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## **THE ATTITUDE OF THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT TO INTER-STATE MIGRATION AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF FOREIGNERS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GERMANY AND THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY**

### **SUMMARY**

Workers' external migration, as well as internal one, have a number of causes and effects. They lead to significant changes in the countries and regions of origin, and also in the countries and regions of destination, and they affect the lives and consciousness of migrant workers and their families. Faced with the far-reaching consequences and effects of foreign workers' migration and employment, the working-class movement has made attempts from the very first beginning to take a class-based attitude to migration. Discussions and resolutions pertaining to the Second International confirmed the fact that under the conditions of imperialism two diverse class-orientated approaches were manifest, which was also reflected in different views of migration and foreign workers' employment.

It is gratifying to note that the literature dealing with external migration takes account of the attitude of the working class, its political parties and trade unions towards migration, the employment of foreigners and state policies towards them. The research group »Migration and policy towards foreigners in the 19th and 20th centuries« in the School of History at Wilhelm Pieck University, Rostock has for some time also addressed itself to this topic. The members of our group have published longitudinal studies on state policy towards foreigners in countries of destination such as Germany, France, Great Britain, Switzerland and Austria and examined the attitude of the working-class movements there to their immigrant class brothers and sisters. Before turning to an examination of the German working-class movement, which on account of the limited space available will of necessity be somewhat summary, I should like to state the following: First, I am of the opinion that it must be, and indeed is, possible on the basis of an exact analysis of the economic, political and historical situation in the countries of origin and destination to come to an agreed assessment of external migration, its effects and consequences. Up to now social scientists and politicians have taken up different positions depending on whether they came from, or concentrated their interest on, countries of origin or countries of destination. The working-class movement must also work out a common viewpoint and cannot allow itself to be divided. The struggle against the main initiator and beneficiary of migration, the monopolies and the representatives of their interests, demands this. The struggle against the

discrimination and hounding of foreigners and for equality of status for foreign and native workers in the capitalist world also makes it a necessity.

Secondly, there is no *single* attitude of the working-class movement to external migration. Two aspects must be emphasized here: a) the various strands within the working-class movement have developed different attitudes towards migration. (I shall return to these differences and also to possible common positions.) b) The appraisal of migration and its effects is always connected with concrete historical circumstances; changing circumstances require the working class to reconsider its position. This becomes particularly clear during the period of imperialist wars and fascist dictatorship. In the decades before the first world war the international working-class movement had generally supported the free movement of labour across frontiers. However, in the course of the war when imperialist powers such as Germany tried to prolong the war by means of deportation and forced labour the movement was forced, within the framework of the struggle to end imperialist war and bring down the respective bourgeoisie, to do everything in its power to prevent further foreign labour being recruited, whether in occupied territories or in neutral countries. After German fascism had been brought to power it was the task of the international working-class movement to put up the stiffest resistance to this monstrous, misanthropic creation of imperialism and to make every effort to oppose deportation and mass forced labour during the second world war.

Thirdly, migration and state policy towards foreigners cannot in general be judged without taking the balance of forces between the social classes into consideration. This applies especially to the period after the second world war and at the present time when the extent and direction of migration have been deeply influenced by the basic social and political changes which led to the creation of the socialist countries and the emergence of the socialist community of states. With the abolition of the exploitation of man by man and the creation of a new society economic compulsion to emigrate disappeared in most socialist countries. In most cases migration between socialist countries took place on a planned basis and is subject to different causes and driving forces than in capitalism. The current intensification of attempts by imperialist circles to persuade citizens of socialist countries to leave their countries often does not only have economic motivations but is a means of struggle against socialism. Such aims are cloaked by talk of human rights and freedom. Migratory movement between socialist and capitalist countries can, in my opinion, only be analysed and judged against the background of struggle between opposing social systems. The extent of such migration depends now and in the future on the development of relations between socialist and capitalist countries and the maintenance of peace.

In what follows we deal with migration and state policy towards foreigners in capitalist countries.

