

12 Million Guest Workers and Ex-Colonials

45.22

Immigration: The American Problem Comes to Europe

Today Europeans face a social and economic challenge that is far from new to Americans: the problem of assimilating millions of recent immigrants. Over the past two decades, at least twelve million southern Europeans, Asians, and Africans, comprising a kind of migrant proletariat, have arrived in northern industrial Europe. The question of whether and how they can be "integrated" into their host cultures and societies is much debated in those countries. Meanwhile, pressures are building up around the conflicting values of longtime residents and newcomers, and no satisfactory escape valve has been found, according to two Pacific News Service editors who have been reporting from Europe on immigration and minority issues. The following report by Frank Viviano and Frank Browning is based on articles they filed earlier this year while on assignment under a Fund grant.

FOR MOST OF THIS CENTURY, the conflicts resulting from massive immigration were regarded by other developed countries as an "American problem." Indeed, Europe reaped substantial benefits from the phenomenon—and tacitly encouraged the westward flow of its poorly skilled, disenfranchised, and often politically restless millions into labor markets across the Atlantic which long seemed insatiable.

But the American problem gradually became a global problem after World War Two, though recognition of its expanded scope lagged far behind the change. The war's human toll left an enormous shortage in the workforce available to meet the task of rebuilding shattered industrial infrastructures. Japan alone undertook this task exclusively with its own citizenry. Elsewhere, and particularly in Western Europe, rebuilding was accompanied by an unprecedented influx of foreign "guest workers," mostly from the developing countries of the Mediterranean Basin. The net gain in immigrant population, moreover, was augmented by other waves set in motion by the dismantling of the empires of Great Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and, later, Portugal.

Between 1960 and 1974, when the tide was at its strongest, the member states of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) issued residence and work permits for some 11.6 million immigrants. By 1980, the number of foreign residents had reached 4.2 million in France, 4.5 million in the Federal Republic of Germany, 538,000 in the Netherlands, 422,000 in Sweden, and just

under a million in Switzerland. Millions more made a "South to North" move within their own countries—Sicilians to Turin and Milan, Bretons to Paris, Scots-Irish from Ulster to Manchester and Liverpool. The cumulative effect was a social challenge that few Europeans had foreseen, aggravated by economic stresses that began growing early in the 1970s and would reach crisis levels in the 1980s.

In response came a unilateral decision by the European industrialized nations, implemented virtually everywhere by 1975, to close the era of immigration. But that decision failed to come to grips with the human and cultural legacy left behind: in 1983 a deeply troubled series of nations-within-nations stretches from the Baltic to the Pyrenees—a Yugoslavia in Sweden, a Turkey in the Federal Republic of Germany, a West Indies in the Netherlands, a North Africa in France, an India and Pakistan in Britain, a Sicily in Switzerland.

Nowhere are the paradoxes of this legacy more acute, or its many contradictions further from resolution, than in the crisis of Europe's "second generation," the children of its immigrant millions.

The Disaffection of the Second Generation

It is in France that the dilemma of "the second generation" has claimed the most serious attention. That is in part because of the inexhaustible Gallic preoccupation with cultural self-identity, the endless dialogue over what it means to be French. Yet therein lies the challenge of the burgeoning

second generation, who by their visible presence are an affront to the unity of an historically homogeneous French culture. The demographic data dramatize the scope of the problem. In the last 20 years alone the total number of foreigners living in France has doubled, from just over 2 million in 1962 to nearly 4.3 million today, comprising 8 percent of the population. In the coming 20 years, that foreign population will grow steadily younger: current government projections indicate that some 60 percent of foreigners in the year 2000 will be under the age of 25.

While they may speak the language fluently, these children of immigration seldom identify themselves as French. They are often racially marked—as North Africans or West Indians—and they are frequently jobless. (In a Lyons industrial suburb of 30,000 people, half the population is of foreign extraction; half of them are under the age of 25, and their unemployment rate runs 80 percent.) Increasingly they live in physical ghettos on the periphery of large cities, often the *villes nouvelles* constructed in the 1960s and 1970s specifically to house the flood of foreign workers.

Typical is La Courneuve, a sprawling complex just north of Paris composed of two bare towers called “Le 4,000 Nord” and “Le 4,000 Sud” because each building contains that many box-like flats. Parisians advise visitors not to intrude into the complex for fear they will be robbed or attacked, just as in New York the middle class avoids Bedford-Stuyvesant or the South Bronx. At the ground level windows are broken. Heroin is easily available in the adjacent parking lot. There is no cafe within a mile. And the

young, dark-skinned Frenchmen who live in the complex say they feel thoroughly cut off: they are cut off from work, they are cut off from social integration with young, white French, and even more poignantly they are cut off often from their own heritage.

