4029; Landesarbeitsamt Südbayern, “Merkblatt für Reiseleiter und-begleiter von Sammelreisen türkischer Arbeitnehmer von Istanbul nach München,” - Nov 1973 BArch B 119/ 4032, this instructional sheet recommend that travel escorts receive immunizations eight days before departure from Istanbul.

megaphones to assist them.²³¹ However, because there was typically only one escort per 200 traveling workers, they too proved ineffectual.²³²

It is doubtful that, megaphone in hand or not, travel escorts could have influenced guest-worker travel. One travel escort, who accompanied traveling workers from Belgrade to Munich described horrific scenes on the train. When he boarded in Belgrade, the toilets were already completely stopped up to the point that they could no longer be used, mainly because no water had been added to the train since its departure from Istanbul.²³³ “Certainly it cannot be a problem” the escort noted, “to fill a [guest worker] train with water exactly the same way any other normal train would be filled in any major station.”²³⁴ But the problems with water were nothing compared to what came afterwards, he noted. Apparently, upon arrival in Zagreb, Yugoslavians, who worked in West Germany, “stormed” the train: “in the process, not only the doors, but mainly the windows were used to board. It was an appalling scene, as women and men climbed in like wild animals. It was as if a catastrophe had broken out and everyone wanted to come into the safety of the train.”²³⁵ The escort noted, that the train was also “confused with” a train meant to take Greeks and Yugoslavs who were on vacation back to West Germany; and, no one could prevent these additional passengers from boarding. When the German escort tried to address Yugoslavian passengers who were boarding the already-full train or who were apparently “obtrusive” to traveling Turkish women, the Yugoslavian

²³¹ BAVAV official Weicken noted that it would be a good idea for escorts to walk the aisles and remind passengers with the megaphone to be clean. Weicken, Nürnberg, 11. Nov 1963 BArch B 119/ 4035; see also BAVAV Nürnberg an Landesarbeitsamtes Südbayern, BAVAV Türkei, 17. Okt 1966 BArch B 119/ 4029; BAVAV Greichenland an BAVAV Nürnberg, 8. Nov 1966 BArch B 119/ 4029.

²³² BAVAV Greichenland an BAVAV Nürnberg, “Transportangelegenheiten griechischer und türkischer Arbeitnehmer, 8 Nov 1966 BArch B 119/ 4029.

²³³ Arbeitsamt Rosenheim, Dienststelle Holzkirchen, an Landesarbeitsamtes Südbayern, München, “Türkentransport ab Istanbul am 10.1.1964” 15. Jan 1964 BArch B 119/ 4035.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

passengers replied, “This is Yugoslavia, you can’t say anything here!”²³⁶ During the rest of the trip, the cars were overstuffed and the aisles filled with luggage and people. The escort hoped that at the Austrian border, he could have the rail police deal with the extra passengers, but to no avail. Neither conductors, train police, nor border police found it “worth their while” to deal with the situation on the train, and the escort who was the official representative of the West German employment office was only able to observe with horror.²³⁷

Unlike the border police, Employment Bureau officials thought it worth their while, or at least their responsibility, to address problems with guest-worker travel, address them on paper that is. Officials working in Istanbul (*BAVAV Türkei*), officials working in Nurnberg (*BAVAV Nürnberg*), officials working at the Munich Central Station, officials who worked at the state employment offices (*Landesarbeitsamt*) and German Rail officials all exchanged letters to each other requesting that changes be made, reporting that conditions were poor, and suggesting the improvements that they wanted to see. However, in all of this documentation there is very little evidence that these various officials knew how realistically to address these problems or who was ultimately responsible.

The Trans-national Water Dilemma and the Problems of Multiple Administrations

The main area in which officials’ concerns for provisions and the conditions of the trip, as well as the transnational context of guest-worker travel, clashed, with disastrous results, was in supplying water for the trains. No other aspect of guest-worker transportation highlighted the confusion over responsibility, the Employment Bureau

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid. The escort noted that the train was marked in such a way that anyone could see what its purpose was and that Yugoslavia had such limited train service that everyone wanted to use it.

officials' impotence, and guest workers' inhuman train conditions more than the water situation on the trains. In addition to the need for drinking water, a water supply on the trains was necessary to ensure sanitary conditions for the bathrooms on the crowded train during the three-day trip. "Not only is providing water a part of train service, [especially one] that is traveling for 53 hours," wrote an Employment Bureau official in Istanbul to headquarters in Nurnberg, "but also the cleanliness of the toilet and replenishment of toilet paper and of soap, just as it is common *on every long distance trip in Germany*."²³⁸ However, the problem was that this trip was not in Germany and this train, a *Sonderzug* or "special train" as guest-worker trains were called, was not like other trains in Germany. However, the fact that these officials had the same expectations and wanted to create the same conditions signifies that they believed that they ought to provide the same conditions, even for a "special train."

For drinking water, officials were able to intervene by issuing water bottles with provisions before departure.²³⁹ Officials in Istanbul instructed passengers before departure to fill them or refill them as necessary during the trip.²⁴⁰ Once en route, however, passengers rarely had a chance to refill water bottles.²⁴¹ Furthermore, because the trains were not equipped for long distance travel, their smaller water containers also emptied quickly with so many passengers on board.²⁴² As a result, West German Employment Office officials continually reported problems with water and sanitation,

²³⁸ BAVAV Türkei an den Herrn Präsident BAVAV Nürnberg; 15. Mai 1964 BA B 119/ 4035.

²³⁹²³⁹ On the inaugural trip, 10 liter bottles were issued, presumably to share, starting in 1963, 2 liter bottles were issued to workers together with their travel provisions, BAVAV Türkei, an BAVAV Nürnberg, 16. Aug 1963 BArch B 119 / 4035; BAVAV Nürnberg 24. Mai 1965 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁴⁰ Landesarbeitsamt Südbayern, Der Präsident, An der Herrn Präsidenten Der Bundesanstalt für Arbeit Nürnberg, 9. Apr 1970, BArch B119 4031.

²⁴¹ Abteilung I, Nürnberg, "Betr: Durchführung der Ausländertransporte," 24. Mai 1965 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁴² Weicken, BAVAV Nürnberg 11. Nov 1963, BArch B 119/ 4035, Weicken suggested arranging a special "water wagon" to attach to this train.

even as late in the program as 1970.²⁴³ Due to the multiple bureaucracies involved, supplying water for the trains had no easy solution. “Trains that are coming from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia,” an official in Istanbul reported to Nurnberg, “either have no water or only have limited water supplies.”²⁴⁴ Water containers on the trains that passed through the Balkans were not refilled during stops there, even when travel escorts insisted.²⁴⁵ According to the train schedule, the train should have been filled at stops in Svilengrad, Sofia, Beograd, Zagrep, and Resenbach.²⁴⁶ The only explanation as to why the trains were not refilled in the Balkans was that it was a time consuming process.²⁴⁷

A main problem of guest worker transportation was the type of trains they rode, which were not meant for long-distance travel. German Rail continually offered “the B3y train,” a local train, for guest worker travel. During the over-fifty-hour trip, these trains had problems not just with water, but also with heat and light, in addition to being extremely uncomfortable.²⁴⁸ Workers complained that they were traveling for three days on trains without headrests, which was especially problematic for those sitting in the

²⁴³ OBL Süd 15. Jan 1964 BArch B 119/ 4035; BAVAV Türkei, Istanbul, an BAVAV Nürnberg 13. Juli 1964 BArch B 119/ 4031; BAVAV Nürnberg, an BAVAV Türkei, Grieschenland, Spanien, Landesarbeitsamt Südbayern, Landesarbeitsamt Nordrhein-Westfalen, 4. August 1964 BArch B 119/ 4031; BAVAV Nürnberg, 24. Mai 1964, BArch B 119/ 4031; BAVAV Nürnberg, An Deutsche Bundesbahn Oberbetriebsleitung Süd, 18. Jan 1966; BArch B 119/ 4031; BA Nürnberg, an Oeftering, Präs. Deutschen Bundesbahn, 19. Jan 1970, BArch B 119/ 4031; Landesarbeitsamt Hessen, an BA Nürnberg, 6. März 1970 BArch B 119/ 4031; Landesarbeitsamt Südbayern, An BA Nürnberg, 9. April 1970 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁴⁴ “Verbesserung im Balkan-Verkehr erst 1966? Die ausländischen Bahnverwaltungen können keine weiteren Züge übernehmen,” FAZ No. 228 1 Okt 1965 BArch B 119/ 4031; See also a report from FAZ on Sept 29, 1966; BAVAV Türkei an den Herrn Präsident BAVAV Nürnberg; 15. Mai 1964 BArch B 119/ 4035.

²⁴⁵ “BAVAV Türkei, Istanbul, an BAVAV Nürnberg, 13. Juli 1964 BArch B 119/ 403; BAVAV Nürnberg an BAVAV Türkei, Griechenland, Spanien, Landesarbeitsamt Südbayern, 4. August 1964 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁴⁶ BAVAV Türkei, Istanbul, an BAVAV Nürnberg, 13. Juli 1964 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁴⁷ Weicken, BAVAV Nürnberg 11. Nov 1963 BArch B 119/ 4035.

²⁴⁸ BAVAV Nürnberg, an die Deutsche Bundesbahn Oberbetriebsleitung Süd, 18. Jan 1966 BArch B 119/ 4031; see also, BAVAV Nürnberg, an Präsident und Vorsitz der Deutschen Bundesbahn, 19. Jan 1970 BArch B 119/ 4031.

middle or on an aisle of the double benches that the train offered for seating.²⁴⁹ (See Image Eight). German Rail proposed attaching a headrest, as a “comfort improvement,” but it is unclear if this was implemented.²⁵⁰ (See Image Nine)

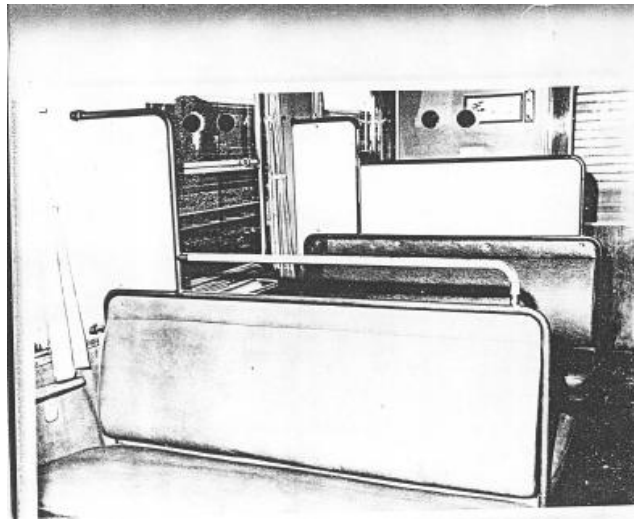


Image Eight. “Seats on the B3y train.” The bench in the front shows the original construction. they had window seats. *Source:* Deutsche Bundesbahn, Frankfurt, An BAVAV, Nürnberg, 23. November 1964 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁴⁹ Deutsche Bundesbahn, Frankfurt, an BA Nürnberg. “Arbeitersonderzüge vom Balkan – Süddeutschland,” 23. Nov. 1964 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.



Image Nine. The “comfort improvement.” *Source:* Deutsche Bundesbahn, Frankfurt, an BAVAV Nürnberg, 23. Nov 1964 BArch B 119/ 4031.

The B3y was absolutely wrong for guest-worker travel. An officer of the German Liaison Office in Istanbul noted,

When, due to a lack of toilet paper, newspaper and packaging must be used, and there is no water to flush, it is no wonder that the toilets are stopped up and the filth reaches an unimaginable degree. So far, my comments on these problems have hardly had any impact, because the certainly earnest attempts by the German Rail Company have fallen on deaf ears.²⁵¹

The lack of water caused serious sanitation problems.

Furthermore, in the midst of discussions of a lack of water in trains, officials appeared to be equally concerned about keeping trains clean. Officials suggested having travel escorts use megaphones to remind passengers to be clean, implying that passengers

²⁵¹BAVAV Türkei an den Herrn Präsident BAVAV Nürnberg; 15. Mai 1964 BA B 119/ 4035.

could solve sanitation problems by “being cleaner” and that they just needed to be reminded more loudly of it. Implicit in the discussions of train sanitation was a commentary on the cleanliness (or lack thereof) of Turkish workers and of the cultural differences between Turks and Germans. “Even though I am aware, that some passengers are unfamiliar with the basin toilet,” reported an Employment Office official from Istanbul, “the blame for the filth cannot be solely placed on the passengers [especially when] . . . *Sonderzüge* from Bulgaria and Yugoslavia have absolutely no water or only very little.”²⁵² The Employment Bureau in Nurnberg met with German Rail to improve the conditions on the train and requested that the water “actually be supplied according to plan.”²⁵³ However, this same memo also admitted that the problems with keeping the trains clean were clearly related to the lack of water on trains, noting that the request to supply the trains with water “actually should be carried out,” in addition to supplying larger trashcans to prevent travelers from throwing their trash from the windows of their crowded compartments.²⁵⁴ The Employment Bureau passed on to German Rail travel escorts’ reports and their requests for water, toilet paper, and soap, though to no avail.²⁵⁵

However, German Rail was concerned with sanitation on the trains, but from a different point of view—they wanted to prevent damage to their trains. German Rail wrote to the Employment Bureau in Nurnberg that the state of the “guest-worker trains” was unacceptable and, furthermore, a public health danger:

²⁵² Ibid; German rail blamed the unsanitary conditions on the trains not only on the duration of the trip but also on guest workers “South-Eastern-European Mentality,” see Deutsche Bundesbahn Bundesbahndirektion München, an BAVAV Nürnberg, 13.11.1973 BArch B 119/ 4029.

²⁵³ BAVAV Nürnberg an BAVAV Türkei 4. Aug 1964 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁵⁴ BAVAV Nürnberg 4. Aug 1964 BArch B 119/ 4031.

²⁵⁵ BAVAV Nürnberg an die Deutsche Bundesbahn Obertriebsleitung Süd, 6. Nov 1964 BArch B 119/ 4029.

Particularly the trains that are used for Turkish guest workers arrive in Munich in an indescribable state. I have attached a photo that unfortunately cannot entirely describe the extent of the unhygienic conditions on the train. Our workers repeatedly refuse to clean these unbelievably dirty trains. Several workers became sick to their stomachs when cleaning. Some of the cleaning ladies reported to have been bitten by fleas. The doctors for German Rail, assigned by the State Health Department, . . . report that cleaning these trains could cause an epidemic²⁵⁶

Interestingly enough, while the Employment Bureau in Nurnberg was writing to German Rail about the poor conditions on the trains, it seems that German Rail was writing the Employment Bureau to complain. The Employment Bureau responded, in an internal memo, that they would request that travel escorts emphasize cleanliness to passengers in en route and, more importantly noted, that if German Rail refused to clean the trains or refused to provide train service, it could interrupt recruitment.²⁵⁷ The same Employment Bureau that issued instructions about how many olives one could pack seemed unable or unwilling to make the connection between the lack of water and the inhuman conditions on the trains.

After a year of discussion, Employment Bureau officials broached the subject at the international conference for guest worker travel, noting that other rail administrations could no longer be delinquent in providing the necessary water, as it was clearly needed for sanitary reasons. In the end, in 1969, West German Employment Bureau officials finally admitted that trains were not being filled with water or cleaned properly out of an effort to keep delays to a minimum.²⁵⁸ But it was too late. Starting in 1970, the German

²⁵⁶ Deutsche Bundesbahn Bundesbahndirektion München an BA Nürnberg, 10. Sep 1964 BArch B 119 / 4029; These sentiments are repeated for years, Deutsche Bundesbahn Bundesbahndirektion München, BA Nürnberg, Landesarbeitsamt Bayern, 1.12.1964 BArch B 119 / 4029; Deutsche Bundesbahn Bundesbahndirektion München, an BA Nürnberg, 12. Mai 1965 BArch B 119 / 4029; Eichner, BA Nürnberg, - Nov 1969 BArch B 119 / 4029; Deutsche Bundesbahn Bundesbahndirektion München an BAVAV Nürnberg, 19. Nov 1969 BArch B 119 / 4029.

²⁵⁷ BAVAV Nürnberg, 13. Sept. 1964 BA B 119 / 4029.

²⁵⁸ BA Nürnberg, "Reinigung von Sonderzügen in München," BArch B 119 / 4029.

Employment Office began using airplanes to transport workers, especially female workers.²⁵⁹ While the era of guest worker train transports was officially over, the relationships and negotiations that had occurred leading up to this point had had a lasting impact.

Many scholars have pointed out that the post-1945 importation of guest workers occurred in the shadow of Germany's dark historical backdrop. The connotations are inescapable when considering the inhuman train travel for ethnic minorities in a country, which had less than twenty years earlier sought to eradicate its minorities and used trains to transport them to concentration and extermination camps. With this connotation in mind, on September 21, 1972 the Union for Wood and Plastics wrote to the Federal Ministry for Labor and Social Affairs and formally requested a name change for transportation lists of foreign workers, changing from the term *Transportlisten* (transport list) to the term *Sammelreiseliste* (group-trip list).²⁶⁰ The Union explained,

When humanitarian conditions are a given, then naturally the terminology should avoid being, or at least acknowledged as being, the same as used by the SS and the *Reichsbahn* for 'Deportation,' for prisoners, and for *Fremdarbeiter*. . . . We recognize that the Employment Bureau attempts to make the trip as pleasant as possible . . . therefore, the contradiction is all the more crass for the promotion of our job market that, up until arrival, human conditions have fallen by the wayside.²⁶¹

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Gewerkschaft Holz und Kunststoff to Bundesanstalt für Arbeit Nürnberg Betr: "Verwendung sogenannter 'Transportlisten' bei der Einreise ausländischer Arbeitnehmer in die Bundesrepublik" 18. Dez 1972 BArch B 119/ 4029; It was in the early 1970s that unions started working on behalf of foreign workers in West German for improved conditions. This request was a part of a larger movement of concern over guest-worker conditions in West Germany in the early 1970s. For more on these two points, see chapter five.

²⁶¹ Gewerkschaft Holz und Kunststoff, an Bundesanstalt für Arbeit Herrn Minta, Betrifft: Verwendung sogenannter "Transportlisten" bei der Einreise ausländischer Arbeitnehmer in die Bundesrepublik"; 18 Dezember 1972 BA B 119/ 4029.

As a result, on October 24, 1972, the Federal Employment Office sent a memo to all foreign liaison offices as well as national labor offices noting a terminology change for all dealings with foreign workers' travel to West Germany:

the term *Transportlist* [transport list] will be immediately replaced with *Sammelreise* [group trip]; *Transportleiter* or *Transportbegleiter* [transport guide] replaced with *Reiseleiter* or *Reisebegleiter* [trip guide]; *Transportliste* [transport list]; *Transportteilnehmer* [transport participant] with *Reiseteilnehmer* [trip participant], and so forth.²⁶²

However, by 1972 it was too late to take into consideration the historical weight of guest worker transportation, as the damage had been done. Germany was unable to let go of its past, just as traveling Turkish workers refused to let go of their futures.

Welcome to Germany! Hezrllich Willkommen bei uns in Deutschland!²⁶³

“As you arrived at the train station in Germany, the variety of new impressions was probably so big that you probably couldn't even hear the welcome greetings of your company representatives,” stated *Hallo Mustafa* about the arrival in West Germany.²⁶⁴

The pamphlet continued, “the company representatives would probably like to shake everyone's hand and say something, but the exhausted men's expressions . . . silences every word, [cause them to] leave them with their confused expressions, their silent homesickness, their vague expectations, plans, hopes, and their overwhelming exhaustion.”²⁶⁵ Such a poetic consideration of guest workers' initial impressions was out of character with the realities of the arrival. It was not often the case that employers personally greeted arriving workers. Instead, due to delays workers often had to spend

²⁶² “Anreise der ausländischen Arbeitnehmer in die Bundesrepublik Deutschland; heir Bezeichnungen im Zusammenhang mit der Anreise,” BA der Präsident Nürnberg an die Landesarbeitsämter und die Auslandsdienststellen 24. Okt 1972 BArch B119/ 4029.

²⁶³ “A heartfelt welcome to Germany” From *Hallo Mustafa* 3.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ DoMiT Interview

their first night in West Germany in the Munich Central Station, the first stop for workers arriving from Italy, Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia.

The Munich station housed a subterranean air-raid shelter that was retrofitted as a holding place for arriving guest workers who could not make their connections. German Rail would not allow large groups of foreign workers to loiter on the platforms and in winter months it was also too cold there.²⁶⁶ The bunker was not only convenient but also keep arriving guest workers out of sight of the general West German public.²⁶⁷

Previously, workers had been going to a bunker that was further away, escorted by police, causing traffic delays, and, most importantly, in the words of Employment Bureau officials, creating “March Columns” of people or an image that was detrimental to the public image of the Federal Republic.²⁶⁸ At the end of platform 11, there were the stairs leading to the bunker, just beneath the arriving platform. (See Image Ten.)

²⁶⁶ Notiz zur Besprechung am 15.11.1963 bei der OFD in München, “Unterbringung der Weiterleitungsstelle für ausländische Arbeitnehmer in Münch Hbf,” BArch B 119/ 4032.

²⁶⁷ For images of the the Munich Central Station and the bunker see, Mathilde Jamin, *Fremde Heimat* 142-143.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

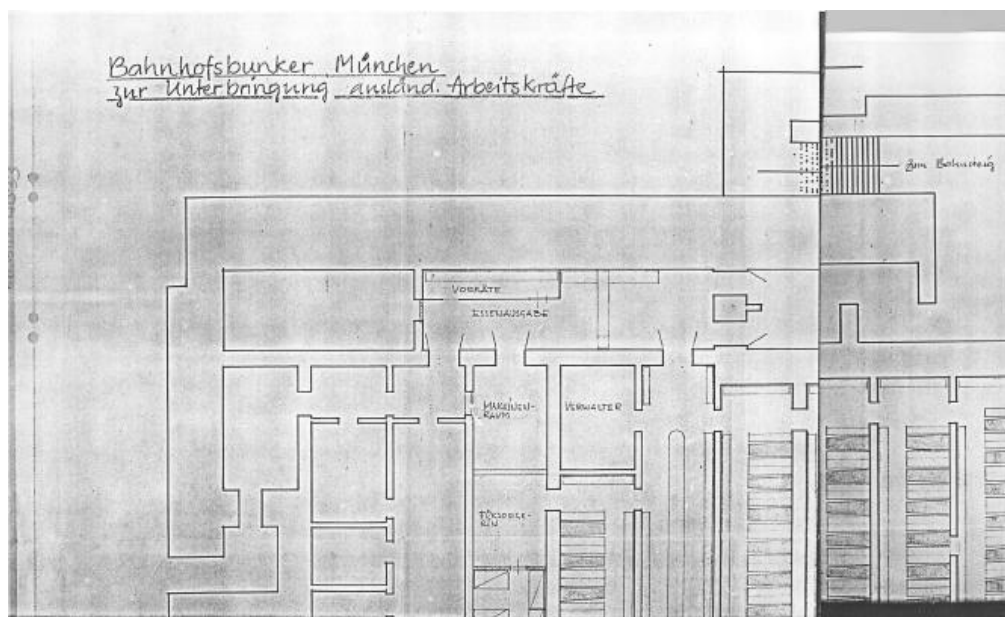


Image Ten. “Air Raid Shelter for the Lodging of Foreign Workers in the Munich Central Station”
Blueprint of the Air-raid Shelter under the Munich Central Train Station. In the upper right there were stairs leading to platform 11 “*Zum Bahnsteig*.” Source: BArch B 119/ 4033.

Cahit, who had said on the train that he would return to Turkey in a few years as a millionaire, changed into fresh clothes and shaved before getting off the train in Munich, hoping to be greeted by German girls. Instead, he was led into the bunker. “They said, you will sleep here and tomorrow, you will go to Berlin. Actually, we thought there would be German girls. It was a shock.”²⁶⁹ Speaking about his night in the Munich Bunker, Erol stated:

We got off [the train in Munich] around morning. When we got off the train, they treated us like we were a bunch of bums . . . [The] Turkish workers who came from Anatolia . . . were wearing *çarık* [rawhide sandals] on their feet and *yorgan* [traditional quilt bags] as clothing. We formed a double line [we lined up in pairs] and followed a translator who had a megaphone . . . [We] were treated like soldiers, lining up. Under the station there were small dark rooms [cellar].²⁷⁰

²⁶⁹ DoMiT Interview, “Cahit.”