In working out a class-based attitude to the very difficult question of migration and the employment of foreign labour the German and international working-class movements were able to make use of statements by Marx and Engels and the struggle of the First International against wage undercutting and strikebreaking and for the international organization of the proletariat. The opinions expressed by Marx and Engels (14; 7) refer above all to the following questions: 1. The causes and social effects of internal and external migration of Irish people to Britain and other countries, especially the USA, as an example, they demonstrate the function of the reserve army of labour in exerting a downward pressure on wages and splitting the working class. At the same time they emphasize that the migration of sections of the rural popu-

lation to other countries made an important contribution to the development of the working class in the country of destination. 2. Marx and Engels show that the regulators and main beneficiaries of worker migration are capital and big landed property, who consciously try to make use of intensified competition between workers and to utilize foreigners as strikebreakers. 3. The appraisal of the migration of workers. Although they certainly see the negative effects of migration, Marx and Engels do not oppose migration as such but emphasize, among other things, its positive effects. Their point of departure in discussing migration are the general class interests of the proletariat. Engels' remarks on German immigration to the USA are characteristic in this respect. He recognizes that the US capitalist magnates benefit most from this immigration but goes on to state, »Therefore, much as we join the *New Yorker Zeitung* in regretting emigration from Germany, much as we are convinced that this will at first lead to a marked deterioration in the condition of American workers, much as we wish that German workers would concentrate their whole attention on the improvement of their condition in Germany, we cannot share the paper's pessimism. We must take account of the situation as it is but as this situation, thanks to the shortsightedness and greed of our opponents, more and more excludes development in a truly reforming sense we must make it our task, in defiance of all the fainthearts, to prepare the spirits for the revolutionary march of events (8 : 307 f.).

The advice given by Marx and Engels on migration was of special significance for the German working-class movement from the 1890s onwards at a time when imperialism was emerging and the immigration of foreign workers increasing. This posed the necessity of working out a position towards the immigration of both native and foreign-immigrant workers. In contrast to Bade, Forberg and others, who in our opinion oppose the interests of the workers in countries of destination and the interests of immigrants too absolutely (cf. 2:17 f.; 9:221 f.) I take the view that before World War I German social democracy and the trade unions influenced by it took up a position towards immigrants which was essentially in accord with proletarian internationalism. According to Lenin (14) an internationalist attitude in this period consisted in: 1. support for the free movement of international labour under capitalism, 2. the struggle against every kind of discrimination against immigrants, 3. the organization of one's foreign class brothers and sisters. There can be no doubt that immigration introduced workers from backward agrarian areas who were often ignorant and over-modest in their demands. The ruling class attempted to split the workers of different nationalities and to set them against each other in order to exploit them more easily. All this was fraught with danger for German workers and their working and living conditions. On the other hand, as a result of imperialism and the growing internationalization of production and exploitation, sections of the working class began to realize that the general conditions of existence and struggle for the working class are, in principle, the same and the community of basic class interests in the proletariat became more apparent. If, as a result of migration the class consciousness of a section of the immigrants was fostered this was due not least to the fact that the German working-class movement possessed a high degree of political maturity and a highly developed feeling of solidarity. At the same time it attached great importance to the organization and political education of its foreign class brother and sisters. A renewed inspection of the sources and descriptions of the German working-class movement in the two decades before the outbreak of the first world war confirms our view that in this period the spirit of internationalism was deeply rooted in the working-class movement. Ever since the

