

Karin Hunn. *„Nächstes Jahr kehren wir zurück ...“: Die Geschichte der türkischen „Gastarbeiter“ in der Bundesrepublik.* Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005. 598 S. EUR 46.00, cloth, ISBN 978-3-89244-945-4.

Reviewed by Nina Berman

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Karin Hunn's meticulously researched, highly informative, and well-structured study is a substantial scholarly accomplishment that justifies its claim of telling *the* history of Turkish "guest-workers" in the Federal Republic. The study appeals to a broad range of academics, including historians, social scientists, and literary scholars, and contributes to a better understanding of the genesis of the Turkish-German community, which currently has about three million members. Especially welcome is the wealth of information about the interdependency of economic, political, social, and cultural developments, which challenges the often narrow focus on questions of culture and identity in many explorations published over the past decade or so.

Hunn's interdisciplinary, comparative methodology allows her to sketch the complexity of conflicting intentions and actions of the various actors involved in the process of Turkish labor immigration and the emergence of Turkish-German life. She draws on data taken from German and Turkish contexts, ably demonstrating that not only German but also Turkish policies are responsible for creating often unbearably difficult situations for individuals involved in the migration process. Economic and political factors have determined the policies pursued by the governments of the Federal Republic and Turkey for dealing with immigration of laborers from Tur-

key. Hunn examines the period from 1961 until unification. During this time, foreign policy played a decisive role in promoting German treaties with Turkey and other non-European countries, such as Morocco and Tunisia. In addition to political and economic data, Hunn draws on ethnographic studies and self-representations by Turkish-Germans. By relating political and economic developments to cultural analysis, Hunn is able to contextualize processes of ethnicization (*Fremd-Ethnisierung*) and self-ethnicization (*Selbst-Ethnisierung*) and to shed light on the functioning of cultural differences in this particular case.

The study, based on Hunn's dissertation, is divided into chapters structured according to the interwoven major economic and political developments relevant to labor migration in the Federal Republic from 1961 until the late 1980s. The first chapter discusses the initial phase of Turkish labor migration, during the period of underemployment in the Federal Republic, which ended with a brief recession (1961-66/67). The second chapter reviews the changes occurring between 1968 and 1973, a period that began with a strong economy and massive recruitment of foreign labor and concluded with the oil crisis and the end of labor recruitment (*Anwerbestop*). The third chapter follows developments to the close of the 1970s, and the last chapter looks at the period from 1981 to 1984, during which a number of measures were

introduced geared toward "reintegrating" migrant workers into their countries of origin. The main chapters are followed by a conclusion and a short chapter devoted to outlining recent trends.

The study targets three interrelated areas: "first, the work sphere of Turkish migrants, respectively their situation on the West German labor market, in the companies, and their relationship to the unions; second, West German and Turkish political policy toward foreigners and migration; and third, the social and societal dimension of the immigration process, which include in particular the development and differentiation (*Ausdifferenzierung*) of the Turkish immigration society, its interaction with West German society, as well as West German reactions to the process of immigration" (p. 21). The author includes both German and Turkish primary sources, which adds a crucial dimension oftentimes lacking from explorations of Turkish-German topics.

Hunn demonstrates that labor migration policy has been tied to political interests from the beginning. Treaties regulating economic relations between the Federal Republic and Turkey were consistently connected to political relations between the two countries. The convention to privilege labor migration treaties with European nations (the "Europäergrundsatz") was suspended with regard to Turkey (and to a much lesser degree Morocco and Tunisia), which held a distinct status as a member of NATO and aspiring member of the European Community and of the European Union. Turkey was also favorably regarded for having been an ally in the two world wars. In fact, Hunn demonstrates that in the early phase Turkey was considered to be part of Europe and that differences in the treaties between Germany and Turkey, in comparison to those with other European nations, cannot be explained as resulting from cultural discrimination. Hunn points out that the temporal restrictions—initially, Turkish labor migrants were allowed to stay in West Germany for only two years—were also supported by

the Turkish government, which hoped that labor migrants would return to Turkey quickly to apply the knowledge they had acquired during their stay in Germany and develop the Turkish economy.

During the first phase of Turkish labor migration to the Federal Republic, cultural and religious differences received little attention, both in the media and in discussions directly related to political and economic dimensions of labor immigration. Turkish workers, for example, were typically seen as less demanding with regard to dietary restrictions than their Italian counterparts. Certain policies, such as the often demeaning physical examination, were not restricted to Turkish immigrants alone, but rather, according to Hunn, reflected a more deep-seated suspicion of "foreigners" and were also related to Third Reich-based negative notions of the "Fremdarbeiter."

