

nist or post-colonial societies, the arrival of the modern typically triggers the eruption of the archaic as compensation – the queues in Moscow lengthen for McDonald's and St Basil's alike. In post-industrial conditions, the same dialectic can be more benign. Delivered from older material pressures, peoples will above all seek to recover themselves, in new forms of national culture made that much more precious by the global commodity-nexus encompassing them. The more European the Community becomes, the more inventively and consciously distinct its members will want to be, as nations in their own right. The echo of Bauer here is apt: for the other side of Debray's book is a strong statement of what socialism should still mean in the contemporary world, beyond the timid affairism of local governments of the Left.

The differing diagnoses of these writers point to a central ambiguity of capitalist rationalization and its discontents, which only events can resolve. If the preoccupations of national identity are a product of the material erosion of much of what was once thought to be national character, will the further progress of a cosmopolitan modernity dissolve or intensify these? In his recent survey of *Nations and Nationalism since 1750* Eric Hobsbawm concludes that the owl of Minerva has now flown over them.<sup>67</sup> In the skies over the USSR and Eastern Europe, some would more readily detect the petrel; others the albatross. The rival hypotheses are, at all events, going to be tested in two huge experimental theatres – the disintegration of the former Soviet world, and the integration of the western half of Europe. Capitalism and the nation-state are more or less cocovals. There were once those who thought they would pass away together, or that the second would outlive the first. Now it is more generally wondered whether capitalism is not final, and nation-states are fated to become nominal. The answers to these questions are not necessarily going to be the same. They constitute the two main incognitos of *fin-de-siècle* politics.

1991

67. *Nations and Nationalism since 1750*, London 1990, p. 183.

## The Ends of History

In the spring of 1989, an arresting work of intellectual history was completed in Germany. Its author, Lutz Niethammer, had hitherto distinguished himself as an oral historian specializing in the reconstruction of popular life from below. The field of *Posthistoire* is virtually antithetical. Its subject is the emergence of a web of speculations on the end of history, at the highest reaches of the European intelligentsia, in the middle years of this century. Drawing on a variety of philosophical and sociological sources, these could stem from a range of distinct intuitions. Niethammer distinguishes three main variants: the idea of a spiritual closure of the repertory of heroic possibilities, derivable from Nietzsche; the vision of a petrification of society into a single vast machine, associated with Weber; and intimations of civilizational entropy, following from Henry Adams. But the focus of his study lies downstream from ultimate origins, in the confluence of such themes into a striking intellectual configuration that he situates, with some precision, in the Franco-German area between the time of the Popular Front and the Marshall Plan.

It was then that an uncanny skein of thinkers started to suggest that history was nearing its terminus. In a brilliant feat of intellectual detection, Niethammer brings to light the hidden links or affinities – cultural or political – within a group of otherwise very contrasted theorists of the period: Henri de Man, Arnold Gehlen, Bertrand de Jouvenel, Carl Schmitt, Alexandre Kojève, Ernst Jünger, Henri Lefebvre, even in their way Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. *Posthistoire*, a French term that exists only in German, adopted in the fifties by Gehlen from a reading of de Man, signifies for Niethammer less a theoretical system than a structure of feeling, the precipitate of a certain common historical experience. These were thinkers, Niethammer argues, who shared early hopes of a radical overthrow of the established social order in Europe, as activists or sympathizers with the

1. Hamburg, 1989: the preface is dated May, publication was in November.

major 'parties of movement' of the inter-war period – socialist, fascist, or communist; and then disappointments which crystallized into a deep scepticism about the possibility of further historical change as such. The result was something like a collective vision – glimpsed from many different angles – of a stalled, exhausted world, dominated by recursive mechanisms of bureaucracy and ubiquitous circuits of commodities, relieved only by the extravagances of a phantasmatic imaginary without limit, because without power. In post-historical society, 'the rulers have ceased to rule, but the slaves remain slaves.'<sup>2</sup> For Niethammer, this diagnosis of the time is not without persuasive force: it corresponds to many particular experiences of daily life and local observations of social science. But they who speak of the end of history do not escape it. The pathos of *Posthistoire* is the intelligible product of a political conjuncture interpreted in the categories of a philosophical tradition.

For this is a vision, Niethammer argues, that should be understood as an inversion of the optimistic theories of history of the eighteenth and mid nineteenth centuries, that had once looked forward to universal peace or freedom or fraternity as the end-goal of human progress, in secularized versions of the teleology of sacred history. That serene Enlightenment confidence – shared by Holbach and Kant, Comte and Marx – in the objective course of social development had fallen into discredit by the close of the last century. What succeeded it were tense voluntarist bids to achieve millennial ends by force of subjective will, in the doctrines of Nietzsche, Sorel or Lenin. These acquired a mass following during and in the wake of the First World War, and form the immediate background to the revolutionary ambitions of those who were to become the theorists of *Posthistoire*. Their original expectations cashiered, these did not abandon the metaphysics of a historical transfiguration, but rather reversed its sign. The optimism of evolutionary progress or collective will gave way to an elitist cultural pessimism, that saw only petrefaction and massification in the stabilized Western democracies after the Second World War. Time still arrived at its term: but no longer with the meaning of an end – simply the facticity of an ending, disabling any ulterior aspiration or purpose. In metaphorically projecting their own political experience as a world-history gone blank, these thinkers characteristically paid little heed to the material development which actually threatened to bring history to end, the dangers of nuclear war; still less to the fate of the famished majority of humanity outside the zone of industrial privilege. *Posthistoire*, a discourse of the

2. *Posthistoire*, p. 156.

end of meaning rather than the end of the world, was consistently blind to such questions: *die Sinnfrage verdunkelt die Existenzfrage*.<sup>3</sup>

Evidently critical, Niethammer's treatment of the cluster of writers at the centre of his account is never dismissive. Written from the Left, about a set of figures many of whom were or ended on the Right, its method – inspired by Benjamin's mosaics – is delicate and diagonal. The historical understanding it brings to the reveries of post-history does not seek to diminish them, as significant reflections of their time. Niethammer's conclusions lie elsewhere. These were generally intellectuals who, after their political disappointments, adopted the stance of an elite equally distant from the masses and from the apparatuses of the post-war order, conceiving themselves as isolated seers. From this posture they sought an overarching viewpoint, capable of distilling the substance of universal experience into a single narrative. Against this twofold pretension, Niethammer affirms the creed of a democratic history from below. Socially, intellectuals form in fact one part of the mass from which they like to distinguish themselves, a collectivity that dissolves on reflection into so many individual subjects. Epistemologically, truth lies first of all in the direct life-experiences of these subjects. It is their clarification that is the first duty of the historian, who is best advised to eschew all larger structural interpretations save as limiting surmises. Critical knowledge is to be found, not in the vain filibuster of macro-narratives, but in the modest commonplace books of the multitude – whose measure of freedom and responsibility is the only safeguard against the dangers which the diviners of post-history saw, as well as those they missed.<sup>4</sup> The concluding judgement of Niethammer's study could be taken as an obituary, laying to rest an esoteric doctrine whose creative time has passed.