1890s, when Marxism had become the most influential ideology in the working-class movement, the members of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the trade unions influenced by them had attempted to integrate their foreign class brothers and sisters in the struggle against imperialism, militarism and the danger of war. They opposed discrimination and nationalistic and racist baiting of foreigners stirred up by right-wing forces. German social democracy had considerable influence on the congress resolutions of the Second International relating to emigration and immigration. The German social democrats supported the resolution passed at the Zurich congress of 1893 (16:51), which called for close cooperation between the socialist parties and trade unions in countries of origin and countries of destination, organization of migrant workers in trade unions and propagation of international solidarity. The majority resolution of the Amsterdam congress in 1904 (10:50 f.) did not conceal the negative effects of immigration on countries of destination, which result from the influx of »poorly — paid, tractable elements eager to work... who are lured by unscrupulous capitalists to undercut native workers with cheap labour, to provide strike breakers...«. However, the resolution stated: »Congress nevertheless condemns any legal regulations intended to prevent immigration or exclude foreigners or treat them less favourably in countries of destination.« It opposed discrimination against immigrants and demanded equal political rights for them in the country they had entered. The resolution on emigration and immigration at the Stuttgart congress of 1907 (11:58 f.) corresponded to the views of the revolutionary forces of social democracy. According to Clara Zetkin it had »upheld class solidarity as a great world association of the proletariat of all races and nations in the spirit of the German trade unions and in accordance with their practice.« (18:362) She took as her point of departure the fact that migration is as inextricably linked with capitalism »as unemployment, overproduction and the underconsumption of the workers.« Although conscious of the negative effects of immigration, for example the downward pressure on wages and strikebreaking, she rejected »the exclusion of certain nations or races from immigration, which is reprehensible also from the standpoint of proletarian solidarity« and recommended the working-class movement in countries of origin and destination to take steps to ensure equal rights for foreigners and native residents and the political education and organization of immigrants. This resolution corresponded to the ideas of the overwhelming majority of German social democrats in this period as can be seen by the unanimous backing it received at the Essen party conference of 1907 (17:292) and the numerous activities of both the party and trade unions in the following years, which were directed to raising the level of consciousness among foreign workers (v. 15:154 ff; 5:86 ff; 4:15 ff).

In these two decades before the first world war there was, in our opinion, greater political and ideological unity in the SPD — also in relation to migration — than before the adoption of the Erfurt Programme in 1891 and after the first world war. That is to say, there were proletarian class positions, which were most firmly supported by the marxist forces and were consistent with proletarian internationalism in theory and practice. To assert this is not to overlook the fact that there was also a clearly different line within the working-class movement, a line that was in the last analysis bourgeois in character and was supported by opportunists and revisionists. In the case of immigration it expressed itself in nationalistic attitudes and in a neglect of immigrant workers' interests. The representatives of this tendency, such as M. Schippel, F. Paepflow and others, supported the restriction or banning of immigration, over-emphasised the negative effects of migration and portrayed foreign workers

as generally uncivilized. They opposed the discrimination of immigrants but neglected their political education. No doubt there were ordinary members of trade unions who here and there rejected the employment of foreigners, for a high degree of class consciousness was necessary in order to uphold the idea of proletarian solidarity in the face of wage undercutting and strikebreaking. In contrast to Forberg (19), however, we underline the responsibility of right-wing party and trade-union leaders for the dissemination of nationalistic attitudes. But the fact that in the pre-war period the opportunists were unable to revise the decisions of the Second International, which corresponded to the requirements of proletarian internationalism, demonstrates how strongly the idea of proletarian solidarity determined the thinking and behaviour of SPD and trade-union members. Only with the outbreak of the first imperialist war did the opportunist-revisionist forces succeed in bringing about a change in the attitude of the working-class movement to migration and the employment of foreign workers. This was, of course, in line with the opportunist-revisionist approval of the war and their policy of maintaining a class truce inside the country. The balance of forces between the more class-orientated and the social reformist forces in the working-class movement changed after the outbreak of the first world war. During the war and in the Weimar Republic right-wing social-democratic leaders endeavoured, by means of their policy of internal class truce and social partnership, to integrate the working class in the bourgeois-capitalist social order. They supported an improvement in the living and working conditions of immigrants and opposed certain forms of discrimination in the interests of maintaining social harmony. But just as they had not resolutely fought against deportation and forced labour during the first world war they now failed to come out strongly against the special laws to which foreigners were subjected (special identity documents for foreigners, enforced periodic absences from Germany, state powers to deport foreigners). They supported priority for German citizens (i. e. that German workers must be given preference in employment) and they advocated compulsory periodic repatriation of foreign workers dependent on the boom/slump cycle and the fluctuating demand for labour. The opportunists did not offer determined resistance to the xenophobic feeling stirred up by right-wing forces, e. g. the Nazi party (NSDAP). The Hösing case of 1926 showed how very willing the right-wing social-democratic leaders were to adopt nationalistic arguments.