²⁷⁰ DoMiT Interview, “Erol.”

However, the Munich Central Station was not an entirely negative experience. First Aid Stations assisted travelers and organized clothing drives together with local charities and the Red Cross to outfit arriving workers for Germany's climate, such as the workers from Anatolia whom Erol mentions.²⁷¹ The efforts of the Munich Train Station's staff to aid arriving workers demonstrates a level of concern with traveling workers that contrasts sharply with their negative experiences during the trip.

Conclusion

Despite efforts by the Employment Bureau to make the transition to West Germany as smooth as possible and to address concerns with the "West German Image" in relation to guest workers, arriving workers faced disappointments that colored future relationships. Traveling workers also did not have much to prepare them for the bumpy road to Germany. Neither detailed instructions or plans could address logistical problems and poor conditions that arose on the trip and indeed, quite to the contrary misled guest workers. Workers did not see the planning involved nor the letter exchanges; they did not receive or read instructions; and, they did not always have a travel escort, the exact provisions, type of train, or fellow passengers that the Employment Bureau intended. Unlike the planning and debates involved, workers in contrast, experienced the trip as it happened. "The trip was like a cattle transport," a former worker, Yalcin, noted when describing his trip to West Germany. He continued, "Everyone was nervous. No one knew the language. There was a translator who was watching over the whole train and acting like a *Commissar*, [saying] don't get up, stay in

²⁷¹ Jan 29, 1964 BAVAV the President to Landesarbeitsämter, Südbayern, Nordrhein-Westfalen, BArch B 119 / 4029.

your seats, and the like . . .”²⁷² Another former worker, Filiz recalled her trip saying, “It was a three-day trip. . . . [our food] was a package that had canned goods and *sucuk* sausage and things like that. They gave us canned goods, but there were no can openers. It was terribly planned.”²⁷³ Having already gone through a year-long, tedious, and stressful application process, many workers endured a three day train ride under horrific and exhausting conditions.

After arrival in West Germany, it is not unrealistic to assume that guest workers were not surprised by the substandard living arrangements that awaited them. Workers could use the application and travel period to focus on their goals for their stay in West Germany, and they “stayed” despite the poor conditions—after all they had gone through to get to West Germany, why would they leave? One former worker, Erol, recalling his miserable conditions on his train—such as a lack of water and having to sleep on the floor in shifts—commented, “there was a guy with a Wilkinson razor, . . . and we shaved with it before we got off the train in Munich. After all, we had come for the women, so to look good, to look handsome, we shaved with the bottled soda pop that we had picked up in Yugoslavia . . .”²⁷⁴ Erol’s comments are striking. Despite his train trip and long application process, Erol anticipated no problems in achieving what he set out to earn. The train trip offered workers the first clues to their future treatment as guest workers—good intentions on the part of officials followed by a lack of implementation—and the poor conditions of the train also predisposed workers to certain views of West German employers and authorities, which would come to a head years later.

²⁷² DoMiT Interview, “Yalcın.”

²⁷³ DoMiT Interview, “Filiz”

²⁷⁴ DoMiT Interview, “Erol.”

CHAPTER THREE: Workers not at Work

“I wasn’t just concerned with making money” reported Erol, who left a job in Turkey to go to West Germany as a guest worker in 1965, “accumulating culture was also important to me,” by which he meant learning more about West German night life—for example night clubs, like the “Big Apfel,” and the latest hair styles and fashions their denizens wore, especially high-heeled boots.²⁷⁵ Erol’s co-workers were also constantly telling stories about their adventures in German discos. Erol’s narration, of his goals for his stay in West Germany, as well as other tales of social life, accompany the grim descriptions the first generation of Turkish guest workers give to the difficult conditions of life in West Germany. At the same time that workers recall their ambitions and adventures, they also describe living in over-crowded dormitories that had strict rules—rules that regulated even private life. Workers’ descriptions contrast workers’ goals for their lives in West Germany, or for how they would like them to be remembered, with the realities of their situations. In interviews, former guest workers emphasize the limitations and surveillance of their housing, as well as their sense of adventure and of freedom when not at work. Workers’ dormitories were sites of constant control and negotiation between dorm managers and residents over the meanings and uses of “free time” and “home spaces” outside of work.

This chapter of the dissertation explores the “home life” of Turkish workers who came to West Germany in the 1960s—ranging from the historical development of workers’ housing, to the external audit of dormitories by the Federal Trade Union, to the details of a dorm manager’s daily journal—and, ultimately, argues that workers actively created their home lives and negotiated private time and spaces in the face of severe

²⁷⁵ DoMiT Interview, “Erol.”

restrictions. Max Frisch once described the guest-worker program, saying, “they called for workers, but people came,” and Frisch’s comment succinctly raises the issue of what “workers” are when they are not *at work*: what did it mean for a guest worker to live and not just work in West Germany?²⁷⁶ Both employers and workers tried to negotiate how guest workers should spend their time while not at work and how they should live when “at home.” The status of “guest worker” proved to be a category that workers could not escape at the end of the workday or at home, because much of what characterized workers’ lives happened outside of the workplace. Despite this categorization guest workers arrived in West Germany with notions of self-determination that challenged power relations at work and “at home.”

Initial Housing Arrangements

“It is a problem to find good and cheap housing in Germany today . . .” according to *Hallo Mustafa!*, the 1964 instructional booklet for guest workers, “I can understand your worries, Dear Mustafa, but you must also remember that twenty years ago, Germany was a pile of rubble.”²⁷⁷ The author wanted his “dear Mustafa” to consider guest workers’ housing problems in light of Germany’s recent past by pointing out a troubling aspect of guest-worker housing—its post-war context.²⁷⁸ Destroyed cities and housing shortages, the ever-increasing population of diverse foreign workers, and the historical burden of Germany’s recent past combined to form the dynamics of the new West German nation.

²⁷⁶ “Ein kleines Herrenvolk sieht sich in Gefahr: man hat Arbeitskräfte gerufen, und es kommen Menschen” (Max Frische, *Überfremdung* (1965), in *Gesammelte Werke* Bd. I-VII (Frankfurt am Main, 1976-1986, Bd V, P. 374, quoted in Mathilde Jamin, “Fremde Heimat,” in *50 Jahre Bundesrepublik*, 163.

²⁷⁷ Giacomo Maturi, *Hallo Mustafa: Gespräch des deutschen Arbeitnehmers mit seinem italienischen, spanisch, griechischen und türkischen Kollegen in vier separaten Sprachausgaben*. **FINISH** 1964 (DoMiT) document 424-431. Maturi is an immigration scholar who has written widely on Mediterranean immigrants in West Germany.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

The postwar period was a particular moment in European history of population movements that ranged from the ‘ex-colonials’ traveling to the metropolises of France and Britain, to the millions of DPs and expellees resettling, and finally, to the recruitment of foreign labor from Mediterranean and extra-European countries to, inter alia, France, Holland, Sweden, and the Federal Republic of Germany. At the same time, this particular postwar period was also meant to be Germany’s rebirth from its dark past—a moment in which West Germany was conscious of its perception on the world stage as well as its historic burden. “Ordinary” West Germans carried this historic burden on their shoulders—for example, when German newspapers informed them that “the treatment of guest workers would be regarded a test case for the sincerity of Germans’ commitment to democracy.”²⁷⁹

The presence of the past and the concern over Germany’s international image meant that there was little open conflict among Germans and foreigners, embarrassing national anti-immigrant campaign, or other public outbreak of “residue from the past.”²⁸⁰ This public silence meant, however, that Germans’ attitudes toward this large influx of foreigners had to be internalized and pushed to the private sphere. Foreign workers’ housing, therefore, can provide insight into interactions between West Germans and foreign workers behind closed doors—clues to West Germans’ thoughts about their new neighbors and the reverse. Additionally, a key aspect of worker’s own attempts to create a new life in West Germany, a home life, often started in employer-organized dormitories.

²⁷⁹ Karen Schönwälder “West German Society and Foreigners in the 1960s” in *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955-1975*, eds., Philipp Gassert and Alan Steinweis (New York: Berghahn, 2006) 115-116.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

Workers' dormitories, barracks, and makeshift housing have a long history in Germany. In the 19th century, the Krupp Company built workers' colonies to provide housing (as well as parks, schools, libraries, and recreation grounds) as a part of a larger worker welfare and insurance plan. Included in Krupp's good will, however, was also a plan to maintain control over workers and their lives to prevent the "misuse" of leisure time, produce better workers, and thwart labor organizing.²⁸¹ In the 20th century, workers' housing took a troubling turn when employers reused housing for prisoners and slave laborers for guest workers, leading some to wonder if Germany could not break away from an inherently xenophobic tradition of *Lager* or camps.²⁸² Historian Ulrich Herbert wrote that workers' facilities were historical place holders, in which workers were part of a troubling replacement process:

Many towns and villages had camps of barracks that had been occupied by a succession of outside laborers . . . work detachments of the National Labor Service . . . in the 1930s, then *Fremdarbeiter* [Foreign workers] during the war, later on by (largely Jewish) DPs, and finally by expellees from the East, only to be utilized starting in the early 1960s as camps for *Gastarbeiter* [guest workers].²⁸³

This succession implies that guest workers were seen as interchangeable with preceding forced labor. However, post-war West Germany had little in common with the specific, nation-building, imperialist, racial agenda of the previous regime. More generally, housing shortages were not unique to foreign workers: after the Second World War, most German cities were reduced to smoking hills of rubble and 20 million Germans were homeless, due to the fact that the majority of the destroyed buildings were

²⁸¹ Lynn Abrams, *Worker's Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

²⁸² Ulrich Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany*; Anne von Oswald and Barbara Schmidt, "Nach Schichtende sind sie immer in ihr Lager zurückgekehrt . . . "Leben in 'Gastarbeiter' Unterkünften in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren" in *50 Jahre Bundesrepublik*, 184-214.

²⁸³ Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany*, 199.

apartment houses.²⁸⁴ Allied bombing raids had destroyed up to 80% of residential areas in some cities.²⁸⁵ For example, *Vertriebene*, or ethnic German expellees, whose rights as Germans (and as refugees) the 1949 constitution guaranteed, were also not likely to have proper housing even well into the 1960s. While for *Vertriebene* the expectation was that they would move elsewhere in West Germany, for guest workers, the expectation was that they would return to their countries of origin, and therefore subsequent waves could presumably be housed in such accommodations. Still, for the period in which guest workers were to be in West Germany, employers used housing, in addition to work, to form relationships with their employees—a relationship that lay somewhere between Krupp’s paternalism and forced labor’s extreme utility.

For many workers, dormitories defined life in Germany. In interviews, memoirs, novels, and films about life in West Germany, workers mention their dormitories much more often than their workplaces.²⁸⁶ Eighty-five percent of foreign workers lived in employer’s dormitories.²⁸⁷ In a 1974 study on guest workers’ living conditions, social scientist Ursula Mehrländer found that those she questioned lived in a variety of housing, ranging from hostels to private rooms to barracks or other accommodation. A third of those she interviewed shared rooms that were less than 15 square meters, while 60% of those she interviewed shared rooms that were less than 20 square meters.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ Tony Judt, *Postwar*, 16; Jeffry M. Diefendorf, *In the Wake of the War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 16.

²⁸⁵ Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor in Germany*, 193.

²⁸⁶ Here “interviews” refers to the oral history interviews I conducted as well as over one hundred interviews, collected in Turkish around 1995, that are archived in DoMiT, Cologne, Germany.

²⁸⁷ Abadan-Unat, *Batı Almaya’daki Türk İşçileri ve Sorunları* (Ankara: Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1964).

²⁸⁸ Ursula Mehrländer, “Wohnverhältnisse Ausländischer Arbeitnehmer in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland” (1974) 16.

Often, dormitories were factory-owned and on company property, blurring the distinction between work and home. Other dormitories were conversely isolated from work and surrounding towns, leading to feelings of seclusion. Employer-controlled housing, in addition to rigid work schedules, contributed to workers' sentiments that employers managed their entire lives; as one former worker recalled: "[we worked] eight full hours, plus an hour to travel there and an hour to travel back. Ten hours you are on the go and then when you come home, you are not at home, but rather in barracks . . . it was military-like."²⁸⁹ Such work and living arrangements also limited contact with local German residents. "The dormitory was on the factory property and was fenced in with barbed wire," one former worker said. "Except for the translator, no one was allowed in. Only the director was German, and the rest were all foreign women, many from Turkey."²⁹⁰ Historian Heide Fehrenbach writes that postwar Germany's racial reeducation did not come solely from official programs, but also from social interactions with occupation troops or from observing social relations among multiethnic, American occupation forces.²⁹¹ However, guest-worker housing prevented such social interactions between West Germans and foreign workers: it kept workers out of public view and, therefore, was perhaps complicit in sustaining negative attitudes about a largely unknown population. Life in the dormitories was also as stressful, if not more stressful, than life at work, as the structure and isolation from society exacted a mental toll on residents. One woman, Filiz, reported that she used her active imagination to make dormitory life more livable: "I lied to myself back then. I thought [to myself] Filiz, imagine you are at a

²⁸⁹ Interview with "Filiz," Berlin 2003.

²⁹⁰ DoMit Interview "Almanya'ya yalnız gelen bir anne ve kızı," Herne, 1995.

²⁹¹ Heidi Fehrenbach, *Race after Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

boarding school and in the mornings you go to the factory and that means [you are at] school and evenings you come back to the boarding school, everyone together.

Otherwise you can't stand it. You have to always lie to yourself."²⁹²

Perhaps one of the most famous recollections of dorm life is the portrayal in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's popular autobiographical novel, *The Bridge over the Golden Horn*. In the novel, the protagonist, a single woman from Turkey, speaks of life in the *Wonaym*, mimicking the Turkish pronunciation of the German word *Wohnheim* or dormitory. The word *Wonaym* plays on the idea that workers could not feel at home, as they were unable even to pronounce the name of where they lived. The novel's main character describes life in the dorm thusly: "I lived with many women in a dormitory; *Wonaym*, we said. We all worked in the radio factory. . . . We got up at 5am. In the rooms there were six beds, always stacked, one on top of the other."²⁹³ Özdamar came to Berlin in 1965 as a guest worker at the age of 19, living in the same dorm as Filiz. Özdamar's description fictionalized a typical dormitory arrangement, one in line with the minimum standards of the German Employment Office.

Dormitory standards evolved through a process of negotiation over the course of labor recruitment in the 1950s and early 1960s. The German government wanted to ensure that workers would have housing waiting for them in Germany and made employers responsible for providing it. In 1954, the German Commission for Employment in Italy, the first country to enter into a guest-worker agreement with the Federal Republic, set the precedent for future arrangements. In this initial agreement, the German-Italian commission made providing "adequate housing" for workers a condition

²⁹² Interview with Filiz, Berlin 2003.

²⁹³ Emine Sevgi Özdamar, *Die Brücke vom Golden Horn* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 2000) 19.

upon which obtaining workers was dependent.²⁹⁴ German officials demanded employers provide housing, because they were not only concerned with workers' wellbeing, but were also apprehensive that foreign workers would stress an already-overburdened post-war housing market. Indeed, German officials approved of hiring foreign workers at least partially because they could be seasonal workers and, therefore, housed in barracks or other such structures that lay outside of the standard housing market. In order to clarify what officials meant by "adequate housing," in 1959, the government updated the 1934 "Law of Housing Regulation" to include the following specifications: rooms could have a maximum of six people and had to provide an "airspace" of at least ten centimeters above each person, a lockable cabinet, a place at a table, a place to sit down, and a toilet for every fifteen people.²⁹⁵ These requirements provided a minimum standard at a time when employers had to find a pillow for every head and housing for a large population very quickly.

Making employers responsible for housing resulted in great variety in housing options.²⁹⁶ Some employers resorted to makeshift housing, especially in the initial years, including condemned houses, cellar apartments, attic apartments, garden huts, retrofitted production plants, warehouses, and management offices.²⁹⁷ As might be expected, many workers found such makeshift housing unsatisfactory, and complaints of poor accommodations prompted the West German government to invest in additional accommodations: in 1960, the West German government agreed to invest 100 million

²⁹⁴ Metin Uyaner und Sami Özkara, "Arbeiterwohnheime für die Migranten im Ruhrgebiet: Eine historische Darstellung der 60er und 70er Jahre" Untersuchung 2, (Essen: DoMiT, June 1996).

²⁹⁵ Anne von Oswald and Barbara Schmidt, "'Nach Schichtende sind sie immer in ihr Lager zurückgekehrt. . .'", 186.

²⁹⁶ For rare photos and descriptions of dormitory life, see Aytaç Eryılmaz, "Das Leben im Wohnheim" in *Fremde Heimat* 171-191.

²⁹⁷ Metin Uyaner und Sami Özkara, "Arbeiterwohnheime für die Migranten im Ruhrgebiet: Eine historische Darstellung der 60er und 70er Jahre" Untersuchung 2, (Essen: DoMiT, June 1996).

German Marks in the construction of *Ausländerwohnheimen* or “dormitories for foreigners” or so the press reported. It is hard to know how the money was allotted and where.²⁹⁸

The German Employment Office planned to distribute these additional funds for guest-worker housing with specific stipulations. First, officials wanted to construct dormitories that could later be used as apartments. Second, the dorm’s property should be “secure” for the foreign workers yet should not be too isolated from the German population. Lastly, the housing was supposed to satisfy the foreign workers’ “special needs” and most importantly offer a “homelike environment” that would enable an “individual lifestyle.”²⁹⁹ Foreign workers’ “special needs” remained an unarticulated phrase, and the Employment Office never specified how these regulations were to be enforced. “Special needs” could be a reference to the religious requirements of Muslim workers. A mining company noted, for example, “Prayer rooms were prepared for our Turkish residents. Special toilets were also arranged for this group of workers.”³⁰⁰ Both the prayer rooms and the “special” (presumably “eastern-style,” in-floor) toilets’ proposed construction suggest that these employers were attempting to demonstrate cultural sensibility. However, such reports are rare. In the end, there is no evidence that policy makers tried to enforce these standards, especially after 1961, when the foreign-worker population increased exponentially. Whether intentional or unintentional, guest-

²⁹⁸ *Industriekurier* October 6, 1960 quoted from Metin Uyaner and Sami Özkara “Arbeiterwohnheime für die Migranten im Ruhrgebiet: Ein historische Darstellung der 60er und 70er Jahre” Untersuchung 2, (Essen: DoMit, June 1996) 24.; Abadan writes that the German Government spent 200 Million in 1963 to encourage German employers to invest in collective housing for workers.

²⁹⁹ Ernst Zieris, “Integration ausländischer Arbeitnehmer,” quoted in Metin Uyaner and Sami Özkara, “Arbeiterwohnheime für die Migranten im Ruhrgebiet: Ein historische Darstellung der 60er und 70er Jahre,” Untersuchung 2, (Essen: DoMit, June 1996) 25.

³⁰⁰ “Gebetsräume für unsere türkischen Heimbewohner wurden bereitgestellt. Ebenso wurden Sondertoiletten für diese Arbeitergruppen” Bergwerksgesellschaft Walsum Nov 3, 1965, AfsB-IGBE-Archive 19094 A (Org) 18 Mappe 3.

workers rarely lived in constructions that provided the stipulated “homelike environment” or enabled an “individual lifestyle.” In fact, temporary solutions lasted for years. The Volkswagen Company lodged four thousand Italian workers in 1962 in forty-eight wooden houses and, by 1966, six thousand workers in fifty-eight houses. For nine years, Volkswagen stuck with a provisional arrangement that was designed during the initial months of recruitment.³⁰¹

Stressful living conditions, such as over-crowding, compounded the pressure of the adjustments that workers had to make—such as learning a new language, dealing with new customs, and working especially long hours. Despite negotiations between employers and the employment offices over housing requirements, workers’ wages, and other details outlined on contracts distributed to workers in Turkey before departure, there were few guarantees after arrival in the Federal Republic. Indeed, one former worker, Cahit, reported that when his cohort arrived in West Germany they had nowhere to live: “We found that our companies didn’t even have any accommodations for the workers who had come before us. For eight months, we didn’t have any place to sleep; they let us sleep here and there. I stayed in a church.”³⁰² Cahit also pointed out the role of the subjective in foreign workers’ housing: “After two to three months a group of 60-70 Turks joined us. But unfortunately the church had to let them go because they [the new group of Turks] were making too much noise. The Turks didn’t want to accept the rule that you have to be quiet in a church. I continued to stay there alone. They didn’t let

³⁰¹ Ibid 195.

³⁰² DoMiT Interview, “Cahit.”

me go, because they liked me very much.”³⁰³ Cahit apparently stayed because they “liked” him.

Finding housing outside of factory-owned dormitories was difficult not only due to a general housing shortage in post-war Germany, but also to negative impressions of foreign workers—not everyone was as well liked as Cahit. *Hallo Mustafa*, for example, informed foreign workers that they faced enduring stereotypes: “I know that most Germans refuse, or only reluctantly rent rooms or apartments to foreigners. There are still many stereotypes at work and, here and there, also a certain animosity and contempt [towards foreigners].”³⁰⁴ Yet at the same time, *Hallo Mustafa* reaffirmed and excused the very attitudes that made finding housing a challenge for many: “[but] I would like to tell you openly that we sometimes shake our heads when we come across many foreigners’ customs in relation to their homes. The order and cleanliness leaves much to be desired.”³⁰⁵ The “we” in “we sometimes shake our heads,” presents a unified German perspective just as it presents a monolithic group of foreigners. The author goes so far as to explain that living in a civilized manner is a characteristic that many foreign workers lack because they do not come from a “highly-developed” country in which a certain affluence is taken for granted:

I can understand that in your climate the home and its inviting warmth and coziness do not play as large a role as in our latitude [or part of the world]. It would be too much to ask of many poor people to expect a sense for the “culture of the home” [*Sinn für Wohnkultur*] comparable to that in a highly-developed country with certain prosperity where it is assumed.³⁰⁶

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ *Hallo Mustafa*, 30.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ *Hallo Mustafa*, 30-31.

It is unclear what the author means by “culture of the home.” In her 1974 study of the living conditions of foreign workers in West Germany, social scientists, Ursula Mehrländer writes that guest workers come from a background that does not enable them to think of the home in the same ways as those from industrialized countries:

Scientific studies show that sublimated home life, i.e. the need for cleanliness, order and decoration in the home, and the heightened desire to shape one’s own home have to be interpreted in part as a direct result of industrial activity and factory discipline. Because of their socio-economic background, the majority of foreign workers will have had no opportunity to be influenced by these factors as far as accommodation requirement, way of living, and home life are concerned.

Both authors imply that guest workers, coming from undeveloped regions, cannot understand *Wohnkultur*, lending an ethnic German-ness to a warm and cozy home life. The “poor-people” and “highly-developed-country” remarks in *Hallo Mustafa* set up a class contrast between the Germans and their foreign guests, falsely putting all Germans in the latter category and the foreign workers in the former. The same author—who prefaced the housing section by stating that Germany was a pile of rubble twenty years ago and was currently in the midst of a housing shortage—nevertheless implies either the grandeur of an earlier era or of an imagined future with his reference to a *Sinn für Wohnkultur*.

Indeed, the author’s implications coincided with a new post-war chauvinism or the idea that West Germans could interpret the recruitment of foreign workers as evidence of their own civic, economic, and cultural superiority. Karen Schönwälder has pointed out this new post-war nationalism: “Germans were invited to interpret the recruitment of thousands of foreign workers as evidence of their own economic superiority,

of their role as a leading civic force in Europe and even as political educators.”³⁰⁷ This sense of German or European superiority also extended to Turkish workers who expected more from West Germany. When a Turkish representative of the German Federal Trade Union audited various workers’ dorms, he noted that he found the kind of housing one would expect of maybe an “underdeveloped country,” but certainly not of the Federal Republic of Germany.³⁰⁸

Despite being an instructional pamphlet, the one thing that *Hallo Mustafa* did not provide was a clear picture of what life was actually like inside workers’ dormitories. Illustrations and photographs in the booklet show pictures of men sleeping alone in spacious rooms instead of the more common bunk beds, with six people to a room. An illustration from *Hallo Mustafa*’s housing section portrays a worker in bed alone, looking longingly at a picture (presumably of his family back home, which he supports from abroad—and to whom he will presumably return (See Image Eleven). He has a plush duvet and a shelf of books above his head—neither realistic expectations for guest workers. In contrast, it was much more common for workers to live in small, crowded spaces, as seen in a photograph of a Ford Dormitory from 1963.³⁰⁹ (See Image Twelve.)