Two months later, in July 1989, Francis Fukuyama published his essay 'The End of History?' in Washington.<sup>5</sup> There has rarely been a more striking *rebondissement* in the fortunes of an idea. Within a year, an arcane philosophical wisdom had become an exoteric image of the age, as Fukuyama's arguments sped round the media of the globe. Unaware of Niethammer's work (completed in May, published in November), this American reprise was directly linked to the Franco-German nexus studied in *Posthistoire* through the figure of Alexandre Kojève – the declared theoretical source of Fukuyama's

3. *Posthistoire*, p. 165.

4. *Posthistoire*, pp. 165–172.

5. *The National Interest*, Summer 1989, pp. 3–18. Fukuyama and Niethammer must have completed their respective texts all but simultaneously.

construction. But the connection represents a paradox for Niethammer's verdict. For the new version of the end of history did not come from any vantage-point, real or imaginary, in equidistant isolation from the populace and power, but from the bureaux of the State Department itself, and its organizing theme was not one of forbidding pessimism, but of confident optimism. The change of register was also a shift in plane. In the Franco-German philosophers of history there was always more philosophy than history, politics glimmering only as elusive metaphor in the background of the diagnosis. In Fukuyama's intervention the relations were reversed, history and politics in an emphatic sense occupying the foreground, with philosophical references forming a tracery behind them. The central thesis of his original essay was, of course, that humanity has reached the end-point of its ideological evolution with the triumph of Western liberal democracy over all competitors at the end of the twentieth century. Fascism, once a powerful rival, had been durably destroyed in the Second World War. Communism, the great post-war adversary, was in visible collapse, surrendering as a system to the capitalism it had once sought to overthrow. These two global alternatives discredited, there remained only local residues of the historical past: nationalisms without distinctive social content or universal claim, fundamentalisms confined to particular religious communities, in the backward zones of the Third World. The victory of liberal capitalism had been won not only in Europe, with the defeat of Nazism and the disintegration of Stalinism, but in the equally momentous battleground of Asia too, with the post-war transformation of Japan, the current liberalization of South Korea and Taiwan, the developing commercialization of China. In the industrialized world, competition between national states would continue. But purged of ideological or military toxins, it would concern mainly economic issues, within a collaborative framework of which the Common Market perhaps already furnished a model. In this view ethnic tensions or sectarian passions, terror or insurgency, might still proliferate in the South. But they do not compromise the deep configuration of the time. For the end of history is not the cessation of all change or conflict, but the exhaustion of any viable alternatives to the civilization of the OECD. Progress towards freedom now has only one path. With the rout of socialism, Western liberal democracy has emerged as the final form of human government, bringing historical development to its close.

This outcome, Fukuyama argues, was foreseen by Hegel. The first philosopher to transcend fixed conceptions of human nature, his phenomenology of the restless transformations of the spirit issued, not

into the bad infinity of an interminable process of change, but into the moment of an absolute culmination, in which reason as freedom on earth was realized in the institutions of a liberal state. The merit of Kojève was to have shown that Hegel believed this hour had come with Napoleon's victory over Prussia at Jena, breaking the power of the *ancien régime* in Germany and laying the basis for the universal spread of the principles of the French Revolution. The essential accuracy of Hegel's conviction that history was at its end is unimpaired by the two hundred years that have followed. For the greatness of his philosophy lay in its unambiguous affirmation of the primacy of ideas in history — the truth that the developments of material reality do not determine, but conform to the emergence of ideal principles. What prevailed at Jena was not the completed practice but the regulative principle of a new political order. Massive struggles and upheavals were still in store, from the abolition of the slave-trade to the victory of suffragism, before liberal ideals acquired their full institutional shape in the West, and were then gradually extended beyond it. But the fundamental outline of the liberties Hegel had perceived as the definitive form of modern freedom was never improved upon. 'The state that emerges at the end of history is liberal insofar as it recognizes and protects through a system of law man's universal right to freedom, and democratic in so far as it exists only with the consent of the governed.'<sup>6</sup> Such freedom includes, of course, as it did in the time of Jena, the rights of private property and the operations of the market economy. If liberalism as a political order is inseparable from capitalism as an economic system, however, this is not in the sense that the latter generates the former as its real basis. Rather both reflect an underlying alteration in the realm of consciousness which governs the course of the world. But the consumer abundance that is the unique achievement of capitalist economics unquestionably consolidates the democratic values of liberal politics, stabilizing the change first grasped by Hegel in a way that could be expected at the end of history. For all the deliverance it brings, however, the conclusion of the story of human freedom has its costs. Daring ideals, high sacrifices, heroic strivings will pass away, amidst the humdrum routines of shopping and voting; art and philosophy wither, as culture is reduced to the curation of the past; technical calculations replace moral or political imagination. The cry of the owl is mournful in the night.

