

Letters to the Editor

See us at the polls

To the editor:
Last Saturday I was one of thousands of people who marched on Washington. It was an experience that will live forever in my memory. It was a reaffirmation (and a badly needed one for me) that people still care about one another and issues that concern us all.

One of the stark differences between the 1963 march and the 1983 march was that in 1963 people marched on Washington in fear, but with a resolve to try and correct an injustice to a race of people. Persons supporting this effort also marched in fear, to march on Washington in 1963 was to confront and conquer the reality and real possibility of physical injury or death. In 1963 they came asking, asking for equality.

In 1983 they came demanding and unafraid. They were the unemployed poor, the working poor and, for the first time in history, the middle class poor, and they all had the same message for President Reagan: In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave us a dream. You have given us a nightmare, you asked us

to stay the course, you didn't tell us that dessert would be unemployment, foreclosures and bread lines. You give us bombs and ask us to pretend it is bread.

You left the White House so you wouldn't have to see us but even at your California ranch, you can't help but hear us. It is impossible to ignore 300,000 voices saying see us march; see us demonstrate and come election time, see us at the polls, after which you can spend all the time you like at your California ranch.

MRS. MARY B. WILLIAMS
57 Jackson St.
Lyons

Cheers for Sessler

To the editor:

Cheers for Waterloo Town Supervisor LaVerne Sessler on recovery from illness and his decision to continue in office (*Times*, Aug. 27).

Also for his good common sense not to bankrupt Seneca County policing the

women protesters. Certainly if the demonstrators are allowed use of Sampson State Park, the responsibility rests with the state of New York.

The sheriff may not be in charge of an operation of this nature but it would save Seneca County taxpayers a lot of money next year.

VINCENT SCAGLIONE
180 Fall St.
Seneca Falls

Meaning of patriotism

To the editor:

Since my childhood days, I have always cherished the American flag and what it stands for.

Why Betsy Ross made the Stars and Stripes, why Francis Scott Key wrote our stirring national anthem, why the Declaration of Independence was written, why great Americans gave their lives in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and World War I, gave me youthful insight of our American heritage.

After completing 32 months overseas service in World War II and visiting the

parents of my buddy who died in front of my eyes in Italy, I realized the true meaning of patriotism.

Today I can reverently and proudly stand when the "Star Spangled Banner" is played, for I know that when "Taps" is sounded and I am laid to rest alongside my deceased buddies, be they privates or generals, history will record that we all played our part in making America — the land of the free and the home of the brave.

We asked not what our country could do for us but what we could do for our country.

RICHARD E. WELCH
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They should pay for it

To the editor:

I have been wondering just how long it was going to take the United States government to ask the women who have been defacing government property and

causing so much havoc, "to pay for it."

Surely anyone as worried about, as devoted to, and as concerned about this country as they claim to be would never waver on their right to pay for what they believe in.

They have made a farce of feminine dignity, a mockery of our GIs who tried not to hurt them and a host of friends in foreign countries who look to people like them to pinpoint our arsenals for them.

Now if they can find out for our enemies just where each type of weapon is, they will surely save a lot of other countries the trouble of looking for themselves.

Perhaps if nuclear bombs start falling over here they will surrender their brooms so our servicemen can defend us with them; that is, if they don't wear them out going home on them.

My three sons have nearly 65 years of service among them and I have a right to voice my opinion.

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Pershing II worries hit a once-content German town

By FREDERICK KEMPE
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SCHWABISCH GMUEND, West Germany — It will be a long time before people here forget the day American soldiers sabotaged the electric-power supply.

In May, two GIs in faded jeans and T-shirts called for a taxi from a local restaurant. They told the driver, 23-year-old Roland Zink, that they were special-forces men flown in from South Carolina for war games and that their job was to play the role of terrorists out to sabotage the power supply. A U.S. Army spokesman says the goal was to test military security against such attacks.