³⁰⁷ Karen Schönwälder writes, “Germans were invited to interpret the recruitment of thousands of foreign workers as evidence of their own economic superiority, of their role as a leading civic force in Europe and even as political educators,” “West German Society and Foreigners,” in *Coping with the Nazi Past*, 113-127.

³⁰⁸ Mete Atsu, AfsB A (org) 18, Mappe 3: “. . . also eine Unterkunft, die man heute unterentwickelten Ländern ohne weiteres zutraut, aber nicht der Bundesrepublik. Kollegen bestätigten mir, daß es eine sehr gute Unterkunft für die Nachkriegszeit sei—mehr nicht.”

³⁰⁹ DoMit Archive Image. Ataç Eryılmaz and Mathilde Jamin ed. *Fremde Heimat* 187.

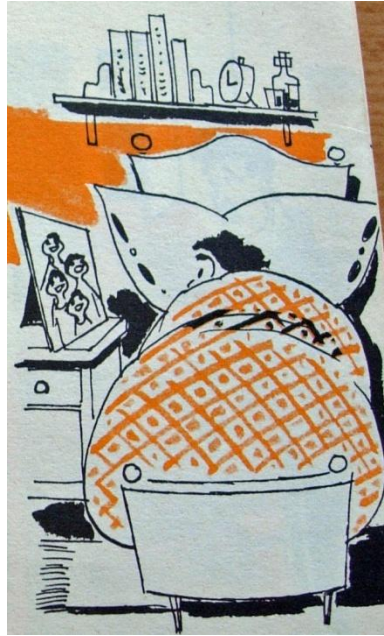


Image Eleven. *Hallo Mustafa*, DoMiT 424-431, 427.

The photograph of the dorm room shows two men simultaneously drinking coffee, shaving, and drying laundry on every surface. The multi-tasking in the room emphasizes a dire lack of space. Much like the photograph, one former worker, Erol, described his dorm room, which he shared with three other people, as a tiny, sixteen-square-meter space with bunk beds, sinks, and a double-door cabinet. Erol described his life in the dorms as a psychological war; he could not sleep at night and attributed this to “the smell of bad breath and feet.”³¹⁰ Unfortunately, even though overcrowding taxed dormitory resources, the population of foreign workers was ever-increasing.³¹¹

³¹⁰ DoMit Interview “Erol,” Munich 1995; For comments on lack of sleep in the dormitories see also the report on “Bergmannsheim Westfalen I by Mete Atsu compiled for the German Federal Trade Union AfsB-IGBE-Archiv 19094 A (org) 18 Mappe 3.

³¹¹ “Viele der Ursachen für die kritische Stimmung liegen zweifellos in der Überbelegung. Und daran wird sich wohl kaum etwas ändern; denn in den nächsten Wochen werden weitere 60 Arbeiter erwartet, die zusätzlich in diesem Heim unterzubringen sind,” Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund Bundesvorstand And die Vorstände der Gewerkschaften und Industriegewerkschaften und an die Mitglieder des Arbeitskreises, 22. Juli 1971, AfsB – IGBE-Archiv A (org) 18, Mappe 3.



Image Twelve. Ford Dormitory 1963, *Fremde Heimat*, 187, DoMiT Museum Catalogue.

Employers faced the task of providing an over-whelming influx of workers a place to sleep—workers who had waited for years to get a chance to come to West Germany and, therefore, would accept most anything. Initially, both workers and employers tolerated sub-par housing: both thought that it would be temporary and both were eager either to earn money or begin production, respectively. Problems arose, however, as temporary fixes became permanent situations.

Life inside the Dormitories: Chaos and Control

In 1971, a decade after West Germany had been recruiting workers from Turkey, the German Trade Union Federation (the umbrella organization for labor organizing) sent a representative to evaluate Turkish workers' dormitories and speak with residents, dorm managers, and translators. Mr. Mete Atsu, himself a bilingual Turkish man, was sent to dozens of dorms in the Ruhr River region of West Germany, a major industrial center. Mete Atsu found that, in the decade since employers had begun recruiting foreign workers, neither conditions nor employers' willingness to address problems had changed. The inspection of the workers' dorms revealed, for example, cases in which there were no refrigerators because the power supply could not support it, no cooking facilities

altogether, or kitchens with lid-less trashcans that resulted in bug- and vermin-infested rooms and cooking areas.³¹² In one dorm, instead of cooking areas, there were expensive canteens, where workers' passports were held because of debts incurred there.³¹³ Atsu found another dormitory near Aachen to be "abominable": for 150 people there was only one shower and, for forty people, only one stove. In order to cook or to wash, one had to go from one barrack to another, and residents stored foodstuff together with shoes and dirty clothes in small cabinets in narrow, four-person rooms.³¹⁴ Yet at the same time, Atsu reported that another dormitory in the Aachen area resembled an "Intercontinental Hotel" and that workers had no problem finding and working with the translator there. Such great variation suggests not only that worker housing was the luck of the draw, but also that the German Employment Office—the same office that subjected potential workers to lengthy, expensive, year-long application procedures and multiple medical exams—had no real control over the conditions of workers' lives after arrival in West Germany.

As variable as the dorms themselves, the dormitory managerial staff proved to be an eclectic cast of characters who often exacerbated already stressful situations. In the "Frederick the Great" Dormitory, named after the King of Prussia, the translator was, ironically enough, a former military officer, who behaved like a "nobleman," insisted that workers stand at attention when addressing him, and requested that workers refer to him in the "noble form" or the third person.³¹⁵ Despite his sense of importance, he did not

³¹² Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund Bundesvorstand, an die Vorstände der Gewerkschaften und Industriegewerkschaften und an die Mitglieder des Arbeitskreises 'Ausländischer Arbeitnehmer': Bericht über die Situation der türkischen Arbeitnehmer in Betrieben und Beziehungen zu den Gewerkschaften, Mete Atsu, 22 Juli 1971, AfsB-IGBE-Archiv 19094, A (Org) 19, Mappe 3.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

feel personally responsible to handle workers' problems. It is doubtful that this officer cum translator was a typical managerial representative; however, it was common for translators to think of themselves not accountable for workers' complaints. Another former worker reported that in one women's dorm, the dorm manager was like a "Gestapo Frau" who would wake the female workers early in the morning with a "shrill whistle."³¹⁶ The women of this dorm, who had one-year contracts, all sought to change dorms after their contracts were up.

At the dorm "Dove Street," there was a housemother, who was paid to keep the dormitory clean, but also took it upon herself to maintain strict order. The residents were forbidden from even visiting with other residents in their rooms. When Atsu visited the Dove Street Dorm, he commented that the housemother was treating grown men like fourteen-year-old boys, and that the residents resented the restrictions on their personal freedom. Revealing perhaps more about himself than the dorm, Atsu commented in his notes that such an arrangement—one that stifled personal freedom—was potentially dangerous: "it is already psychologically false to let these grown men, who have been separated from their families for years, live in close quarters . . . with a woman who is responsible for order. When it one day leads to rape or some similar conflict, no one would be surprised."³¹⁷ Animosity between dormitory managerial staff and workers was common, and, clearly, greater conflicts about power due to mismatched ideas about who should determine what life inside the dormitories should be like.

Typically, large dormitories had a managerial staff of as many as fifty people, consisting of translators, managers, who handled maintenance problems, and a cleaning

³¹⁶ DoMiT interview 39, Yalcin, Oct 19, 1995.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

staff that performed minimal tasks such as taking out the trash. Management sought to provide an orderly and sanitary environment that could foster good workers. Dorm management set up rules and regulations for all residents as well as penalties for non-compliance. Trying to provide a “homelike environment” was not dormitory managers’ main concern. A typical example of dormitory rules illustrates restrictions that were meant to maintain order:

Damaging or dirtying the rooms or the furniture in them is not allowed. It is specifically not allowed to hang anything on the walls or to pin up pictures inside of the lockers. Smoking in bed is not allowed, nor is throwing trash from the windows. It is forbidden to wash clothes in the room. Visitors are only allowed between the hours of 10am and 10pm, and every visitor must sign in and sign out again with the dorm manager. Female visitors are forbidden with the exception of wives who come during the allowed visiting hours as noted above, and who are admitted with the approval of the dormitory management.³¹⁸

However, workers might have viewed not being able to pin photos on the wall or bring home a girlfriend as an affront to creating the residential atmosphere or *Wohnkultur* that they wanted and needed.

Furthermore, dormitory directors and translators often took advantage of the language barrier. Not only did few residents have the German abilities necessary to speak directly to a dorm director or to those who could solve dorm-related problems, but there were also translators and directors looking to capitalize on the situation. In one case, workers reported to Atsu that a dorm director collected 20 German Marks to arrange for vacation tickets to Turkey, but only passed on 10 Marks to the translator and pocketed the other ten. In another case, a translator charged extra money for helping to complete salary forms.³¹⁹ Workers also complained of contract violations, such as sleeping four-

³¹⁸ “Heimordnung für das Wohnheim der Firma Wieland, Singen 1971,” Donated by Frigitte Teotonia-Müller, DoMiT-Archiv.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

to-a-room instead of three or paying 48.50 German Marks instead of 40 German Marks as stated in their contracts.³²⁰ In an interview, one worker reported that the stoves in the kitchen, once free, had begun to require ten-cent coins, suggesting that the dorm manager was looking to profit or at least use workers to defray maintenance costs.³²¹ Another reported that he paid 0.50 German Mark for half an hour of electricity for a stove burner in addition to 30 German Marks per month for the rent of the hotplate.³²² In the factory he only earned 2,80 German Marks an hour.

Management personnel also threatened to send workers back to Turkey—or otherwise misused their positions of power—if residents did not follow directions exactly.³²³ Though dormitory translators were meant to be impartial conduits, workers also accused translators of representing only the interests of management.³²⁴ From the management’s point of view, guest workers came to Germany primarily to work, not to live. Even in the “home,” management thought of them as foreign workers not as residents or tenants.

Dorm managers revealed their thoughts on their wards through their close monitoring of dormitory activities. Management took both its position and its sense of mission to maintain order very seriously. Workers felt that they were constantly being watched. Özdamar’s novel hints at the psychological effects of this surveillance, when, for example, the main character believes that even her mother in Turkey could monitor her through the public pay phones on German streets. This constant surveillance made

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ DoMiT Interview, “Erol.”

³²² DoMiT Interview, “Yalcın.”

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Notiz über die Besprechung im Türkenwohnheim der Schachanlage Emscher-Lippe, Datteln (Dümmerheim), 13 Juli 1970, AfsB-IGBE-Archiv 19094 A (Org) 18 Mappe.

guest workers more than just employees: they were managements' wards. Indeed, dorm managers figured prominently within recollections of former guest workers, because, much more than simply looking after maintenance problems, they sought to regulate dormitory life and impose their ideas of order. In Özdamar's novel, a kitchen scene of multi-linguistic cooperation among women comes to an abrupt halt when the dorm manager walks in:

It looked like a Turkish shadow-puppet play: the figures came on stage, everyone speaking in her own dialect; Turkish-Greek, Turkish-Armenian, Turkish-Jewish, various Turks from various locations and of various social classes with their various dialects. They all misunderstood one another, but they continued talking and acting in turn. The women of the *Wonaym* [dormitory] handed each other the knife or the pot, or pulled up a sleeve so that it didn't fall into a pan. Then the dorm manager came, the only one who could speak German, and she checked to see if the kitchen was clean and tidy.³²⁵

There was a conflict of interest within the lively "Turkish play" in which the workers are seeking to build community while the dorm manager is checking on sanitation and order. This symbolic divergence of interests formed the core conflict within dormitory life—the difference between the creative and personal process of making a home and the functional task of providing housing and maintaining subjective ideas of order. The post-war housing deficit, overall poor planning, and miscommunications between management and residents—all of the issues that plagued guest-worker housing—were issues that could, in theory, have been solved. However, the fundamentally different mindsets about the function of a dormitory, as shown in the mismatched expectations of the residents of the dorm and the dorm management, presented an issue that could only worsen over time.

Management's Point of View

³²⁵ Emine Sevgi Özdamar, *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, 28.

To see a dormitory and its workers through the eyes of a dorm manager is also an attempt to understand life in the dorms from the point of view of the managers. In the case of the North-Rhine-Westphalia dormitory “Bergmannsheim, Westfalen I”—a large, all-male complex of several, multi-floor houses—the managerial staff kept meticulous records of dorm activities in its daily log. Staff members went on morning, midday, and evening shifts and painstakingly noted dorm activities and maintenance problems. It was uncommon for the management log to refer to workers by name. The word “*Gastarbeiter*” (“guest worker”) appeared in the notes in lieu of people’s names. Yet, from time to time, the dorm manager appeared uncomfortable with this expression as well: in a few entries, the word “*Gastarbeiter*” is crossed out and the phrase “*Ausländische Mitarbeiter*” or “foreign co-worker” is written in its place. This self-conscious action was a small clue that the dorm manager was himself not certain what his relationship was to the foreign workers living in the dorm or had any idea how long workers would be living there.

The management log entries paint a dreary picture of month-long heating and plumbing problems and dark hallways:

October 12, 1970: the heat is not working; the lights in the bathroom do not work

October 13, 1970: the toilets were stopped up.

October 14, 1970: the heat is not working, after trying to repair it, sent a report

October 15, 1970: the heat is not working, tried to repair it and was successful

October 16, 1970: the heat is not working, took a look and repaired it.

October 20, 1970: in House 8, stove 1, 4, and 5 are not working; in House

9 the hall lights were burnt out, replaced four light bulbs

...

October 26, 1970: the heat is not working, tried to repair it, was unsuccessful and reported it; light in the entrance hall was burned out, replaced it, . . . lights in the bathroom burned out, repaired them.

October 27, 1970: hall lights burned out, repaired it. Toilet was stopped up, repaired it.³²⁶

³²⁶ *Bergmannsheim Westfalen I Rapportbuch*: Oct 12,13,14,15, 16, 20, 26 and 27, 1970, DoMiT.

The log noted maintenance problems typical of housing of this scale. However, daily reports of no heat indicate that the dorm management was either extremely understaffed or delinquent in addressing problems. On October 8, 1970, the log began with a note that the heating was not working and repeated this note almost daily, as shown above, until the 16th of November.³²⁷ On November 19th, the report stated in the same entry that the heat was not working and complained of workers burning packaging (presumably for heat) in the same line: “Heating leaky; packaging burnt.”³²⁸ On November 23, 1970, there was a note that no lights were working in the entire Building VI.³²⁹ On November 24th, 27th, and December 1st, reports of the heat not working began again. On December 2-7th, the log noted that windows were broken, and a table had “fallen apart,” a room had a door handle missing, that four of five stove burners were not working, that in one dorm none of the urinals were working, that the water in the bathrooms did not drain, and, as usual, the heat was not working.³³⁰

However, the same December 2nd housing report also noted the following transgressions and fines, mixing maintenance with supervision:

Morning shift, Dec 2, 1970

. . . Checked all dorms for *cleanliness*.

Dorm 10, Room 108, the floor was unclean and a fine was issued;

Dorm 10, Room 103, floor dirty, fine issued;

Dorm 10, Room 113, floor unclean, fine issued

Room 97, issued a fine for everyone for “lack of order” [*Ordnungstraf*]

. . .

Dec 4, 1970

Dorm 10, toilets were dirty, told them to clean up their own mess, and threatened

to fine everyone if I found it dirty again.

Dorm 2, Room 5, . . . Hasan deliberately damaged his cabinet door, must pay 20 DM [German Marks]

³²⁷ *Rapportbuch* Oct 8, 1970.

³²⁸ *Rapportbuch* Nov 19, 1970.

³²⁹ *Rapportbuch* Nov 23, 1970.

³³⁰ *Rapportbuch* Dec 2-7, 1970.

...

morning shift, Dec 7, 1970

Dorm 8, Kitchen was deliberately left dirty, because the trash can was empty!!

Everyone must be issued a fine.³³¹

The comments that the kitchen was “deliberately left dirty,” that “Hasan deliberately damaged his cabinet,” and that workers should clean their “own mess” suggest that management is placing blame on the workers themselves, attributing a personal aspect to the notes. The writer’s frustration, seen in both his threats and his tone (and the multiple exclamation points that dot entries), hint at animosity between staff and residents. Similar comments about fines continued daily for the subsequent twelve months. The dormitory log had a dual function of reporting repairs and of tracking misbehavior and penalties. A February 24, 1971 report of “power out again, called maintenance, but no one came” is followed by the comment, “made multiple rounds and checked for quiet and cleanliness.”³³² Despite being unable to repair the heating, management demanded order.

Yet workers might have found it paradoxical that patterns of poor maintenance persisted, despite the strict regulation of the workers’ cleanliness and order. The responsibility of the dorm managers to maintain livable conditions, (including providing for basic human needs such as heat, security of property, and sufficiently maintained plumbing) fell by the wayside as management focused primarily on cleanliness and a desire to police and fine for “unclean” conditions on the part of workers. Even if management thought that maintaining sanitary conditions was just another part of their job, their ability to fine workers for transgressions while they themselves were not penalized added to an imbalanced power dynamic and policed atmosphere. In sum,

³³¹ *Rapportbuch* Dec 2, 4, 7, 1970.

³³² *Rapportbuch* Feb 24, 1971.

addressing maintenance problems took second place to imposing fines for messiness: workers had to pay fines for having dirty floors in unheated dormitories. A tenant-landlord relationship, in which residents were in a position to make demands on the dorm management, did not exist. The fines and threats and dorm managers' close observation of workers and how they spent their free time all imply that dorm managers did not think of these residents as tenants to whom they had a responsibility to provide services, but rather as workers whose behavior it was their responsibility to control.

Despite the responsibility management assumed to monitor workers' activities, they appeared less inclined to deal with infractions such as theft. Remarks that residents had sums of between 25 and 500 German Marks stolen, often from their cupboards, dot the management logs. The dorm manager, however, did not make a connection between reports of theft and complaints of broken doors and locks on the cabinets. A February 17, 1971 entry stated that a cabinet was damaged and the lock missing, but does not consider that a robbery had taken place. Instead, the report noted that the man would have to pay for the damages: "in room 88 the cabinet door was purposely damaged and the lock is missing. He will have to pay for this himself!"³³³ Possibly the most heart-breaking account was that 920 German Marks—quite a nest egg—had been stolen from between the pages of a "Neckermann Catalogue"—a well-known wish book that represented, for many, the possibilities of what the investment of their time in Germany was worth.³³⁴ The log did not demonstrate interventions or attempts to control theft or even, more

³³³ *Rapportbuch*, Feb 17, 1971.

³³⁴ DoMiT 88 (1-15) SD.

generally, any sense of regret at the loss. On the contrary, descriptions of theft were accompanied with subjective comments such as, “criminal most likely Italian.”³³⁵

It is unclear if management is accusing workers of damage due to prejudice, if workers are damaging property out of frustration with their housing situation, or if the incidents are coincidental, though workers did feel they had reasons to protest their conditions. Workers also rebelled against their living situations in more organized ways. In the 1970s, as workers had spent more time in Germany, activism increased in the form of protests against conditions at work and at home. Workers were particularly vocal about their housing situations. One example is the following list of demands made at an Opel Dormitory:

- 1) Colleagues from shift A and shift B don't sleep in separate sections of Dormitory 90. Shift A and Shift B [workers] should be placed so that they don't disturb one another when they come and go.
- 2) There is no warm water in Dormitory 82 (for the shower)
- 3) Three colleagues have to sleep together in a two-bed room in Dormitory 90. That is too many!
- 4) In the dormitory in Evertal Street 46/8 a German colleague has a room to himself. And he has white bed linens. Why don't the Turkish colleagues [have these things]? We would also pay more for the rent [for these things].
- 5) We need a mail box in Dormitory 82 and 90.
- 6) We need a phone booth in Dormitory 82 and 90, in case something happens in the night and we have to quickly call a doctor.³³⁶

Activism became a way for guest workers to find their voice and agency in Germany and to effect real change in their lives. Indeed, in the early 1970s, both workers' conditions and workers' protests against them began to gather media attention, bringing the debate about guest workers' conditions to the broader public.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ “Opel-Arbeiter über die Zustände im Wohnheim, Bochum, 1977, Wohnheim Probleme: 30.1.77” DoMiT.

On January 1, 1971 the West German television station the *Westdeutsche Rundfunk* broadcast an exposé about guest-worker dormitories. Their report revealed poor conditions for workers and large profits for management: at the same time that the company was making large profits by over-charging on the rent, the windows had holes in them. Workers in the dormitory also did not have basic rights to come and go freely or to receive visitors, and a fence prevented seeing into or out of the grounds that surrounded the dormitory. In the television exposé, a reporter interviewed a company representative, Dr. Georg K, and asked him how five water faucets and 12 showers, of which only eight were currently working, could possibly be considered sufficient for the 678 workers living there. Dr K. defended the company by complaining that the dormitory was rather expensive because the upkeep costs were high, such as the cost of employing the over fifty people working as dormitory managers. In response to the accusations of poor lavatory conditions, Dr. K scoffed and responded defiantly that they often had to spend money to replace the toilets, because, he complained, “these people” don’t know how to use them and break the toilets by standing on them. Workers’ protests about conditions in the dormitory not only drew media attention, but also, ultimately, resulted in fines for the dormitory management.³³⁷

Dissatisfaction over employer-provided housing led to lasting resentments among guest workers. One women who worked for the auto parts factory, Pierburg, and paid 60 DM a month to live four-to-a-room with rooms that had no running water and where the manger restricted all visitors, especially union representatives, said the firm’s housing

³³⁷ From the exhibition at the Cologne Art Collective: Migration: “Monitor: Kritik an Wohnverhältnissen in Gastarbeiterlager der Baufirma Holzman AG, Frankfurt – Rödelheim 4.1. 1971) Description: Stellungnahme von Dr. Georg K. einer Mitarbeiter der Holzmann AG, zu den Vorwürfen wegen des Schlechter Lagerzustandes. Eine Delegation von Kirchenvertreten unterstützten den Protest der Bewohner,” Provided by Westdeutscher Rundfunk. Part of the “Transit” Exhibition, Cologne, 2005.

represented “modern-day feudalism.”³³⁸ She said, “foreign women haven’t forgotten how they have been treated by the company” and drew up fliers that said “Does feudalism still exist?” citing Article 13 of the constitution, which stated that one is guaranteed freedom within one’s home meaning the ability to be free in one’s own residence, including the ability to receive guests. Another female employee at Pierbrug reported paying 200 Marks in rent for a damp cellar room that was previously used to keep pigs.³³⁹ The longer workers lived in “temporary housing” the more resentment grew along with grievances over wages and discriminatory treatment, fueling larger, more organized protests in the early 1970s, the subject of the next chapter.

Worker’s Social Lives

But workers had smaller, more personal protests as well—in the ways they lived their lives. These were actions smaller than those that gathered media attention, but just as large in the effects on their lives. Amid control and regulation, tight quarters, and petty theft, workers made dormitories their homes when they took steps to create a social environment, carved out private time, and broke rules about visitors. “Did the first round and everything was quiet” the manager of a male dorm writes,

On the second round, chased people out of the television room, where burning cigarettes were thrown on the floor. In room 125 there was the same [non-resident] woman as on Friday, and I had to get rid of her . . . with difficulty. [On another floor] cards were being played at high stakes. It was broken up after I threatened punishment. The trash container was turned over. Culprit unknown.³⁴⁰

It is doubtful that residents did not know that women were not allowed. More likely, they did not care. Try as the manager might to “chase” people out of the television room and

³³⁸ Edith Schmidt and David Wittenberg, “*Pierburg: Ihr Kampf ist Unser Kampf*” (West Germany 1974/75) 49’ (motion picture).

³³⁹ *Ausburger Allgemeine*, 22 August 1973.

³⁴⁰ *Rapportbuch*, Feb. 7, 1971; emphasis added.

get the “same woman” to leave, workers maintained control over what they did in their free time. Residents often ignored the “threats of punishment” and fines for visitors.³⁴¹ While the dorm manager might have seen himself as a warden, by using words like “culprit,” he was apparently an increasingly unconvincing authority figure. In many cases, workers reported creating a home life out of their limited time and space regardless of the rules, exerting their own sense of self-determination over the controlled-atmosphere of the dormitory.