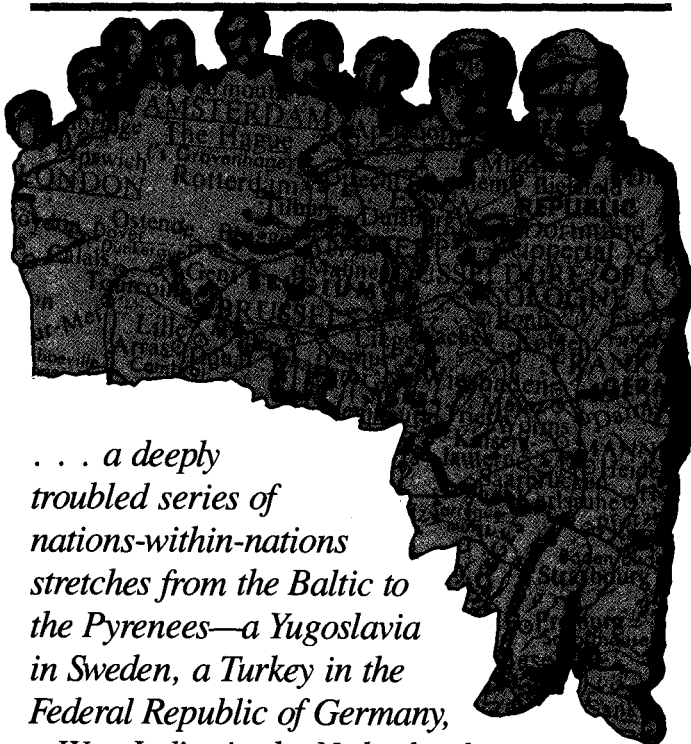
They exist, in the French phrase, *entre les deux chaises*, neither really Algerians or Moroccans or Antillaise, nor French citizens. Not too surprisingly, they are regarded as dangerous threats to respectable native French who fear that they are responsible for recent rises in juvenile crime and violence. Brought into France as their parents’ incidental baggage, they now present themselves not as servants, not as temporary labor, not as the exotic *boulevardiers* of the cosmopolitan scene, but as Frenchmen with full title to the rights and privileges of the state. The result is that even on the left one hears subtle racial complaints. Just as the arbiters of linguistic purity complain against the intrusion of *franglais*, so many others rail against the disintegration of cultural purity. As a writer in *Le Monde* noted recently, it is no longer rare to hear comments like the following at gatherings of even the most enlightened: “They are occupying our schools, there are too many of them in our resorts, they are taking over our neighborhoods.”

France, of course, is hardly alone. Similar dilemmas face Germany, where nearly 40 percent of the country’s 4.5 million foreigners are under 26. In tolerant Holland, the right-wing Nederlandse Volksunie party has called for the expulsion of all colored immigrants and foreign workers. Even in Sweden—where half the 200,000 immigrants are under 25—riots broke out last summer as gangs of Stockholm youths attacked a gathering of young Turks. Their message: Keep Sweden for the Swedes.

The depressed economies that pervade all of Europe only intensify the conflict surrounding the second generation. Unemployment for the adult native-born population hovers around 10 percent, but for adult immigrants it is twice that, and for the second generation it runs above 60 percent in many industrial locales. Moreover, the birthrate among immigrant or ex-colonial populations tends to be much higher than for natives, leading some analysts to project an ever-widening gap in years to come. In Rotterdam, for example, the immigrant birthrate is from three to five times that of the Dutch. Already one of every three babies born is to parents from Turkey, Morocco, or Suriname. Should these trends continue in Holland’s largest city, the non-Dutch population could reach 25 to 30 percent by the year 2000.

Cultural habits of the newcomers, compounded by poverty, are putting ever more stress on the traditional Dutch commitment to tolerant assimilation. The black Surinamese, for example, come to Holland from a tropical peasant culture where the disciplined work habits of the stalwart Dutch business world are virtually unknown. For many of the Surinamese the adult Dutch seem a dreary, soulless lot whose children rebel by going to Amsterdam to become drug-crazed squatters.