What Turkish workers expected from their move to Germany and what their government wanted were, in reality, two different things. Turkey wanted unskilled workers to return as skilled workers; instead, it lost many skilled workers. Political motivations often weighed more heavily than economic objectives: in early 1964 reducing unemployment was less important to the Turkish leadership than strengthening political and economic ties with Europe. In this regard, the official objectives of the Turkish government and those of Turkish migrant workers often clashed significantly. In addition, Turkish migrant workers held unrealistic expectations and were often unaware of what awaited them in Germany. As long as workers arrived in Germany by train, the journey alone was an ordeal, which was the case until the late 1960s. Hunn's study provides significant detail on the housing situation of Turkish-German workers and their families, which was frequently atrocious. Complaints about conditions at the workplace, high-risk and strenuous labor, and low pay were incessant and occasionally led to strikes.

Over the years, the various Turkish governments did not act as advocates for Turkish-born labor migrants with any consistency. Facing unemployment at home, the Turkish government was not eager to facilitate the return of migrants. In addition, and especially during periods in which Turkey was ruled by repressive regimes, actions by Turkish government officials divided Turkish-German communities. Anti-communist repression and support of fascist groups by Turkey kept Turkish-Germans from integrating into West German society. As a result, West Germany ended up importing the entire range of Turkey's domestic conflicts. The divide between urban and rural communities, clashes between political groups, and internal ethnic conflicts, such as the struggle of the Kurdish population to be autonomous from Turkey, all surfaced in Germany.

Importantly, Hunn's study counters widely held beliefs about the social and regional origins of Turkish migrant workers in Germany. With regard to the first generation of workers, for example, only 18.2 percent hailed from villages with less than two thousand inhabitants; 41 percent came from Istanbul. Indeed, many Turkish workers were accustomed to far more developed sanitary facilities than those that awaited them in Germany and were shocked when confronted with the substandard sanitary situation and heating equipment in areas of Berlin. The percentage of skilled workers was higher among immigrants from Turkey than, for example, those who came from Spain or Greece.

In her study, Hunn corroborates data about discrimination against Turkish-German workers at the workplace. Although in the early period German unions often fought side by side with their immigrant colleagues (mostly out of self-interest, in order to ensure that wages of the German workers would not fall), over the years solidarity grew weaker, especially once unemployment rates began to rise. It was typical to see physical fights between German- and Turkish-

born workers. Immigrant workers pushed Germans out of certain jobs during the 1960s, even as Turkish immigrants were pushed into jobs that paid little and which Germans did not want.

German employers and the German state were initially responsive to the demands of immigrant workers on labor issues as well as to their cultural and religious needs. Indeed, some of the country's social policies might be surprising to readers: at the beginning of 1963, for example, the West German government agreed to pay monthly child support even for children of Turkish migrant workers who lived in Turkey. Nevertheless, discriminatory views based in ethnocentric and racist beliefs were also pervasive, although not until the economic situation turned sour did these views begin to translate into widespread discriminatory practices. In addition, immigration of family members to Germany resulted in the growth of Turkish neighborhoods, which in turn often led to ghettoization. The emergence of a Turkish-German infrastructure, with shops, enterprises of all sorts, schools, and cultural centers, contributed to the rising hostility of the German majority population to the immigrants. Beginning in the early 1980s, amid a climate of increasing concern about the economy and unemployment, growing animosity led to acts of violence and widened the gap between immigrants and their descendants and the German majority.

The increasing ethnicization of Turkish-born workers in Germany must also be seen in the context of the changing political landscape in Turkey. As issues of religious and cultural identity gained importance in Turkey, resulting conflicts were once again imported to Germany, where they reinforced existing patterns of discrimination. A lack of social workers, translators, and union representatives who could address the needs of Turkish-German workers also contributed to their inadequate representation. Individual ministries in Germany often pursued opposing policies, and the general lack of coordination, both within Ger-

many and between Germany and Turkey, negatively affected the situation of Turkish-Germans, who lacked, and continue to lack, basic civil and political rights.

One aspect not directly addressed in Hunn's study is the international dimension inherent in the story of Turkish-German labor migration. Significant political, economic, and cultural features that structure this particular story have also played key roles in comparable situations in, for example, France and the United States. Comparative studies are needed to determine which factors are indeed unique to the German situation and which are related to global developments. The emergence of Islam as an aspect of discrimination but also self-ethnicization is surely one of the transnational phenomena. Similarly, the decreasing economic capital of unskilled workers is also a global issue.

Hunn's study is an indispensable compendium useful to scholars and students across different disciplines. It provides information that allows for a better understanding of cultural and literary expressions by Turkish-German artists, for example. As Hunn demonstrates convincingly, taking into consideration the longer economic and political history of Turkish-German immigrants and drawing on data about both the German and the Turkish contexts allows for the de-ethnicization of economic and political conflict. Her study should be mandatory reading in any course on Turkish-Germans, and in this regard, I hope that an English translation of this substantial work will be available in the near future.

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