Workers’ dormitories broke down traditional ideas of public and private spheres, by making home life a public, observed, and regulated affair. Workers’ defiance against regulations were attempts to reclaim this space and time and, in so doing, to have control over their lives. Indeed, for many residents, dormitory life was an important source of social activity. Some workers reported that roommates functioned as substitute families or sources of comfort. (Filiz, for example, is still in close, almost daily contact with former dormitory roommates.³⁴²) Canteens and common rooms were often a place for drinking beer, watching TV, playing cards, and listening to music from home. Dorms also became outlets for workers to experiment with new freedoms. Workers, male and female, reported going out with roommates to discos at night. “You have to go to the places where people meet, where it is possible to have spiritual and physical contact with them,” Erol commented, “And since young people spend the weekends at matinees, night clubs, and discos, we felt we had to go there to have social contact. . . we changed our clothes and hair styles. . . . [Long] hair was in, and high-heeled boots and the like,

³⁴¹ *Rapportbuch* Nov 11 and 19, 1970. The fine for having a visitor was five Marks.

³⁴² DoMit Interview, Filiz, Berlin 1995; Interview Filiz Berlin 2003. Filiz has also organized a social club in Berlin for retired female migrants called, “*Aile Baçesi*” or Family Garden” where former dormitory roommates among others meet to drink tea, dance, sing, and visit. Other social organizations also exist in Cologne and in Berlin, such as the “Second Spring” group.

that was how we would go to the discos, [it was] not only to meet people but also to improve our language skills.”³⁴³ Erol and his friends went out to discos to feel a part of the larger society.

Particularly for female workers, who were about 30% of the total population of the foreign workers, the ability to live autonomously in a foreign land or to earn one's own money afforded a new lifestyle previously unknown.³⁴⁴ It would be inaccurate to suggest that all Turkish women had serious restrictions on their personal freedoms from which they were released (or not) upon arrival in West Germany. Turkish guest workers were a linguistically, religious, and ethnically diverse group that drew from both cosmopolitan centers and Anatolian villages. However, anthropological and sociological research has suggested that, for at least some Turkish women, there were serious limitations on private life due to familial and social restrictions.³⁴⁵ At the same time, immigration scholar, Umut Erel has written that it is too narrow to discuss female migrants as necessarily passive and limited:

Assumptions about migrant women's culturally reified passivity and reduction to family life are problematic, [and reproduce] . . . oppressive truths and social

³⁴³ DoMit Interview, “Erol.”

³⁴⁴ Between 1960 and 1973, the number of female foreign workers in West Germany increased from 43,000 to 706,000 and, in percentages, from 15% to 30%, see Monika Mattes, “Zum Verhältnis von Migration und Geschlecht: Anwerbung und Beschäftigung von ‘Gastarbeiterinnen’ in der Bundesrepublik 1960-1973, in *50 Jahre*, 285.

³⁴⁵ Inga Stienen, *Leben zwischen zwei Welten: Türkische Frauen in Deutschland* (Berlin: Quadriga, 1994); Christine Huth and Jürgen Micksch, *Ausländische Frauen*; Gaby Franger, *Wir haben es uns anders vorgesellt*; Sigrid Nökel, *Die Töchter der Gastarbeiter und der Islam: Zur Soziologie alltagsweltlicher Anerkennungspolitiken, Eine Fallstudie* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2002); Pia Weische-Alexa, *Sozial-Kulturelle Probleme Junger Türkinnen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland mit einer Studie zum Freizeitverhalten türkischer Mädchen in Köln*, 4th ed. (Diplomarbeit an der PH Rheinland, Köln, 1982); M. Karpf, *Türkische Mädchen in der Bundesrepublik. Institut für Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik: Informationsdienst zur Ausländerarbeit*, Themenheft: Türkei 4 (1979); Rita Rosen and Gerd Stüwe, *Ausländische Mädchen in der Bundesrepublik* (Opladen: Leske, 1985); Rosen and Stüwe write, “Young Turkish girls can’t walk on the street. They cannot go to the movies or to the theater. They cannot go anywhere alone. Their mothers decide what they wear. When they come home from work, they have to do housework and take care of the children. They have absolutely no rights, and if they oppose, they will be hit,” 7.

realities . . . [They] fix migrant women as passive and within the private sphere, while ignoring their intervention into community building and both participating in established public spheres, as well as *creating their own public spheres*.³⁴⁶

In their own recollections, female guest workers connected how they spent their free time while in West Germany to expressions of self—as adventurous or glamorous if need be.

Indeed, for some women, despite the highly-regulated life at work and in the dorms, West Germany did provide a new and even liberating lifestyle. Filiz recollected:

All [the other women in the dorm] were for the first time in their lives working [for themselves] and were earning money, and they did not know how to handle money. They [had] never learned it. . . . Luxury for example, what is luxury? For example, an evening dress—not [for] a disco, but [for] a dance salon. On the weekends we went dancing, naturally. Sometimes in a group, sometimes [we were] three people, sometimes a big group was planned. Every time we explored a new dance salon, with a different name. And so on. And these times [we] had lots of friends, co-workers, [who would buy] an evening dress with their own money in order to go dancing.³⁴⁷



Image Thirteen. Filiz in her Berlin dormitory, 1964
DOMIT Archive, *Fremde Heimat*, 190.

³⁴⁶ Umut Erel, “The Politics of Identity and Community: Migrant Women from Turkey in Germany,” in *Gender and Insecurity: Migrant Women in Europe*, ed. Jane Freedman (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003) 153 – 171, emphasis added.

³⁴⁷ Interview conducted with Filiz, Berlin 2003.

In Image Thirteen, shows Filiz in her dormitory, providing an image of a Turkish guest-worker woman who does not match images of Turkish women seen in the media.

Turkish sociologist Abadan-Unat, who studied Turkish women guest workers in West Germany, concluded that, through working, Turkish women developed a sense of independence and gained control over their financial decisions. Furthermore, she found that women who worked outside of the home had more rights in decision-making as well as more authority that manifested itself mainly in access to consumer goods. However, this “pseudo-independence,” according to Abadan-Unat, did not necessarily lead to a new lifestyle and “real self-confidence.”³⁴⁸

Not all women were as successful in creating their own public spheres and living the carefree life that Filiz describes. Everyone dealt with his or her new situation in Germany differently. Some workers, both male and female, rarely left the dorms. Filiz commented that some female workers never went out:

And some also were simply not for spending any money at all, they never went dancing. They were afraid. [Their lives consisted of:] Factory, dormitory. Dormitory, Factory. We also sometimes tried to force them, [we would say] ‘come along, just one time! Just once you can experience something. But it’ll be interesting’ But no. . . . they were afraid.³⁴⁹

When asked what these women were afraid of, she responded, “Oh, of the foreign, unknown country and other expectations in their heads. And some came only to work

³⁴⁸ Nermin Abadan-Unat and Neşe Kemiksiz write, “Turkish women living abroad have a certain independence, which they have developed through their participation in financial decisions, over which their control has grown, . . . this ‘pseudo-independence, [however this] does not always mean that they begin new lifestyles [or] become a new, real self-confidence,” in *Türkische Migration: 1960-1984 Annotierte Bibliographie*, eds., Nermin Abadan-Unat and Neşe Kemiksiz; see also, Abadan-Unat, “Dış Göç Akımının Türk Kadınının Özgürleşme ve Sözde Özgürleşme Sürecine Etkisi,” *Amme İdaresi Dergisi* 10 no.1 (Mart 1977): 107-132; see also G. Aslantepe, *Federal Almanya’da Yaşayan Türk Kadınlarının Soruları, Birinci Nesil-İkinci Nesil* (Düsseldorf Çalışma Ataşeliği, Mart 1982) 7; S. Gürel and Ayşe Kudat, “Türk Kadınının Avrupa’ya Göçünün Kişilik, Aile ve Topluma Yansıyan Sonuçları,” *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 33 no. 93/4 (Eylül-Aralık 1978): 109-134.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

and earn money and for other reasons. . . . But some never visited a dance locale, [they were] always in the dorm. Boring. But, that was their own decision. Can't do anything about that."³⁵⁰ In Filiz's portrayal of dormitory life, owning one's earnings meant being able to choose what to do with one's free time. For many of these women, buying an evening dress had a double meaning: first, that they had the spending money to afford it and, second, that they did not need permission to go out dancing. "Some also went out every evening," Filiz noted, "[They were] extreme. . . . Suddenly there was lots of freedom [for them]."³⁵¹ Filiz suggested that as guest workers, these women had newfound social freedoms. Dormitories, therefore, enabled workers to create new families and to reinvent themselves by taking advantage of autonomous and anonymous living in addition to new economic freedoms. This ability to reinvent oneself was often a sign that one was living a temporary existence, one in which consequences did not matter.

Turkish guest-worker migration caused both challenges to and consistencies with gender roles that were more complex than the binary opposition Filiz presents of "adventurous" versus "boring." Turkish women left behind in villages with children were often under the thumb of their in-laws, and their husbands rarely returned; started second families in West Germany that absorbed their money; and, basically abandoned the Turkish families to a twilight existence.³⁵² Furthermore, some Turkish women who followed husbands to West Germany as guest workers ended up on their own.³⁵³ One woman recalled a dormitory roommate's story thusly: she had followed her husband to

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Interview with "Filiz" Berlin 2003.

³⁵² Jenny B. White, email, September 12, 2005.

³⁵³ It is unclear how many female guest workers chose to come to West Germany on their own versus at the prodding of family members. West German companies aggressively recruited female workers for certain industries, even contacting employed married men to inquire if their wives could apply, BAVAV Türkei, Istanbul an BAVAV Nürnberg, 24. Juli 1964 BArch B 119/ 4035.

Kassel, West Germany, but lived in the dormitory in a four-person room, while her husband was living with a West German woman. One day her husband came to the dormitory to get her and, even though her roommates had told her that she should leave him and find something better, she did not heed their advice and left with him.³⁵⁴

Single Turkish women in West Germany also faced enormous problems and many of their fond memories could be pasts they have created for themselves to explain their present. Significantly, when Filiz recalled the early years of her life in West Berlin, she emphasized her new earnings, how she spent her free time, and her feelings of independence, instead of any indignities suffered. Filiz's positive spin on her experience could be an idealized past (for example, she never mentioned what happened with the boyfriend she followed to Germany). However, Filiz's and other DoMiT interviewees' interpretations of their own past, especially in terms of social life, are perhaps their ways of reclaiming their past and its historical reconstruction. Foreign men and women had trouble with life in West Germany, for women compounded by gendered experiences. Social scientist noted that workers in company housing suffered from isolation, lack of privacy, racism and deprivation spurred by the desire to save as much as possible to support family back home.³⁵⁵

Control of Workers' Private Lives

Dormitories housed mostly single workers and more men than women. By 1968, among unmarried Turkish guest workers in West Germany, 52% of the women and 64%

³⁵⁴ DoMiT Interview 18-19, "Almanya'ya yalnız gelen bir Anne ve kızın gelen bir Anne ve kızı" 1995.

³⁵⁵ Jamin, "Fremde Heimat: Zur Geschichte der Arbeitsmigration aus der Türkei," in *50 Jahre*, 158.

of the men lived in company-provided dormitories.³⁵⁶ (Female workers remained at about 25% of the total population of Turkish workers in Germany during the 1960s.) Perhaps the fact that dormitories were largely male contributed to how dorm personnel thought of their residents, imposed rules, and considered what services they were obligated to provide. The surveillance of workers, especially of the male workers, included regulating intimate relationships: dorm rules clearly stated that female visitors were not allowed. Dormitory management also regulated traditional expressions of masculinity: men were scolded as children, fined for not cleaning, faced strict curfews and were banned from having visitors. At the same time, stereotypes about aggressive sexuality among male guest workers abounded. For example, in 1963, 160 people signed a petition against the construction of guest-worker housing near Karlsruhe. The signers complained not only that the construction unappealingly looked like barracks, but also that it housed only men, and that the lifestyle and temperament of the Mediterranean male guest workers would be bad for the community, “especially bad for children.”³⁵⁷ Therefore, dorm managers and instructional booklets both sought to regulate even the intimate relationships of their foreign guests.

“I don’t want to make any intimation, dear Mustafa, there are many family fathers, who actually are so well behaved, but most of the young people look to spend their free time in the possibly pleasant company of a female,” begins the section on “free time” in the worker’s manual *Hallo Mustafa!*³⁵⁸ Interestingly enough, this instructional pamphlet on life in Germany coaches these male family breadwinners on how to pick up German

³⁵⁶ Metin Uyaner and Sami Özkara, “Arbeiterwohnheime für die Migranten im Ruhrgebiet: Eine historische Darstellung der 60er und 70er Jahre,” *Untersuchung 2*, (Essen: DoMit, Juni 1996) 18.

³⁵⁷ Nermin Abadan, *Batı Almanya’daki Türk İşçileri ve Sorunları* (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1964) 103-104.

³⁵⁸ *Hallo Mustafa*, 34.

women in their spare time.³⁵⁹ Indeed, the booklet assumes that adultery was the norm and that it was best to accept it. The author takes the time to wish workers luck and to warn workers of such licentious activities' potential dangers:

I wish you lots of luck and joy with this; perhaps you can make your dreams come true here. I must, however, also warn you. It is not true, that women are always the best use of time. Every meeting with a woman demands tact and good manners. I would also like to warn you about sexually transmitted diseases, but that matters mainly for a specific category of women.³⁶⁰

In this particular case, the statement “perhaps you can make your dreams come true” is not connected to earning large sums of money, but rather with sex. This passage represents the extent of employers' comments on and involvement in the transnational family situation of their workers. Some married men who came to Germany rarely returned to Turkey and chose instead to start new families in Germany, leading to the financial and personal ruin of wives and children left behind. The pamphlet's flip comments about adultery and dating advice fails to recognize the role that migration and the businesses themselves played in separating families.

“It is not possible for a young person not to think about women,” explains *Hallo Mustafa*,

But different countries have different customs and also the women here often have different lifestyles from the women in your country. You will have your own experiences, but please be smart and careful. That can be the best way to a normal introduction into the German social life but can also be a source of danger and complication. I can't give you any advice. You must keep your eyes open and manage [make your own way]. A reasonable plan for free time is a necessary complement to work life; it can give you happiness and self-confidence and make it easier for you to build a new existence here.³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Ibid.

One can only wonder what would be an example of an abnormal as compared to “normal introduction into the German social life.” The author is perhaps alluding to a post-war perception of German women’s sexuality, especially the high incidents of dating occupation troops.³⁶² Concerns about the introduction of “different customs” and of vague “complications” undermine the author’s friendly suggestions and encouragement for leisure time: after all these are not man-woman interactions, but foreigner-German woman interactions. The author also warns foreign workers to keep their jealousy, temperament, and impulsiveness in check when dealing with private affairs.³⁶³

In contrast, for an example of a “reasonable plan for free time,” the authors provided a photograph of appropriate social co-ed behavior. (See Image Fourteen). In this photograph, a table helps to separate the men and women. Prominently displayed Coca-cola bottles provide a non-alcoholic beverage option; the men are dressed in coats and ties, symbolizing upright behavior; and the photo offers singing as an appropriate (and platonic) way to spend time with the accompanying women.

³⁶² Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German- American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina University Press, 2002); Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender and Foreign Relations, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

³⁶³ *Hallo Mustafa*, 35.



**Image
Fourteen.**

“What do you do
in your Free
time?”

Hallo Mustafa
DoMit 427.

Worker's Own Time and Space

It was not only Germans who had stereotypical views of “Turkish masculinity,” or “Turkish sexuality.” In interviews, male workers themselves bragged about their relationships with German women. Many Turkish men thought of themselves in hyper-masculinized terms, such as Cahit who came to work in West Berlin in 1964 with a two-year contract, but stayed in Berlin after falling for an East Berlin woman. He reports that starting in about 1966, he and his friends went to East Berlin once a week to go dancing. Cahit said that it was not particularly easy to go to East Berlin, but that it also did not stop many Turkish men from doing so.³⁶⁴ For Cahit and his friends, East Berlin was also a

³⁶⁴ From August 1961 to December 1963 no East German could go to West Berlin, and no West Berliner to the East. In 1963 a “crossing-permit agreement” (*Passierscheinabkommen*) granted West Berliners temporary permits to visit during the Christmas and New Year’s holidays, an agreement that authorities renewed annually through 1966. After the 1972 Treaty—the settlement that gave the GDR a separate but equal (and recognized) existence with the FRG—passage into East Berlin became even easier for West Berlin residents. It was a time of stylishly dressed West German visitors, with enviable shoes who came looking to snatch up bargains and leave tips in West Marks in exchange for the best tables at

place where they could feel like men and show off their sexual prowess. Cahit reported “we, all the Turks, went to [East Berlin] to find women and to flirt. We went to dance.”³⁶⁵ Unlike the dormitories, where managers treated workers with suspicion and closely supervised them, in the nightclubs of East Berlin, women were attracted to these men as men: these Turkish men appeared appealing to East German women as men of means or as potential lovers instead if as “problematic foreigners.” For their German girlfriends, Cahit reports, the Turkish men brought gifts: “they were such idiots—bringing so many gifts. They were even bringing golden rings. Tto tell you the truth, I also brought gifts.”³⁶⁶ Cahit’s interview suggests that flirting with and having sexual encounters with East German women gave Turkish male workers an opportunity to exert their own self-perceived masculinity and prove their virility in comparison with German men, men who had control over them both at work and at home. Cahit reports:

[Compared] to German men, in terms of sexual ability, [Turkish men] have more endurance and stamina; so [the East German women] preferred the Turks. The western [that is, West German] women didn’t really want to have much to do with the Turkish men. To say more, I didn’t have any contact with West German women. Moreover, we had heard that in the East there were a lot of women, and there really were. So the Turks were always there. We were young, so naturally, it was normal that men needed women.³⁶⁷

Relationships with German women also gave male guest workers a way out of the dormitories. Cahit started dating an East Berlin woman whom he met one night and he moved in with her when she became pregnant.³⁶⁸ They married when the child was nine years old. In 1980, he brought them both to West Berlin where they have been living

restaurants. Frederick Taylor, *The Berlin Wall: A World Divided, 1961-1989*; Ann Tusa, *The Last Division: A History of Berlin, 1945-1989* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997) 363.

³⁶⁵ DoMiT interview, “Cahit.”

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Ibid.

³⁶⁸ Presumably she joined him in West Berlin, though the details of the arrangement are not clear.

ever since. Cahit said that his story was a common one and that “many children were born in the East.”³⁶⁹ In Cahit’s case, his ability to start a family and bring his wife from East Berlin to West Berlin complicates the guest worker narrative by providing an example of a guest worker who is a source of social and economic uplift for his German wife.

However, it was not only through exploring night life or shopping for chic outfits that workers sought to assert their autonomy and control over their lives. Other workers defied the guest-worker identity in their own ways. For example, one man, Adil, was determined to maintain his identity as an intellectual: he read books from sundown to sun-up, and at work, he would try to sleep, asking a co-worker to wake him if anyone came by.³⁷⁰ It did not matter to him how tired he was, he spent what little free time he had to create a life in keeping with his own identity of himself. Asked if he ever went to a bar, he answered, “No, no, I didn’t have any kind of bar-life in Germany, the others went. At the most, I would go to the cinema, or go to a nice restaurant with a friend. I would take a trip, if I was in a bad mood. Then I would get in my car and drive on the *Autobahn* and sing at the top of my lungs.”³⁷¹

Whether imaging that one’s life was different (as Filiz did when she pretended to be a girl at a boarding school), exploring a new disco every night, reading until sun up or driving on the autobahn, foreign workers had a need for escapism—a tool used not only to create a social life or home life out of limited free time and space, but also to endure a difficult life in Germany of long hours, cramped quarters, and isolation from family or from society in general. In interviews, most anecdotes shed a positive light on situations,

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ DoMiT Interview, “Adil,” Essen 1995.

³⁷¹ Ibid.

especially in reference to free time, and attempt to show that workers controlled situations. Even in retrospect, Turkish workers attempt actively to influence their life histories.

Conclusion

Focusing on life outside of work provides a way to view the process of importing labor from the inside out. German officials' attempts to provide temporary housing reveal (conscious or unconscious) attempts to insure that workers had only temporary stays in West Germany. German officials' attempts to regulate and insure appropriate housing for foreign workers broke down when the responsibility was assumed by others, such as employers, dorm managers, and translators, many of whom tried to do things as quickly and cheaply as possible or tried to play power games with workers or, more troubling, the game of "civilization." Despite dorm managers' attempts to control even the most intimate details of workers' lives, guest workers managed to exert control over their own lives in their free time and often through expressions of their sexuality. In this case study, guest workers' ambition and rebellions, whether in their home lives or in their social lives, reveal ways in which male and female workers were able to maintain a sense of self within a highly controlled and regulated process. In the dormitories, workers created their own spaces with their own imaginations. These attempts are also transparent in revealing foremost, that the workers were opinionated about and not passive in their situations. They actively attempted to shape their own living situations—an aspect that is often ignored in descriptions of workers' poor housing and bad condition. Perhaps Özdamar's term *Wonaym* is not a mispronunciation, but a transliteration in which workers represent their German home in their own language.

Over time, workers changed their housing as they needed to, such as when a family member joined them and they needed a larger place or when they wanted to change jobs. The instability of worker's housing led to an inability to settle in West Germany and inhibited integrating into society. It also led to the "ghettoization" of Turkish minority populations that led to problems.³⁷² The longer guest workers stayed in West Germany, the greater their dissatisfaction with their housing arrangements. On the whole, workers felt their rent was too high and the furnishings substandard.³⁷³ The Federal Minister of Labor and Social Affairs' housing guidelines were not regulated and, in addition to a continuing shortage of reasonably priced housing in West Germany, foreign workers faced prejudice when they attempted to find private accommodations.³⁷⁴ As dissatisfaction with housing grew, as workers decided to stay in West Germany longer, worker protests over housing also increased, along with the likelihood of workers to join organized labor activism, the subject of the next chapter.

³⁷² Y. Diricks and Ayşe Kudat, "Instability of Migrant Workers' Housing" Preprint-International Institute of Comparative Social Studies (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin) 1975. Compare with "Ger Mik and Mia Verkoren-Hemelaar, "Segregation in the Netherlands and Turkish Migration" in *Turkish Workers in Europe, 1960-1975*, ed. Nermin Abadan-Unat (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976); Günther Glebe, "Housing and segregation of Turks in Germany" in Şule, 122-157; Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 238.

³⁷³ Ursula Mehrländer, "Wohnverhältnisse Ausländischer Arbeitnehmer in Der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," 23.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR: Our Fight is Your Fight: Guest Worker Activism in the Early 1970s

Introduction

“The public is astonished by the determination of the foreign women,” a reporter from the West German television station WDR II reported on December 13, 1973.³⁷⁵ “And rightly so,” she continued, “the foreign workers, who in fact were women, threatened to stop the entire West German automobile industry.”³⁷⁶ The report refers to the foreign female workers of the Pierburg Auto Parts Factory, who, in 1973, conducted a wildcat strike that sent shockwaves through West Germany. The strikes at Pierburg were not isolated events; indeed, the summer of 1973 saw a sharp increase in workers’ activism, including a wave of “women’s strikes.” On July 16, four thousand female workers, mostly from abroad, went on strike at the Hellawerk Factory in Lippstadt, while at the Optal factory in Herner, thirty female workers went on strike. In Cologne, seamstresses protested speedups.³⁷⁷ These strikes were part of a labor insurrection of men and women, foreign and German, that swept West Germany in 1973. However, for foreign workers, labor activism had a larger significance than securing better labor conditions. Striking foreign workers were no longer negotiating temporary problems; they were signaling, in fact, that they were there to stay.

Since the nineteenth century, foreign workers (especially in the Ruhr River region where the majority of guest workers lived and worked) have used labor activism to

³⁷⁵ WDR II Dec 13, 1973, Barbara Schleich, “Rebellion am Fließband: Erfahrungen aus Frauenstreiks” 15 min.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ “Dossiers: Die Chronik der neuen Frauenbewegung: 1973” <http://www.frauenmediatum.de/dreiundsiebzig.html> Internet; accessed 13 May 2008.

negotiate definitions of belonging, of local, national, and class identity, and of solidarity within these categories. John Kulczycki has argued that ethnic polish miners, though aware of cultural and linguistic differences, worked together with native German co-workers in the Ruhr to achieve common working-class goals, with the main barrier to this class solidarity being German workers' prejudice against them.³⁷⁸ What connects the nineteenth century roots, as well as the more contemporary protests in this same industrial region, was not only the role of migrants, but the civic participation and social citizenship inherent in their labor activism. Furthermore, David F. Crew has written that, for nineteenth century miners in the Ruhr Region, "occupation . . . provided the miner with an 'integrated' role in German society. . . [which] combined economic, social, and legal functions," and it was this "occupational community" more than material deprivation that explains why workers strike.³⁷⁹ Guest workers' "occupational community"—meaning in this case a newfound solidarity with other workers of various nationalities through common work-related goals—included achieving common working-class goals, but it also meant that German workers necessarily benefited from the foreign workers' achievements in labor activism.

