



## Europa! Oy, Europa!

by Michael Ledeen

**Y**ou probably noticed that, as we were marching off to establish the new world order, Europe hit the fan. It shouldn't have surprised us all that much—after all, Europe's given us fascism, Communism, and two world wars in less than eighty years—but somehow we'd thought that the Europeans had outgrown that kid stuff and were ready for graduate school. Instead, no sooner do we decide that they're big guys now than they race back to the sandbox and start bashing each other over the heads with their toys. Forget about "Europe." In fact, you may have to forget about some of its biggest pieces. Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia have already joined the ranks of Rand McNally's money-makers, adding new colors to the maps. And those are only the noisy kids; back in the corner of the sandbox the little Scots, Welsh, Basques, Catalans, Corsicans, Sardinians, Sicilians, Istrians, and Sudtyrolers are practicing anthems on their harmonicas and accordions, while the Irish dance their murderous jigs by the jungle gym. And who can keep track of all the brats with the funny names, like the Ossetians?

The easiest way to understand the mess the Europeans are making is to pretend that the two world wars, and the Cold War, never happened, and we're back in about 1914. Lenin is competing with the Dadaists in Zurich for Beast of the Bourgeoisie honors, the anarchists are plotting to

assassinate monarchs all over Europe, the old empires—Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman—are laboring to hold it all together, the Balkans are seething with ethnic conflict, Germany and Italy are trying to define their destinies as the young nations of the old continent, everyone is running after real estate in Africa, and the Americans are living in blissful isolation at the other end of the world, tending to domestic affairs and hoping that the rot will not contaminate them. This is the end of the century of "total peace," the interlude between the bloody eighteenth century—which ended at Waterloo—and the century of total war. French anti-Semites are bloodied but unbowed by the exoneration of Captain Dreyfus, while German and Austrian anti-Semites gather converts, laying the groundwork for the tidal wave of racial hatred that will come after the Great War. And throughout the old con-

tinents, the merchants of death design, build, and export newer and more efficient weapons, including, for the first time, chemical weapons of mass destruction.

**S**ound familiar? The Europeans have forgotten nothing, and learned nothing. All the old hatreds are still there, and they're busy avenging real and imagined ancestors at the same time that the elegant and overpaid bureaucrats sit around the tables in Brussels, mopping up their *moûles marinières* with their crusty baguettes, pondering deeply their future as the planet's latest and greatest superpower, The New Europe. The European Community has thousands of wines, hundreds of cheeses, farmers who riot at the thought of selling their produce at market prices, and they can't find the wit or the will to stop Serbs from slaughtering Bosnians and other Serbs just next door, even though the last time the Serbs went hyper, the First World War was required to calm them down.

With unruly children like these, stern discipline is required, and the rod was not spared in the past fifty-odd years. Fear of the Soviet Union and respect for hundreds of thousands of American troops compelled the Europeans to be on good behavior, and occasionally to face reality. But no sooner did the Iron Curtain come down than they raced pell-mell into Fantasyland.

The Germans went mega-lo, assuming that their capacity to generate wealth was so great that they could painless-



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ly absorb their poor relations to the east. But unification was A Good Thing only so long as the Easterners stayed in their zone and didn't clutter up the good neighborhoods in the old Federal Republic. To keep the twain from meeting, the Westerners were prepared to pay for housing, for unemployment, for retraining, above all for immobility. This was the same policy that the Italians had so disastrously adopted for their own south, but if the Germans noticed, they probably dismissed the comparison out of hand. After all, what relevance could Italian history have for them? They should have paid attention; just as the recession reached the Rhine, they found themselves strapped for cash (when you have to fork out upwards of 150 billion Deutschemarks a year for five to ten years, you tend to get a bit short).

So, like good Europeans, they decided to spread the misery to their neighbors and raised interest rates to Valhalla, sucking up all the liquid capital in sight and funneling it eastward. This gave the rest of Europe a severe case of indigestion: they had either to raise their own interest rates (thereby strangling any hopes of economic recovery), or devalue their money (thereby wrecking the scheme for an integrated European currency). The Brits and the Italians, fancying themselves just as smart as the Germans, tried both. This quite naturally created a panic that savaged the pound sterling and the lira. Shortly thereafter the Spanish peseta and the Swedish crown followed suit, leaving monetary integration a shambles.

Monetary integration was supposed to pave the way to political unification (or at least political federation). Neither is in the cards for the near future, and right now the vision of the new Europe is so unattractive that the Swiss voted to stay out of the Common Market. But you wouldn't know it from the public rhetoric; they've become so wacky that the New Europeans have agreed to let the Danes reject the terms of integration in order to "keep them in." The Byzantines couldn't have said it any better.

