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# Translator's Preface to "A Second Attack"

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¶<sub>1</sub> "Going into the kiosk felt like coming home. Everything was familiar here. It was a refuge from the harshness and coldness of the outside world, offering a feeling of warmth and security. I realize how absurd this sounds, knowing that my brother lost his life in this place. But that's exactly how it was. It was where we would be hit the hardest. Because if we couldn't feel safe even here, then where would we?"

(Gültekin & Koçak, 129)<sup>1</sup>

¶<sub>2</sub> *Geboren, aufgewachsen, und ermordet in Deutschland* [Born, Raised, and Murdered in Germany] (München: Heyne Verlag, 2024), is as much a memorial to the interrupted life of Gökhan Gültekin, as it is an account of the exclusionary policies that continue to affect generations of migrants living in Germany. While at work in his 24-hour kiosk at Hanau's Kurt-Schumacher Platz on February 19, 2020, Gökhan was brutally murdered as part of a racist terror attack that claimed nine lives. In this lucid and heartbreaking biography of his brother—co-written by Mutlu Koçak, a close friend—Çetin Gültekin attempts to reconcile his memories of an idyllic upbringing in the storybook town of Großauheim with the dawning realization that the security, comfort, and familiarity of

what he and his brother knew to be "home" were a mirage all along.

¶<sub>3</sub> The subsequent alienation, faced by the surviving members of Gökhan's family, extends beyond the characteristically ambivalent bond to homeland experienced by the migrant subject, pulled and pushed out of their habitus for myriad reasons, whether to gain economic mobility, reunite with loved ones, or to leave adverse political climates. For Çetin and Gökhan, born, raised—and, in the younger brother's case, eventually murdered—in Germany, the exclusionary and uncompromising processes of racialized marginalization stall promises of arrival and integration. The idea of *Migrantisierung*, or migrantization, is a useful framework here, as it seeks to explain a form of racialization that consolidates certain groups as eternal migrants: always arriving, regardless of their citizenship or country of birth.<sup>2</sup> As Çetin puts it: "[I]f we couldn't feel safe even here, then where would we?" (Gültekin & Koçak, 129)

¶<sub>4</sub> Still, as part of the first wave of guest worker recruitment from Turkey to West Germany in the 1960's, the Gültekin family encountered a Feder-

2— The migrantized subject is understood here through the lens of Fatima El-Tayeb's work in *European Others* (2011) and *Undeutsch: Die Konstruktion des Anderen in der postmigrantischen Gesellschaft* (2018). El-Tayeb conceptualizes the process of migrantization as a form of racialization that reinforces the minorization of whole groups as eternal migrants who must continuously adopt, integrate, and prove their right to be in their country of citizenship. See El Tayeb, 2011 and Kirndörfer & Pilz, 2021.

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1—Page numbers correspond to the German-language edition of *Geboren, aufgewachsen, und ermordet in Deutschland* (2024). All translations are my own.

al Republic that appeared more welcoming and hospitable. "We didn't have the feeling that we were met with prejudice," Çetin Gültekin writes. "There seemed to be greater understanding back then than there is today" (Gültekin & Koçak, 27). A memory of a 1973 issue of *Der Spiegel* titled *Ghettos in Deutschland: Eine Million Türken* [Ghettos in Germany: One Million Turks], found in the home of a German friend, creased and faded, marks a mental turning point for Çetin. Visiting the title article in his adult years, headlined "The Turks are Coming! Save Yourself If You Can!" Çetin is shocked by the clear, racist expositions running throughout the text, bemoaning the loss of an "authentic Kreuzberg" with "a corner storefront, Berliner Kindl beer, beef sandwiches," to a new scene: "lamb spit rotating on a vertical axis at the counter, the coffee is sweet and translucent, and Oriental sing-song is coming from the music box" (Göktürk et al., 110).<sup>3</sup> The fear is too palpable: "This nightmare is... upon us: a city of marginal groups, condemned to the chronic malaise of apathy amid racial conflict, criminality, and dilapidated buildings. The first Harlem symptoms are already visible" (Göktürk et al., 111).