By the 1970s, foreign workers were well integrated into the West German economy, and, indeed, the reporter's comments were not hyperbolic: by the early 1970s, the construction industry, steel industry, mining industry, and the automobile industry in

³⁷⁸ John J. Kulczycki, *The Foreign Worker and the German Labor Movement: Xenophobia and Solidarity in the Coal Fields of the Ruhr, 1871-1914*; Kulczycki argues against the idea that these ethnic Poles had to choose between class interests and national consciousness, which Christoph Klessman terms, "double loyalty" in Christoph Klessman, "Zjednoczenie Zawodowe Polskie (ZZP-Polnische Berufsvereinigung) und Alter Verband im Ruhrgebiet," *Internationale Wissenschaftliche Korrespondenz zur Geschichte der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung*, 15 (1979): 68; Erhard Lucas, *Zwei Formen von Radikalismus in der deutschen Arbeiterbewegung* (Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 1976); idem, *Der bewaffnete Arbeiteraufstand im Ruhrgebiet in seiner inneren Struktur und in seinem Verhältnis zu den Klassenkämpfen in den verschiedenen Regionen des Reiches* (Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 1973).

³⁷⁹ Crew, 181.

West Germany had become largely dependent upon foreign labor.³⁸⁰ Yet despite the vital role they played, foreign workers, especially Turkish workers, remained isolated, underrepresented in labor unions, and misused by their employers.³⁸¹ Many Turkish guest workers were disappointed with their jobs, due to a combination of negative aspects, ranging from low wages, to the often-unexpected strenuousness of the work, to work-related health problems, to the high risk of injury on the job, and to working at jobs beneath their skill levels.³⁸² Furthermore, despite the length of their stay, guest workers were not able to achieve any upward mobility in their jobs.³⁸³

Therefore, foreign workers' active roles in strikes and protests is not surprising, considering that workers were not just reacting to poor conditions at work, but also to poor conditions in employer-managed housing, as well as drawing on memories of deplorable train rides and the long and tedious application process before hand. However, material conditions alone cannot explain labor activism: there was also a more complicated social reality in guest workers' negotiations with their increasingly permanent lives in West Germany.³⁸⁴ Labor activism for foreign workers in the 1970s, I would argue, served an integrating function by combining demands for economic, social, and, in some cases, legal parity—demands that signaled a claim on “occupational community” and a newfound sense of permanence in West German society for foreign

³⁸⁰ Gottfried. E. Voelker, “More Foreign Workers—Germany’s Labour Problem No. 1?” in *Turkish Workers in Europe, 1960-1975*, ed. Nermin Abadan-Unat (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1976)331-345, here 336; Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 216. Herbert points out that in 90% of foreign males were blue-collar workers compared with only 49% of the German male work force, 216.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Karin Hunn, *Nächstes Jahr*, 117.

³⁸³ Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 241.

³⁸⁴ For a useful dispute of the “misery” theory, that material deprivation necessarily spurred labor activism, see “Foundations of Worker Protest” in David F. Crew, *Town in the Ruhr* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979)159-194. Crew argues that material deprivation alone cannot explain labor activism; instead, “foundation of worker protest” lies in “occupational community,” 186.

workers. Labor activism in the 1970s, also signaled a class solidarity among workers that crossed national boundaries. Despite the unique experiences of Turkish guest workers, labor activism necessarily involved workers of other nationalities as well as German co-workers, as the concerns of protesting workers were inherently linked, even if their grievances were unique. Unlike previous chapters, this final chapter seeks to move beyond the individuality of the Turkish workers' experiences to find the ways in which they sought commonality and expressed a sense of belonging through labor activism in the early 1970s.

Foreign workers' notions of self-determination and newfound solidarity—both among other foreign workers and with West German workers—challenged the power relations between workers and employers during negotiations of labor conditions and hinted at a longer commitment to life in West Germany. At the same time, foreign workers' labor activism and raised consciousness were also reasons why West German employers might have begun to lose interest in the guest-worker program, preempting the 1973 end to recruitment. Finally, guest-worker activism can provide clues to the questions immigrant historians have long asked: when does an immigrant decide that home is no longer the place left behind? Or at what point do temporary “guest workers” become “immigrants”? When do they begin to invest in West Germany as a more permanent home? Or—from the other point of view—“Why are you still here?”³⁸⁵ After a brief introduction to the history Turkish guest workers' labor protests, this chapter will take as a case study the strike at Pierburg that involved guest workers of various nationalities and whose success depended on the participation of West German co-workers as well.

³⁸⁵ Interview with Filiz, Berlin 2003.

Because many of the strikes that foreign workers led were wildcat strikes, they challenged the power relations between not only workers and employees, but also the hierarchy of worker representation with West German industries.³⁸⁶ The Pierburg strike is significant not only because foreign women instigated it and not just because it was successful, but also because it permanently altered the West German wage structure, just as guest workers permanently altered the West German economy and society. The Pierburg strike included moments of solidarity with West German co-workers and challenged ideas of “women’s work” and “jobs for foreigners.” The strikes of the early 1970s were the ultimate postwar negotiations, because, whether they meant to or not, foreign workers fought on behalf of West German workers across Germany, and in so doing lay claim to a more permanent future as “workers in Germany.”

Background of Turkish Labor Activism in West Germany

Before the early 1970s, Turkish guest workers had engaged in labor activism. Indeed, protests and work stoppages were present since the beginning of recruitment. On April 30, 1962, 300 Turkish workers went on strike in the city of Essen out of protest over under-paid *Kindergeld* or child benefit payments.³⁸⁷ During the strike, the police reportedly shot rubber bullets at the workers as they sang their national anthem, and the police arrested ten of the striking Turkish workers and had them deported.³⁸⁸ In the aftermath of the strike, which prompted much negative press in Turkey for the guest-

³⁸⁶ The role of West German labor unions as well as foreign workers’ reactions to them will be discussed in an extended, future version of this manuscript. During the early 1970s, German labor offered striking workers varying amounts of support, see Gottfried E. Voelker “More Foreign Workers—Germany’s Labour Problem No. 1?” in *Turkish Workers in Europe: 1960-1975*, ed. Nermin Abadan-Unat (Leiden: Brill, 1976) 331-362, Hunn, “Der ‘Türkenstreik bei Ford vom August 1973: Verlauf und Analyse,” in *Nächste Jahr* 243-261.

³⁸⁷ Der Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, Bonn, an BAVAV Nürnberg, 2. Mai 1962, BArch B119/ 3071 II.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

worker program, the Federal Labor Ministry complained that West German officials in Istanbul were falsely promising workers child benefit payments for children left behind in Turkey. “[The workers] cite that the Liaison Office reassured them that they would have the same rights as German workers and all other foreign workers,” the Federal Labor Ministry explained; the Federal Labor Ministry warned the Liaison Office not to “lead to misunderstandings.”³⁸⁹ Workers were eligible for child benefit payments, but not for children left behind in Turkey; an arrangement that did not suit the transnational families that the guest-worker arrangement prompted. Those on strike in Essen appealed to West German Labor unions for help, who apparently said, “you’re right, but there is nothing that we can do for you.”³⁹⁰ They also appealed to the Turkish consulate, which offered no help.³⁹¹ Significantly, despite having no representatives for collective bargaining, these workers were not willing to settle for less than what they expected to be their equal rights.

However, “equal rights” were not “equal” for foreign workers. Employers and the West German government deducted taxes, pension money, social benefit money, rent, and all sorts of other payments from foreign workers pay checks, regardless of whether or not they planned to take part on the social services such payments supplied, like the pension. *Hallo Mustafa* explains that such deductions were simply a part of life and not meant to be understood by foreigners, who stare at them and “shake their heads.” The pamphlet continues

You don’t understand. You can’t tell the difference between gross and net pay, and most of all you don’t understand the deductions for social benefits and taxes. . . . At first, you get the feeling that they are trying to take you for a ride

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

with these complicated numbers and figures. Allow me to tell you, dear Mustafa, in my opinion, you all are much too suspicious.³⁹²

However, considering how the guest-worker program had functioned so far, for many workers, it is not surprising that one might be suspicious of one's paycheck. The Liaison Office in Istanbul could also not offer workers a clear idea of what their wages would be in West Germany, prompting the Turkish Federal Employment Ministry to request a certain minimum wage for workers, especially for female workers.³⁹³

“At the beginning our wages were very low. Everyone who wanted to go didn't care about the wages very much,” reported a man from Bursa who came to West Germany in 1963, “the government didn't give much importance to this . . . I earned 3 DM per hour. A German worker doing something much simpler was earning about 6-7DM per hour.”³⁹⁴ However, the Turkish Employment Service did take notice of workers' poor wages abroad. The Attaché for Labor and Social Concerns of the Turkish Consulate informed the Liaison office, that a minimum wage of 3 DM an hour for men, and 2.60 an hour for women was imperative, and the Turkish Employment Service would only send workers if these conditions were met.³⁹⁵ The West German Association of Chocolate and Sweets, which employed many foreign women, replied that it found the request “astonishing,” as did not know of any wages above 2.50 per hour in the category “unskilled and physical labor,” which presumably was for women workers.³⁹⁶ Furthermore, this wage of 2.50 DM was only for a “certain part” of the unskilled

³⁹² *Hallo Mustafa*, 22.

³⁹³ “Mindeststundenlöhne,” BAVAV Türkei, an BAVAV Nürnberg, 7. Dez 1965 BArch B119/3073.

³⁹⁴ Ali Gitmez, *Göçmen İşçilerin Dönüşü: Return Migration of Turkish Workers to Three Selected Regions* (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, idari İlimler Fakültesi, 1977) 81.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁶ Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie, Vereinigung der Schokolade- und Süßwarenfabrikanten, E.V. an BAVAV Nürnberg, 8.12.1965 BArch B 119/ 3073.

category that “doubtful would be considered for women Turkish guest workers,” they continued.³⁹⁷ The Association of Chocolate and Sweets later reported that it the minimum wage would be impossible to instate because it would be an “extremely unpleasant situation” to explain to those already working for 2.27DM that the newly arrived Turkish female workers were to earn 2.50DM an hour.”³⁹⁸ Turkish women workers could get a raise, they reasoned, only when they could “handle the demands of a higher-paid wage category.” Despite Turkish officials’ attempts to set a standard for their workers, West German employers remained resistant.

Additionally, workers expressed their dissatisfaction over *Akkordarbeit* or the piecework system that many West German employers used. According to *Akkordarbeit*, wages varied based on the number of days worked and on the completion of certain tasks.³⁹⁹ “What is *Akkord*? As you know, nobody can work at the same speed and produce the same amount. . . . the *Akkord* system is simple. Whoever produces more gets paid more” explained a guide for Turkish workers at a spinning factory.⁴⁰⁰ Filiz explained the confusion of receiving a paycheck according to the *Akkord* system to me thusly,

A day before [payday] we received a receipt listing how many hours we worked or how much we produced. Because we worked on different machines, and did different work, and different work was worth different amounts . . . Three hours here for example, three days, a different machine. Every machine had different pay, per hour and per piece sometimes too. . . . We would get a monthly receipt and we could check it. Sometimes there were also mistakes, sometimes it says

³⁹⁷ Ibid. A memo from the “Fine Ceramic Industry” in Bavaria lists foreign women’s wages, for those over 21 years as 2.33DM and for those 20 years old, as just 2.26DM. In contrast, unskilled men who were over 21 years old would earn 2.85DM and 20 years old 2.79DM, “Lohntarifvertrag vom 2.6.1965 für die gewerblichen Arbeitnehmer der feinkeramischen Industrie, BArch B119/ 3073.

³⁹⁸ Bundesverband der Deutschen Süßwarenindustrie Vereinigung der Schokolade und Süßwarenfabrikanten, e.v., an BAVAV 4. Feb 1966.

³⁹⁹ “Akort nedir?” *Eilermark’a Hoş geldiniz: Türk İşçi Arkadaşlarımız için Kılavuz*, Eilermark AG, Spinnerei u. Zwirneri, Gronau, 2 Mayıs, 1973, Milli Kütüphanesi 5262, DM 4671-73, pp 17-19.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, 17-18.

you were on a different machine than you were. Then you go to the boss, and he checks it with his notes. You go and tell him and he also has his notes, and then we would correct it together. And then you go to the payment office, and they make corrections as well. [Then] you go get in line and wait, because the department has a different opening hour. A man came with the cash box . . . Your name is there and an envelope with your name on it, and you get it from your boss's hand.⁴⁰¹

Piecework also depended upon collaboration with German co-workers, which could lead to aggravation and misunderstandings due to differing work speeds and language problems.⁴⁰² Guest workers had varying relationships with German co-workers. Filiz reported to me that when she started working in West Berlin in 1964, the German women she worked with helped her to learn her job and to learn German.⁴⁰³ More than coworkers, the German women she worked with wanted to be friends: "I had really good colleagues. They were the ones in the post war generation, in the war times, . . . They were *Trummenfrauen*. . . . and they wanted to become closer friend with me . . . [They] were exploited too, . . . [and] had very low pensions. . . . [We] stayed in contact when they retired."⁴⁰⁴ Filiz's comment, "they were exploited, too," signifies a sense of solidarity with her German co-workers, especially because they were women who had lived through a difficult time previously. Other worker also noted that in the initial years of the guest-worker program, they had good relations with their coworkers, citing problems with xenophobia first in the 1980s and 1990s.⁴⁰⁵ However, despite signs of good will, guest workers had very different experiences at work than their German

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Filiz Berlin 2003.

⁴⁰² Jamin reports that Turkish workers worked faster than their West German co-workers, who complained that they were "spoiling the *Akkord*," Jamin, "Migrationserfahrungen," in *Fremde Heimat*, 216.

⁴⁰³ Interview with "Filiz" Berlin 2003.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Jamin that many of her interview partners described the relationship between Germans and Turks as having changed over time: "in the beginning it was no problem and the relations were good (in the 1960s), difficulties came later, (1970s) and racist discrimination was a later development (1980s)" "Migrationserfahrung," in *Fremde Heimat*, 224.

coworkers. Foreign workers were more likely to work on piecework and received shift work more frequently than their German coworkers did.⁴⁰⁶ As early as 1962, Turkish guest workers went on strike over the *Akkord* system. For example, Turkish guest workers at a West German mine in the Ruhr River region refused to work, because they thought their pay was too little, insisting that they receive a steady paycheck instead of one that varied.⁴⁰⁷

Neither economic downturn nor foreign worker's activism was new in 1973, despite there being no institutional memory of foreign labor organizing. The short-lived 1966-67 recession was the first point of stagnation in the postwar period and included high unemployment and lower real wages, as well as, the first significant wave of postwar labor organizing in West Germany. In September of 1969, 140,000 workers from 69 different companies within the steel, metal, textile, and mining industries in the Ruhr and Saar River regions, the main industrial centers of West Germany, went on strike.⁴⁰⁸ In the early 1970s, further economic downturn resulted from the international depression caused by the oil embargo and the ensuing crisis of stagflation. In 1973, workers' wages could not keep up with cost-of-living increases.⁴⁰⁹ Within this

⁴⁰⁶ Herbert, *A History of Foreign Labor*, 241.

⁴⁰⁷ BAVAV Nürnberg an den Herrn Bundesminister für Arbeit und Sozialordnung Bonn, "Beschäftigung türkischer Bergarbeiter im deutschen Steinkohlenbergbau" 2. Mai 1962, BArch B119/ 3071 II; Ten workers were fired and given train tickets back to Istanbul. Apparently these ten did not give up easily; they got off the train in Bonn to look for work there but were denied work permits from the Bonn Employment Office. See also, "10 Türken wegen Aufwiegelung ausgewiesen: Rabiante 'Gäste' verprügelten besonnen kollegen, Große Tumulte in Wohnlager," *Solinger Tageblatt* 17.3.62, BArch B119/ 3071 II.

⁴⁰⁸ "Schwerpunkte, Aufmass und Verlauf der Streikbewegung" in *Spontane Streiks 1973, Krise der Gewerkschaftspolitik*, ed., Reihe Betrieb und Gewerkschaften: Redaktionskollektiv 'express', 22. This published source on the 1973 strikes is a compellation of the events of year based on interviews with strike participants. It is located in the DoMiT archive.

⁴⁰⁹ Reihe Betrieb und Gewerkschaften: Redaktionskollektiv 'Express,' ed., *Spontane Streiks 1973 Krise der Gewerkschaftspolitik* (Offenbach: Verlag 2000 GmbH, Januar 1974) 18. This is a published source compiled by a the collective 'express' –*Zeitung für sozialistische Betriebs- und*

increasingly insecure economic situation, workers' uprisings became more common.⁴¹⁰

In 1973, 275,240 workers from 335 firms went on strike, many of whom were foreign workers.⁴¹¹

The West German 'economic miracle' was predominantly based on increasing labor productivity not only through the importation of large numbers of temporary workers via the guest worker program, but also through expanding conveyor-belt production and other technical innovations,. At the same time, employers sought to maintain low wages—wages that remained low especially in relation to both profit margins and inflation. When the post-war economic boom came to a crashing halt in the late 1960s and early 1970s, foreign workers bore the brunt of the high inflation, rising prices, declining growth rates, wide-spread unemployment, and social discontent—all effects of the early 1970s global economic recession—as they were often the first employees laid off.

During the 1973 strikes, foreign and West German workers had varying degrees of solidarity. At a ten-day strike, from May 18 to 28, 1973, at the *Profilwalzwerk der Mannesmann-Hüttenwerke* in Duisburg-Huckingen, 380 of the 700 workers went on strike over increasingly poor working conditions, including speedup and dangerous working conditions, such as having to work with burning hot materials. At first, Turkish workers at the firm were called strikebreakers, because strike organizers had not included them in their plans for work stoppage. By the end of the strike, however, Turkish workers joined German workers in the strike, and management sought to fire them.

Gewerkschaftsarbeit, in which the editors collected strike materials and interviewed participants of the strikes during the year 1973.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ *Spontane Streiks 1973*, 127.

When the workers' representatives, who were ironically against the strike, asked Turkish workers for the names of those who had joined the strike, the Turkish worker all answered with the same name: "Atatürk."⁴¹² In the end, all workers at the firm, German and foreign, gained 25 to 70 Pfg (*Pfennig* or West German cents) more per hour and employees voted the entire existing workers council out of office.⁴¹³

In other cases, German and foreign workers did not support one another, even though in the end both benefited, as was the case at the automobile producer, Hella. "They will kill us if we force them to work!" claimed the president of the workers' council at Hella, referring to the 3,000 foreign workers from Spain, Greece, Italy, and Turkey who went on strike from July 17-19, 1973.⁴¹⁴ These foreign workers were protesting discriminatory wage practices. On Monday, July 16, 800 German skilled workers had received a 15 Pfg per hour raise; however, unskilled workers, who were almost all foreign workers, received nothing.⁴¹⁵ As a result, the foreign workers stopped working and demanding a raise of 50Pfg more per hour. On the third day of the strike, the press arrived and the tabloid, *Bild*, apparently reported, "Guest workers are beating their German colleagues."⁴¹⁶ As a result, the police came to "protect" those willing to work from the "violent" guest workers. While there were no punches thrown, the West German co-workers at Hella were also not willing to join the strike and only offered words of support, such as "you do good job!"⁴¹⁷ The foreign workers were successful and gained raises of between 30Pfg and 40 Pfg. Though no West German

⁴¹² "Streik bei Mannesmann, Duisburg-Huckingen" in *Spontane Streiks 1973*, 64.

⁴¹³ Ibid, 63. The workers' council is the elected representatives at a firm who are meant to serve as a liaison between the employees and the employers.

⁴¹⁴ "Streik bei Hella, Lippstadt," in *Spontane Streiks 1973*, 75.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid.

⁴¹⁷ "Du schon machen gut!" [*sic*] Ibid.

worker participated in the strike, they also reaped the benefits of the raise along with the foreign workers. The latter risked losing their jobs and, since they lived in employer-supplied dormitories, their housing as well, which guaranteed work permits and residency passes.

Furthermore, foreign workers organized around issues specific to their situations. The first strikes begun and maintained by foreign workers focused on the rules and regulations of vacation time—the period when foreign workers were able to travel back to their home countries.⁴¹⁸ Because of the distances foreign workers had to travel, *inter alia* to remote places in Turkey, they had different needs for their vacation allotments than West German workers did; as a result, strikes over vacation time did not necessarily contribute to solidarity among German and foreign workers, and German workers did not join in. At the Karmann factory in Osnabrück, 1,600 Portuguese and 250 Spanish workers at the rapid printing press in Wiesloch demanded new regulations about vacation time, in which they would be able to take their remaining vacation days all at once.⁴¹⁹ Additionally, foreign workers were also more likely than German workers to go on strike due to long-standing resentments of their employers over poor conditions in employer-supplied housing—another foreigner-specific cause. In the majority of cases, foreign workers lent their solidarity to West German workers, but the reverse was less likely to occur.⁴²⁰

Another strike prompted over vacation leave was the strike known as the “*Türkenstreik*” or Turkish Strike that occurred at the Ford factory in Cologne from August 24-30, 1973. The strike occurred after management laid off Turkish workers who

⁴¹⁸ *Spontane Streiks 1973*

⁴¹⁹ „Zur Rolle der Ausländischen Arbeiter,“ *Spontane Streiks 1973*, 30.

⁴²⁰ *Spontane Streiks 1973*.

returned late from vacation. Turkish coworkers protested the dismissals and 300 workers went on strike.⁴²¹ German workers joined the strike to request higher wages to offset inflation. When IG Metal and the workers' council joined in, the management agreed to pay for a small increase for inflation. The German workers and union member were satisfied, but workers' representatives ignored the Turkish workers' demands, so the Turkish workers continued to strike. A large fight including the police ensued, and after the strike, management fired many of the Turkish workers out of retribution.⁴²²

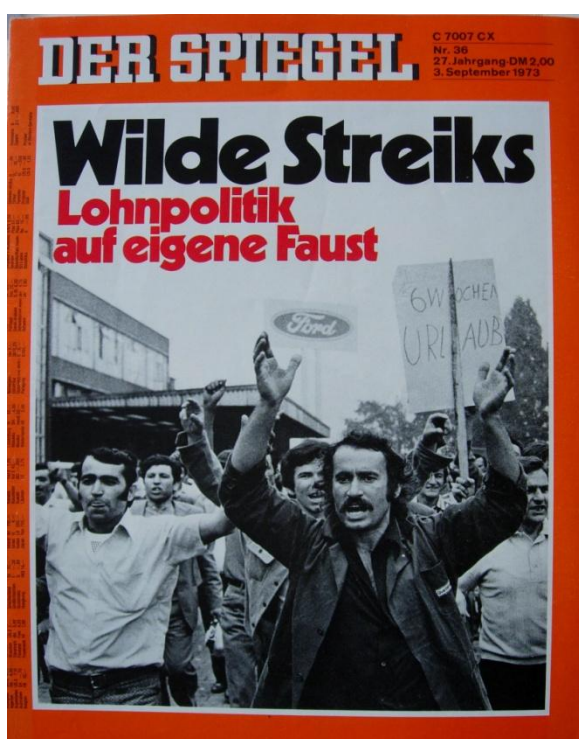


Image Fifteen. *Der Spiegel* Cover of the “Wildcat Strikes of 1973”

Wage Politics On One’s Own Initiative.” Notice the poster, which reads “6 Wochen Urlaub” or “Six Weeks for Vacation”
 Source: *Der Spiegel* Sept 3, 1973, Vol 27: 36.

The Ford Strike was also an all-male one. (See Image Fifteen.) In Image fifteen, the cover of the Spiegel edition devoted to the wildcat strikes of 1973, a mustached

⁴²¹ See for example, “Einwanderung und Selbstbewusstsein: Der Fordstreik 1973” in Jan Motte and Rainer Ohliger eds., *Geschichte und Gedächtnis in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft: Migration zwischen historischer Rekonstruktion und Erinnerungspolitik* (Essen: Klartext, 2004); *Der Spiegel* Sept 3, 1973; “Der ‘Türkenstreik’ bei Ford von August 1973: Verlauf und Analyse” and “Die zeitgenössischen Deutungen des Fordstreiks und dessen Konsequenzen für die türkischen Arbeitnehmer” in Karin Hunn ‘Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück. . .’ *Die Geschichte der türkischen ‘Gastarbeiter’ in der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005) 243-261.