Nowhere does there seem to be any ready solution to the troubles facing the second generation. Dutch government policy seems more ready now to acknowledge that assim-



. . . a deeply troubled series of nations-within-nations stretches from the Baltic to the Pyrenees—a Yugoslavia in Sweden, a Turkey in the Federal Republic of Germany, a West Indies in the Netherlands, a North Africa in France, an India and Pakistan in Britain, a Sicily in Switzerland.

ilation is neither likely nor desirable even if economic equity is essential. In France, the ministries of youth, justice, and leisure have embarked upon a number of programs intended to enhance "social insertion," but increasingly the immigrant groups themselves have suggested that it is the very definition of French culture that must itself change, that native French culture and the immigrant heritage must together invent a new French identity.

Taken altogether, these second generations pose what is surely the most profound challenge to the democratic and cultural stability of Western Europe in at least several centuries. As the Swiss author and social critic Max Frisch expressed it, "We called for workers and there came human beings."

Ex-Emigrants Bring Savings and Problems Home

In sharp contrast with the one-directional "safety valve" effect which normally governed relations between immigrant native lands and 19th century America, mounting pressures attend both sides of the emigration relationship in contemporary Europe.

The Italian South presents a graphic case in point. The combination of recession and more restrictive laws in Northern Europe has terminated the 25-year period of continuous immigration which most recently drained Italy of her young, and for the first time in memory "emigrati" are now flooding back, at an estimated rate of 90,000 per year. They are bringing fundamental changes and unanticipated problems with them.

Equipped with imported skills, tastes, and financial resources, returned immigrants are building what amounts to a separate world in their old hometowns and villages. The consequences include growing divisions between non-emigrants and ex-emigrants, and the emergence of a dangerously fragile economic bubble. The impact is being felt not only in Italy, but in Portugal, North Africa, Turkey, and Yugoslavia, where significant numbers of guest workers are also returning to their native lands.

Almost everywhere in the Mediterranean, these developments can be visibly measured in a rash of outsized and often garish homes that Sicilians call "immigrant villas." Savings from industrial employment in the North have allowed thousands of immigrants to begin building such dream houses long in advance of their return. But what makes them possible as well are the low costs and wages in hometowns like Terrasini, a village perched above the Gulf of Castellamare 20 miles west of Palermo.

"Think of what it means to this economy, where the average person makes 8 million lire (\$5,500) per year, when one of our immigrants builds a 100 million lire (\$70,000) house," observes village clerk Grazia Zappa. "It drives all the prices up. It makes people change their ideas about what a decent wage is. It makes it very difficult for those who never left to continue living here." Behind all of the house-building, says Zappa, is a "different way of looking at the world, a way that people bring home from the North even if they say the old-fashioned things are what they want."

Brought into France as their parents' incidental baggage, they now present themselves not as servants, not as temporary labor, not as the exotic boulevardiers of the cosmopolitan scene, but as Frenchmen with full title to the rights and privileges of the state.



In 1982, according to Zappa, 90 of Terrasini's 1,500 overseas citizens came back, most of them to open shops selling "modern" goods, or to go into businesses related to "modern" lifestyles. In a population of 8,000, their influence carries a great deal of weight. And to a surprising extent, their economic activity is focused on each other, or on the foreign tourists for whom they serve as seasonal intermediaries. One common pattern, say economists, is for returnees to employ other returnees in the relatively skilled positions required for building new homes according to northern standards, while non-emigrants are channeled into an unskilled day-labor force which offers little hope for self-improvement.

As Grazia Zappa points out, "it cannot last forever. Already some of the immigrant villas are being abandoned by people who can't afford to keep living that way" after savings from the North run out. Nevertheless, as long as a steady stream of returnees does keep washing in, the hardest workers among their immediate predecessors are able to maintain some semblance of the material life they left behind in Germany or Switzerland: automobiles, clothes, their own large homes. In the process, the distance between the emigrants and their stay-at-home cousins only increases.

Such strains may seem inconsequential in themselves, but they are added to longstanding tensions in places which, like the Italian South, are already troubled by social confusion and violence. This year, an estimated 85,000 Turks and Yugoslavs will repatriate from Germany alone, return-

ing to dangerously unstable nations. "The greatest problem facing Portugal today is how to re-absorb more than 500,000 immigrants from the past seven years," says Lisbon lawyer and journalist Antonio Santos.