In its clarity and boldness, this finalization of history has set off more — far more — public controversy than any earlier version. The most

6. 'The End of History?', p. 5.

striking feature of the discussion which followed the publication of Fukuyama's essay was the virtual universality of the rejection which it met. For once, most of the Right, Centre and Left were united in their reaction. For different reasons, liberals, conservatives, social democrats, communists all expressed incredulity or abhorrence of Fukuyama's arguments. Two kinds of objection were consistently raised against Fukuyama. The first was that his construction rests on a basic misrepresentation of Hegel. The second was that it involves a complete misconception of the age – ingenuously apologetic for some, dangerously insouciant for others. Each of these criticisms, made before the publication of Fukuyama's book *The End of History and the Last Man* in 1992 amplified his case, bears examination. Before looking at them, however, one thing should already be plain. Niethammer's profile of the philosophical figure of post-history, penetrating though it is, does not capture all its variations, which have proved richer than he suggests. The concluding cadences of Fukuyama's essay, echoing late reflections in Kojève, belong to the portrait of *Posthistoire*. But here they appear as if an ironic after-thought, in an account whose central theme is a robust affirmation of the democratic prosperity Jünger or Gehlen scorned, and whose function is precisely to mediate between the official worlds of government and popular currents of opinion with a compelling public vision of the time. Such a role suggests a limit not just of Niethammer's description of the discourse of post-history, but of his recommended antidote to it. For his critique of the Franco-German tradition in effect concludes, not with an alternative to its diagnosis of the age, contesting its substantive theses, but with a call to eschew such ventures altogether – rejecting any macro-historical narrative as intellectually and politically overweening. Currently, the effect of such a withdrawal would be to leave the American variant in possession of the field. If this is to be questioned, it can only be on its own – legitimate, even inescapable – terrain. The values of daily experience and local investigation are real; but they are no refuge from the course of the world. In general modern historians have nearly always reacted, understandably, against philosophies of history. But these have not gone away, and are unlikely to, as long as the demand

7. Compare, for example, the trend of responses in *The National Interest*, Summer and Fall 1989 (Pierre Hassner, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Irving Kristol, Samuel Huntington, Leon Wieseltier, Frederick Will), with those in *Marxism Today*, November 1989 (Jonathan Steele, Edward Mortimer, Gareth Stedman Jones); or *The National Review*, 27 October 1989 (John Gray), with *Time*, 11 September 1989 (Strobe Talbott), across to *The Nation*, 22 September 1989 (Christopher Hitchens).

for social meaning over time persists. The idea of a closure of history has a more complicated pedigree than is often assumed – one which merits consideration in its own right, for the light it sheds on the political issues posed by contemporary versions.

### 1. Hegel

In other words, the end of history is best tackled from its beginning. Fukuyama's construction has consistently claimed the authority of Hegel for the form of its reasoning. How far is it entitled to this mantle? Numerous critics have complained of supererogation. There are, in fact, two distinct issues here. Did Hegel maintain that history had come to an end? If so, what kind of an end was it? The answer to the first question is less straightforward than it seems. In the letter of his texts, the phrase is scarcely to be found. Nor is there any single passage in his writing where the idea is directly spelt out and developed as such. But there can be no doubt that the logic of Hegel's whole system virtually required it as a conclusion, and that there is sufficient evidence of something like its assumption in the various ciphers of his work. In its psychological register, the *Phenomenology* already speaks of history as the conscious, self-mediating evolution of the Spirit, through the succession of its temporal forms, to the goal of absolute knowledge of itself.<sup>8</sup> The institutional survey of *The Philosophy of Right* declares that 'the present has cast off its barbarity – what is unjust and arbitrary, and the truth has ceased to be other-worldly – a contingent force', allowing 'true reconciliation, which reveals the state as the image and actuality of reason, to become objective'.<sup>9</sup> In the historical account of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, the actualization of freedom is 'the ultimate goal at which the world-historical process has been

8. 'The goal, Absolute Knowing, or Spirit that knows itself as Spirit, has for its path the recollection of the Spirits as they are in themselves and as they accomplish the organization of their realm. Their preservation, regarded from the side of their free existence appearing in the form of contingency, is History; but regarded from the side of their comprehended organization, is the Science of Knowing in the sphere of appearance: the two together, comprehended History, form alike the recollection and calvary of absolute spirit, the actuality, truth and certainty of its throne, without which it would be lifeless and alone.' *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, *Werke* Vol. 3, Frankfurt 1970, p. 591; *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, (ed. J.N. Findlay), Oxford 1977, p. 493. Henceforward W-3 and PS respectively.

9. *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, *Werke* Vol. 7, § 360 – p. 512; *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, (ed. Allen Wood), Cambridge 1991, p. 380. Henceforward W-7 and EPR respectively.

aiming . . . which alone realizes and fulfills itself, as what is constant amidst the ceaseless change of events and conditions, and their effective principle.<sup>10</sup> The *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* announce, in the most emphatic key of all, that 'a new epoch has arisen in the world', for 'the world spirit has now succeeded in shedding all alien objective existence and finally grasping itself as absolute' – 'such is the standpoint of the present, and the series of spiritual forms is therewith for the moment concluded.'<sup>11</sup> The terms and referents change, but the gesture of closure is insistently repeated. If the end of history was never thematized by Hegel, it is easy to see how it was deduced from him. But the difference has its importance. For if Hegel himself never actually coined the phrase, or quite fixed the notion, there were two reasons. The ultimate instance of his philosophy was not history, but spirit – and history was only one side of its circumscription, the other being nature;<sup>12</sup> the overcoming of the division between the two was conceived as a result, rather than an ending. Hegel virtually never uses the terms *Ende* or *Schluss* in the lexicon of his closures: only *Ziel*, *Zweck* or *Resultat*. The reason for this is at one level simple. In German, there is no word that combines the two senses of 'end' in English, as terminus and as purpose, and Hegel's essential concern was with the second rather than the first. The distinction between the two can be seen with emblematic clarity in Kant, the original source of the idea of a universal history. Kant's vision of human progress is radically teleological, in keeping with the cast of his philosophy as a whole. History has an 'ultimate aim', the attainment of the highest good – a state in which human happiness and moral perfection tend to coincide. This is the *Endzweck* of creation at large. But this purpose is not an ending. Kant poured a scathing irony on that notion, in one of his most playful texts, *Das Ende aller Dinge*, whose theme – directed against Christian conceptions of the Last Judgement – was the dangerous absurdity of

10. *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, *Werke* Vol. 12, p. 33; *The Philosophy of History* (ed. C.J. Friedrich), New York 1956, p. 19. Henceforward W-12 and PH.

11. *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, Vol. III, *Werke* Vol. 20, pp. 460–61; *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Vol. III, London 1896, pp. 551–52. Henceforward W-20 and LHP-3.

12. 'Spirit produces itself as Nature, and as the State; nature is its unconscious work, in the course of which it appears to itself something different, and not spirit; but in the deeds of life of History, as also of Art, it brings itself to pass in conscious fashion; it knows various modes of its reality, but only modes. In science alone does it know itself as absolute spirit and this knowledge, or spirit, is its only true existence.' W-20, p. 460; LHP, p. 552.

moral fancies of the end of time.<sup>13</sup> Goal and stop are separate terms in this tradition, as they were in ordinary language itself. The concept of the end of history in its full contemporary ambiguity had to await translation into French. Kojève's *fin de l'histoire* spells something new.

