HANDOUT 3.3.4

'AN IMAGINARY FOREIGNER STRIKE IN BERLIN'

(Ein imaginärer Ausländer-Generalstreik in Berlin)

A poem by Aras Ören

The lady in the café wants her
Regular afternoon coffee and cake
But the cups are not washed,
And the waitress has disappeared.
Where is my delicious ethnic food?
Well spiced and a little change of pace
The Dönerkebab[1] spit is not turning
And the colorful vegetable booth
around the corner
Has been shut for days.
The patient is waiting for naught
for the friendly doctor.
No one nurses the old man in the sick ward
Not even the soup in the kitchen gets made
The garbage pickup is not quite right
And the metro stops reek.
Berlin's export trade is shrinking
Conference participants
from all over the world
Are fed up
Their beds are not made
The quick service forgotten.
The housing shortage deepens
Promises are great,
but where are the construction workers
Pension plans need urgent subsidies
Fewer people paying, red ink everywhere
The last foreigner in Berlin
turns off the lights and goes home.
The industrial sector hangs out a sign:
We need workers! Every idiot welcome.
The man on the street is still screaming:
Ausländer raus! Foreigners out!

Author–Poet Aras Ören *was born November 1, 1939 in Istanbul and belongs to the first generation of Turkish immigrants to Germany.* Ören *writes in Turkish, though his works are typically published simultaneously in German translation. His home and workplace since 1969 has been Berlin.*

Source

Ören, A. (n.d.). An Imaginary Foreigner Strike in Berlin (Ein imaginärer Ausländer-Generalstreik in Berlin). Retrieved from http://cies.einaudi.cornell.edu/system/files/An Imaginary Foreigner Strike in Berlin.pdf

1 Dönerkebab is a Turkish dish made of lamb meat cooked on a vertical spit and sliced off to order.