Conflicts in Values and Disparities in Treatment

Ironically, what lies behind many returning emigrants is the same dilemma they provoke at home: an acute conflict in values. Economics may offer a root explanation for the impatience of the North to be rid of its now-superfluous guests, but economics is far from the sole element in today's bitter anti-immigrant sentiment or the restrictive government policies it has encouraged. In effect, the sheer presence of 12 to 15 million immigrants is simply out of synch with the basic vision of the "good life" that well-meaning—even idealistic—northern Europeans have cultivated for a generation.

Under the leadership of the various social democratic parties that have dominated northern politics for 25 years, social guarantees have become the common rule in Europe, especially in the job market. Unions, employers, and government have worked together to establish among the world's highest standards for job site conditions, hours, and wages.

Immigrants, with typically larger families, more pressing immediate needs, and financial obligations in their native lands, have been willing to forego such guarantees. The fear is frequently voiced that the entire structure of workplace standards has thus been jeopardized. "To make social guarantees effective in France, we must extend them to everyone who works here," says Alain Delpont, chief advisor to the French secretariat of state for immigration.

Socialists in France and Social Democrats in Germany have pushed for a complex network of laws designed to protect what the modern world regards as basic human rights. But many immigrants have been raised in societies where the patriarchal family is the operative central unit of government, and where concepts like children's and women's rights are unknown. "Western society has moved a long way toward overcoming inequities in such areas as relations between men and women," points out Barbara John, the West Berlin Senate's commissioner for immigrants. "There is a danger that the old world's way of handling these matters can disturb truly progressive norms and values."

The average French Socialist or German Social Democrat is well educated, reasonably affluent, employed as a skilled worker or professional, and equipped with a world view and lifestyle that reflect these conditions. By contrast, foreign workers are found in relatively low-pay, low-skilled occupations, and their children seldom receive more than a rudimentary education. Indeed, a 1980 study in Germany found that nearly 37,000 immigrant children had received no formal education at all in the previous year.

"Disparities between the situations of national and foreign pupils in education are persisting and in fact are liable to increase," concluded an unpublished study of the problem compiled last year by an international agency. The result, it predicted, would be severe long-term handicaps to

"subsequent progress and social integration" in general.

It is while caught on the horns of this dilemma that social democrats across Europe have gradually endorsed a principle that was once associated primarily with right-wing or racist politics. "The trend everywhere is rigorously to oppose any new immigration at all," says demography analyst Gianpiero Rellini of the OECD.

"Our intention is to keep the door shut tight," confirms France's Alain Delpont, "and to do everything in our power to improve conditions for those who are already inside our borders." Accordingly, the Mitterrand government launched a highly publicized effort last year to legalize the status of undocumented workers, which added some 150,000 new names to the roster of 4.2 million legal immigrants already in France.

Nevertheless, to make good on its "closed door" promise, Paris also instituted a "Third World Visa," a special permit for short-term visits by citizens of nations in Latin America and Africa, which is not required of tourists from the developed countries. Coming from the same Socialist government that called for a more open international economic order at the Cancun North-South conference only seven months earlier, the new visa requirements struck many on the French left as grossly hypocritical.

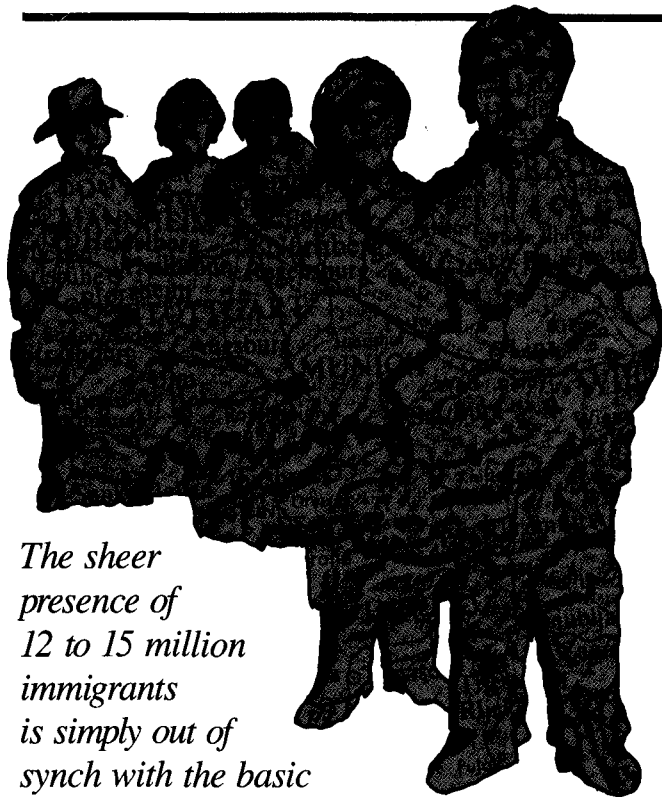
Similar reactions have greeted a German plan to offer financial inducements, in the form of pension and unemployment payments, to immigrants who will agree to repatriate. Aimed largely at Germany's two million Turkish residents, the scheme was launched under former Social Democratic Chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Despite her own misgivings about differences in social values, West Berlin's Barbara John is among those who are dismayed by the payment idea. "We ought to be helping people who are now in Germany to integrate themselves successfully into our society, instead of trying to force them out," she says.