⁴²² “Beispiele für Maßregelungen,” *Spontane Streiks*, 46.

Turkish man is the foreground. If there is any doubt that this strike is about foreign workers, the sign “6 weeks of vacation,” a demand specific to foreign workers clarifies the point. Foreign workers’ grievances did not necessarily differentiate along gender lines or along nationalities: male and female foreign workers alike had legitimate complaints about their pay scale’s inequity. In a study of Italian guest workers, historian Anne von Oswald found that West German males’ wages were higher than foreign males,’ and that they increased more quickly as well. (See Table 4.) While scholars of ethnic Turks in Germany have paid more attention to the “Turkish strike” at Ford, the Pierburg strikes arguably had a broader impact. Indeed, scholars rarely credit Turkish women or other foreign women for participating in such labor organizing more less for being the main actors in the 1973 strikes. It would be more fruitful, however, to not differentiate the foreign workers participating in strikes by nationality, as it is, I would argue, more significant to see how they demonstrated solidarity with workers of other nationalities. Foreign female workers, often acting in solidarity with women of different national origins, were the instigators behind many battles over pay inequities for foreign workers, as well as for women workers across West Germany, as will be discussed in the next section.

Table 4. Comparison of the average hourly wage of West German and Italian workers at the Volkswagen Plant in Wolfsburg, Germany between the Years 1963-1973

Year	West German Male Wages	Italian Guest Workers’ Male Wages
1963	3.95 DM	3.35 DM
1966	4.30 DM	3.67 DM
1970	4.63 DM	3.98 DM
1973	5.40 DM	4.68 DM

Source: Anne von Oswald “Stippvisiten” in der “Autostadt”: Volkswagen, Wolfsburg und die italienischen “Gastarbeiter,” in Klaus J. Bade and Jochen Oltmer eds., *Zuwanderung und Integration in Niedersachsen seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Osnabrück: Rasch University Press, 2002) 234.

The Pierburg Strikes and the Postwar Negotiations of “Wage Categories”

The Pierburg Strikes in 1973 were an example of solidarity not just between foreign and German workers, but also between male and female workers. Furthermore, those reaping the benefits of the strike were not just workers at the firm, but workers across West Germany. In order to understand the significance of the Pierburg strike, it is necessary to understand the development of women’s work in postwar West Germany as well as the development of the different “wage categories” used to determine what men and women, skilled (often German men) and unskilled (often foreign and female) earned. After an introduction to the history of the “wage categories” and women’s work in West Germany, this section will turn to the events of the strikes at the Pierburg factory that revolutionized wages in West Germany.

The original constitutions of both West and East Germany adopted in 1949—despite their other differences and divergent characters—guaranteed equal rights to men and women under the law. Furthermore, Article 3 of the West German constitution specified a series of anti-discrimination guidelines. In 1955, a Federal Labor Court ruling based on Article 3 stipulated that any agreement that paid women less than men for the same work violated the principle of equality of the sexes and was therefore unconstitutional. In theory, the 1955 ruling should have meant that women’s salaries would on average increase by 25% or more.

Employers, who understandably wanted to keep wages down, invented a new category, the “light wage group,” meant to designate unskilled and “light work.” Many employers regrouped female workers from the “women’s wage category” to the “light

wage categories.” From 1955 on, companies argued that women’s lower wages were not due to sex discrimination, but because women had “less strength” and had “lighter” work to do. When accused of renewed discrimination, employers countered that there were also men in the “light-wage group” so it could not be considered unconstitutional.

“Employers always get creative whenever it comes to the constitutional right of equal pay for equal work” reported *Stern* in 1973.⁴²³ According to economist Harry Schaffer’s analysis of the ruling, the light wage categories were indeed created for female workers, even if it was unconstitutional:

[Women’s wage groups] were merely replaced by the so-called ‘light wage categories’ . . . Typically characterized as encompassing ‘light,’ ‘the lightest,’ ‘simple,’ or ‘the simplest’ types of jobs, or jobs that entail ‘minimal physical exertion,’ or ‘minimal requirements,’ these wage categories are presumably applicable to both male and female workers. But in practice, work and wage categories are so defined that virtually all workers in the ‘light wage category’ are women. ‘In fact, the women [sic] wage categories’ have continued to exist in the form of ‘light wage categories,’ a female labor union executive charged recently [in 1975].⁴²⁴

Union leaders, most of whom were male, were generally unsupportive of female workers’ gains, and did not protest the creation of the Light Wage Groups, because they did not stand to gain from them. Historian Ute Frevert points out that neither employers nor trade unions protested the creation of the light wage groups:

. . . ‘Light wage groups’ : in effect, [meant] no change in the discriminatory policy toward women. Employers were well pleased to hear the land’s highest

⁴²³ “Frauen im Beruf: Arbeiten und kuschen,” *Stern*, No 44, 1973.

⁴²⁴ Harry Schaffer, *Women in the Two Germanies: A comparative Study of A Socialist and Non-Socialist Society* (New York: Pergamon, 1981); The female labor union executive mentioned was Liesel Winkelraeter, who wrote, “Entlohnung weiblicher Arbeitnehmer—Standortanalyse,” *Probleme der Frauen—Problem der Gesellschaft, Arbeitschancen, Lohnungleichheit, Vorurteile*, Protokoll des Arbeitstagung des DGB (a symposium) Nov 6-7, 1975 (Cologne: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1976); See also, Ute Frevert “Family or Career? Women’s Dilemma in the Land of the Economic Miracle” in *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation* trans. Stuart McKinnon-Evans (New York: Berg, 1989) 265-286; G. Krell, ‘Gesellschaftliche Arbeitsteilung und Frauenlöhne’, in *Frauen als bezahlte und unbezahlte Arbeitskräften: Beiträge zur Berliner Sommeruniversität für Frauen*, (Berlin 1978) 58-68.

legal authority make such pronouncements, since it would spare them a greatly increased wages bill. But the trade unions too were very understanding about it, because higher wages for women might well have delayed the attainment of more important trade union goals such as the implementation of the forty-hour week or the extension of paid holidays.⁴²⁵

In collective bargaining agreements, officials designated unskilled and semi-skilled jobs by the physical strength required, while in skilled and professional jobs the degree of “responsibility” was the criterion used for classification. “Easy” and “simple” jobs were classified under Wage Categories 1 or 2, or at best under Wage Category 3, while jobs that called for hard physical labor were generally classified under Wage Categories 4 or 5, which commanded considerably higher wages. In a kitchen furniture factory where both men and women worked on assembly lines to drill holes in doors, the women were in Wage Groups 1 and 2 and the men in Wage Groups 3 and 4, with the explanation that the men were drilling holes in “bigger and heavier doors.”⁴²⁶ In short, the new wage categories quickly came to mean men and women’s work. For guest workers, the Liaison Office in Turkey also listed wages thusly: “*Lohngruppe I (Frauen)*” and “*Lohngruppe III (Männer)*” or “Wage Category I (women) and “Wage Category III (men).”⁴²⁷

A 1970s government-sponsored study on the proper criteria for job evaluation recommended that job evaluations be evaluated strictly according to requirements for physical exertion, but it could do no more than provide suggested guidelines to the private sector.⁴²⁸ Foreign female workers in West Germany had long been performing

⁴²⁵ Frevert, *Women in German History*, 279.

⁴²⁶ Shaffer, 100.

⁴²⁷ “Lohntarifvertrag vom 2.6.1965 für die gewerblichen Arbeitnehmer der feinkeramischen Industrie” Bayern, quoted in, BAVAV Türkei an BAVAV Nürnberg 7.12.1965 BArch B 119/ 3073.

⁴²⁸ W. Rohmert and J. Rutenfranz, *Arbeitswissenschaftliche Beurteilung der Belastung und Beanspruchung an unterschiedlichen industriellen Arbeitsplätzen* (Berlin: Federal Ministry for Labor and Social Order, July 1, 1975).

heavy manual labor as “guest workers,” a concept largely gendered male; at the same time, employers paid foreign women according to the light wage groups regardless of their jobs’ degree of physicality. Protective legislation designed for female workers meant that foreign female workers were paid less, but not that they were excluded or “protected” from physically demanding jobs.⁴²⁹ It was this hypocrisy, more than anything else that instituted the strikes at Pierburg in Neuss.

With the importation of guest workers, foreign women became the new “women workers” of West Germany. “Expanded employment of German females was economically a reasonable and feasible step, but it was undesirable from the standpoint of ‘family policy,’” reported the industrial news, *Industriekurier* in 1955 in an article explaining why guest workers were necessary.⁴³⁰ Though this attitude of sending women back to the home to rebuild nuclear families was primarily a product of the immediate postwar years, its impact on women’s work in West Germany remained unchanged for years, as foreign women were increasingly recruited to fill the large number of vacancies in “women’s work.”⁴³¹ Like many West German industrial companies, Alfred Pierburg Auto Parts relied heavily upon foreign female labor and reaped the benefits of it.

Strikes at Pierburg

⁴²⁹ For a comparison of similar cases in the United States against discriminatory protective legislation please see J. Ralph Lindgren and Nadine Taub, *The Law of Sex Discrimination* (New York: Westing Publishing Company, 1988).

⁴³⁰ “Es geht nicht ohne Italiener,” *Industriekurier*, October 4, 1955 quoted in Herbert A *History of Foreign Labor*, 206.

⁴³¹ For a reference to recruiters’ demands specifically for female foreign workers, see, “Wochenbericht der deutschen Verbindungsstelle in der Türkei” : 26. Nov 1969 BArch B 119/4031, in which the German office in Istanbul writes, “Bei der Anforderung weiblicher Arbeitskräfte bestehen allerdings Schwierigkeiten, Näherinnen mit perfekten Kenntnissen an elektrischen Nähmaschinen in ausreichender Zahl zu gewinnen.” See also, Berlin Aa 10. Nov 1965, “Informationsbesuch bei der Firma Sarotti AG” Landesarchiv Berlin, which called for “dringend benötigen weiblichen Arbeitskräfte,” Landesarchiv Berlin, B Rep 301 Nr 297 Acc 2879 “Arbeitsmarktpolitik.”

“There are those who can still remember a time when Professor Pierburg shook everyone’s hand and strolled though the factory. We were a family and the professor was like a father to us; at Christmas we all got 5 DM [German Marks] cash,” recalled a former worker of the Pierburg Company.⁴³² However, not all workers could have shared in the nostalgia for the factory’s early days. Like much of the West German automobile industry, Pierburg had come to rely on foreign labor, especially foreign female labor.⁴³³ The Pierburg Neuss factory was one of the few factories in its area in West Germany’s main industrial center, the Ruhr River Region, to offer employment to women. (See Image Seventeen.) Pierburg began by directly recruiting four hundred women from Yugoslavia and housing them in barracks. Later, they also recruited the wives of men working in the metal industry in the surrounding area. In 1973, Pierburg employed 900 Greeks, 850 Turks, 380 Yugoslavs, 300 Spaniards, 200 Portuguese, 150 Italians and 850 Germans. Altogether, they employed 1,711 women in “Light Wage Categories.”⁴³⁴

⁴³² *Pierburg-Neuss: Deutsche und Ausländische Arbeiter – Ein Gegner – Ein Kampf: Streikverlauf-Vorgeschichte-Analyse-Dokumentation- Nach dem Streik*

⁴³³ Many former workers of the DoMiT interview collection worked for car manufacturers such as BMW, Opel, and VW, DoMiT Interview, “Rezmi.”

⁴³⁴ *Pierburg-Neuss: Deutsche und Ausländische Arbeiter—Ein Geger- Ein Kampf/ Alman ve Meslektaslar Tek Rakıp tek Mücadele, Streikverlauf, Vorgeschichte, Analyse, Dokumentation, Nach dem Streik* page 9. Internationale Sozialistische Publikationen, “Diese Broschüre wurden von Kolleginnen und Kollegen von Pierburg-Neuss zusammengestellt und geschrieben” (DoMit Archiv, Sig. No. 1177) 6.



Image Sixteen. Neuss, West Germany. Source: Mapquest, <http://europe.mapquest.com/maps/map.adp?formtype=address&country=DE&addtohistory=&address=&city=Neuss&zipcode=> accessed on 4 August 2008.

The strike over Wage Category 2 in the summer of 1973 was not the first protest over wages at the Pierburg factory in Neuss. Already in 1970, female workers, both German and foreign, had gone on strike over “Light Wage Category 1,” as well as, for the foreign women, over complaints of the conditions of the company-owned dormitory.⁴³⁵ During this initial strike, in May 1970, neither the union nor the worker’s council at Pierburg supported the striking women workers. Perhaps this lack of support was due to the fact that the worker’s council at Pierburg consisted mainly of German men, even though 75% of the workers at Pierburg were foreign. According to a newspaper

⁴³⁵ In a documentary about the 1973 Pierburg strike, foreign women who were interviewed complained more about the factory-supplied housing than their wages. Their grievances included living in a cellar that had once been used to keep pigs, having rooms without running water, having rent that was unreasonably expensive, and not being able to receive guests. *Ihr Kampf ist Unser Kampf* film; There were even fliers about the workers’ dormitories, which referred to the dorms as “concentration camps, *Pierburg-Neuss: Deutsche und Ausländische Arbeiter—Ein Geger- Ein Kampf/ Alman ve Meslektaslar Tek Rakip tek Mücadele, Streikverlauf, Vorgeschichte, Analyse, Dokumentation, Nach dem Streik* , 9. Internationale Sozialistische Publikationen, „Diese Broschüre wurden von Kolleginnen und Kollegen von Pierburg-Neuss zusammengestellt und geschrieben.“ DoMit, 1177.

report on the 1970 strike, management was not above threatening the striking women, especially considering their foreign status: Various department heads attempted to scare off the women with the threat of firing them, such as: “if you don’t want to work, then you’ll go with the police to the airport!”⁴³⁶ The airport reference implies that the striking women were thought of as only foreign even though German and foreign women were striking together. The department heads were unsuccessful in their threats, and the striking women achieved their aims, or so they thought at first.⁴³⁷ Their strike only lasted a few days and resulted in the elimination of Light Wage Category I, the lowest paying wage category. According to the terms negotiated, by Dec 31, 1971 Wage Categories 1 and 2 were to be eliminated. However, Light Wage Category 2 remained.

One of the women on strike at Pierburg in May 1970 was a Greek woman, Anna Satolias.⁴³⁸ Satolias described her reasons for striking in an interview with a German newspaper:

The work went from bad to worse, more production, more work, more workers, less working space. And the speed: faster and faster, the supervisor and the foreman shouting at us all the time—all that in the lowest wage category, which is called “light.” First I joined the trade union—like my husband—then we women started making demands. We wanted the abolition of wage category 1, because the work was and is heavy and not light—and because category 1 is supposed to be only for beginners, although we had been working five or six years in this category.⁴³⁹

The same year Pierburg promoted Anna’s husband, Nikiforus, to the position of tool-setter, and placed him together with his wife and her colleagues in the machine room. “Perhaps,” Anna said, “the firm thought we would be more docile then, because I would

⁴³⁶ *Deutsche Volkszeitung* May 29, 1970. quoted in *Pierburg- Neuss*.

⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁸ Barbara Schleich, “Streik am laufenden Band: In der Vergaserfirma Pierburg streikten vor allem ausländische Arbeiterinnen” *Vorwärts*, August 25, 1973.

⁴³⁹ Quoted in, “Migrant Women in Europe” *Race and Class*, 17 no. 4 (1976); See also “Anna, geh du voran: Anna Satolias—die Geschichte einer griechischen Gastarbeiterin, die die Sprecherin der Frauen in einem deutschen Betrieb wurde.” *Jasmin* 1973; See also *Jasmin* No 20 (1973).

have to do what my husband said.⁴⁴⁰ “Perhaps,” Nikiforus responded, “the firm thought that as a tool-setter I would earn so much that I could let my wife stay at home—and there were even colleagues who said such things aloud.”⁴⁴¹ Anna reported to the West German women’s magazine, *Jasmin*: “The firm might well have thought that he would leave his wife at home and I would obey him.”⁴⁴² Anna implies that her German employers were playing on stereotypes of gender relations in Mediterranean countries, which is ironic considering that it was foreign women from such Mediterranean countries who instigated protests against very real sex discrimination practices of Western Europe.

Indeed these foreign women protested the light wage categories before German women did. At this point in 1973, there had not yet been significant challenges to misuses of Wage Category 2 by West German women. In reporting about the Pierburg strike after its conclusion, one reporter was impressed with striking foreign women’s perceived heightened political consciousness in comparison to German women: “German female workers of this wage category [2] have neither at the Pierburg factories or elsewhere demonstrated that they were prepared to strike.” He continued, “Among the German women of this wage group there is missing, unfortunately, to a large extent leadership-personalities.”⁴⁴³ The journalist’s bias notwithstanding, reports of West German women striking against Wage Category 2 first began in 1978, when industrial baker, Irene Einemann, was credited with the first to challenge her placement in the Wage Category:

At long last, in the spring of 1978, Irene Einemann, a female baker’s assistant in the North German city of Delmenhorst, filed suit demanding that her pay be

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴⁴² Ibid. *Jasmin*’s audience was middle-class women.

⁴⁴³ *Augsburger Allgemeine* August 22, 1973.

brought up to the level of her male colleagues and won the case. Her wage was raised from the previous DM 6.86 per hour to DM 8.24 per hour, plus an additional supplement of DM 1.00 her male counterparts were earning also, and the decision was made retroactive, with back pay due her as of January 1, 1976.⁴⁴⁴

Furthermore, in an article reporting on Einemann, syndicated newspaper commentator Tatjana Pawlowski, five years after the Pierburg strike, falsely credits Einemann with having the courage to be the first to have the courage to protest her Wage Group:

“Injustice cannot be overcome if justifiable criticism limits itself to complaining. . . Who, until now, would have had the courage to oppose the long-established wage policies of many industrial enterprises?”⁴⁴⁵ The actions of the striking foreign women in 1973 and their significance seemed to be lost on the wider West German population, however, foreign women’s labor protests were all too real to many West German employers.

In the summer of 1973 after becoming impatient about the promised wage reforms, three hundred female workers at Peirburg conducted a “warning strike” and made the following 13 demands:

- 1) The Wage Category 2 must be eliminated. All women of LG2 must be re-categorized to WG3.
- 2) Those who have been working longer in the firms want to have a higher wage than those who are newly hired.
- 3) Because there are no clean work places in the firm, every employee is to receive a supplement for the dirty conditions [Schmutzzulage].
- 4) Everyone regardless if male or female is to receive an additional 1 DM for their hourly wage.
- 5) The Women who are working on the *Sondermaschinen* [vague??] are to be regrouped in LG5
- 6) Workers must be paid for the wages lost during these proceedings [the strike?]
- 7) All of the women who perform heavy manual labor must finally be paid as much as men.
- 8) There cannot be any firings due to taking too many sick days.
- 9) Overtime may not be unfairly distributed.
- 10) Whenever one is sick and wants to go to a doctor, he or she should receive a half a day paid leave.
- 11) One day a month should be paid for housekeeping [*Hausfrauentag* (!)]
- 12) Travel money

⁴⁴⁴ Harry Shaffer, *Women in the Two Germanies: A Comparative Study of A Socialist and Non-Socialist Society* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1981) 101-102.

⁴⁴⁵ Emphasis added.

must be raised 13) Tomorrow everyone should be able to leave the factory two hours earlier to pick up his [sic] money.⁴⁴⁶

The most important of the demands, to the women on strike, was the elimination of Wage Category 2 and a 1 German-Mark-per-hour raise for all workers. In an attempt at solidarity, those on strike distributed fliers in all of the different languages of the workers at Pierburg: Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Italian, Greek, and Turkish. (See Image Seventeen.) The text points out that had the workers been more united, the strike would have been more successful.

After the union stepped in to negotiate, the strike ended on the second day. Management's goal was to retain the "*Billig-Lohngruppe*" (Cheap Wage Category) at all costs. Management also planned to replace the three hundred striking workers with new employees in the fall so as to break the political will against Wage Category 2. The strike ended with the promise of negotiations between management and the workers' council, but new arrangements were not secured and the union did not follow up.⁴⁴⁷ The foreign women who initially protested their wage group did not find support in fellow workers, in their workers' council (*Betriebsrat*), nor in their union; their employer take their protest seriously, as they planned to pacify them until they could be replaced by newer and (in their eyes) less problematic workers in the fall.

⁴⁴⁶ „Forderungen der Beschäftigten der Versammlung der Belegsschaftsmitglieder der Firma Pierburg“ DoMit Pierburg File.

⁴⁴⁷ “Migrant Women in Europe” *Race and Class* 17 no. 4 (1976).

The strike was not without consequences for the women involved. After the June 1973 “warning strike” Professor Alfred Pierburg called and spoke to the chair of the workers’ council, Peter Leipziger, on June 14, 1973 and promised that there would be no firings.⁴⁴⁸ There were, however, temporary suspensions as punishment:

Leipziger reported back to the worker’s council that Professor Pierburg gave his word that there would be no firings. He would stick with the *Beurlaubungen*. Professor Pierburg will met with the worker’s council directly in the next week, to discuss the people whom the worker’s council fingered. He also mentioned that the forced leaves would be paid.⁴⁴⁹

Therefore, not only did the Worker’s Council not work in their official capacity to represent the foreign female workers, but they also incriminated the striking women by reporting them to the management.

The August 1973 Strike over Light Wage Category 2

Management did not have a chance to implement its plan to replace politicized workers in the fall of 1973, however, because a second, longer strike broke out on August 13, 1973. On Monday, August 13, as the 6am shift began to arrive at around 5:30am, twenty workers distributed fliers, which stated that in an hour workers would go on strike for the elimination of Wage Category Two and one German Mark more per hour.⁴⁵⁰ By 5:50am between 200 and 250 workers stood in front of the factory gates, deciding to participate in the strike. At first, the German foreman just observed, however at 6:30am sharp, he demanded that they get to work. Shortly thereafter, the police arrived with patrol wagons and demanded that those on strike clear the front gates. According to documentation, published in 1974, the following *mêlée* occurred:

⁴⁴⁸ “Telefonnotiz” 14 Juni 1973 “Telefongespräch mit Herrn Prof. Pierburg am 14. Juni 1973 nach 16 Uhr.” Neuss, 15 Juni 1973 DoMit Archiv Pierburg File.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ “Streik bei Pierbrug, Neuss,” *Spontante Streiks 1973*, 79.

One of the foremen fingers Elefteria Marmela—a Greek woman who together with her husband is a union [IG Metall] member—as the organizer of the strike. As the police attempt to arrest Marmela, she resists and a scuffle ensues. Another Greek worker has a camera with him and snaps photos . . . The police respond by confiscating his camera. Another Greek man manages, however, to rip the camera out of his hand and throw it to another Greek worker. A new scuffle begins. Suddenly an officer grabs his pistol and screams, ‘Get Back!’ A Greek woman steps up and yells, ‘So shoot me then! Or are you afraid?’⁴⁵¹

The police tried to arrest Marmela, who resisted and was injured in the process and returned with a bandaged arm. The end, no one was arrested, but as the police wagons were pulling away, one officer apparently called back, “*Dreckige Ausländer! Ich mache Euch kalt!*” or “Dirty foreigners! I’ll kill you!”⁴⁵² Three hours later, three VW buses, filled with police officers, again arrived. This time, the officers surrounded the protesters and arrested three Greeks, two women and one man, who were held for ten hours and interrogated. The police presence scared off many of those on strike, so that at the beginning of the breakfast break, there were only one hundred and fifty on the picket line. This breakfast break, however, began a moment of solidarity in which six hundred workers joined the strike. As a result, production was completely stopped at Pierburg in Neuss. The heavy hand of the West German police might be explained by the perceived terrorist threat from the far-left, including the Red Army Faction of the 1970s, during which law enforcement agencies showed their ability to impose harsh social controls, including roadblocks, airport surveillance, searches of suspicious citizens, and numerous public statements about tracking down the terrorists;⁴⁵³ politicians also introduced new

⁴⁵¹ “Pierburg” in *Reihe Betrieb und Gewerkschaften: Redaktionskollektiv ‘express,’ eds., Spontane Streiks 1973 Krise der Gewerkschaftspolitik* (Verlag 2000 GmbH, Januar 1974) 79.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁵³ Belinda Davis, “Jenseit von Terror und Rückzug: Die Suche nach politischen Spielraum und Strategien im Westdeutschland der siebziger Jahre,” in *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik: Medien, Staat und Subkulturen in den 1970er Jahren*, eds., Klaus Weinbauer, Jörg Requate, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 2006), see also, “Police Under Fire in German Unrest,” *The New York Times*, 27 December 1992.

legislation to protect the state from extremism of any kind.⁴⁵⁴ The face that most of the Red Army Faction's targets were powerful businessmen and politicians made the connection to the labor unrest even clearer.

