

**A Perspective on Multicultural and Multiethnic Society: Critique
of Kenji Yamamoto's Critical Essay on the Author's *The West of Allah***

Masanori NAITO*

In the past two decades German alien policies (*Ausländerpolitik*) have become more restrictive toward foreign residents and toward any additional immigration. German alien policies basically consist of two major principles: "promoting their return" and "promoting their integration into German society."

However, federal government officials have repeatedly stated that the Federal Republic of Germany is not a country of migrants. It should be noted that there is a contradiction that migrants are expected to become integrated into German society, whereas the government declares that the host country itself is not oriented toward being a multicultural society.

Since reunification in 1990, Turkish migrants in Germany have been threatened by xenophobia in their daily life. On 31 October 1990, the Federal Constitutional Court decided that granting political rights to foreign residents is unconstitutional. In addition, the "Islamic threat" became more widely perceived among the Western allies after the threat from communism had diminished. Under these circumstances, a certain number of Turks have been drifting toward Islamic activism to achieve the power to protect them from discrimination and alienation.

Yamamoto's analysis of the situation of Turks in Germany is superficial in the sense that he does not understand motivation for the awakening of Islam among the migrants, and also pays little attention to institutionalized discrimination including the legal status of "alien." His evaluation of Islamic organizations involves too many misunderstandings and his interpretation of Islamic movements is only the trite stereotype of the "Islamic threat." Although the *Süleymancı* is a closed *Sunni* sect, he described it as a Shiite sect. Although Islamic movements aim at realizing an *umma* (Islamic community) beyond the "state" or "nation," he interpreted the characteristics of one of the most active Islamists groups, the *Avrupa Milli Görüş Teşkilatı*, as a movement with a "national view."

Yamamoto emphasized that institutional discrimination against foreign residents has a lower profile in the present migrant issues. However, this is wrong. Even though many German local governments exhibit tolerant attitudes, the Turks are still reluctant to seek to improve their legal rights which are restrictively regulated by the federal government. Most of the Turks in Germany have become aware that their difficulties in achieving equal rights as German citizens are the result of institutionalized alienation whose ideological basis is the concept of the German nation (*Volk*). Through a series of events in the past half decade, it has become clear that the criteria to become a German national (*deutsche Volk*) and their legitimacy have created many questions. The focus of arguments from the migrants is concentrated on the conceptual basis of the state and nation.

If we try to find the reality in the points at issue, it is necessary to listen to the actual voices of the migrants themselves. Much more attention should be paid to the fact that ridiculous discussions limit opportunities to consider migrant issues more realistically. It should be stressed that "migrant study without migrants" threatens the *de facto* situation of a multicultural and multiethnic society in Germany, even though these elements are not widely recognized as essentials for achieving equal human rights.

Key words: Germany, Turkish migrants, Islamic movements, migration