

Panel 2 – Civic Ideals: Historical Analysis of Themes and Practices in Civic Education

Prof. Dr. Gert Strasser

My lecture is subdivided into six sections:

Current figures

1890 – 1920

1945 – 1948

1955 – 1973

1987 – 1998

Present situation

1 Current figures

30, 4 million people altogether immigrated to Germany between 1954 and 1999, some of them emigrated again¹. The majority were work migrants and their family members. The balance for this time is a gain of 6, 7 million foreigners and 2, 3 million Germans.

Temporary stay developed into permanent stay over the years. 30 % of all foreigners in Germany had been living here for more than 20 years by the end of 1999, 40 % for more than 15 years. 25 % of the foreign population in Germany were born here. Most of the foreigners are already locals without receiving an adequate status. 80 % of the foreigners live in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. The proportion of foreigners is partly 15 %, in some parts of the town over 50 %. Migration in the Federal Republic of Germany is a phenomenon of the cities.² Germany did not see itself as an immigration country until very recently. If you look at the history, though, you will soon realize that this idea does not comply with reality. Migration is a social reality in Germany. This can be seen very clearly in history and at present although politics denied it until not so long ago.

2 1890 – 1914

This period was characterised by the rapid industrial expansion of Germany and labour shortage. Migrant labour from eastern Germany and Poland was recruited into the coal

¹ 29,7 million foreigners and 700,000 remigrating Germans

² The quoted figures are taken from the report of the federal official looking after foreign immigrants (Statistisches Bundesamt, October 2000)

mines of the Ruhr during this time. Many of these migrants were legally German and had residency rights but they also had some difficulties with the German language and experienced hostility and discrimination. As a result they held on to their cultural identity by forming their own subculture which slowed down, but did not prevent, their integration. This shows a common phenomenon with migration, still visible today, separation as a response to the racism and ethnocentrism of the host community" (Bade: 2000, Herbert: 2001)

3 1945 – 1948

In my lecture I leave out the years of the World Wars. This phase was characterized by a fascist system of forced labour. Work was considered to be a loot of the war (Herbert: 129) and had a different status than in a democratic society.

The first years after World War II were characterized by absorbing refugees from the former east of Germany. Despite the difficult economic situation of destroyed Germany it was possible to absorb and integrate the large number of 12 million refugees. But integration was not without problems. There are accounts of discrimination in many cases but there was no public discussion at that time. Looking back, integration is considered to be successful. The Marshall-Plan and the economic miracle in post war Germany assisted the economic integration. In 1960 nearly a fourth of the population of the Federal Republic of Germany consisted of refugees. That was the base of social integration. A large number of Germans had the same fate because legally they all were Germans. The climate of immigration politics at that time can be summarized as follows: The German refugees wanted to and had to stay in Germany.

4 1955 – 1973

In the middle of the 1950s immigration from Italy and later from Spain, Greece, Portugal, Turkey, Tunisia, Yugoslavia and Morocco started. The status of these work immigrants was different: their stay was scheduled as temporary. Because of the economic miracle they were recruited on the basis of bilateral contracts to fill a gap of workers on low wages on the German labour market. At first it was agriculture and later industry where workers were needed. The amount of vacancies could not be filled with Germans alone.

Then and now these work migrants were pejoratively called "Gastarbeiter = guest workers". This term reflects the political and social thinking of the time: work and stay of these work migrants was not supposed to be permanent. But it has to be added that a large proportion of the "guest workers" did not assume to stay in Germany long-term. Most of them rather

wanted to earn a lot of money quickly to build up a new existence for them and their families in their native countries. Many foreign employees transferred their centres of life and their families to Germany. Politics did not want a permanent integration into society. In so far the colloquial term of “guest worker” reflects the refusal of full legal and political recognition of the immigrants. Between 1955 and 1973 about 14 million people from 8 recruitment states came to Germany. 11 millions of them returned to their countries of origin. So in reality 3 million people had immigrated to Germany. (Bade/Münz: 2000) Contrary to the settling there was no political planning with regard to the future, no programme of integration. The motto was “non-permanent integration”, i.e. integration yes – immigration no. The beginning of the economic recession in 1966 changed public opinion. “Gastarbeiter” were more and more rejected and excluded. A survey showed that the press reported on “Gastarbeiter” three times more negatively than positively in 1966. (Herbert: 221) After the overcoming of the recession (from 1973 onwards) immigration of work migrants increased, especially of Turkish migrants. There were more than 600,000 workers from Turkey in Germany in 1973. From this time onwards they were the largest national group within the work migrants. From 1973 there was a change in recruitment politics. Reasons were of economic and political nature. A recruitment stop brought the influx of work migrants from non-EU-countries to an end. The German government assumed that most of the work migrants would now return to their native countries. This did not happen. In 1980 the number of foreigners living in Germany was 1 million higher than in 1971. The work migrants living in Germany fetched over their families and prepared themselves for a permanent stay in Germany.

5 1987 – 1998

Another wave of immigration took place from 1989 – 1994 because of the decay of the Soviet Union and the global shifting of power that followed. These were mainly German emigrants of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (“Aussiedler”). At the same time the number of asylum seekers increased. The number of “Aussiedler” and asylum seekers together was 7.3 million people between 1988 and 1993. 3.6 million people left the country so that the balance is 3.7 million people. “At that time an immigration of this dimension only took place in the USA which is a classical immigration country. The population of the USA, though, is three times bigger than that of Germany” (Bade/Münz:26). Germany was not prepared for such a high number of immigrants because it did not have a clear concept of immigration. This resulted in increasing hostility to foreigners. The right-wing political parties used this mood for their election campaign. Arguments like “the boat is full” or the fear of losing one’s own “cultural identity” were subjects of the media and public opinion at that time. The

government's politic on immigration was not clear so that racist attacks on foreigners increased.

6 Present situation

The change of government in 1998 influenced the situation. In a first step the law on nationality was changed in 1999. Naturalization became easier. The principle of descent (*ius sanguinis*) was supplemented by the principle of territory (*ius soli*). Under the new law a child of foreign parents acquires the German nationality when one parent has been living in Germany for eight years and possesses a right of residence or a residence permit for three years. In a second step the red and green government worked out a concept of immigration. After internal debates with the opposition this concept became legally binding in 2004. This law includes new regulations on the immigration of work force and a fundamental reorganization of the law on foreigners. In addition immigrants have to take part in language and integration courses. With these legal changes immigration of work migrants and asylum seekers dropped. Extensive programmes (*Civitas*, *Xenos*) try to combat hostility to foreigners and racism. How these changes will work in the next years will have to be seen.

Literatur:

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