If the actual outcome of Hegel's synthesis is thus a philosophical consummation more than a social end-state, it remains plausible that the one must in principle imply some version of the other. What was then the political system that realized reason for Hegel? Can it be described as a liberal institutional order? Much of the interest of Hegel's political thought lies in the difficulty of giving any simple answer to this question – partly because of chronological shifts within it, but mainly because of its substantive complexity. By the most relevant criteria, however, Hegel's political outlook belonged to the European liberalism of his time. For central to it was the rule of law, as this was understood by his contemporaries – a public order that guaranteed the rights of the individual to personal freedom, private property and unhindered opinion, and a career open to talents in the offices of the state. Such liberalism was not democratic, of course, since it feared popular rule and rejected universal suffrage. Hegel was no exception in this regard. In that sense, it is naturally an anachronism to ascribe any paternity of liberal democracy to him: like nearly every other liberal of his day, he was a constitutional monarchist. On the other hand, in so far as there was to be an evident continuity – both theoretical and institutional – in the subsequent history of capitalism between the *Rechtsstaat* and the *Volksstaat*, as limited government under the rule of law developed into modern representative democracy, Fukuyama's annotation can be treated as if it were an anticipatory shorthand. The distinctive features of Hegel's political thought which his essay obscures do not concern its distance from twentieth-century democratic norms, but the points at which it diverges from mainstream assumptions of early nineteenth-century liberalism.

13. See *Werke*, Vol. 8, Berlin 1912, pp. 327–339. Kant wrote this singular document on the eve of his censorship by the Prussian monarchy for undermining religious authority: it concludes by impudently suggesting that official enforcement of orthodoxy would tender Christian doctrine so unpopular that the result would be in its own terms the reign of Antichrist, cutting off Christianity's vocation to become a world religion – 'the (perverse) end of all things'. There is no really good commentary on the text. In his *Conjectures on the Beginning of Human History*, Kant does subtitle a section *Beschluss der Geschichte*, but what this signifies is the end of the first steps in social development that are the object of his surmise – leaving humanity simply at a stage when nomads and agriculturalists start to fuse – not of the course of history as such, as has sometimes wrongly been suggested.

The first of these was Hegel's critique of any atomistic notion of citizenry or instrumental conception of the state. Inheriting from the culture of the Enlightenment a deep admiration for the public life of the Greek city-state, in which active participation in the government and rites of the *polis* was the central meaning of individual freedom, Hegel came to believe that such immediate civic unity was a form that could no longer be recovered in modern conditions: socio-economic differentiation and religious development had created another kind of subjectivity, whose freedom demanded a more complex political structure. His contemporary Constant, the most logical mind of classical liberalism, saw the same kind of contrast between ancient and modern societies, and drew the conclusion that their respective forms of liberty were virtually antithetical. The ancient republics were small warlike states, whose citizens could devote most of their energies to public — mainly martial — pursuits, because production and trade were left to slaves, in a setting of rigid civic conformity. Modern societies, on the other hand, were large-scale nations devoted to commerce, in which individuals had neither chance nor time to engage much in public affairs, but far greater opportunity to choose their own modes of life. The proper role of the state was thus first and foremost to protect the private autonomy of the citizens, even if it was desirable to foster a certain public spirit as well — within the bounds of the modestly possible.<sup>14</sup> For Hegel, on the other hand, the opposition between the two ideals of freedom was not incurable: the task of the modern *Rechtsstaat* was to articulate them in a rational synthesis. The architecture of state and civil society that is the hallmark of his political theory was designed to enable this. Civil society as a system of needs was the realm of particular economic pursuits, in which the atomism of the market and the individualism of the modern subject prevailed, in the characteristic pattern of negative freedom. The state, with its impersonal civil service, by contrast embodied the universal principle of political will, as the positive freedom of the community. But these two were not counterposed abstractions: they formed an interconnected structure. For civil society was neither self-standing, nor simply a domain of commerce and pleasure. Beneath its transactions lay the family as the primary unit of any customary social life, and within its compass fell not only the exchanges of the market, but also the

14. For Constant's most influential statement of his contrast, the famous lecture *De la Liberté des Anciens comparée à celle des Modernes*, delivered in 1819 (as Hegel was giving his lectures on the philosophy of right at Heidelberg), see *Political Writings* (ed. Biancamano Fontana), Cambridge 1988, pp. 309–328.

institutions of the law and — crucially — the provision of public works and the organization of corporate associations. Above these rose the state with its constitutional framework of sovereign authority, executive and legislative powers, and external relations. The three levels of this conception do not form separable zones of society, but compose an ascending structure in which each lower moment is subsumed into the higher. In this conception the nexus between family and civil society is unproblematic. The crux of the scheme lies in the way it envisages the integration of civil society into the state. Here there is a double overlap. On the one hand, public functions now normally imputed to the state — education, welfare, health, communications — are located in the space of civil society. On the other hand, corporate associations originating in civil society are lodged in the political framework of the state, as the elective units of the Estates Assembly.

These interlocking forms are the sign of Hegel's originality as a political thinker. The conventional liberalism of his time straightforwardly divided the private and public spheres, and limited government to instrumental functions as the guarantor of individual liberties. The link between the two was secured by representative institutions, based on a censitary electorate defined by property qualifications. For Hegel, by contrast, the political life of a community was ideally a realm of expressive meaning, in which the subjective freedom of individual agents was translated into a common objective configuration, the *Sittlichkeit* of the nation. The corporations, as occupational associations, consequently become the natural mediations between civil society and the state, as collective rather than atomic, and professional rather than residential, bodies. Hegel did not reject property qualifications for political participation outright, but for him *Gewerbe* commanded *Vermögen* rather than the other way round.<sup>15</sup> Not the abstract, isolate possession of money, but the concrete pursuit of a calling shared by others, was the condition of responsible suffrage. In this conception, work and solidarity become stepping-stones of meaning to the higher sense of the state.