Eager for adventure, the young German driver took them on. They twice drove by the central transformer station, with the soldiers snapping photos. On

'Better a Pershing in the garden than an SS-20 on the roof.'

the third pass, one soldier leaped from the taxi and hurled a smoke grenade over the fence. But the ersatz bomb, which was supposed to produce only a black cloud, burst near a contract-relay point, melted it and knocked out the town's lights.

Good Tip but... "I had quite enjoyed it all until that happened," remarks Mr. Zink, who regards his role as accomplice to "saboteurs" as a high point in his taxi-driving life. What's more, the soldiers sweetened his day with a \$15 tip for the \$35 fare. "I'd love to do something like that again," he says, "but I think American commanders should use better judgment next time about the targets they choose."

So probably do many of the 60,000 other residents of Schwabisch Gmuend and the adjoining bedroom village of Mutlangen. This area is home for more than 2,000 of the 5,000 troops of the 56th Field Artillery Brigade and for 36 of the 108 Pershing I nuclear missiles already in West Germany. Moreover, it will be one of three West German bases for the faster, more accurate and more lethal Pershing IIs scheduled to arrive in December.

For more than 30 years, the affluent, conservative people in this sleepy community of half-timbered houses and neat flower boxes lived placidly beside the U.S. military in the belief that the soldiers were helping keep Central Europe quiet. For 20 years, they coexisted even with nuclear weapons, though many of the residents didn't know that such devices were here. But now, a new disquiet is creeping in.

People are starting to question American defense policies that they once tacitly accepted. They aren't sure that they oppose the Pershing IIs. But they also aren't sure that they oppose antimissile demonstrators, including such luminaries as author Cuentas Grass and 66-year-old Nobel laureate Heinrich

Boell. From this Thursday through Sunday, the protesters plan to blockade the entrance to a military installation in Mutlangen that they believe will house the new missiles. About 150 demonstrators are already camping out next to the gate, and another 850 are expected to join them by Friday.

In short, the contentment and the bliss of ignorance about nuclear weapons here are being replaced by concern and the malaise of greater understanding. This change among the conservative folk of Schwabisch Gmuend reflects a similar soul-searching throughout West Germany that is disconcerting the government. Opinion surveys show that 60 percent or more of the West Germans oppose the plans to deploy new nuclear weapons if the Geneva arms-reduction negotiations should fail.

The unease in Schwabisch Gmuend and elsewhere in West Germany has been aggravated by some accidents involving Pershings. Last November, for instance, a 30-foot-long five-ton Pershing I landed in a burgher's garden here after a missile transporter's brakes failed. Another brake failure that month caused a transporter to hit a German passenger car near Karlsruhe and kill its driver.

American military officials say the 56th Field Artillery enjoys one of the best safety records around and term local apprehension unwarranted. A 56th Field Artillery public-affairs spokesman says the missile transporters, "are pretty damn safe when we move them. But whenever we have any accident, it is smeared all over the newspapers. And when people see a Pershing missile moving down the road, they do have a fear about it."

However, what has increased nervousness in Schwabisch Gmuend is that such accidents coincided with talk in Washington of limited nuclear war, talk that is especially shocking here because this is where such a war might well begin. Moreover, the glare of the world's spotlight on this area is increasing the discomfort.

"The first instinct here has been to ignore everything and trust our leaders," says Gerhard Drexel, the owner of Cafe Piano, a comfortable watering hole in Schwabisch Gmuend's center. "Now, people are being forced to wake up and have their own opinions."

Too Realistic Game?
He tells of a recent evening when three soldiers sat at a sidewalk table in front of his cafe playing Risk, a board game in which players try to conquer the world. "They announced they were going to play war, then happily went about it for several hours," Mr. Drexel says. "They became quite excited."
Local residents watching the game reacted with uncomfortable smiles and churning stomachs. "We can only shake our heads and wonder what runs through our American friends' minds," Mr. Drexel remarks. "We aren't in the Wild West. We try to live peacefully in a precarious part of the world, and they do such things as sabotage our power stations during their war games."

All this doesn't show that people here are turning against American soldiers or, necessarily, their nuclear weapons. They are just thinking about them more. In fact, the closer one gets to the an-

tipated missile site, the less people seem to oppose the weapons.