In contrast to this the tradition of international solidarity represented by class-orientated forces remained very much alive in the German working-class movement despite more difficult conditions of struggle during the first world war and in the face of mass unemployment during the Weimar Republic. The Communist Party of German (KPD) and class-conscious members of the SPD and the trade unions endeavoured to strongly resist every kind of discrimination, to organize their class brothers and sisters and draw them into the struggle against the common enemy, the monopolies and the big landowners. This internationalist tradition was also continued throughout the fascist dictatorship and linked up with the joint struggle of German and foreign antifascists against fascism and the danger of war. Lack of time unfortunately prevents us from going into detail about the activities of class-conscious German and foreign workers during the Weimar Republic and the period of fascist dictatorship.

The different class positions adumbrated here and the differing attitudes to migration and the employment of foreigners which derive from them can also be discerned in the working-class movement in the Federal Republic of Germany. Here, we shall consider the German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB) in somewhat more detail.

In the literature, for example Anagnostidis (1) and, recently, Maria Konos (12) it is said that for a long time the DGB's response to migration and the employment of foreigners was a total failure. Here, the attitudes of right-wing leaders and those trade union members whose class-consciousness has remained underdeveloped are equated with the trade union movement as a whole and insufficient attention is paid to opposing standpoints in the DGB. As far as the attitude of the DGB to the employment of foreign workers is concerned we can distinguish two periods: 1. the period from 1955 to the end of the 1960s, 2. from the end of the 1960s to the present time. In the first period leading officials of the reformist-led DGB regarded the employment of foreign workers as a temporary phenomenon, a provisional state of affairs, for in the years 1955—1961 the number of foreign workers did not exceed 300,000 and only increased rapidly after the GDR secured its western frontier in 1961, the million mark being reached in 1964. The principle of compulsory periodic repatriation favoured such attitudes. Furthermore, the world boom meant that the function of the reserve army of labour — now greatly augmented by foreign workers — in undercutting wages and dividing the working class was not so apparent. However, the DGB did fight for the equality of foreign workers with comparable German workers in wages and social matters and for decent housing. Certain political rights, etc. were won by struggle. The failure to achieve more far-reaching demands put forward by trade unionists, for example by the IG Metall (metal workers), for the creation of a united front of German and foreign workers was due not least to the attitude of those influential DGB leaders whose position can be characterized as anti-communist and favouring the integration of the working class, the promotion of social partnership and the maintenance of the capitalist system. Trade union activities among foreign workers, for example the work of the DGB advisory and guidance offices, which came into existence from 1956 onwards, were reduced at the behest of such leaders to giving advice on labour and social legislation, to charitable aid. At first they also failed to oppose the wave of neo-fascist baiting of foreigners during the economic crisis of 1966—1967, actions which flanked the monopolies' attack on working-class rights and were intended to counteract trade-union struggle for a reduction in working hours and to prepare the ground for the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of foreigners. Token strikes and other actions, which in the mid 1960s rebuffed attacks by employers and the state on the rights and status of trade unions, show that in the period 1955—1969 the characteristic attitudes of reformist leaders did not go unchallenged. Other, class-orientated forces were active in the DGB — not only communists — who endeavoured, above all in the workplaces, to organize foreign workers. In a publication which appeared in 1970 I pointed out that in the 1960s there had been numerous joint actions, for example against the emergency laws, demonstrations on the first of May, actions in favour of democracy in Greece and Spain, etc. (6:144 ff). It was thanks to class-conscious trade unionists that foreigners acted in solidarity during the wage and strike movements of the 1960s. The spirit of internationalism lives on, especially in such industrial unions as the IG Metall (metal workers) and IG Druck und Papier (paper and print workers), to name but two, and among young trade unionists. Members of these industrial unions, supported by leading officials endeavoured quite early on to organize foreigners. Such attitudes as these were important for the formation of opinion in the DGB during the subsequent period.

