
The treaty is now saddled with explicit and implicit escape clauses: Britain may opt out of the single currency, Germany may preserve the cherished deutsche mark, and Denmark was granted even more significant exemptions. Even before the currency crisis of the summer, Feldstein found "widespread agreement" among informed observers and officials (speaking privately) that the prospect of monetary and political union will remain remote.

One reason for the popular opposition to Maastricht, Harvard's Stanley Hoffmann notes in the *New York Review of Books* (May 27, 1993), was that the text of the treaty was "nearly incomprehensible . . . written by and for lawyers and bureaucrats." Few Europeans really grasp how the EC works, Hoffmann points out, and there is a widespread complaint about a "democratic deficit." The Council of Ministers is the Community's chief lawmaker, while the popularly elected European Parliament has very limited powers. Regulations are drafted by the European Commission, which is not accountable to the parliament. The EC Commission's president, currently Jacques Delors of France, is chosen by the council.

Germany, with a preference for federalism, would like to see the European Parliament given much more power, the *Economist* notes. France

and Britain, however, "think true legitimacy rests with elected governments, acting through the Council of Ministers." From the beginning, Hoffmann says, the European Community has been characterized by a "deliberate ambiguity that . . . has allowed it to proceed despite the different conceptions that exist among and within its members about its goals. Is the EC destined to become a federal state, more or less on the American model, or is it to be a particularly active regional organization, governed by its members?"

In the past, Hoffmann points out, the French, who dominate the Brussels bureaucracy, looked upon the EC as "a vehicle for French influence and for imposing restraints on the power of West Germany. Today, and for good reasons, the fear of Germany dominating the Community has replaced . . . the old fear of an unshackled Germany outside the Community." All the old arguments for surrendering national sovereignty to the Community have changed.

This summer's currency crisis brought the EC back to earth but the aims of monetary and political union remain worthy ones, the *Economist* believes. "[A] politically united Europe would be a fine thing; the intellectual case for monetary union remains powerful. [But] the political will to make either of these happen does not exist; in truth, it has never yet existed. It may one day; but to think that it already did was an illusion."

Arab Nationalism: Out of Gas

"Withered Arab Nationalism" by Mahmud A. Faksh, in *Orbis* (Summer 1993), Foreign Policy Research Institute, 3615 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pa. 19104.

Once an ideological force to be reckoned with in the Middle East, Arab nationalism has long been little more than a fig leaf used by Arab regimes to cover their particular interests. Now, as a result of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, even the fig leaf has been discarded, contends Faksh, a political scientist at the University of Southern Maine.

Born during the late 19th century in reaction to Turkish domination of the Arab world, Arab

nationalism asserts the existence of one Arab nation stretching from Morocco to the Arabian Peninsula. It had its heyday during the 1950s and '60s, when it was promoted by Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser (1918-70) and the Ba'ath party in Syria. "Arab nationalism became increasingly associated with anticolonialism and Third World nonalignment; the defeat of Israel and the restoration of Palestinian rights; the toppling of pro-Western, conservative monarchic regimes; and the establishment of revolutionary socialism," Faksh writes. "Nasser became the Arab voice, speaking to the masses over the heads of their rulers."

Egypt and Syria joined in 1958 to form the United Arab Republic (UAR). But this move to-



Mourners at the 1970 funeral of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser, symbol of Arab nationalism.

ward Arab unity, like all subsequent ones, was thwarted. Revolutionaries who overthrew the Iraqi monarchy that same year refused to participate in "the common Arab destiny." Three years later, Syrian officers staged a coup and restored their country's independence. And then the Arabs' defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war demonstrated the weakness of the pan-Arabist forces and the emptiness of nationalist rhetoric. Nasser himself died three years later. Arab nationalism became "a facade" behind which authoritarian regimes hid their particular interests.

"Hoping to bring about a revival of unified Arab will and purpose (as well as to win back the territories lost in the 1967 war)," two pragmatists, Egypt's Anwar al-Sadat and Syria's Hafiz al-Asad, launched a combined assault against Israel in 1973. Their defeat "ushered in a new age of realism in the Middle East," Faksh says. Sadat abandoned his last pan-Arab pretensions. He pursued *infitah* (economic and political liberalization) at home and realigned Egypt with the West. This led to the Egyptian-Israeli peace

treaty of 1979, which "struck at the core of one of the unifying principles of Arab nationalism: the defeat of Israel and the defense of Palestinian rights," Faksh writes.

The new wealth of conservative oil-rich Arab states such as Saudi Arabia, the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79, and the spread of Islamic fundamentalism during the '80s further undercut Arab nationalism. The death blow came with Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, launched in the name of pan-Arabism. In the subsequent Persian Gulf War, several Arab nations joined the West to free Kuwait and humble Iraq and the putative Arab standard-bearer, Saddam Hussein.

The struggle in much of the Arab world today is between "modernists" favoring a secular state and Islamic fundamentalists. Arab nationalism today is nowhere to be seen. The modernists no longer try to hide the fact that, like leaders elsewhere, they act mainly in terms of their distinct national interests. This new realism, Faksh suggests, may ultimately lead to a "New Middle East Order."