On the second day of the strike, around three hundred and fifty workers stood in front of the factory gates—the entire early shift. Around 6:30am again three busses filled with police arrived. This time, the officers jumped out and immediately began to batter those on strike. Especially hard hit (literally) was again Ms. Marmela, who afterwards suffered severe injuries. The media also arrived, including television and radio reporters, who began to film the beatings and later aired them on television. Once the camera began recording, the police pulled back and there were no arrests. On this second day, there was almost a total solidarity among the two thousand foreign workers, male and female.

Like the previous day, the third day of the strike began with around three hundred workers standing in front of the factory gate. Several foreign female workers went first into the factory, changed clothes, punched-in, and then returned to the strike. As a result, management, which was still refusing to negotiate, locked the main gates—locking the women out. According to eyewitnesses, the breakfast break again resulted in solidarity between those striking in front of the (now-locked) factory gates, who were calling “*Al-le-ra-us!*” (or Every One O-ut!) to those still on the grounds, as workers greeted and hugged through the locked gate: “Every time there was in this moment an out-break of

⁴⁵⁴ See Freimut Duve, “‘Terror in Deutschland’, Angst vor den Deutschen. Terror gegen Ausländer und der Zerfall des Rechtsstaates” (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1992) 19-27, which argues that the German state created legal means to deal with extremism in the 1970s yet was reluctant to employ these means against xenophobic acts in the early 1990s, quoted in “Germany as a Multicultural Society: Legal Challenges, Ideological Shifts and Socioeconomic Realities,” in *Fringe Voices: An Anthology of Minority Writing in the Federal Republic of Germany*, eds. and trans., Antje Harnisch, Anne Marie Stokes, and Friedemann Weidauer (New York: Berg, 1998) 9-16, here, 14.

tears and mutual hugs [through the gate] and unbroken ‘strike will’”⁴⁵⁵ In order to hinder this reunification and the solidarity it signified, management apparently hung a chain about ten meters from the factory gate, which the workers repeatedly pulled down; and, twelve female workers stood on the chain so that it could not be pulled taut again.⁴⁵⁶



Image Eighteen. Police Arrest Striking Female Workers at Pierburg.

Source: “Frauen im Beruf: Arbeiter und kuschen,” *Stern*, 25 Okt 1973, no. 44, p. 84.

On the fourth day, the striking women achieved the final act of solidarity. As workers entered the factory for the early morning shift, the striking women handed each entering worker a rose, to which was attached the statement, “We are expecting you at 9 o’clock.”⁴⁵⁷ And indeed, at the agreed time the German skilled workers came out in solidarity. “This was a real blow to the management who had hoped to break the strike through the loyalty of the German workers,” reported eyewitnesses, “from that moment on the strike was won.”⁴⁵⁸ Telegrams from workers at other factories also arrived to express support and solidarity, (such as from Walz- and Hüttenwerken, Pverhausen, den

⁴⁵⁵ “Pierburg Neuss,” *Spontane Streiks 1973*, 80.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

Halla-Werken aus Lippstadt, von Küppersbusch aus Gelsen-Kirchen,) as well as from artists, “the Young Socialists,” the (GEW) (*Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft*) and the DKP (German Communist Party.)⁴⁵⁹ Eyewitness reported, “Cash donations also arrived. Everyone stopped working. There were dances for joy as the German and foreign workers hugged each other. Foreign women fainted. The German workers . . . [who were] the most skilled of the factory, gave an ultimatum to the management, at 10am you will have an agreement.”⁴⁶⁰ In the end, the solidarity among the workers male and female, skilled and unskilled, foreign and native changed the course of the strike.

On the fifth day, August 17, 1973, around 6:30am the first result of the negotiation was made known: 12 Pfg more an hour, effective immediately, and, beginning January 1, 1974, 20 Pfg an hour more. The results were unsatisfactory, and a Turkish man called out “If you stay at 12 cents, we will continue striking for 12 years!”⁴⁶¹ The negotiations continued, and at 1pm the chairmen of the employers’ association stepped in, because the strike had become contagious with strikes breaking out in nearby areas, such as in Lippstadt.⁴⁶² By 4pm the decision was announced: the Light Wage Category 2 was eliminated, there is a 200 DM raise (*Teuerungszulage*) and 30 cents more per hour.⁴⁶³ Together these two raises equaled 53 to 65 cents more an hour. Those on strike accepted the terms and declared themselves ready to return to work on Monday.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ “Streik Bei Pierbrug Neuss,” 80.

⁴⁶¹ “Streik bei Pierburg Neuss,” 81.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁴ On Monday, however, some continued to strike, over pay for the days while on strike and over firings: “Bei Pierburg in Neuss drohte der Chef mit 30 Kündigungen: Keine Ruhe nach dem Streik: Wieder kurze Arbeitsniederlegung, wieder Polizei vor dem Werkstor“ *Kölner Stadtanzeiger* 22 August 1973; “Unternehmensleitung in Neuss glaubt an politische Motive: „Streik war von außen gesteuert,” 30

Even though these women were striking for an arrangement that had technically already been made, at the beginning of the strike, the union was not able legally to support the strike. In a press release that was translated into Turkish, Greek, and Italian, the metal Union (IG Metall) reported on August 15 that, “based on legal conditions in the Federal Republic, the Metal Union (IG Metall) cannot deem the work stoppage at the A. Pierberg Company legal.”⁴⁶⁵ The Union and the Worker’s Council continued to work with management to secure better wages for the female workers, especially female workers: “For some time the workers’ council and the IG Metall union have been negotiating with the management for a correct equitable practice in the wage contracts. The hard work of the approximately 1,700 employees, especially the foreign women, is being unjustly characterized as ‘physically light’ (wage category 2).”⁴⁶⁶ However, despite the presence of such negotiations, which management had both promised and conducted since the “warning strike” in June, the foreign female workers, as they lost patience with the workers’ council, had carried out the strike on their own terms, to great success.

Conclusion: Our Fight is Your Fight! The Strikes’ Broader Impact

“Come join us! We are waiting for you!” reads the Pierburg welcome sign in the opening shot of a 1973 documentary film about the Pierburg wildcat strike.⁴⁶⁷ (See Image Nineteen). The sign lists the factory’s employment opportunities: including women’s labor and Drilling/ Molding, Precision Mechanics, Polisher, and (again) women’s labor.

Ausländerinnen sollen entlassen werden, Betriebsrat gibt andere Darstellung *Frankfurter Rundschau* 22August 1973.

⁴⁶⁵ Micheal Geuenich, Industriegewerkschaft Metall, F. D Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Verwaltungsstelle Neuss-Grevenbroich August 15, 1973 in “Flugblatt-Dokumentation” in *Pierburg-Neuss: Deutsche und Ausländische Arbeiter—Ein Gegner- Ein Kampf*, 27; DoMiT Pierburg file.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Edith Schmidt and David Wittenberg, “Pierburg: Ihr Kampf ist unser Kampf” (West Germany 1974/75) 49’ (motion picture).

This opening shot is telling, and perhaps ironic, in both its words of welcome and in its emphasis on female labor. This documentary film emphasized the role of foreign women in labor strikes in West Germany and was just one example of the media coverage that the Pierburg strike had gained.

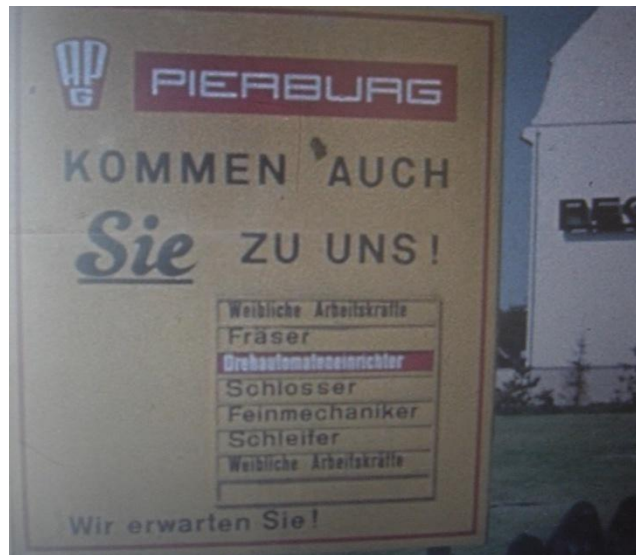


Image Nineteen. Film Still from *Ihr Kampf ist unser Kampf*

“Pierburg: Come Join us! Female Workers, Drillers, . . . Locksmiths, Precision Mechanics, Polishers, Female Workers. We are waiting for you!”

This welcome sign sets women workers apart as their own category, distinct from skilled workers.

Foreign press also covered the strike. A Dutch newspaper article declared: “West Germany fears protest from guest workers: Foreigners won’t tolerate discrimination any longer.” (See Image Nineteen.)



Image Twenty. Foreign Press, Dutch Newspaper report on the Pierburg Strike, “West Germany Fears Uprising from Guest Workers.”
 Source: Franz Wennekes in *Pierburg-Neuss: Deutsche und Ausländische Arbeiter-Ein Gegner- Ein Kampf* “Presse-Dokumentation,” 91.

Scholars and journalists tend to think of the Pierburg strike as a “women’s strike.”

Moreover, in the early 1970s, those writing about the strike reported that it was a sign of a rising tide of women’s liberation movements and a raised consciousness, especially on the part of migrant women, who through their exploitation in West Germany had apparently come to realize a new feminist consciousness:

It is the extreme form of discrimination, which makes migrant women fight. They get much lower pay than male workers, have to suffer authoritarian behaviour from the almost inevitably male foremen and, in addition, have a second day’s work waiting for them at home—household and children—while their husbands consider it their right to relax after work. This obvious injustice mobilizes many migrant women against their previously unquestioned position as their husbands’ servants.⁴⁶⁸

This quote indulges a stereotype about Mediterranean women, that they are unquestionably” their husbands’ servants; however, migrant women’s activism and raised consciousness in comparison to West German women disproves this point. Furthermore,

⁴⁶⁸ Godula Kosack, “Migrant women in Europe” *Race and Class* 17 no. 4 (1976); While it is true that many working women did have a double workday of work at outside of the home followed by work at home, many migrant women lived in with other single women in factory housing.

it was first in 1956 that West German women were allowed to take jobs without their husbands' permission.⁴⁶⁹ This interpretation takes for granted a certain solidarity among women, foreign and German alike, as well as a lack of acknowledgement of migrant women's unique circumstances; they found themselves at the intersection of both gender discrimination and the realities of the poor conditions "guest workers" (both male and female) had experienced for the last ten years in West Germany.⁴⁷⁰ However, the impact of the Pierburg strike and other strikes led by foreign workers in the early 1970s did not have one-dimensional results. The Pierburg strikes were not just "women's" strikes any more than the Ford strike was a male "Turkish strike," as all of the strikes fundamentally altered the wage structure of the West German economy—by challenging the wage categories, the Fordist mode of production, and the exploitation of foreign labor upon which it depended. Furthermore, the strikes drew attention to the long-term effects of labor models that were meant to be "temporary fixes," such as the guest worker program itself.

Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt declared of the Turkish-worker based strike at the Ford plant in Cologne: "that is no longer a strike; that is a movement."⁴⁷¹ And the management of the Ford Factory apparently replied with resignation, "We have

⁴⁶⁹Wiebke Buchholz-Will, "Wann wird aus diesem Traum Wirklichkeit? Die gewerkschaftliche Frauenarbeit in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland" in *Geschichte Der Deutschen Frauen Bewegung*, ed. Florence Herve (Cologne: PapyRossa Verlag, 1995) 185-208.

⁴⁷⁰For more on concepts of "intersectionality" see Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color" *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 1241-1299; Philomena Essed, *Everyday Racism: Reports from women in two cultures* (Claremont, CA: Hunter House, 1990); idem, *Diversity: Gender, Color, and Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" *Feminist Review* 30 (1988) 61-88; Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Aunt Lute Books, 1987); Irene Browne, and Joya Misra, "The Intersection of Gender and Race in the Labor Market," *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (August 2003):487-513.

⁴⁷¹"Das ist kein Streik mehr, das ist eine Bewegung," Martin Rapp and Marion von Osten "Ihr Kampf ist unser Kampf," *Bildpunkt: Zeitschrift der IG Bildende Kunst* (Spring 2006) 23.

discovered over the years that foreigners came to us with a much too highly developed confidence.”⁴⁷² Both Brandt’s and the Ford management’s comments effectively invoke the new image of “guest workers” in West Germany in 1973: they had arrived with a more highly-developed sense self-determination than expected, and by the early 1970s, had begun to effectively channel their political consciousness into a successful labor movement. “The power that lay behind such a strike [at Pierburg] in the automobile parts supply industry, demonstrates, for the first time, a real threat to West Germany’s Fordist production model,” commented journalist Martin Rapp.⁴⁷³ However, the Pierburg strike’s impact reached much further than its impact on the West German economic model. In 1979, economist Martin Slater reported that labor activism—not just the recession of 1973—directly affected employers’ decision to end the recruitment of temporary foreign labor:

[Foreign] migrants, by the early 1970s, had increasingly come to be regarded as a social or political burden. . . . [Migrants] had come to be regarded as social *liability* . . . [due to their] own political transformation. By the early 1970s, the docile, hard-working migrant of the 1950s and 1960s had apparently transformed into a radical member of the working class. . . . Following close on the heels of protests and demonstrations by migrants over their housing conditions, these strikes were seen by governments as a sure sign that migrants were politically unreliable.⁴⁷⁴

The year 1973 is known within the history of guest workers as the year of the end of recruitment. However, as Slater pointed out, the dates can hardly be coincidental, nor does the economic recession alone explain the waning interest in temporary foreign labor

⁴⁷² Ibid.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Martin Slater, “Migrant Employment, Recessions, and Return Migration: Some Consequences for Migration Policy and Development” *Studies in Comparative International Development* (Fall-Winter 1979) 4, emphasis added.

in the early 1970s: it is possible that foreign workers' labor activism also prompted the end of recruitment in 1973.

Whether scholars interpret the Pierburg strike as a sign of female solidarity, or as part of a larger wave of worker solidarity, from the point of view of foreign workers such labor activism was also a turning point in their decisions to return home—a point when workers, who had been saying for a decade that they would return home after a year's time, finally acknowledged through their actions a more permanent investment in West German society. 1973 was also the year that saw the largest increase in foreign workers in West Germany, due to family reunifications or the migration of workers' family members to join them in West Germany. Historians have long connected the decision to stay in West Germany, the boom in family reunification, and general investment in a more permanent stay in West Germany with the 1973 recruitment stop, stating that the fear of not being able to travel freely between West Germany and their home countries encouraged workers to settle permanently in West Germany.⁴⁷⁵ However, foreign workers' activism and collective bargaining, which occurred from 1969 through 1973, provided an even earlier sign of foreign workers' commitment to and realization of West Germany as home.⁴⁷⁶ Furthermore, workers' activism, whether about housing or wages, also demonstrated that foreign workers were interested in solidarity with other West German workers and with foreign workers of other nationalities; and that, in their own way, they had become social and civic citizens through their participation in West German society as West German workers.

⁴⁷⁶ Despite the common perception that family reunification began after 1973, by 1971 38 percent of Turkish workers had their families in West Germany with them. See Ursula Mehrländer, "The second generation of migrant workers in Germany: the transition from school to work," in *Education and the Integration of Ethnic Minorities*, eds., D. Rothermund and J. Simon (London: Pinter, 1986) 12-24.

CONCLUSION: How did we get here?

“Die Welt zur Gast bei Freunden” or the “world as a guest among friends” was the slogan of the 2006 World Cup, during which Germany made a show of its hospitality to its temporary foreign guests. Signs that read, “A Time to Make Friends,” greeted the international mix of soccer players and fans. Soon after these foreign guests left, Germany immediately turned its attention to its *other* “foreign guests.” A week after the championship game, Chancellor Angela Merkel held an “Integration Summit” in the Federal Chancellery in Berlin to discuss the problems of immigrant communities, especially the prospects of children of “immigrant-backgrounds.” It was not the first time that the media and German authorities turned their attention to migrant communities within Germany. In fact, during the preceding year, the German news had been filled with reports on the poor school performance and dismal job prospects of children of “immigrant backgrounds.” The more notable incidents included the closing of the “Rütli” school in Berlin’s heavily immigrant-populated Neukölln neighborhood, where the school shut its doors after teachers wrote to authorities that they were frightened to enter classrooms due to student violence. In Bavaria, the senate enacted a new law to compel children to learn German by the time they were Kindergarten age, threatening to fine parents who do not send their children to language classes. This Contemporary frustration on all sides of the issue of non-ethnic Germans’ integration, or lack thereof, results, at least partly, from historical amnesia about the planning, recruitment, and experiences of the 1960s guest worker program. How did Germany arrive in the center of debates about minorities in Europe? How did Turkish workers who had said that they would go to West Germany temporarily find themselves permanent residents and citizens?

In contrast to contemporary media reports, and borrowing from Filiz, this study begins and ends from the standpoint, “Why would Turkish worker return to Turkey?” The invitation to work in West Germany was extended with excitement and words of welcome and greeted with great anticipation on both sides. In the beginning, large numbers of Turkish workers accepted the invitation to West Germany and endured a tedious and bureaucratic application, as well as relied on networks of friends and family to negotiate applying in their own way. Once in West Germany, workers were not biding their time in the dormitories: they were creating new lives and started to imagine this life on a longer-term basis. Indeed, the idea of “personal freedom” was a central issue in West Germany in this precise period, as it continued to define itself against the Cold War constellation of Europe. As a result, the idea of West Germany as a land of “freedom” and a place where “dreams come true,” as the guest-worker program sold it, fit in perfectly with West Germany’s idea of itself. West Germans could gain a new national image of themselves as benevolent helpers of the “oppressed” Turkish women or, through their modern industry, as a land of economic uplift. Finally, by spearheading labor organizing in the early 1970s, guest workers staked a claim as future “workers” in West Germany.

In many ways, the guest worker program demonstrated the ways in which West Germany was stuck on the “past,” while guest workers refused to let go of their “future.” Whether holding on to old ideas of decorum, as the Prussian dorm manager did, or to Nazi-era terminology for “guest-worker transports,” or to temporary housing from generations ago, or to ideas of women’s work—the guest worker program revealed many areas in which the new state of West Germany seemed unable to escape their past. Guest

workers also continuously endured substandard conditions before, during, and after arrival in West Germany, reported exploitation at work, homesickness, and cramped living quarters. However, for myriad reasons, which were personal, political, economic, and social, Turkish guest workers stayed, forever invested in their future, whether or not it was fictional. Despite terrible living spaces, ethnic Turkish workers created a home and created manageable and at times interesting lives for themselves where possible. Despite exploitation at work, Turkish formed unexpected alliances and achieved major, national changes in the West German wage structure. In short, before ethnic Turks became the homogenized community that policy makers, scholars, and journalists describe, there was a period when guest workers were individuals who took each condition, each aspect of the program, and transformed it, negotiating it on their own terms. The desire to stay, necessarily developed over time, but a key aspect of it was the “prehistory” of this population, including the previous relationships with West German authorities, institutions, and coworkers. Because personal desires, decisions, and experiences are individual, it was necessary in this study to take a closer look at home life, at life stories, and private life as it was lived and recalled and to integrate it into larger historical considerations. Examining workers’ lived experiences demonstrates that they did not just bide time in West Germany, but built lives, invested in their jobs, and relationships, steadily staking claims, and steadily developing the longterm desire to stay.

As West Germany set itself up as an example of a liberal, western democracy, based on capitalist industry within the context of the Cold War, Turkish guest workers were the unlikely example of what this geo-political constellation had to offer. Moreover, workers knew this. “What do the foreigners want now?” asked a migration scholar in the

1960s, “One can’t demand of them, that they arrive with a firmly staked out plan.

Initially, it was an attempt for them. They were driven by need and carried by hope into the foreign to seek and to find better working and living conditions. They did not have grand illusions, they just wanted to earn as much as possible in a short period of time.”⁴⁷⁷

But what if guest workers *did* have grand illusions?

Considering guest workers’ negative experiences in West Germany, it is difficult not to ask, why, despite a negative experience before departure, a negative experience during travel, and a negative experience in the dormitories and at work, did workers decide to invest in a life in West Germany?⁴⁷⁸ Yet, to ask the question, “why in spite of exploitation, did workers stay?” is to see in guest workers’ lives only as exploitation or only in terms of material conditions. However, workers did not bide their time in West Germany in dormitories and at work. It is possible to recognize the ways workers invested in West Germany long before they realized it. Even if workers had intended to stay only for a year, at their point of arrival in West Germany, they had already had a yearlong relationship with West German Employment Authorities, as well as a year-long anticipation of living in West Germany. Turkish guest workers further invested in new lives in West Germany by taking steps to create a life outside of work. At some point workers transitioned from making a temporary situation seem tolerable to having something worth staying for, as was the case with striking workers, as well as with Filiz, who did not hesitate before saying, “Why should I leave? I like it here.”

⁴⁷⁷ Giacomo Maturi, *Die zweite Phase der Ausländerbeschäftigung in der Bundesrepublik* (Heidelberg: Heidelberger Verlagsanstalt und Druckerei GmbH, undated) 9.

⁴⁷⁸ “Surprisingly, the majority [of guest workers] refused to leave, . . . in spite of exploitation, many of the supposedly temporary ‘guest’ ultimately decided to stay,” write historians Konrad H. Jarusch and Michael Geyer, in *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003) 212.

It was the West German point of view that guest workers should leave. By the end of 1972, Turkish workers formed the largest group of foreign nationals in the West German workforce, and in 1973, every ninth worker in the Federal Republic was a foreign national.⁴⁷⁹ Annually, about 30% of workers returned home each year in the 1960s, but in the 1970s, lengths of stay began steadily to rise.⁴⁸⁰ Chancellor Brandt, in his January 1973 address, stated, “we should carefully consider where the absorptive ability of our society has been exhausted, and where social common sense and responsibility dictate that the process be halted.”⁴⁸¹ Shortly thereafter, the recruitment of guest workers from all countries to West Germany officially ended on November 23, 1973. Scholars have long written that the end of the recruitment was the beginning of the decision to stay in West Germany, citing problems with travel between West Germany and Turkey—a non-European Community member.⁴⁸² The early 1970s also marked the years when many workers moved out of employer-supplied dormitories and into neighborhoods together with family members who joined them from Turkey.⁴⁸³ By 1974, the Turkish Employment Service reported that 55% of Turkish workers had a tendency to stay abroad over four years, up from 17.2% in 1968.⁴⁸⁴

Many workers did not have homes in Turkey to go back to, because they had sold their property in order to go to West Germany in the first place, or because they no longer had strong social ties there. There were also those who left after West Germany offered monetary incentive to do so, but they were in the minority. On November 28, 1983 the

⁴⁷⁹ Herbert and Hunn, “Guest Workers,” in *Miracle Years*, 205.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid, 207.

⁴⁸¹ Deutsche Bundestag 7. Sitzung vom 18.1.1973,” 11, quoted in Ibid 209-210.

⁴⁸² Herbert and Hunn, “Guest Workers;” *Fremde Heimat* 225.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ TES statistics, quoted in Ali S. Gitmez, “Göçmen işçilerin Dönüşü: Return Migration of Turkish Workers to Three Selected Regions” (Ankara: Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, İdari İlimler Fakültesi, 1977) 2.