The peace movement and West German newspapers believe that the Pershings will arrive in December at an American airfield cut out of a forest beside Mutlangen — a village of 5,000 people, four butcher shops, two

'People here don't have anything against the Americans... It's only the missiles that bother us.'

bakeries, two policemen, a brewery and a pizzeria. The Army hasn't denied these reports. The missiles would rest only a hefty lobe from the Mutlangen Tennis Club and a short walk from the village's new school.

A Matter of Access

Players at the tennis club sometimes joke about how hard they might have to whack a ball to reach the airfield or to hit the low-flying planes whose roar rattles their concentration. However, their biggest worry is that the demonstrators' blockade, intended to shut off the base, might also impede their access to the five neatly groomed clay courts.

"If the Russians don't disarm, then why should we?" asks Brigitte Peters, a member of the club's board, whose birthday party at the courts was disrupted by demonstrators last Easter. "I don't want to feel like a mouse in a hole who is afraid to stick her head out for fear of the cat." She says she could sympathize with the demonstrators more if they would more loudly protest Soviet weapons as well.

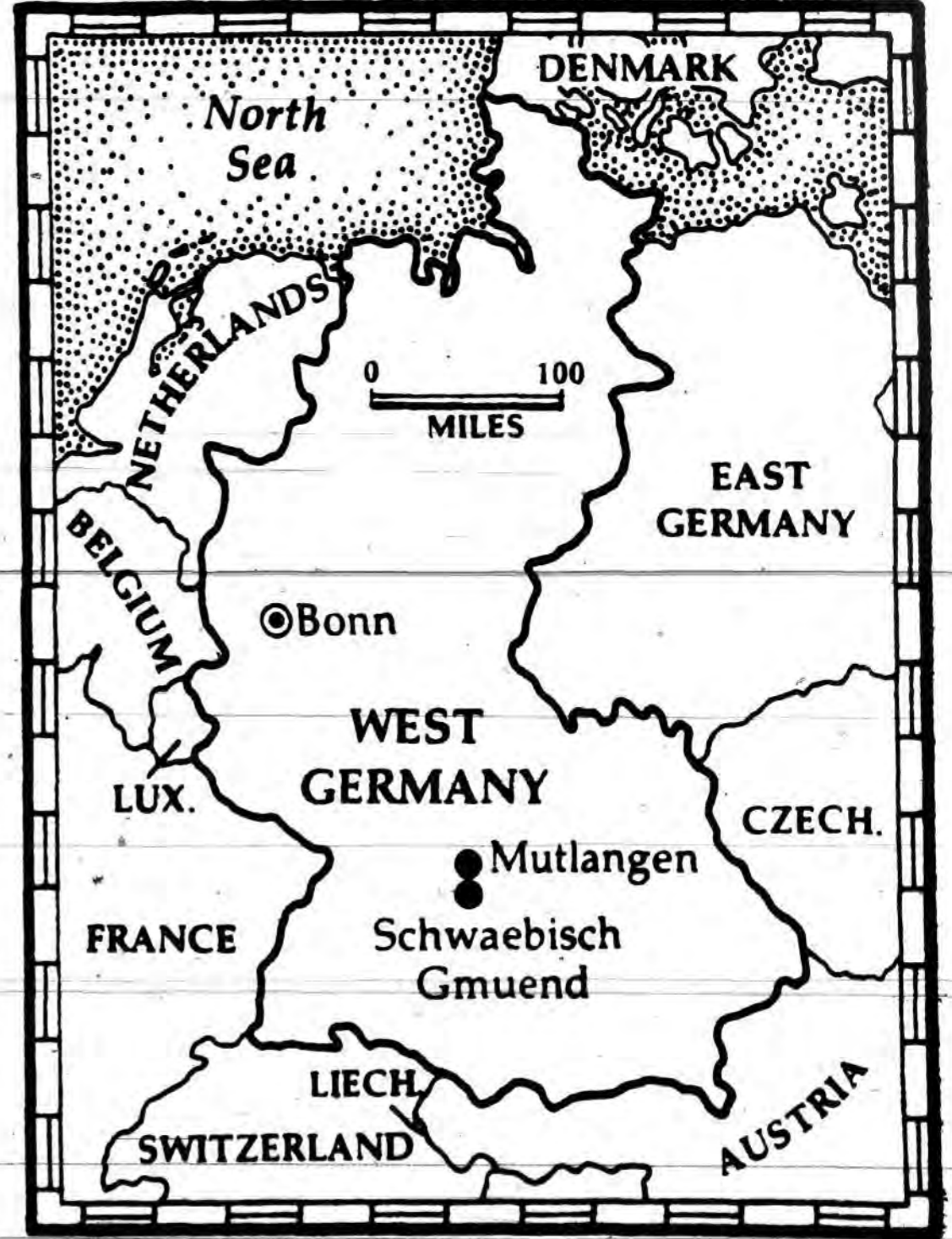
Her view reflects widespread sentiment among the middle-aged and the upper middle class here, a sentiment expressed in an oft-repeated pro-nuclear missile slogan: "Better a Pershing in the garden than an SS-20 on the roof."