Meanwhile, the barbarians at the gate want in, and this presents the New Europeans with a problem of epic proportions. From Portugal around to Italy, hundreds of thousands of impoverished Arabs and sub-Saharan Africans are clamoring for entry. The center is

besieged by refugees from ex-Yugoslavia (Germany alone has taken over a quarter of a million of these unhappy souls) and the USS-were. And the Brits have to cope with the pleas of those escaping from the unhappier reaches of the Commonwealth, from Hong Kong to India. These are all unwelcome guests, and all the West Europeans are busily passing restrictive immigration laws. Moreover, in another dramatic setback to the vision of The New Europe, there will be no elimination of customs and immigration borders at the start of '93. All of them want to be sure they keep out the unwashed.

When you've got enemies without, it's only a matter of time before you find lots of them within, and so it's not surprising to see outbreaks of other-bashing, whether it's torching Turks in Germany or mauling Moroccans or Albanians in Italy or bashing the ragheads in France. Some of the bashers have tried to give a bit of political gloss to their activities by calling themselves Nazis and dressing up in movie surplus costumes, but even the most hysterical fear-mongers are going to have trouble selling the idea that Hitler's making a comeback. In fact, the big news in Rome was that a group of young Jews had trashed the Nazis' headquarters and beaten up some of the storm troopers there, and some Jewish leaders were feeling a bit guilty about it. We are not living through the opening scenes of the rise and fall of the Fourth Reich, but we are almost certainly watching the disintegration of The New Europe.

It does not take an atomic scientist to figure out why The New Europe arrived stillborn; the major culprit is the great democratic revolution, which has thrown a spanner into the global works. As I've been arguing to these many years, the people in most countries have figured out that bureaucracy is their enemy, and that the powers of the state need to be drastically curtailed. The New Europe, whatever else it was supposed to be, would have funded several new layers of bureaucrats, provoked a metastasis of regulation, and greatly diminished individual freedom and enterprise. The New Europe looked like an acceptable idea only so long as there was a Soviet Union on the other side of the line, for one could justify a big

European state in order to protect Europeans against the big enemy. Absent the threat, The New Europe becomes much less attractive.

The second reason for the brief life of The New Europe is less pleasant: we are still in 1914, with all the centuries-old hatreds at full burn. Nationalism, presumed to have died (a few years after God was buried) en route to the new world order, has shown an unexpected vitality, along with its cousins, chauvinism and xenophobia. And that nationalism—which, with the collapse of the external threat, becomes more and more narrow in its focus—merges with the anti-state passions to produce calls for greater local autonomy (like the Catalans) or downright secession (like the Lombard League's call to saw Italy in half just north of Rome, and float the southern part down to North Africa). The map that the lunatic Woodrow Wilson drafted along with Lloyd George and Clemenceau after the First World War is undone, at long last. Hopefully we will understand that Wilson's enterprise was a colossal blunder, the result of American patrician hubris run amok.

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You can't ignore two millennia of history and just redraw the map in accordance with convenience.

The third cause of all the trouble is us. Bush and Baker never got a grip on the revolutionary nature of this period, and so, just when our moment came and the whole world looked to Washington for guidance, we abdicated. Foreign policy became personalized (as in the embarrassing "Save Gorbys" campaign), and we actually counseled Europeans to order the waves to retreat (as in the "Chicken Kiev" speech when Bush told Ukrainians to abandon their "impossible dreams" of independence). Worst of all, we failed to hector the Europeans into action when it was most desperately needed (as in the Yugoslav mess).

**I**t may be too late for us to get a grip on things European, but there is an outside chance if the new administration shows real leadership. There is—as there has been all along—every reason to do so, for our nation has proved to be more successful than their nations. We have understood two great principles upon which successful national life must rest: freedom of the individual is paramount to all but the most urgent needs of the state; and the proper basis for legitimacy is citizenship, not membership in a particular ethnic, racial, or religious group. With rare exceptions, the European nation-states have not embraced these principles. They believe that *raison d'état* is paramount in virtually all cases, and their people tend to be exceedingly homogeneous. Such variations as do exist give rise to separatist demands, which shows the premium they put on homogeneity.

