

Reise der Hoffnung

("Journey of Hope"; aka: "Voyage Vers l'Espoir")

Switzerland : 1990 : dir. Xavier Koller : Condor / Catpics : 110 min

prod: : scr: Xavier Koller, Feride Çiçekoglu & Heike Hubert : dir.ph.: Elemér Ragályi

Emin Sivas

Necmettin Çobanoglu; Nur Sürer; Erdinç Akbas; Yaman Okay; Mathias Gnädinger; Yasar Gner

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
6146	1.5	3	0	1,127	-	-	-	-	-	No	unseen

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
2001 review:

"Heartbreaking, based-on-fact account of what happens when a poor Turkish couple and their young son set off for Switzerland, in the hope of finding a better life. This could have wallowed in sentiment and clichés, but director/scripter Koller consistently keeps it on the right emotional track. This deserving Best Foreign Film Academy Award-winner packs a real wallop. ***1/2 "

Bloomsbury Foreign Film Guide review:

"Haydar (Çobanoglu) ekes out a bare living farming a few sheep in a small mountain village in South-East Turkey. Encouraged by an optimistic postcard from his cousin who has emigrated to Switzerland, he decides to seek a new life there. Selling everything they possess to pay for the journey and the papers, and leaving their other six children behind, Haydar, his wife Meryem (Sürer), and seven-year old Mehmet Ali (Sivas) set out on the arduous trip via Istanbul and Italy to the country they regard as Paradise. Nothing, however, turns out as they expected and hope becomes despair.

Shot entirely on location in Turkey, Italy and Switzerland, this film is based on an amalgam of actual events that befell poor Turks. It is a tale that is at once inspiring in its portrait of the will to survive and to seek a better life, appalling in its picture of man's inhumanity and greed as the smugglers of illegal immigrants ruthlessly cause suffering, and heartbreaking as the dreams of a simple family end in tragedy. This

film, acted, photographed and edited with impeccable restraint, is haunting and dignified, and gripping to watch. Best Foreign Film Oscar 1990."

Radio Times Guide to Films review:

"Although Xavier Koller's uncompromising feature won an Oscar for Best Foreign film, its power derives from its basis in reality rather than the unsentimental solidity of his direction. Accompanied by his young son, Necmettin Çobanoglu travels from Southern Turkey to Switzerland more in desperation than in hope, placing himself in the hands of guides who are every bit as treacherous as the forbidding mountain terrain they must cross. The physical perils are presented with a naturalism that makes them all the more terrifying, but it's the contrast between blind faith and pitiless greed that renders the action so harrowing. In German with English subtitles. **** "

Cast:

HaydarNecmettin Çobanoglu
MeryemNür Ser
Mehmet AliEmin Sivas
AdanaErdinç Akbas
TürkmenYaman Okay
Haci BabaYasar Gner

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video

No further information currently available. The film tells a personal story, but its message is broader than that, being "an amalgam" of anecdotes about various economic migrants, legal or otherwise. Personal stories in themselves are entirely valid, giving the human perspective to social trends that otherwise attract generalisation and cold statistics, but by the same token they deflect attention from the broader social and economic ramifications of large-scale migration from the third world to the wealthier, more politically stable west. Apologists for the "multicultural society" prefer to argue from the personal scale, because it is always easier to make the human case why a particular individual, or a particular family, should be absorbed into the bosom of the affluent. One does not then need to address the uncomfortable questions – about lack of birth control leading to unsustainable population growth in poorer countries, or the displacement of native working class Europeans by burgeoning immigrant populations, and the natural resentment this fosters, or the erosion of our own cultural values and norms by the supposed ideal of "cultural diversity".

Nobody ever voted for a "multicultural" society. No political party has ever stood for election on that platform, nor has it ever been put to a referendum in any country to my knowledge. Like that other great shibboleth of our times, "globalisation", it is fundamentally anti-democratic and contrary to public will. Which is not to say, of course, that it need necessarily be a Bad Thing, but it is a trend which has been foisted upon us, and particularly on the poorer classes, without even the pretense of consultation. Only the small-minded could take exception to immigrants, foreign workers, asylum claimants or tourists on the flat ground that they are foreign, or of different race. But when they arrive, in the space of a single generation, by the hundreds of thousands – and most particularly when they arrive requiring the host population to adapt itself to *their* cultural norms and beliefs – then the tail has begun to wag the dog, and cultural fragmentation, not cultural fusion, is the inevitable result. In the final analysis, *any* host culture can only absorb so many outsiders before its own cohesion and sense of self becomes compromised. Beyond that point, we're talking about reverse colonisation, or cultural imperialism by the back door. And we are well beyond that point in many parts of Northern Europe already.

None of which takes anything away from the individual tragedy of the family in this film. There is nothing contradictory about having genuine sympathy for the individual case, while rejecting the social assumptions implicit in the story (illegal immigration is OK – they're just poor folks trying to get ahead in the world). While living in the Netherlands I had a number of Turkish immigrant friends, and learned a little of their culture, and their views on ours. I have neither false illusions nor blind prejudice about the question, but it is all too easy to take a patronising liberal stance when you are not an unemployed Frenchman in Marseilles whose children attend a school where the majority of their classmates converse in another language. When his kids arrive home speaking in a broad Jamaican patois, he is entitled to think he is being made a stranger in his own native land, not necessarily by the immigrants themselves, but by the political doctrine that has devalued his own culture. No-one is making any films about *that* personal story. So even some personal stories are more "valid" than others...

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