Now to the second period:

From the end of the 1960s/beginning of the 1970s a significant change in the attitude of the DGB executive committee towards the employment of fo-

reigners and state policy towards foreigners become apparent. This found expression in the executive committee resolution for the 2nd November 1971, »The German trade unions and foreign employers« (3:1 ff). Other resolutions followed (3:8 ff) The basis of this change of heart lay, amongst other things, in the intensification of the class struggle from the end of the 1960s and the upswing in the working-class movement. New issues, such as the effects of the scientific and technological revolution, the dominance of international concerns, the world economic crisis in the mid — 1970s and early 1980s and the combination of general and cyclical crises of capitalism, demanded new alternatives from the DGB. As the DGB congress of 1986 made clear, the political and social conflicts of these years and the confrontation with the conservative forces demanded a politicization of the DGB. Although representatives of the integrationist, social-partnership tendency predominate in the leading bodies of the DGB the class-orientated forces have gained greater room to manoeuvre. But right-wing leaders, too, have felt obliged to reconsider certain of their attitudes, including their position on state policies towards foreigners. DGB conferences since that in Munich in 1969 demonstrate this quite clearly. Unfortunately we cannot analyse them here but if we summarize their results we can say that they opposed the attempt to foist the burden of the crisis on foreign workers who were hardest hit by unemployment, took a stand against discrimination and supported the extension of democratic rights. The intention was to put up a determined struggle against divisions in the working class brought about by restriction state policies towards foreigners and the rabid campaigns against them stirred up above all by right-wing conservative forces. It is above all the industrial unions and young trade unionists who are active in this direction. Here we need only recall the great response elicited by the campaign organized by young trade unionists under the slogan »Hands off my mate!« which was directed against racism and xenophobia. Since the party congress in Hannover in 1973 the SPD leadership has concerned itself with the employment of foreigners and state policies towards them and this has had a positive effect. The Kühn memorandum of 1970 (13) confirms that the SPD has developed more realistic ideas than those actually put into practice by the SPD-led Federal Government (*Zur Haltung der SPD*; cf. 5:499 ff). The DGB unions have allied themselves with other democratic forces whether they fight for foreigners' rights in political parties, the churches, charitable organizations, citizens' initiatives of various kinds, or elsewhere. In this way they are making an important contribution to the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress.

Of course, one cannot overlook a lack of consistency on the part of right-wing trade union leaders and the members they influence. Nevertheless, class-orientated members of the DGB, in their endeavour to fight for common class interests together with their foreign class brothers and sisters and the latter's political organizations, have been able, since 1970s, to base themselves on important resolutions passed by the DGB executive. In this way the basis of a successful integration of immigrants in the working-class movement has been laid.

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STAV RADNIČKOG POKRETA PREMA MEĐUDRŽAVNOJ MIGRACIJI  
I ZAPOSŁJAVANJE STRANACA U DVADESETOM STOLJEĆU S OSOBITIM  
OSVRTOM NA NJEMAČKU I SR NJEMAČKU

SAŽETAK

Vanjskim migracijama radnika, upravo kao i unutaršnjim, mnoštvo je različitih uzroka, a mnoštvo je i učinaka. Migracije dovode do značajnih promjena i u zemljama i regijama porijekla i u zemljama i regijama prijema, a utječu na život i svijest radnika migranata i njihovih obitelji. Suočen s dalekosežnim posljedicama i učincima migracije i zapošljavanja stranih radnika, radnički je pokret na nacionalnoj i internacionalnoj razini nastojao od prvih početaka migracijskih kretanja zauzeti klasno stanovište o njima. Diskusije i rezolucije Druge internacionale potvrdile su činjenicu da su u uvjetima imperijalizma izražena dva suprotna klasna pristupa migracijama, a to se odrazilo i na različite poglede na migracije i na zapošljavanje stranih radnika.