If the device of corporate associations was designed to remedy the atomization of market society, the function of their counterpart — what Hegel called 'policing' institutions — was largely to check its polarization. Unusually among his contemporaries, Hegel had a very strong sense of the exploitative and crisis-ridden logic of early industrial

15. W-7, § 310 — pp. 479–480; *EPF*, pp. 349–350.

capitalism, the jagged patterns of accumulation of wealth and overproduction at one end of society and of new kinds of misery and dependency at the other. To limit these, some regulation of the unbridled workings of the economy – the system of needs – was necessary, both to moderate the 'dangerous convulsions' of the market and to assure every member of society 'the right to subsistence'.<sup>16</sup> But how was this to be done? If the regulative authorities, or wealthier classes, provided direct relief to the poor, they would undermine the motivation to work; but if they provided work, they would exacerbate the periodic tendency to overproduction. After announcing the need for social intervention to assure the minimum welfare of every citizen, Hegel effectively despairs of it. The only solution to the phenomenon of mass poverty and dependency, which not merely contradicted the very principle of subjective freedom but generate a demoralized rabble that menaces social stability, is overseas expansion – the conquest of markets and colonies abroad in which surplus goods can be sold and excess population can be settled.<sup>17</sup> The dilemmas of social security must eventually find their release in imperialism.

If the drive for such expansion springs from the dialectic of civil society, its systematic organization is the work of the state. Hegel assumes a plurality of states arrayed against one other in external competition. Their principle is necessarily particular, as each embodies its own ethical form of life. The *Sittlichkeit* of any given community is specific to it. But it is a strange substance – a particularity without quiddity, so to speak. For while Hegel regularly uses the term *Volk* and not infrequently *Nation* to designate the bearer of *Sitten*, the national character of his states is in retrospect curiously vestigial. For nationalism itself, in the Romantic sense, he had nothing but scorn: there are no passages in his writing so savage, in fact, as his letters on the *Deutschdium* of the War of Liberation and the patriotic antics celebrating the Congress of Vienna.<sup>18</sup> Nor did he set much store by ethnic identity or

16. W-7 § 236, 240 – pp. 385, 387; *EPR* pp. 262, 264. In his Jena texts of 1803–4, Hegel's view of the market yields little to that of Marx: 'Need and labour are raised into this universality, and so create in a great nation an immense system of communality and mutual dependence, a life of death moving without itself, thrashing to and fro blindly and elementally, that like a wild animal calls for continual strict curbing and control'; *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 6, Hamburg 1975, p. 324; *System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit*, Albany 1979, p. 249.

17. W-7, § 240, 248 – pp. 391–93; *EPR*, pp. 267–69.

18. In 1813 – if there are by chance any liberated individuals to be seen, I will rise to my feet.' In 1814, 'according to a few rumours, the era after the Congress of Vienna is to

linguistic continuity, even in moderate Enlightenment guise: it is striking how unaffected he was by Herder. The idea of a national 'culture' in the modern sense is absent – the term never appears in his work.<sup>19</sup> Religious cult is more significant, from his early writing on Greece to his late surveys of Europe, where Protestantism and Catholicism remain the central dividing-line between Germanic and Latin nations. But since the Roman faith is treated unambiguously as a fetter to be overcome in the contemporary age,<sup>20</sup> even this distinction yields no real content for the idea of a legitimate plurality of ethical forms of life. There is a logic to this paradox. The variety of national states is structurally underdetermined in Hegel's vision of the modern world, because there is only room for one truly rational version at a time. The stages of history form a sequence of natural principles realizing the development of the world spirit, each of which is allotted to a single nation, and confers on it 'fulfilment, fortune and fame' in turn. This nation becomes 'the dominant one in world history for this epoch, and only once in history can it have this epochal role' – but so long as it enjoys this 'absolute right' as the bearer of the world spirit, 'the spirits of other nations are without rights, and like those whose epoch has

be assured by an interesting literary-artistic idea: the erection of the great memorial column dedicated to the Nation along with a comprehensive national archive for the conservation of Old German monuments and patriotic relics of all sorts, including the song of the *Nibelungen*, Imperial jewelry, King Roger's shoes, electoral capitulations, charters of freedom, Albrecht Dürer's woodcuts, Norica and so on. It will be built on a quiet spot, so that its enjoyment will be more secure from the noise of the rest of reality ... The entire Congress, however, is to be concluded with a great ceremony, a torchlight procession with the ringing of bells and roaring of cannons to the "ultimate rule of reason" in which the German people [*Pippel*] will be trampled in the dirt. Behind Pippel there follow, as valets and attendants, a few tame house cats, such as the Inquisition, the Jesuit Order, and then all the armies with their sundry commissioned, princely, and dited marshals and generals.' *Briefe von und an Hegel*, (ed. J. Hoffmeister), Vol. 2, Hamburg 1953, pp. 14, 43; *Hegel: The Letters*, Bloomington 1984, pp. 299, 312.

19. There is a sketch of 'national characters' in the anthropological section of the *Encyclopaedia*, similar to the survey in Kant's *Philosophical Anthropology*, if less flattering to the Germans. But they are assigned the humble rank of natural qualities of the soul, before free spirit unfolds: *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, III, *Werke* Vol. 10, Frankfurt 1970, § 394 (*Zusatz*), pp. 63–70; *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, Oxford 1973, pp. 46–51 – henceforward W-10 and *HPM*.

20. W-12, p. 535; *PH*, pp. 452–53. Lukács rightly emphasizes the significance of the later Hegel's shift away from the French Revolution towards the Reformation as the real turning-point of modern history – as he points out, the conclusion of the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* suggests that 'a socio-political upheaval of the sort that resulted in the French Revolution was only possible and necessary in countries where the Reformation had failed to carry the day': *The Young Hegel*, London 1975, p. 158.



passed, no longer count in world history.<sup>21</sup> The *dramatis personae* of this succession are significantly vaguer than the standard translations suggest: Hegel uses the term *Volk* with a widely fluctuating range of reference, from small city-states to broad civilizations. The Germanic world, with which the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* conclude their survey of the progress of the spirit, at times extends across most of Europe, at others indicates its Northern region, and elsewhere narrows to the German-speaking lands alone. The indeterminacy is a symptom of the aporia that the multiplicity of states introduces into the unity of reason, once the idea of freedom is realized. Philosophically, variety could now only figure as disgraced contingency. Politically, Hegel's realism forbade such banishment: the array of major and minor powers was too solid a fixture of the post-Napoleonic world. The result is incoherence. On the one hand, 'the European nations form a family by the universal principle of their legislation, customs and education [*ibrer Gesetzgebung, ihrer Sitten, ihrer Bildung*]', but on the other, each retains a particular individuality 'as exclusive being-for-itself' whose welfare necessarily collides with that of others, in conflicts which can only issue into war.<sup>22</sup> No pact for perpetual peace, such as Kant had dreamt of, could ever hold between them, since 'it would always be dependent on particular sovereign wills, and therefore continue to be tainted with contingency.'<sup>23</sup> The contradictions between modern states, in other words, are not dissolved into a higher universality. History is the province only of the objective spirit: the realm of the absolute spirit remains religion and philosophy.