¶5 "When the public sphere is steeped in discursive violence, moreover, acts of physical violence are never far away," write Rezugui, Sturtz, and Windsor, in their introduction to *Rewriting Identities in Contemporary Germany* (2024). The 2020 terror attacks in Hanau, which claimed the lives of nine people, fall within a legacy of racist murders that began as early as the 1990's. But as Göktürk, Kaes, and Gramling have shown in their edited anthology *Germany in Transit* (2005), German debates on anti-immigrant violence had begun at least 20 years prior (Göktürk et al., Ch. 3). When Çetin writes, "[o]ur whole life now feels like a prelude

3—An extended excerpted text of this article, translated by David Gramling, can be found in Ch. 3, titled "Is the Boat Full?" of *Germany in Transit* (2007).

to his untimely death, like links in a chain, interlocking and leading inevitably to that moment," he is grieving over the violence, whether discursive, systemic, or physical, that continues to befall racialized communities (Gültekin & Koçak, 9).

¶6 The excerpt below, "A Second Attack," reveals that such forms of violence persist, even after death. A nightmare begins for Gültekin's family and close friends, torn between grief and the determination to fight for justice, as new failings on the part of authorities continue to surface: an unreachable emergency call the night of the murder, a locked emergency exit, right-wing extremist Special Task Force (*SEK*) officers on duty, and an autopsy that ends with the desecration of Gökhan's body.<sup>4</sup> Since the murder of his brother, Çetin has been campaigning across Germany to ensure that the victims of the Hanau attack and their stories are not forgotten. Indeed, since February 19, 2020, a counter-memory culture has been active in German-language spheres, one that actively commemorates the names and lives of victims, over those of the perpetrators. This practice, of course, echoes and sustains the ongoing fight in the United States for the political and discursive recognition of Black lives lost to police brutality and other forms of racist violence. In Germany, #Say-theirnames and *Erinnern heißt verändern* [To change is to remember] have become rallying calls across social media platforms and in public spheres of remembrance.<sup>5</sup>

¶7 Translating this excerpt as part of Çetin and Mut-

4—In 2022, Forensic Architecture published an investigative report on the right-wing affiliations of the special forces operators who were on duty in Hanau the night of the terror attack: [www.forensic-architecture.org/investigation/racist-terror-attack-in-hanau-the-police-operation](http://www.forensic-architecture.org/investigation/racist-terror-attack-in-hanau-the-police-operation); another report investigates the locked emergency exit door of Arena Bar, which, prevented victims from escaping in time: [www.forensic-architecture.org/investigation/hanau-the-arena-bar](http://www.forensic-architecture.org/investigation/hanau-the-arena-bar).

5—See Degeling and Horn (2023) for a critical analy-

lu's English-language book tour this past November 2024 has been a humbling experience. To be entrusted with a translation task of this weight is truly an honor and a privilege. Throughout the experience, I have been struck by the power and importance of language, especially when it aches in order to impart a painful truth about the world we live in, a world that so clearly values the lives of some over others. The events of "A Second Attack," among many others, was additional proof to the Gökhan family and to Germany's migrant populations that their homeland is a hostile one.

Organized by Dr. Katharina Karcher (University of Birmingham) and Dr. Maria Roca Lizarazu (University of Cambridge) in collaboration with Prof. Ingvild Folkvord (Norwegian University of Science and Technology), the English-language book tour brought the authors to the University of Birmingham, University of London, and the University of Cambridge. *Born, Raised, and Murdered in Germany*, in its German-language edition, has already been featured in course syllabi at universities in the UK. In sharing this excerpt of Gökhan's story with English-language readers, we endeavor to extend community to others whose search for home has been continuously thwarted by racist violence.

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