

# Opinion/Commentary/Letters

## Europe facing minority problems

By WOLFGANG WAGNER  
HANNOVER, West Germany — We here in Western Europe like to think that we, in contrast to Americans, have no minority problems. But in fact we do — and the problems could become worse.

Our minorities are the Greeks, Turks, Yugoslavs, Spaniards, Italians and other southern Europeans as well as North Africans who were invited to emigrate north to perform the kinds of jobs that Germans, British, French, Swiss and Scandinavians, with their more middle-class inclinations, refuse to handle.

They became ditch-diggers, garbage collectors, coal miners, street cleaners, waiters and the like. Most of them learned only enough of our languages to take orders.

These emigrants were politely termed "guest workers" when they first arrived, since they were desperately needed during the labor shortages that developed in Western Europe's industrial countries during the boom years of the 1960s.

With the recession, however, they have become a burden. Many have lost their jobs, but cannot return to their native lands, where unemployment is even more critical. Those who accept welfare benefits, to which they are entitled, sometimes provoke the enmity of local taxpayers. Those who continue at menial jobs often incur the resentment of the local jobless.

Thus we are beginning to understand, to some degree at least, the sort of tensions that exist in parts of the United States, where the plight of underprivileged minorities is acute.

This situation could become aggravated in the future with the extension of European integration, which provides for the free movement of peoples across borders. For unlimited numbers of emigrants from the poor areas of the continent could flow without restrictions to the richer industrial cities of the north.

So Western Europe may eventually resemble the United States in the sense that urban ghettos could develop on a broad scale. Unlike U.S. ghettos, which are mostly populated by black Americans, ours would be filled with foreigners.

The different countries of Western Europe are trying to cope with these problems in different ways. But getting rid of the alien workers is not easy, especially when they were welcomed with such fanfare at the start.

Switzerland, which once had the highest proportion of emigrants in Europe, has been slowly pushing them out under drastic laws that make life difficult for all foreigners. In Britain, where unemployment is serious, alien workers mainly come from Commonwealth countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean, and

their presence has recently sparked race riots. All the British have done until now has been to limit fresh immigration.

West Germany, whose economy continues to be relatively vigorous, has been a paradise for southern Europeans. But unemployment here is also growing, particularly among teenagers, and the hope is that the ranks of the foreign workers will thin out over time. That, however, is only a hope.

The negotiations over full Greek membership in the Community may drag on, but they are likely to be successful. When that happens, there will be no barrier to Greek emigration, and their influx into West Germany, Britain and the other northern nations is bound to be heavy.

The Turkish case is even more significant. Turkey, which has a

soaring birth rate, is extremely poor. Its population, now 50 million, will probably double by the end of the century. To vast numbers of Turks, therefore, Western Europe's industrial cities look like Eldorado.

Turkey, like Greece, is already an associate member of the European Community. Under a special agreement, the free movement of Turks into other nations of the Community will be achieved "step-by-step" over a ten-year period. After that, no restrictions will remain.

With all this, then, we seem to be approaching something akin to the United States of Europe — which may have more of the headaches than the advantages of the United States of America.

Wagner is editor of the Hannoverische Allgemeine Zeitung, the Hannover daily.



### Slouch by Jim Earle



## Carter's 'tough' image eroded slightly

WASHINGTON — For Jimmy Carter, the visible scars of the Sorensen affair had healed even before he stood on the inaugural platform to take his oath as President. But inside the Capitol Building, it has contributed to a view of Carter which contains the seeds of serious future problems.

That view, in plain terms, is that Carter can be muscled without risk. It is an opinion that most of Carter's intimates think is dead-wrong. As the new President once said, "Most people, when they get to know me, have decided that I'm tougher than is originally apparent."

But politics is as much a matter of appearance as reality. And for now, Carter is laboring under the handicap of the spreading belief that he can be easily pressured.

It did not begin that way. He came out of the election with the reputation of a tough, disciplined, even dangerous, campaigner and political fighter. By standing up to pressure from a variety of interest groups in the choice of his Cabinet,



David S. Broder

he strengthened the view that he would not be easy to push around.

But politicians were surprised when Carter did not protest some rather blatant "pal-ship" in his Cabinet members' choices of their own subordinates. They blinked at the apparent ease with which Senate Finance Committee Chairman Russell B. Long (D-La.) sold Carter on making a veteran Long aide the chief tax policy official in the Treasury.

