

International Migration – A Global Challenge

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I

Introduction

Migration has many faces: It has been part of global regional and national history all the time and changed faces of landscapes and societies. **It has changed societies and developed new forms of society. – The USA are the foremost example – but also post-war Germany. This is little known:**

1. Traditionally observers divided the world into immigration countries and non-immigration countries – or rather emigration countries, countries from which people wanted to emigrate into a more promising future. For quite some time USA, Canada, Australia and some parts of Latin America were countries of destination from Europa, where poverty and discrimination for reasons of ethnicities and religion forced people to leave their homelands. The US were the “Land of Freedom”, the “Land of Promise”

2. The twentieth century added to the history of mankind the terrible experiences of “forced population transfers” .Hitler and Stalin were masters in this regard, and so were the countries that drew the frontiers in post war Europe (Summit Conference of the ‘Big Three’ at Yalta/Soviet Union, February 4-11, 1945).

3. The survivors of the holocaust in Europe saw their future only in an independent Jewish state – in Israel – a country that cannot yet enjoy peace with every-one of its neighbors.

4. The forced imposition of communist rule added another dimension to refugee movements during the cold war and led to the rebirth of ethnic conflict after the collapse of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia.

5. For the European Union (EU) the principle of freedom of movement of persons –as of goods and capital - within the Union was one of the major objectives of the Union as such and constitutes an established practice as of now.

In Europe, national boundaries have lost a great deal of their former rigidity. The European Union agreed on freedom of movement of goods, capital **and citizens** within Europa. A great number of regulations are still to be observed, and their limits are felt, since there is not a Social Union in Europe providing social security at the place of living necessarily. **The differences in living standards and of national legislation related to residence issues constitute still limits to the freedom of movement and settlement.**

The UN High Commissioner presents to the world the annual report on issues of refugees. These reports tell us in so many words that life is quite miserable for millions of refugees in conflict areas such as Syria and in parts of Africa, but also with regard to small opposition groups originating from Iran and living in an hostile environment in Iraq now – “Camp Liberty- 3000 human beings – at the grace of Shiite Iraqi government.

In June/July 2014 the “**Evangelische Akademie zu Berlin**” organizes a conference on “**Protection to Refugees in Germany and in Europe**”, dealing in particular with the issue of **Asylum and integration of Refugees in Germany**. (West Balkan is considered to be safe for the return of refugees to their homeland). This assessment is challenged by a number of independent human rights organizations.

II

Integration of Refugees

In connection with the tragic event of refugee movements and forced population transfer the issue of “integration” into the new social fabric constitutes the most important aspect for the development of a prosperous future that includes the newcomers – in most instances not welcome newcomers. We can learn from history:

1. Refugees, Expellees in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) after 1945.

In West Germany successful integration was accomplished by way of a Lastenausgleichsgesetz (Shared Burden Law), adopted in 1951 by the still very young Federal Republic. It obliged landowners to the transfer of a contribution into a public Fund according to the rules laid down by the “Lastenausgleich” amounting to 50 percent of the real estate value as established by financial authorities in 1938. The Fund created in this way financed the establishment of economic units – that means of enterprises in the broadest sense of the term by refugees, expellees and other victims of the war 1945 – at extremely reasonable cost. In contrast to this economically sound system of shared burdens in the reconstruction of the country, in East Germany, refugees – called Umsiedler – were integrated as workers into collectivized

farms and the nationalized economic enterprises and socialist economy, eliminating independent small and medium sized companies thus causing a 2nd wave of Refugees in Germany – namely from the GDR to the FRG (1949-1961) that was stopped by the erection of the Wall within Berlin and on the GDR-FRG-border through Germany on August 13, 1961. Between 1949 and 1961 three million inhabitants of the GDR left for West Germany. East Germany had 18 million inhabitants in 1949. Khrushchev insisted on the erection of the wall since the GDR was heading for a total collapse of its system because of the losses in population.

Against this background, we can understand the **significance of the US decision on September 6, 1946 to include Germany (West) into the US-Recovery Program for Europe**. NATO – established in April 1949 – was the protective umbrella for non-state investment in post war Europe and notably in post war Germany. Investment requires a safety net in strategic terms – one way or the other. Without such a safety-net long term-investment are possible, but extremely expensive – because of the high risk character of the investment.

2. After reunification of Germany in 1990, the integration of the socialist run population in GDR (17 Million) into the FRG-System of social market economy was a difficult and costly process and cannot be considered to be accomplished yet . Since 1990, 100 Mrd. DM/50 trillion € were invested into East Germany annually. What was accomplished?

3. Germany changed from a country with “forced foreign labor” during WW II, to a country with temporary foreign labor in free Germany and now to a country with foreign immigration (Turkish population, Mediterranean European countries, North African countries). Not religious issue, but issue of fundamentalism and non-integration. „Islam-Dialogue” with

society – solution? Open question – indeed the most important open question that is now addressed in a more comprehensive way than ever before.

4. **Immigration and vocational training** as a precondition for meaningful integration – instead of ghettoization - issues: language, social habits, professional deficiencies, recognition of diploma.

5. VERY IMPORTANT: Inclusion of local population in integration process and handling of asylum camps. – It does not suffice to regulate it at the administrative level.

Number of social workers in schools and at local administration increases by the hour – not only for immigrants but also for ordinary citizens and their children – who have to be taken along! Integration is a process that has to be wanted and investments are needed.

Integration has to be part of the political culture of a country – the more local and regional rooted business, the better for the social fabric of the region.

The success story of the century: integrate of 10 plus million refugees and expellees from all over Europa (Germany) into destroyed West Germany on the basis of "Lastenausgleichsgesetz 1951 (compensation law), obliging real estate owners to pay 50 percent of the tax valued piece of real estate into a public fund to finance the establishment of companies or takeover of farms by refugees/expellees.

6. How to improve living conditions and qualified business opportunity in Africa, in backward areas of India and other countries, in order to overcome migration for reasons of poverty and hopelessness!

We may discuss it; I abstain from presenting policy recommendations.