Because Hegel's system closes itself beyond the empirical world, although the course of history is subject to the movement of the spirit, its upshot need not be as conclusive — the drop in level of vision allows for less resolution in the image. Hegel's political thought does not come to rest in any unequivocal summation of his age. In fact, it can be said that each of its three strategic themes issues into uncertainty. The realization of modern freedom requires a state that expresses the life of its citizens, assures their welfare, and conforms to universal reason. This is the programme of the *Philosophy of Right*, but Hegel could not

21. W-7, § 345, 347 — pp. 505–506; EPR, pp. 373–74.

22. W-7, § 339, 322 — pp. 502, 490; EPR, pp. 371, 359. 'Individuality, as exclusive being-for-itself, appears as the relation of [the state] to other states, each of which is independent in relation to the others. Since the being-for-itself of the actual spirit has its existence therein, this independence is the primary freedom and supreme dignity of a nation.'

23. W-7, § 333 — p. 500; EPR, p. 368.

deliver it. The corporate structure, designed to repair the anomie of the market and compensate for classic participation in the city, was also calculated to circumvent more direct forms of suffrage and parliamentary government — whose principles broke through European politics in Hegel's last years. No form of public regulation succeeded in checking economic crises or social destitution, as he acknowledged. Colonial expansion and continental war could only yield an international order of radical contingency. Far from his view of the time suggesting a stable end of history, it is striking that Hegel uses just the opposite language when he confronts these outcomes. The July Revolution in France unleashed the kind of liberalism he deplored — 'the atomistic principle that insists upon the sway of individual wills, and maintains that all government must emanate from their express power.' But he did not believe that this turbulence could be lightly stilled: 'Thus agitation and unrest [*Bewegung und Unruhe*] are perpetuated. This collision, this knot, this problem is that with which history is now occupied and whose solution it has to work out in the future.'<sup>24</sup> When he contemplated the spread of misery in the new industrial world around him, his tone was the same: 'The emergence of poverty is in general a consequence of civil society, and as a whole arises necessarily out of it . . . hardship at once assumes the form of an injustice inflicted on this or that class. The important question of how poverty can be remedied is one that is especially agitating and tormenting [*bewegende und quälende*] to modern societies.'<sup>25</sup> So too when he came to describe the mutual relations between states, he stressed that no praetor existed on earth to settle their disputes, and therefore international affairs were inherently unstable [*schwankend*]: 'The broadest view of these will encompass the ceaseless turmoil [*das höchst bewegte Spiel*] not just of external contingency but also of the inner particularity of passions, interests, aims, talents and virtues, violence, wrongdoing and vices, that exposes the ethical whole itself — the independence of the state — to the realm of accident.'<sup>26</sup> Shortly before his death, he was writing to his sister: 'We are for the moment . . . spared all the current unrest; but these are still anxious times, in which everything that was previously taken for solid and secure seems to totter.'<sup>27</sup> Not rest, but unrest

24. W-12, p. 534; FH, p. 452.

25. *Philosophie des Rechts: Die Vorlesung von 1819/1820* (ed. Dieter Henrich), Frankfurt 1983, p. 193, and W-7, § 244, p. 390; EPR, pp. 266–67, 452.

26. W-7, § 339 — p. 503; EPR, p. 371.

27. *Wo alles zu schwanken scheint, was sonst für fest und sicher galt — Briefe*, Vol. 3, Hamburg 1954, p. 329; Hegel: *the Letters*, p. 422.



is the consistent note. The terms that recur are *Bewegung* and *Schwan-  
kung*. Above, there is the order of 'the higher praetor that is the  
universal spirit'.<sup>28</sup> Below, it is movement and turmoil that persist.

## 2. Cournot

It is thus not wholly surprising that in the nineteenth century Hegel was rarely seen as a philosopher who had theorized the end of history. His reputation was identified, understandably, more with his express doctrines of nature or logic or politics. It was these which became the focus of controversy, even for such a committed historical critic as Marx. The original source of what were eventually to become ideas of *Posthistoire* lay, as Niehammer's account makes clear, elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> The philosopher who explicitly developed a coherent conception of the end of history was a very different figure. Antoine-Augustin Cournot, rediscovery in our own. He is most often, although not widely, remembered today as one of the ancestors of neo-classical economics. In fact, his *Recherches sur les Principes Mathématiques de la Théorie des Richesses* (1838) was the pioneering work of modern price theory, which not only invented the demand curve that became a standard tool of marginalist analysis in the time of Jevons and Walras, but also anticipated the game-theoretical models of imperfect competition developed in a much later epoch by Neumann and Morgenstern. This founding text of formal equilibrium theory was so much in advance of its period that for a generation it was virtually ignored, until it was acknowledged as a precursor by Walras. By the time Marshall came to write his *Principles of Economics* in the last decade of the century, he explained that it was to Cournot's ideas of interdependent functions that he was most indebted, although he also – surprising as it may seem today – paid tribute to the influence on his thought of Hegel.<sup>30</sup>

For his contemporaries, however, Cournot was above all the philosopher of probability and chance. In 1843 he became the first thinker to

28. W-7, § 339 – p. 503; *EPR*, p. 371.

29. See *Posthistoire*, pp. 25–29.

30. 'Cournot's genius must give a new mental activity to everyone who passes through his hands'; *Principles of Economics*, Vol. 1, London 1890, pp. x–xi.