No Workable Common Definition of Integration

"Integration," however, is at the very heart of the problem. Its meaning is subject to many definitions, ranging from the wholesale absorption of foreign cultures into a homogeneous national whole, to movement toward something like an American-style cultural pluralism. A workable common definition, one that merges the needs of hosts and guests alike, has not emerged in the context of a European debate over immigration that often exceeds its American counterpart in vitriolic content.

The most striking evidence that social integration remains a distant dream lies in the abysmal record of northern Europe's "citizenship campaigns." Last year in West Berlin, for example, such a campaign was aimed at the 30,000 of the city's 120,000 Turkish inhabitants who are now eligible to become West German citizens. The effort netted exactly 50 applicants.

Implicit in this figure is a growing hostility toward northern European life among the region's immigrants—a hostility that sends some on the road back South, keeps others in a state of legal and social limbo, and leaves northerners



The sheer presence of 12 to 15 million immigrants is simply out of synch with the basic vision of the 'good life' that well-meaning—even idealistic—northern Europeans have cultivated for a generation.

perplexed. "What puzzles me about their unhappiness is that our guest workers have some of the best wages and benefits in the world," remarks one Berlin official.

Clearly, something more than economics accounts for the immigrants' reluctance to integrate, just as something more than economics accounts for the desire of the native-born to be rid of their foreign-born neighbors. In both instances, it is a matter of values; in both instances, the impossibility of turning back the clock—or of mounting truly satisfactory repatriation schemes—makes the incentive for a conciliatory approach enormous.

But there is little reason to believe, based on the available evidence, that such an approach is in the offing. In fact, it might be argued that European immigrants are instead being asked to accept the ultimate terms of the American "melting pot"—total assimilation—without any of the support mechanisms that helped generations of immigrants to the United States survive the ordeal. The most important of these mechanisms is the network of "old world" cultural links—the food stores, shops, and other bastions of popular life that gave the classic U.S. immigrant ghetto its peculiar flavor.

Their absence is almost startling in such places as West Berlin's Kreuzberg district, an area of pre-War apartment buildings adjacent to the Berlin wall near Checkpoint Charlie that shelters 40,000 Turkish and Yugoslav residents. It houses the Federal Republic of Germany's densest concentration of foreigners, but Kreuzberg offers few of the exotic street scenes that were once synonymous with immigrant

life. Indeed, it seems less an immigrant ghetto than a cultural desert—neither German nor Turk nor Yugoslav. While dozens of stores that once served a predominantly German clientele have moved out with their old customers, virtually no immigrant enterprises have replaced them.

The vast majority of immigrants, in fact, are legally prohibited from opening stores. Their passports specifically exclude the legal "right of establishment" necessary to launch a private business.


"The general opinion among Germans is that we asked for and needed workers, not entrepreneurs," explains Berlin commissioner-for-immigrants Barbara John. "Personally I don't believe that immigrants should remain workers if they have the energy to create their own employment opportunities. But at present the laws make it very, very difficult. The permits are only for dependent labor." As in the United States and France, adds John, the ideal of cultural pluralism is under severe attack in Germany: "Our official policy is to promote diversity as a good thing...but the German population is not well prepared for a multi-cultural society."

Integration, in other words, must mean "strictly on German terms," and the citizenship figures for eligible immigrants indicate that guest workers simply are not buying. Yet despite their deep resentment of the situation, they cannot return to Turkey or Yugoslavia, either; current economic conditions there make Germany's 10 percent unemployment rate seem insignificant. Hence, Kreuzberg's empty streets and shuttered stores graphically reflect the limbo in which most of the past two decades' immigrants are effectively trapped.

