

Publications

Cheers and Fears: The EU at 50

by Stanley Hoffman

The following is a summary by Professor Hoffmann of his plenary speech at the 2000 Conference of Europeanists in Chicago on April 2, 2000.

The first part of my address dealt with the past. It emphasized the contrast between the wounded and divided continent of 1950 and the European situation fifty years after the launching of the Schuman plan. Half a century is a long enough period for testing theories of integration. I reviewed critically Ernst Haas' "modelization" of Jean Monnet; the intergovernmental theories that developed in reaction against Haas (such as Hoffmann in the 60s, Andrew Moravcsik in the 90s); and the neo-realists' dire forecasts about Europe moving "back to the future" after the end of the cold war. I then presented my own interpretation: integration's dynamics have been a mix of federalist and intergovernmental processes, inspired by a blend of passion and interests. The bargaining that is the EU's constant characteristic is buttressed by a common normative vision which has made the conciliation of divergent interests easier and prevented setbacks from turning into routs. The significance of these dynamics goes beyond the case of the EU; I tried to show that they help us see the insufficiencies of current theories of cooperation and the flaws of rational choice. Today the EU is a (slow) success story, and a baroque construction - less than a federation, more than a confederation; indeed, it can be seen as a "quasi-state", albeit one with weak institutions and considerable blemishes.

In the second part of my address, I turned to the future (without any pretense of prediction). I examined Europe's relation to the rest of the world, especially its dependence on the state of the world economy, and the impact of globalization (led by the US) on the EU; also, I discussed Europe in the world political game, and especially the difficult relations between the US and the EU, and the need for profound institutional changes in the latter if it wants to reach a less imbalanced position vs. the US. Next, I looked at the EU "at home" and raised a number of critical issues, about the monetary union, the problem of diversification (or multiple speeds) in a EU of 27 or more members, and the question of the democratic legitimacy of the EU's institutions - a question whose answer lies both in institutional reforms and in the creation of a European public sphere. The most desirable outcome would be neither a classical Federation nor a European nation, but an entity with an ever greater functional scope and a growing sphere of common action and citizenship. This depends, ultimately, on the survival of the original vision, on the politics of the EU becoming a contest between different interpretations of that vision, and on the capacity of the EU to appeal both to all those who repudiate the nationalist excesses of Europe's past, and to all those who will come to see in the EU the last protector of the shrinking nations and national cultures of Europe in a stormy world.

It is obvious that in an address, many of the issues could not be discussed in depth. The written version, which will be published in the *International Studies Review*, will try to go beyond the oral one, by examining problems in greater detail and taking into account the events that have affected Europe in the summer and fall of 2000.