What seems to worry such Germans more than the Pershings is the general state of American military vehicles, including those used to transport the missiles. This is a nation where cars are pampered like children, waxed to a shiny polish and tuned to racing perfection for runs on the autobahn.

Anxious Mayor

After the brake failure of one rocket transporter and the turning-over of another, which started an unarmed Pershing burning, Mayor Shoch of Schwabisch Gmuend wrote an urgent note to Brig. Gen. William Earl Sweet, the commander of the 56th Artillery, asking him "to take measures so that nothing like this happens anymore in this area," the mayor's spokesman, Klaus Eilhoff, says.

Soldiers themselves don't mix much with the local Germans, and when they do, they are reticent about military matters. "They usually try to change the subject," says Achim Hirzel, a co-owner of Mutlangen's only sporting-goods



Schwabisch Gmuend — one of three West German bases for the Pershing IIs scheduled to arrive in December

shop. Mr. Hirzel knows many soldiers who have joined his scuba-diving club. "People here don't have anything against the Americans. They don't cause any real trouble," he says. "It's only the missiles that bother us."

In fact, many businessmen here rely heavily on Americans for their profits. Every year, soldiers pour nearly \$2 million into the local economy. Moreover, the Army pays civilian employees, most of them West Germans, \$6 million a year in salaries. The army will also spend at least \$50 million for new buildings and to modernize barracks or offices in old, dilapidated structures, such as the former stables for Bismarck's army. German companies will get the contracts.

"We would never have opened without the Americans, and we'd probably close if they left," remarks Christian Timischl, the 23-year-old manager of a three-year-old McDonald's restaurant. He says that 30 percent of his business is done with Americans and that they are far better behaved and friendlier than the Germans. Americans are happy to discover that here, unlike the McDonald's in the U.S., they can also order a German Pilsener with their McRibs.

Posters Banned

In deference to his American clientele, Mr. Timischl won't allow local peace groups to put antimissile posters

on his walls or windows. Soldiers make up about 70 percent of the weekend business at Ma Lou, a modern but also somewhat seedy discotheque. Rainer Schuetz, the disco's manager, had declared Ma Lou off limits for several months, until September 1982, after a series of fights. He reopened after negotiations with municipal officials and the military resulted in a U.S. Army promise to repay him promptly for any future damages.

"Ninety-nine percent of the people who come here are good," he says over the blaring soul music. "But I lost a great deal of German clientele by letting Americans come here. I'm also very afraid about the fall. I'm afraid Germans might come here and provoke something."

The German-American square-dance club here seems less concerned. It is planning a Europe-wide square-dance jamboree in Schwabisch Gmuend in December, the month of missile deployment if the Geneva talks should fail. However, members of the club did at least have the foresight to change their name. Once known as the "Pershing Promenaders," they recently switched to the more innocuous title of the "Unicorn Promenaders" after the mythical animal on the town's crest.

"We wanted to disassociate from the military and reassociate with the community," says Jerry Lynn, the square-dance caller.