They were surprised when Carter allowed a brief flurry of adverse

publicity — unsupported by any official charges — to reverse his intention to name his own close aide, Greg Schneiders, as White House appointments secretary.

Ironically, even the successful meeting in Plains early this month to frame the economic stimulus package contributed to a belief by some Congressional leaders that Carter was malleable.

Carter himself expressed delight, both privately and publicly, that broad agreement was reached with the House and Senate Democrats on the terms of his tax cut-public works proposal.

But several Congressional leaders told colleagues they had a different impression — that Carter was ready to accede with remarkable haste to whatever suggestions they made, notably a doubling of the public works authorization from \$2 billion to \$4 billion.

"I was surprised it was so easy," said one leading House Democrat,

who expected much more probing analysis of the expensive public works package by the new President.

It was in this context that the quick coup against Theodore C. Sorensen's nomination to head the CIA was viewed on Capitol Hill as another measure of Carter's unwillingness or inability to use his muscle.

It was not until 96 hours before Sorensen's confirmation hearing that the Carter administration got its first warning from allies in the Senate that Sorensen might be in trouble. Vice-President Walter F. Mondale intervened immediately, but Carter himself hesitated until only 48 hours remained.

He is known to have made calls to only three supposedly friendly senators, and, apparently discouraged by their cool reaction, pushed no further.

On the morning of Sorensen's scheduled hearing, Mondale con-

tinued to mount a public defense of the nomination on the NBC's Show. An hour later, Hamilton, Carter's top assistant, told the same NBC interviewers, "It is possible" Sorensen might withdraw, as, in fact, he did two hours later.

Carter's own passivity in the face of this rebuff, like his quick change of Schneiders, has created a perception the new President will have to correct.

He faces an assertive Congress well aware of its own power ready to push them as far as it can. In the space of 24 hours, Sen. Alan Cranston (Calif.) and Abraham A. Ribicoff (D-Conn.) both found occasion to state publicly, for Carter's sake, that Congress is not "going to be over and play dead."

At this early stage, Carter, surprisingly, is in need of making the same speech about the Presi-

### Many thanks to library staff

Editor: During six years of struggling painfully toward a Ph.D. in English, I haunted our library. At the same time the library was expanding and modernizing at a rate that must have been painful to control.

You'd think a painful struggle amid painful change would trigger conflicts. But not so. I have never known staff members of any other organization so cheerfully and genuinely helpful at every turn. Their consistent efficiency kept me marveling — and progressing in my research.

Often I would simply be standing with a puzzled look when I couldn't find what I needed, a library worker would approach, and presto, he or she would guide me out of my puzzlement. Half the time I didn't even have to ask for the help I needed. This is a public letter of gratitude.

—Bill Harrison, '76

### British control guns by requiring licenses and reason for ownership

LONDON — We here in Britain are astonished and often baffled by the controversy over gun controls in the United States. For our own regulations have proved so effective for more than a half-century that we cannot quite understand why the issue should still be the subject of debate elsewhere.

This is not to suggest that laws that function in one society will necessarily work in another. Yet, as we observe the ravages caused by the proliferation of weapons in the United States, we cannot help but believe that Americans ought to share the basic premise of our gun legislation — that violence is directly attributable to the availability of firearms.

British law on the matter is predicated on the simple principle that possession of a weapon is a privilege rather than a right. Licenses are granted by the police, who register all guns, and it is up to applicants to justify their motives for ownership rather than an obligation of the authorities to explain their reasons for refusal.

Applicants for a weapon of any kind must first fill in a three-page form, which requires among other things the guarantee that the gun will be stored out of the reach of burglars. The applicant must also produce evidence that he has never been convicted of a criminal offense or suffered from mental disorder. He can be denied a license as well if he has a record of alcoholism or even heavy drinking.

Next, the applicant will be interviewed by a police officer, who is also likely to conduct an investigation among the would-be gun owner's neighbors and friends in order to collect information on his background. Any "character defect" can prompt a rejection of his request for a license.

Finally, the applicant must persuade the police that his possession of a weapon is necessary, and this is not easy. Gun collectors and members of approved rifle clubs are generally given approval, on condition that their weapons are kept in se-

### Readers' forum

Guest viewpoints, in addition to Letters to the Editor, are welcome. All pieces submitted to Readers' forum should be:

- Typed triple space
  - Limited to 60 characters per line
  - Limited to 100 lines
- Submit articles to Reed McDonald 217, College Station, Texas, 77843. Author's name and phone number must accompany all submissions.

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