

## *Dreaming of Europe*

After four years of war in the former Yugoslavia, the United States had to come, once again, to Europe's rescue. French thinker André Glucksman, writing in *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Fall 1997), explains why united action still eludes the continent.

*The return of the Americans is very paradoxical, especially in light of the fact that in 1999 the Europeans are preparing to launch a common currency, the euro. Both economically and militarily, France and Germany certainly possess the wherewithal to rise to challenges such as Bosnia. But they lack the mentality—the shared cultural ground—required for a common political agenda. . . .*

*The strategy of integrating through the euro, a good thing in itself, was conceived as a project for “this side” of Europe when the Wall came down in 1989. It didn't then, and doesn't now, take into account either the eastern or southern frontiers of that part of Europe tied together by a common currency. For 10 years we have spoken of the euro without elaborating some strategy that takes into account the changed historical circumstances and the new challenge.*

*This challenge must be met on the cultural level. So far, the requisite cultural dialogue has happened only between Germany on the one hand and the former [German Democratic Republic], the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary on the other. . . .*

*In contrast, the French live happily on in their cafés, oblivious to the dangers that exist on the other side of the fallen wall. Worried about economic competition and immigrants, they instead seek to put up new walls, not just around France but around Western Europe as a whole. Rather than remembering catastrophe, the French only remember the dream of victory over fascism. And it is a dream because—despite the fact that Charles de Gaulle gave them the right to dream—the victory was not theirs, but that of the U.S., England, and the Soviet Union.*

## *Russia's Collapsing Military*

“Disarmed and Dangerous” by Anatol Lieven, in *The New Republic* (Dec. 22, 1997),  
1220 19th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

Though the war in Chechnya is over, the casualties in the demoralized and ill-equipped Russian military continue to mount—inflicted by the enemy within. In 1996, 1,071 soldiers were murdered, mostly by other soldiers, and 543 committed suicide. The Russian navy admitted there were at least 32 suicide attempts that same year, many successful, among the officers of the Northern Fleet, which includes most of Russia's nuclear-armed submarines.

While the weakened state of its military may seem like good news to Russia's neighbors and to the West, Lieven, a correspondent for the London *Times* in the former Soviet Union from 1990 to 1996, warns that “the more anarchic the Russian military becomes, the more of a destabilizing factor it may be, both inside Russia and in the Eurasian land mass that Russia dominates.” Though politically quiescent so far, the officer corps could be tempted to take a decisive hand in the event of an extraconstitutional power struggle, and a force too weak to defend Russia

could contribute to a dangerous power vacuum in the neighborhood. Even worse, officers who are not paid regularly are more likely to peddle nuclear weapons to rogue states and terrorists.

The infamous practice of *dyedovshchina*—a form of exploitation far surpassing hazing in its cruelty—is largely to blame, Lieven says, for the wave of murders, suicides, and nervous and physical breakdowns in recent years. Lacking enough effective noncommissioned officers, even those officers with a will to do so have been unable to control the abuses. “The weakest element in our army,” one general says, “is the sergeants.”

There has been some talk in Russia of reform—of downsizing and professionalization. But the transition to a professional force of 1.2 million would require the equivalent of almost a 40 percent increase in the 1997 military budget. President Boris Yeltsin's advisers, Lieven says, reportedly greeted the reform idea with mockery, deeming it “an absolutely preposterous notion given Russia's present fiscal circumstances.”