advance a systematic theory of the difference between two kinds of probability that had traditionally been assimilated: evidential plausibility and statistical frequency. He called these, respectively, subjective or philosophical probability, and objective or mathematical probability.<sup>31</sup> The distinguishing feature of his philosophy was the way in which it articulated these two. For Cournot, the subjective probability yielded by induction was the primary form of our knowledge of the world – although, contrary to Mill, not the exclusive one, since mathematics afforded certainties that were deductive. Objective probability, on the other hand, was inscribed in the general nature of the world as a principle of the laws of chance. Where for Christian theology chance was no more than divine will in disguise, while for Hume or Laplace it was a mere name for our ignorance, for Cournot it was a positive and fully intelligible reality. In a famous definition, he declared chance events to be those that were produced by the encounter of two independent causal series. Since the universe was not the outcome of a single natural law, but was plainly governed by a variety of different mechanisms, there were both processes governed by more or less linear causal sequences, and occurrences set off by intersections between them. This was the difference between what was regular and what was random, each equally intelligible – the contrast, for example, between the movement of planets and meteors, or of tides and glaciers. Where the conditions of chance events were themselves repeated, as in such standard cases as games of dice or coloured balls drawn from an urn, the likelihood of differing outcomes could be mathematically calculated – out of accidents came order, from contingency probability. If the deductive capacities of the human mind to attain mathematical truths found correspondence in the numerically regular laws of the physical world, so its inductive powers of empirical conjecture – always subject to error – had what could be taken for their counterpart in the distribution of natural probabilities. Human reason was the fitting intelligence of the reason of things.<sup>32</sup>

31. Cournot's contribution to the development of this distinction is understated in the standard treatments by Keynes (*A Treatise on Probability*, London 1922, pp. 282–84) and Carnap (*The Logical Foundations of Probability*, Chicago 1950, p. 186), both interested essentially in the logic of induction alone; and with less justification is virtually ignored – under Foucauldian rules of evidence – in Ian Hacking's more historical study *The Taming of Chance* (London 1989).

32. Cournot first formulated this idea in his *Exposition de la Théorie des Chances et des Probabilités*, Paris 1843, § 40 – p. 73; for his distinction between mathematical and philosophical probability in this work, see § 18–20; 231–33 – pp. 35, 135–28–14.

Cournot's scientific background (his first publication was in mechanics) and statistical interests, his economic modelling and epistemological prudence, set him far apart from Hegel. In some ways like a last great figure of the French Enlightenment in his combination of mathematical, philosophical and social concerns, he also belongs to a much more modern world than that of German Idealism. Yet Cournot shared certain central ambitions, and some assumptions with Hegel, as in its own idiom the title of what might be called his *Encyclopaedia* suggests: *Traité de l'Enchaînement des Idées Fondamentales dans les Sciences et dans l'Histoire*. For Cournot sought to unify a philosophy of knowledge and a philosophy of history in a single theory, in which a formal exposition of the developmental order of reason – the concatenation of fundamental ideas that has produced the sciences – grounds a substantive account of the development of civilization – grounds a substantive primacy to the progress of the human mind. In this sense, Cournot's philosophy of history was as consciously idealist as Hegel's, against which it matched itself. But the theorists of the absolute and of the probable had different kinds of narratives to tell. Cournot expressly disavowed any teleological conception of history, of the kind embodied in Hegel's succession of *Volksgeister*, that sort of epic in which a few elite nations each play their role as the representative of an idea<sup>33</sup> – not to speak of any cyclical version in the style of Vico, or vision of indefinite progress in the manner of Condorcet. The innovation of his philosophy of history was to be what he called an *aetiology*: a systematic enquiry into the weave of causes that composed the fabric of history. The task of such an enquiry was to trace out the complicated patterns of chance and necessity that had shaped human development, by distinguishing between the threads of 'independence' and 'solidarity' within its causal continuum. The combination of the accidental and essential did not render the course of history impenetrable to critical explanation. Statistics had already shown how chance events, repeated

restated and amplified his argument in a number of later works – see *Traité de l'Enchaînement des Idées Fondamentales dans les Sciences et dans l'Histoire*, Vol. I, Paris 1861, § 57–68 – pp. 89–108 – henceforward *TE*. Nine volumes of Cournot's works have been published in a modern edition by Librairie Vrin: *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paris 1973–1984; henceforward *OC* – here *OC-I*, 1984, pp. 55, 29–30, 280–82; *OC-3*, 1982, pp. 60–71.

33. *Considérations sur la Marche des Idées et des Événements dans les Temps Modernes*, Vol. I, Paris 1872, pp. 17–18; *Matérialisme, Vitalisme, Rationalisme*, Paris 1875, pp. 235–36 – henceforward *CM* and *MVR*; *OC-4*, 1973, p. 19; *OC-5*, 1979, p. 136.

sufficiently often, yielded predictable outcomes.<sup>34</sup> Historical contingencies could not be so reiterated, but the distinction between contingency and necessity still held. Here, however, the contrast lay between events occurring with the irregularity of facts and processes exhibiting the regularity of laws. The former were by no means always trivial or ephemeral: they could be large realities in their own right, with indefinitely long consequences – comparable to a natural configuration like that, say, which gave greater land-mass to the Northern than the Southern hemisphere.<sup>35</sup> For all its significance, a causal sequence of this kind still remained accidental, in a sense that the tidal movement of the oceans was not. The aim of an aetiology of history was to establish the hierarchy of these various kinds of causation in the actual record of human societies.

In practice, there is a significant drift in Cournot's execution of this programme. He was resolved to give chance its due role in the skein of events. But he paradoxically tended to conflate two distinct types of chance that his own examples constantly illustrated – one that could be called punctual, the other medial. In the first, a rare event occurs because of the intersection of unrelated causal chains: in the second, a recurrent event exhibits a range of unpredictable outcomes. This is the difference between the meteorite and the roulette wheel. In Cournot's formal definition of chance the accent falls on the idea of causal *independence*, regardless of the scale or frequency of the event so caused, but in his historical treatment of it, the emphasis lies on the notion of statistical *compensation* – that is, the way in which a large number of unexpectably small causes acting within set parameters can give rise to random variations that cancel each other out to form a regular distribution. The shift from one to the other passes through the criterion that governs Cournot's selection of cases – stability of conse-

34. Kant, of course, had sketched an account of human development based directly on this model: 'Marriages, births and deaths do not seem to be subject to any rule by which their numbers could be calculated in advance, since the free human will has so great an influence upon them; and yet the annual statistics for them in large countries prove that they are just as subject to constant natural laws as the changes in the weather, which in themselves are so inconsistent that their individual occurrence cannot be determined in advance, but which nevertheless do not fail as a whole to sustain the growth of plants, the flow of rivers, and other natural functions in a uniform and uninterrupted course. Individuals and men and even entire nations little imagine that, while they are pursuing their own ends, each in his own way and often in opposition to others, they are unwittingly guided along a course intended by nature'. *Political Writings* (ed. Hans Reiss), Cambridge 1991, p. 41. Cournot, without Kant's teleological commitment, wanted to make more allowance for effective contingency than this.