Law for the Promotion of Return offered bonuses up to 10,500 DM to return as well as 1,500 DM per child. Around 156,000 foreign workers took advantage of the offer. It was certainly a huge gain for the West German pension fund not to have to pay for these now retired workers. In addition, some workers who returned had mixed feelings about it, as in the case of Murat, who told me in Istanbul, that returning to Turkey was a huge mistake, because, he thought that he could not earn enough there to live. However, he also regretted leaving because he said that he missed the social life he had once had in Germany, which included going to discos with German friends.⁴⁸⁵

Mirroring Murat's disappointment in his life and prospects after returning to Turkey, the Turkish government also did not get what it expected from the guest worker program. The Turkish economy did not see a significant post-war boom as other "Western Bloc" nations did, and the guest worker program did not achieve the goals for which that the authors of the Five Year Economic Plan had hoped. Therefore, it was unlikely that immigrants who had favorable work conditions abroad would return to Turkey before retirement age, especially since Turkey could not offer skilled workers equitable working conditions or wages.⁴⁸⁶ Seen from the economic point of view, the question, "why did you stay?" seems to have a logical answer. A Turkish social scientist Ali Gitmez reported in 1977,

[Since] Turkey cannot offer these skilled workers the required money and equitable working conditions, they choose to come back to Turkey not to work but rather to spend their years of pension 'in peace' and relative wealth. In this case, such migrants who will never again join the Turkish workforce may be considered a complete loss for Turkey.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ Interview with "Murat" Istanbul 2004.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid, 6.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

Many workers looked back on the Turkish authorities of the Employment Service with resentment, stating that they did everything in their power to meet West German employers' and officials' needs without consideration for the wants and needs of their own citizens. "In general, the record of the Turkish policy of migration and of return migration has been one of almost complete neglect," reported Gitmez of government policies on Turkish labor migrants. He continued,

One thing is quite clear that Turkish governments have done everything within their power to dispatch as many workers abroad as possible and to do everything to satisfy all requests from receiving countries in terms of number, qualification, age, health, etc. Still worse, policy for return flow concerning their reemployment and reintegration, planned use of savings, and organization of the economy accordingly has not been drawn. Neither has it been considered necessary to do so.⁴⁸⁸

However, despite the state-level failures to process return migration in a positive way, returning workers had their own ideas of success. Gitmez found that 81% of those who returned to Turkey after working abroad reported that they had had a positive experience.⁴⁸⁹ "I am living in the village from now on," reported a man who had gone to West Germany as a tourist for seven years, "I didn't get any harm from working in Germany. I couldn't have owned what I have now, if I hadn't gone to Germany. If I had the chance to go once more, I would buy a house in the city and live there."⁴⁹⁰ Another man reported that 500 people from his village, including most of the young men, had left for West Germany, saying, "There eating, drinking and having fun is plenty."⁴⁹¹ Speaking of those who had returned from Germany to his village, the same man reported, "We built roads in the village, built a high-school, bought telephone [*sic*]. These were all

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Gitmez's valuable study offers one of the few studies from the 1970s that includes interviews with return migrants to Turkey. Ibid, 71-72.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid, 73.

because of Germany. We have a lot of tractors, all belonging to *Germaners* [the made-up word for those who had lived in Germany].”⁴⁹² However, other former guest workers reported returning out of frustration with their employment situations in West Germany, constantly moving from low-paid job to low-paid job until they had given up to return to Turkey.⁴⁹³ Individual guest workers’ achievements varied greatly, even if their contributions as a collective population were great.

The impact of the immigration of foreign workers on postwar Western Europe cannot be underestimated. The model of postwar labor migration, which occurred across Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, had similar effects regardless of the sending and receiving countries. In West Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, foreign nationals began to settle permanently with their families, forever changing the social fabric of West Europe, and calling into question ideas of “New” and “Old” Europe. While historians have long concerned themselves with the rebuilding of the economy, the architecture, and the governments of Europe in the postwar period, a closer look at the ways in which European governments and society sought (or not) to rebuild the social fabric of Europe has gone unnoticed within the discipline. Yet in this same period, migrants forced Europeans to “reconstruct” questions of identity, culture, and citizenship, as well as “walls” and “borders” that defined belonging in the “West” or the “East,” whether figuratively or literally. The stories of workers like Erol, Filiz, and Cahit break apart the stock narratives about guest workers not only from Turkey to West Germany, but also of the general discussion of “minorities in Europe” or of “Muslims in Europe.” The texture of the immigrant experience,

⁴⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁹³ Ibid, 75.

including the inherent will and ambition needed to move somewhere new, can hopefully challenge historical debates about who guest workers are and where they belong.

As Filiz and I ended our conversation at the Kreuzberg Museum that day, she looked me in the eyes and said,

At a certain age, people mull over themselves, . . . your thoughts automatically go back to thinking, how was it then? . . . Were you loved as a child by your family? Were you wanted? These thoughts work through your past. So naturally, this life that I started in Germany, living in Germany since I was 20. That belongs too, that is your past. In this mental work, you decide what you did correctly or incorrectly. Or what you want for the future. What will you do? What is right and other things. When you don't consider your past, as personal history, . . . then you can't built your future.⁴⁹⁴

I felt like she wanted to stress that her journey to West Germany was a personal one, an inherent part of who she had become over the last forty years, as a way to discourage me from thinking of her as just a “guest worker.” She inspired me to think about guest worker in Germany in an entirely new way, to search for their individual stories and the clues to their newfound permanence. In these details, told by former guest workers themselves, in the pages of the instructional manuals, and in the long, often bizarre, debates of various officials, I discovered a new way to view West German history and what this new postwar nation could become, in both positive and negative ways, as well as all of the complicated constellations in between. Historians owe this new insight to the postwar migrants whose stories and demands define postwar Europe.

⁴⁹⁴ Interview with Filiz, Berlin 2003.

Appendix 1: Timeline of Turkish Guest Worker Migration to West Germany and Relevant Events

December 20, 1955---German Italian Agreement.

1957---European Community Signs the Treaty of Rome.

August 13, 1961---Erection of the Berlin Wall.

October 30, 1961--- Bi-lateral agreement between Turkey and West Germany is signed; by the end of the year 7,000 ethnic Turkish workers are living in West Germany.

1962 ---founding of the first Turkish social and political organization in Germany, the Union of Turkish Workers in the Cologne Region.

March 1962---Conflicting information about taxation rates of salaries leads Turkish miners in Essen and Hamburg to stage a strike. 26 workers are fired and deported.

1963---West Germany signs guest worker agreement with Morocco.

June 15, 1963 ---The International Committee for Information and Social Action founds monthly newspaper *Anadolu*—A Newspaper for Turks living in Germany.

1964---West Germany agrees to a bilateral accord with Italy, insuring basic standards for housing and other accommodations for Italian workers in Germany.

1964---West Germany and Turkey sign a social welfare agreement.

1964---West German Radio begins Turkish language broadcasts under the name “*Köln Radyosu*” throughout the West German territory.

1964---Armando Rodriguez, a Portuguese man celebrated as the millionth Guest Worker, receives a motorcycle as a present from the West German Government.

September 30, 1964 ---Renewal of the Guest worker agreement between the West German and Turkish Republics.

1964---The first Turkish guest workers come to West Berlin; The Turkish Socialist Organization (*Berlin Türk Toplumcular Ocağı*) founded.

March 17, 1964---Bi-lateral Agreement between West Germany and Portugal.

1965 ---WDR and Second German Television begin to produce television series such as *Neighbors*, *Our Homeland/Your Homeland*, and later *Babylon*, geared towards the Turkish viewership.

1965---Guest worker agreement signed with Tunisia. 2,700 Turks live in West Berlin. The Foreign Workers Edict of 1933 and the Foreigners’ Police Edict of 1938 are officially discontinued. Guest workers who have been employed in West Germany for five years may now receive an automatic five-year renewal of their work permit, regardless of whether they are citizens of an EC country. This change applies to 400,000 non EC-workers.

April 1965 ---Law on Foreigners replaced the Foreigner Police Ordinance from the prewar period, did not grant foreigner legal rights, expressed that guest workers were temporary, needed residence and work permit, gave discretionary powers to authorities to control duration of stay and access to labor market.

August 1, 1965 ---Labor Ministry created a special section for promoting the integration of foreign workers.

1965 ---One of the first Turkish sports clubs is founded in West Berlin TÜRKSPOR.

1966 ---East Germany signs “*Pendlervereinbarung*” (Commuter Accord) with Poland.

1966-67--- First postwar recession broke upward trend in West German economy.

1967---Founding of the Turkish Union (Türk Federasyonu).

May 1967 ---Turkish Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel visits West Germany.

October 12, 1968 ---Bilateral Agreement with Yugoslavia.

1971 ---Ordinance on Work Permits: allowed foreigners who have been employed in the Federal Republic for more than five years to obtain a special work permit, limited to five years but not dependent on developments in the labor market.

1971---Three daily Turkish newspapers—*Aksam* (Evening), *Tercüman* (The Interpreter), and *Hürriyet* (Liberty) print editions for migrant readership in Germany

March 12, 1971 ---Turkish military forces the Demirel government to step down, causing “political migrants” from Turkey to come to West Germany

July 21, 1972 ---Turkish General Consul Metin Kusdaloglu greets Necati Güven, the 500,000th guest worker recruited at the Istanbul Recruitment Office, at the Munich Airport

1972 ---*Arbeiterwohlfahrt* (Workers Welfare Organization) founded in Kreuzberg

1972---West German Radio holds a contest to come up with alternatives to the label “Guest worker”, which has become recognized as euphemistic. None of the 32,000 entries are accepted. WDR decides that “foreign employee” is the most appropriate.

1972-73 ---Municipally sanctioned Foreigner Caucuses and Foreigner Parliaments are founded in Wiesloch, Wiesbaden, Troisdorf, and Nuremberg

1973 ---Organized labor strikes.

1973 ---Turks account for 23% of all foreigners living in Germany

July 30, 1973 ---Spiegel magazine’s cover headline reads “The Turks are coming—Save yourself if you can!”

November 23, 1973 ---Minister for Labor and Social Order declared a recruitment halt.

1973---*Türk Federasyonu* becomes the Islamic Cultural Center, and applies in 1979 for recognition as a “corporation of public entitlement.”

1973 --- Publication of Aras Oren's *Was will Niyazi in der Naunynstraße*.

1974 --- GDR signs accord with Algeria for contract workers.

1974 --- Rainer Werner Fassbinder releases his film, *Angst essen Seele auf* (*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*), addressing relations between Germans and "foreigners" living in Germany.

October 28, 1974 --- In Bethanien (West Berlin) the first official Turkish library opens, called *Namık-Kemal-Bücherei*; The first Turkish-language Berlin radio broadcast premieres on *Sender Freies Berlin*; founding of *Halkevi İşçi Tiyatrosu/ Volkhaus Arbeit Theater* – worker theater.

November 13, 1974 ---The West German government decrees that any family member of a Guest worker arriving in Germany after November 30, 1974 may not work. *Stichtagregelung*.

January 1, 1975 --- The Berlin Senate imposes a *Zuzugsstopp* or official ban on moving in for foreigners in the neighborhoods of Kreuzberg, Wedding and Tiergarten in West Berlin out of fear of creating "Problem Centers"; There is a new law on *Kindergeld* or child welfare money in which foreign nationals whose children live abroad receive less money.

1975 ---First Turkish women's organization founded in Berlin

1975 ---The Mevlana Mosque on Kottbusser Tor (Kreuzberg, West Berlin) opens. Today there are 34 mosques in Berlin.

April 1, 1975 ---The West German government decrees that no foreigners may move to a neighborhood or region where the percentage of foreigners exceeds 12% of the entire population. This law is repealed in 1976 on constitutional grounds.

November 22, 1978 ---Position of the Commissioner for Foreigners is established to develop integration strategies. Heinz Kühn, the first Commissioner, writes a memorandum suggesting that the government consider adopting integration policies which do not simultaneously seek integration of foreigners and their voluntary return to the country of origin, but rather focus on cultural and political, as well as economic integration.

1979 --- The American television series Holocaust is broadcasted in West Germany.

1980 ---Municipalities begin to implement "Measures for Social and Career Integration" for foreign workers.

1980 ---Turkey joins the European Community.

1980 ---Boom in the founding of Turkish and Turkish-Kurdish organizations (*Selbstorganisationen*).

1980 ---GDR signs accord with Vietnam for contract workers.

September 12, 1980 ---Military putsch in Turkey leads to increase in asylum applications among Turkish and Kurdish political opponents of the Turkish Government.

January 5, 1980 ---Turkish teacher and union leader ? *Gewerkschaftler* Celalettin Kesim is murder at Kottbusser Tor in Kreuzberg (West Berlin) by a right-extremist Turkish faction, making visible to the West German public the factions within the Turkish community.

May 26, 1981--- The Kresuberg (West Berlin) *Kunstamt* opens the exhibit “*Morgens Deutschland – Abends Türkei*” in Bethanien.

December 8, 1981 ---West German law prohibits children over the age of 16 from joining their parents in Germany . Younger children who have at least one parent in the home country also may not immigrate to Germany .

March, 24 1981 --- The Turkish Ministry for Religion (DITIB) becomes an official organization within West Germany

May 26, 1982 ---Semra Ertan lights herself on fire in the Hamburg Marketplace to protest an increase in xenophobia.

August 30, 1983 ---Asylum seeker Kemal Altın commits suicide, jumping out of a Berlin third story window, to avoid being deported to Turkey .

November 28, 1983 ---A new law for the Promotion of Readiness to Return (Das Gesetz zur Förderung der Rückkehrbereitschaft) offers jobless Guest workers 10,500 DM to return to their country of origin. Only 13,000 individuals make use of this option.

1985 ---*Historikerstreit* breaks out in the West German press and continues until 1988. A number of conservative historians, including Andreas Hillgruber and Klaus Hildebrand begin to question whether all Germans could be responsible for Nazi war crimes, whether these atrocities were unique, and whether they were part of a greater "banality of evil." Jurgen Habermas, along with Hans and Wolfgang Mommsen and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, argue that these conservative scholars were trivializing the "Final Solution" and conducting a "strategy of moral relativization" that denied guilt for the Holocaust and would eventually deny the Holocaust itself.

1985 --- Local Turkish television station TDI is founded in Berlin'; 60 Turkish parents found the Berlin Turkish Parents Association (*Berlin Türk Veliler Berliği*).

1986 ---GDR signs accord with China for contract workers.

1988 ---4.5 million foreigners in Germany , accounting for 7.3% of population

November 9, 1989 ---fall of the Berlin Wall

October, 3 1990 --- German reunification

1990---TRT, Turkey 's state-run television and radio corporation, begins daily broadcasts to Germany .

April 26, 1990 ---“Law on the Admission of Ethnic Germans” The Bundestag passes a new Foreigner Law, reaffirming the principle of *jus sanguinis*, by which only those of German “blood” heritage receive automatic German citizenship. Naturalization procedures are made easier, yet dual citizenship is rejected. The immigration rate is cut by 50% as a result.

1991---The New Aliens Act

1991 ---Emine Sevgi Özdamar, a Turkish writer/actress living in Berlin, wins the Ingeborg Bachmann prize. Great controversy over the state of “German” literature ensues.

1992 --- 440,000 asylum seekers filed applications

1992 ---Hans Magnus Enzensberger's, *Die grosse Wanderung*, is published, in which the author addresses the issues of migration.

1992 ---A reception center for asylum seekers in Rostock , Germany is attacked by hundreds of unemployed German youths angry at the "special privileges" foreigners receive

March 26, 1992 --- In the West Berlin House of World Cultures (*Haus der Kulturen der Welt*) an exhibition on Turkish business-owners opens: "Buyrun! Türkisch Unternehmer in Berlin"

November 22, 1992 ---An arson attack in Moelln (Schleswig-Holstein) kills three Turkish women.

May 29, 1993 --- An arson attack in the city of Solingen , kills five Turkish residents, all members of a family that had lived in Germany for 23 years. The attack leads to many pro-Turkish/anti-xenophobia demonstrations and to a public discussion about right-wing activities and skinheads in Germany .

June 30, 1993 ---The naturalization of foreigners is governed by the Nationality Act of 1913 and a number of special acts. In order to facilitate the integration of foreigners who were born in Germany, have grown up there or have lived there for at least 15 years, they have a legal entitlement to naturalization under sections 85ff. of the Aliens Act as amended on this day.

July 1, 1993 --- The "Asylum Compromise": Changes in asylum laws go into effect: Germany will not accept asylum seekers who have entered Germany through neighboring countries that have been declared secure third countries, or whose countries of origin have been declared secure under the German asylum provisions.

1993---Teams of the German Soccer League participate in the "Peacefully With One Another" project by wearing a slogan on their uniforms which reads "My friend is a foreigner."

1994--- All EU and EEA nationals in Germany are allowed to enter Germany at their own will, receive legal residence status, and worth without special permission.

1994---Leyla Onur and Cem Özdemir become the first elected Bundestag representatives of Turkish descent. Onur had served in the European Parliament as a German delegate since 1989.

March 1995 --- Germany joins other countries in urging Turkey to exercise moderation in its operations against the Kurds in Northern Iraq . The PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) continues to attack Turks in Germany .

January 15, 1997 ---Implementation of children's visas for children from Bosnia, Herzegovina , The Yugoslav Republic, Croatia , Macedonia , Slovenia , Turkey , and Tunisia .

1997 ---German entertainer Harald Juhnke makes racist remarks to an African-American while in the Los Angeles : "*Du dreckiger Nigger, bei Hitler wäre so etwas vergast worden.*"

1998 ---release of Hussi Kutlucan's film *Ich Chef, Du Turnschuh* (Me Boss, You Sneakers!), an award-winning film about the guest worker experience.

January 1998 --- Interior Minister Manfred Kanther declares 1998 the "Year of Security", in part resulting in higher penalties for illegal immigration. Kanther plans stricter border controls to prohibit Kurdish refugees in other EU-states, such as Italy , from entering Germany . According to the Ministry of the Interior, 9.37 million foreigners live in Germany , 2.11 million are Turks, and one out of four foreigners in Germany is from or descended from an EU-state.

February 1998 ---The Conference of German Interior Ministers (IMK) decides not to cease deporting individuals to Algeria, despite widespread violence and persecution there. In 1997, only 2% of Algerian asylum requests were accepted. North Rhine-Westphalia institutes an option for physically or emotionally battered non-citizen women to receive self-standing visas in that province.

March 1998 ---The Coalition government coalition rejects a reform of the 1913 citizenship law.

May 1998---Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel declares that Germany will withdraw aid from those countries that make it difficult for Germany to deport its citizens. This concerns approximately 70,000 individuals from Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Gambia, Sudan, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and India.

June 1998---A new law allows the Federal Border Control to stop any individual, independent of probable cause, and inspect his/her identification documents. Previously, this procedure was only legal within 30 km of the country's border.

July 1998---CDU election platform seeks to reduce immigration by reducing government subsidized housing for foreigners, and rejecting the possibility of dual citizenship. The province of Baden-Wurtemberg prohibits Muslim women educators from teaching while wearing headscarves.

October 1998---The position paper of the new coalition government aims for major reform in immigration regulations

November 1998--- Newly-appointed Commissioner for Foreigners Marieluise Beck (Greens) plans to develop an image for Germany as a "country of immigration". Berlin schools may legally provide Islamic education to pupils, after a court battle between the school district and the Islamic Federation in Berlin. Failed appeal to the Federal Constitutional Court to prohibit Bavaria from deporting a 14-year old legal offender born in Germany to Turkey. The Red-Green government decides not to significantly alter the resettler politics of the previous government.

December 1998---German Catholic Bishops conference declares that it is the responsibility of every Christian to provide "church asylum" to those in need of it. No such category exists either in the Catholic Church or in German law.

January 1999---Under the leadership of Edmund Stoiber, CDU/CSU begins a petition campaign against dual citizenship, declaring that it would entail a "massive potential for violence."

February 1999---Demonstrations in many German cities, outcry against the arrest of the Kurdish PKK party leader Öcalan. France and Germany's Interior Ministers declared that the two countries will seek a common deportation practice and common goals for immigration politics

2000--- by the end of the year more than 90% of Bosnians who sought refuge in Germany returned home

2000---7.3 million legally resident foreigners in Germany; 2 million are Turkish citizens, 750,000 of whom were born in Germany

2000 ---A new citizenship law takes effect. Children born to foreigners in Germany automatically receive Germany citizenship, as long as one parent has been a legal resident for at least eight years. Children can also hold the nationality of their parents, but must decide to be citizens of one country before the age of 23.

August 2000--- Germany introduces a "green card" system due to the demand for highly skilled workers – green card residency is limited to a maximum of five years

March 2001---Chancellor Schröder suggests giving “Green Cards” to approximately 75,000 computer specialists from Eastern Europe and India to fill gaps in domestic expertise. Domestic union representatives question whether the 37,000 unemployed specialists in Germany could be directed towards this lack, and the government responds that they are not “highest quality programmers.” CDU candidate Jürgen Rüttgers campaigns in North Rhine-Westphalia under the slogan “Children, not Indians” (*Kinder Statt Inder*)

August 2001--- Interior Minister Otto Schily presents his draft for an immigration law.

May 2002---Green Cards offered to 10,000 non-EU computer specialists with a higher degree who can demonstrate a yearly gross income of 100,000 DM. 5 year work visa. Germany rejects an EU bill regarding basic rights for refugees in EU-countries without asylum status. The suicide of an Algerian asylum seeker who had spent eight months in the holding section of the Frankfurt Airport leads to heightened critique among churches and refugee organizations against Federal Government procedures. Claiming no fault, the government releases seven detainees on humanitarian grounds. SPD and the Greens plan to lift the general prohibition on work for asylum seekers.

December 18, 2002---The *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Germany 's Federal Constitutional Court) nullifies German's new Immigration Act, which was to come into effect on January 1, 2003. The new law would have allowed for the entry of thousands of highly skilled foreign workers desperately needed to fill skill shortage areas in the German economy.

Sources: “*Wir Waren die Ersten..., Türkiye'den Berlin'e,*” Ausstellungstext und Fotos, Kreuzberg Museum, Kotti e.v. (Berlin: Kreuzberg Museum, 2001); Ulrich Herbert and Karin Hunn, “Guest Worker and Policy on Guest Workers in the Federal Republic: From the Beginning of Recruitment in 1955 until its Halt in 1973” in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) ; Aytac Eryilmaz and Mathilde Jamin eds., “Chronologie Kronologji” in *Fremde Heimat: Eine Geschichte der Einwanderung/ Yaban, Silan olur*. Ruhrlandmuseum, (Essen: Klartext, 1998) 391-403; and “Transit” University of California Berkeley [online resource] <http://german.berkeley.edu:8002/mg/chronology.php?range=1965> accessed on August 4, 2008.

Appendix 2. Strike Results for selected strikes by Foreign Workers in 1973.

Date: **Company**

May 4-7 Karmann in Osnabrück

Result: Four weeks of vacation for foreign workers

May 15-16 Heidelberger Schnellpressenfabrik in Wiesloch

Result: Six consecutive weeks of vacation allowed instead of four

May 22, 24-29 John Deere/ Mannheim:

Result: A change to the *Akkord* system.

July 17-19 Hella-Werke/ Lippstadt

Result: Raise of 30 to 40Pfg / hour and the days on strike paid

August 20 Television Manufacturer Philip in Krefeld

Result: A roll-back from the increase in the amount of production per day

August 13-20 Pierburg in Neuss

Result: The elimination of the Light Wage Category 2

August 24-30 Ford-Werke, Köln-Niehl, Köln-Merkenich

Result: Bonus (*Teuerungszulage*) of 280 DM, Strike days paid.

Source: K. Becke, H. Halberstadt, W. Hanesch, A. Hepp, O. Jacobi, Reiner Kessler, H. G. Lang, H. Langguth, W. Michel, W. Müller-Jentsch, E. Schmidt, K. Vack, E. Weick eds., *Redaktionskollektiv "express"; Spontane Streiks 1973 Krise der Gewerkschaftspolitik* (Bensheim: hbo-druck, 1974).

Appendix 3. Summary of Strike Participants in 1973:

Month	Number of Companies Affected	Number of those on Strike
February	3	15,500
March	2	740
April	3	10,000
May	46	51,000
June	49	43,000
July	15	17,000
August	107	80,000
September	79	27,000
October	28	30,000
November	2	1,000
Total	335	275,240

Source: K. Becke, H. Halberstadt, W. Hanesch, A. Hepp, O. Jacobi, Reiner Kessler, H. G. Lang, H. Langguth, W. Michel, W. Müller-Jentsch, E. Schmidt, K. Vack, E. Weick eds., *Redaktionskollektiv "express": Spontane Streiks 1973 Krise der Gewerkschaftspolitik* (Bensheim: hbo-druck, 1974) 125-126.

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- 3073: Anwerbung und Vermittlung türkischer Arbeitskräfte
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- 3945: Verfahrensabsprachen mit der Partnerverwaltung Türkei im
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- 3946: Verfahrensabsprachen mit der Partnerverwaltung Türkei im
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- 3952: 1966-1973 Enthält u.a. Reiseverpflegung türkischer Arbeitnehmer
- 4029: Ärztliche Versorgung von Kinder ausländischer Arbeitnehmer bei
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