

*Auswanderer — Wanderarbeiter — Gastarbeiter.
Bevölkerung, Arbeitsmarkt und Wanderung in
Deutschland seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts.*
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During the second half of the 19th century, as central Europe began to industrialize, increasing numbers of Germans abandoned their homeland, most finding their way to North America. Beginning in the 1890s, new migration patterns emerged as Germany became a net importer of labor. By the turn of the 20th century, internal migration rates reached historic highs and an increasing number of laborers were recruited from all parts of the European continent for both seasonal and long-term employment. Mass immigration continued to characterize Germany during the early 20th century and was supplemented during the Nazi period by the forced importation of foreign laborers. World War II and its aftermath brought with it forced resettlement and a steady stream of refugees from eastern Europe to that part of Germany that became the Federal Republic. The West German "economic miracle" of the post-war period also encouraged a large influx of "guest workers" and their families, particularly from Mediterranean countries. The fate of these *Gastarbeiter* has become the subject of sometimes rancorous political debate that focuses on the questions: Should Germany be a country of migrants? If not, what measures should be instituted to control immigration and settlement?

In October, 1982, an ambitious interdisciplinary gathering of primarily German scholars was held near Munich to confront these issues of public policy and to set these contemporary concerns into historical and comparative context. Their conference papers and pertinent commentaries have been published in a two-volume set.* Volume I focuses on 19th century German emigrants as "guest workers": Why did they leave? How and to what degree did they become part of a new culture? What implications did this assimilation process have for the development of a working-class consciousness in America? And why did the great waves of German emigration end in the 1890s:

These papers highlight significant variables that animated the German migration experience. Some do so by competently summarizing the current state of scholarship (e.g., Pete Marschalck's review of Germany's demographic transition) or setting a broader context for other contributors. Klaus Bade, for example, insists that German overseas and internal migration as well as immigration of "guest workers" were part of the same migration system. Other authors take a well-known topic and explore the data in a new way. This is particularly true of Wolfgang Kelber's analysis of age-specific employment experiences that reflected structural shifts in the German economy at the turn of the 20th century. Other conference participants undermine conventional perspectives and suggest new investigative departures. Walter Kamphoefner's analysis of German acculturation severely tests Oscar Handlin's characterization of migrants as "uprooted" by demonstrating the importance of chain migration. Kathleen Conzen stresses how German farmers adapted to new economic conditions to further traditional cultural goals, suggesting that more detailed studies of labor relations in the countryside and of rural family values are needed. Finally, Dirk Hoerder sketches the complicated connection between patterns of acculturation and the absence of a radical political movement in America, stressing the need for international comparisons.

In spite of these notable contributions, the conference could have been improved if more attention had been devoted to the cultural aspects of migration. In addition, a more detailed analysis of the segmentation of industrial work and its relationship to migration would also have been helpful. As a result, the explanations offered by several authors for the migration transition of the 1890s are unsatisfactory. Ultimately, the enduring value of this conference may be measured by the careful regional studies it inspires that may answer these questions.

* Note: Volume II concentrates on the experience of national minorities in Germany after the 1890s and attempts to control the influx of foreign workers, the nature of forced labor in the Nazi period, the significance of "guest workers" for the economy of the Federal Republic, and the process of transnational migration from the perspective of sending nations.