The dilemma is by no means limited to Germany. While France has had much longer experience with immigration, a massive influx from North Africa in the 1960s and 1970s has led to a hardening of French attitudes, even in culturally tolerant Paris. And French law, like German law, prohibits most recent newcomers from entering private business.

Paradoxically, immigrants who arrived in Europe under the worst of circumstances are in some instances experiencing the smoothest transition: those admitted under refugee status are normally guaranteed the same rights as citizens, including the "right of establishment." The impact is readily apparent in communities like the Porte d'Italie district of Paris, or the London suburb of Southall, where, respectively, Southeast Asian and East-African Asian refugees have created thriving local economies based on their traditional needs and tastes.

"The final irony is that these people are assimilated far more readily in the end," according to OECD immigration analyst Julian Aveling. He points out that in Sweden, where cultural supports for guest workers are deliberately encouraged, the rate of application for citizenship among Turks and Yugoslavs is much higher than in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Along with refugees, however, guest workers in Sweden comprise but a drop in the bucket of Europe's huge immigrant population. The real test of diversity's chances lies with the vastly more numerous guest workers of Germany, France, and Switzerland—an estimated 10 million people. 

Consensus on NATO Lacking

The International Alignment of Socialist Spain

The 1982 national elections brought a socialist government to power in Spain for the first time. Last March the Fletcher School of Tufts University convened a two-day conference to explore the changes in relationships that might ensue between Spain's new political leadership and the Western community of nations. The following article is adapted from the presentation of Sr. Antonio Sánchez-Gijón, director of Madrid's Institute for International Affairs, who traveled to Boston for the conference under a Fund grant.

THE NEW SPANISH GOVERNMENT'S most articulate spokesman on diplomatic and defense matters, Foreign Minister Fernando Morán, has said that Spain can achieve "an area of autonomy that will prevent its reduction to satellite status and make possible a dynamic and original foreign policy in consonance with the vitality of Spanish society." But, in its first months, the foreign policy of the government led by the Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) has been subjected to criticism, misinterpretation, and even misrepresentation.

A certain semantic carelessness is partly responsible for this state of affairs. By threatening to maintain an equidistant position between the two blocs and to join France in diplomatic initiatives in the Mediterranean and Latin America, and by stating an unwillingness to wait for membership in the European Economic Community past 1985, top Socialist officials have managed to give a rough-hewn appearance to Spanish foreign policy. By turns it has seemed negative, revisionist, and pretentious.

In fact, two constant principles underlie the definitions of international policy framed by the Socialist leaders, especially party head and Prime Minister Felipe González and Foreign Minister Morán. If defined in clear policy terms, these principles could perfectly well serve to orientate the search for the broad national consensus that would permit Spain to act with greater reassurance and freedom internationally.

Spain Unwilling to Be Anyone's Satellite

The first of these principles is the need for Spain to attain the maximum possible degree of autonomy in the international system.

In the Socialist view, both the Franco regime and the democratic governments led by the centrists (UCD) suffered

from an international inferiority complex, which obligated them to yield to the demands of stronger powers and blocs, chiefly the Atlantic Alliance and the United States. To Socialist policymakers, Spain's strategic and diplomatic dependence reached its apogee in 1953, when agreements with the United States on military bases were signed by an internationally isolated, authoritarian regime that was markedly repressive at home and, because of its inadequate internal legitimacy, very much in need of protection from abroad. These agreements contained secret clauses giving Washington the power to use Spanish territory for the pursuit of its aims without consulting or obtaining the authorization of the Spanish government.

Over the years, thanks to arduous diplomatic negotiations, it has been possible gradually to recover part of the sovereignty that was lost. However, the price paid has been a general process of pragmatic adaptation to transnational constraints, especially in the economic and financial spheres.

Internationally, the Socialist Workers Party's final objective is to overcome the divisions of the contemporary world into opposing politico-military blocs. It campaigned last year on a promise to work toward greater autonomy for Spain by gradually separating it in military terms from the North Atlantic bloc. No sooner had the González government been formed last December than it signaled its willingness to forego political solidarity with its NATO allies by refusing to sign the final communique of the NATO Council in December. "We consider it more honest not to underwrite the spirit of a document which, *inter alia*, would involve the sanctioning of the installation of new missiles in Europe," declared a spokesman.

A few days earlier, during his investiture speech, Prime Minister González announced that the government would reexamine Spain's relations with the United States and uphold the campaign pledge to hold a referendum on NATO