If they're going to get through the current crisis—for crisis it is—the Europeans, east and west, are going to have to rethink their national identities, and move toward our more profound understanding of what makes a modern democratic society work best. It would be difficult even under optimum conditions, and the current economic problems are going to make it even harder. But it's worth a try, not least of all because, in working with them, we will inevitably remind ourselves of our own basic values. Given the Europe-envy that plagues so many of the members of our own cultural elite, we could do with a strong dose of Americanism ourselves. □



## Berkeley Barbs

*On November 30, 1992, an editorial in the Wall Street Journal brought national attention to another controversy at the University of California-Berkeley. It arose when the student editors at the Daily Californian overruled their advertising manager to reject a 12-page insert from the Berkeley Students for Life. The following contributions to the affair from Daily Cal editor-in-chief Virginia Matzek might be said to rest on the premise that diversity is bad for business in a model liberal community:*

If you're a typical *Daily Cal* reader, you're probably pro-choice, and you're definitely savvy enough to recognize an outright attempt to mislead you. And we believed that, if you picked up the *Daily Cal* and this piece of slime dropped out of it, you would wonder why we had been willing to accept money to mislead you. And we are nothing without our readers.

—Virginia Matzek, writing in the *Daily Californian*, December 2, 1992

*Matzek had written to Berkeley Students for Life on November 11, comparing their ad to one that had claimed the Holocaust didn't happen and calling it similarly "misleading and offensive." Note that she construes the word free in free speech to mean not "unrestricted" but "gratis":*

Berkeley Students for Life  
c/o Theresa Peyton  
Berkeley, CA 94704

Dear Members:

After the *Daily Cal's* refusal of your advertising insert last month, Theresa Peyton asked me to write a letter to you explaining our reasons, which I agreed to do. Unfortunately, I got distracted in the days immediately following that conversation and forgot all about my promise. I apologize for not following up immediately, and hope you will forgive the lateness of this response.

First of all, a little context: the Senior Editorial Board, made up of 11 *Daily Cal* editors ranging from editor in chief to the staff representative, has the power to interpret and enforce the corporation's advertising policy, which bans various types of ads, including "misleading" ones. Among the ads that we have regularly banned in the past are recruiting ads for the CIA, cigarette ads, Coors beer ads (because of their anti-union policies) and ads for pornographic materials. There is no ban on ads with political content, but some controversial political ads have been refused in the past. For example, we ran two full-page ads in the same day last semester, one in favor of animal rights and another defending animal research. However, a full-page ad purporting to "prove that the Holocaust was a hoax" did not pass muster.

There were several reasons for the refusal of your insert.

The first problem was the ad's format. The insert, though labeled "paid advertising" in small letters, was formulated to resemble newspaper style, with newspaper-style "stories" and graphics, and a typeface and headline style similar to that of the *Daily Cal* . . .

The fact that the advertisement was in the form of an insert was also of great concern to the editors. We frequently publish inserts of our own . . . [and] did not want readers to associate the insert with *Daily Cal*-produced news copy.

The primary reason, however, was financial. The insert was worth, approximately, \$1,600 to us in revenue, and at this paper, that's nothing to sneeze at. Nonetheless, we recognize that most of our readers, on and off campus, are pro-choice, and likely to be greatly offended by the insert. I myself was offended by what I considered overly graphic photos, misleading text, and questionable statistics.

In itself, our being offended is not reason enough to refuse the ad. But we have to be concerned about the paper's image

and its perception in the community, not least for financial reasons. The scenario we imagine was of a typical *Daily Cal* reader picking up the paper, seeing this insert drop out, and associating that point of view with the *Daily Cal*. Simply put, that is not something we can afford.

There was long and impassioned debate about "free speech" when we discussed the ad. Some of you may be thinking in terms of "censorship" and wondering how a newspaper can be in favor of the First Amendment right to free speech and yet refuse to distribute the ad.

I submit for your consideration the fact that this is not about *free* speech, but about *paid* speech. Our opinion page and guest column are open to pieces from a variety of view points about virtually any subject, provided they are well-written, topical, and not overly repetitive of other points of view previously printed in the paper. In fact, since the pro-life viewpoint (like the Republican viewpoint and the pro-death penalty viewpoint) is in the minority in Berkeley, we consider it especially important to get it into our pages. We are generally hindered in that effort by the small number of people who are willing to sign their names to that sort of thing in this town. . . .

There are many parallels here with the "Holocaust hoax" ad. It, too, was in newspaper style with a headline font that matched ours exactly. It, too, was regarded as misleading and offensive by the staff. And it, too, was judged to be paid speech that we didn't want to accept money for. . . .

Sincerely yours,  
Virginia Matzek  
Editor in Chief

*Editors' note: On December 4, 1992, Express, a Berkeley weekly, reported: "In hindsight, Matzek feels that she was set up by Berkeley Students for Life president Theresa Peyton, who, she says, repeatedly insisted on a written explanation for the rejection of her ad." □*