35. *CM-I*, pp. 1–9; *OC-4*, pp. 9–14.

quence.<sup>36</sup> This is what unites the otherwise disparate paradigms of the cosmic disaster and the gaming table. In Cournot's philosophy of history, the contingencies that count are those that yield persistent effects, of duration or repetition. Facilely, he assimilated the two and assumed they were equivalent to historical significance. In reality, of course, persistence – of either kind – is no guarantee against inconsequence: what lasts longer or happens more often is not thereby necessarily most important for a society. But Cournot's measure of the significance of a cause by the stability of its effect gave a particular shape to his narrative.

For the order of the conditions determining human society underwent a basic reversal in his account. In primitive or ancient times, the philosophical study of history logically started with the ethnographic data of race, language and religious belief, as the structures of greatest longevity: moved to juridical and political institutions, followed by economic life; and ended with art, science and industry. In modern civilization, however – by which Cournot meant the history of Europe since the sixteenth century – the same fundamental criterion imposed the opposite sequence. 'We must give first place to what truly constitutes the substratum of European civilization, what has been least altered or impaired in its progress by elements of more variable nature, what will have most persistent interest for future generations. We will thus treat the positive sciences before philosophical systems, and even philosophical systems before religious doctrines . . . treating last all that has to do more directly with the diversity of origins, genius and customs of the nations that compose our European civilization; and ending with views on the great historical events where accidents certainly play more of a role than elsewhere, though not to the point where we need despair of discerning traces of order and regular concatenation.'<sup>37</sup> The ensuing accounts of each century since the Renaissance in *Considérations sur la Marche des Idées et des Evénements dans les Temps Modernes* obey this protocol: they begin with a survey of the science of the age, pass to philosophy and literature, proceed to religion (sixteenth–seventeenth centuries) and politics, or politics and economics (eighteenth–nineteenth centuries), before concluding with international affairs. The hierarchy runs from the durable to the ephemeral. It was an order that might shock readers, Cournot remarked. The book ended with its most pointed expression. The French Revolution was lifted out of chronological sequence and treated

36. See *CAL-I*, pp. i–iii; *OC-4*, pp. 37–38.

37. *CAL-I*, p. 35; *OC-4*, p. 30.

after rather than before the nineteenth century. The purpose of this experiment, he explained, was to explore how much in the history of his own time was due to general social processes at work in Europe, that would have occurred without any upheaval in France, and how much to specific effects of the Revolution.<sup>38</sup> A philosophical history could only be comparative in method, and must be capable of counter-factual reasoning.

Viewed in this light, the outbreak of the Revolution was indeed all but inevitable within France – given the state of the *ancien régime*, no scenario for its avoidance was retrospectively plausible. But its course was affected by accidents: among them the failure of the flight to Varennes, without which no new dynasty could have been founded, and then the 'incomparable chance' that this was done by a military genius, rather than merely a soldier of fortune of Latin American stamp;<sup>39</sup> and its eventual outcome was at variance with its many vicissitudes. For 'the historical order in which causes and effects unfolded in no way coincides with the order of importance of the conditions and results that finally predominated, as reason conceives it and subsequent events have confirmed it.'<sup>40</sup> The most durable achievements of the French Revolution were those based on the work of science – the cosmopolitan innovations of its metric system. Next came its legal reforms, as they were codified by Napoleon; then its rationalization of civil administration, with the creation of *départements*; and finally the concordat with the Church. The theatre of its most spectacular episodes, on the other hand, had left little behind. For the political legacy of the Revolution was perhaps no more than the endemic instability of governments in France since the Restoration; while economically it had retarded rather than accelerated the industrial development of the country. Looked at within the perspective of the continent as a whole, indeed, the French Revolution delayed more than it promoted the progress of European civilization towards a more rational international order in the nineteenth century. In this framework, it could be regarded as a random perturbation, without which Europe would have reached the same condition quickly and more painlessly.<sup>41</sup> In the coolness of this counter-factual verdict we are a long way from Hegel's judgement of the Revolution, to the end of his

38. *CM-I*, pp. iv–vi; *OC-4*, pp. 5–6.

39. *CM-II*, pp. 382–88; 402–403; 392–93; *OC-4*, pp. 513–18; 527–28; 520.

40. *CM-II*, p. 301; *OC-4*, p. 462.

41. *CM-II*, pp. 120–21; 246–47; 395–96; *OC-4*, pp. 346–47; 476–77; 522–33.

life: 'A constitution was now established in harmony with the conception of right, on which all future legislation would be based' - 'That was a glorious dawn. All thinking beings shared in the jubilation of the epoch.'<sup>42</sup> What for Hegel was a change in man's place in the political world comparable to the Copernican discovery that the sun was the centre of the firmament, Cournot could compare to an errancy in the path of a planet around it.

Yet Cournot too could declare that the Revolution was perhaps the last page of epic history that humanity would write. For his aetiology of modern Europe was inserted as a detailed segment within a much vaster theoretical prospectus. The overall development of the species was characterized by a sequence of three phases, that divided social time on earth. In primitive societies, there was no significant order of public events to compose a history proper; social life was the product of instinctual drives, whose play was essentially blind; the train of deeds was the dictate of chance. The records of humanity at this stage of pre-history could yield at best the form of arbitrary annals - a series of curiosities, calamities or prodigies with no relation between them other than mere temporal succession. With the emergence of civilization, instinctual life became increasingly subject to the guidance or control of ideas, leaders arose capable of directing masses beneath them, religions and states were founded, empires battled with each other, the arts and sciences developed. The flow of events now acquired an intelligible order, of which a connected narrative could be written - one dominated by heroes and poets, legislators and prophets, whose principal field of action was politics and religion. The realm of chance was now crossed with that of purpose, yielding a social causation inextricably mingling contingency and necessity. In the course of its development, however, civilization gradually subjected more and more domains of social existence to rational organization. Its tendency, already visible, was therefore towards the advent of a third condition of humanity, which could be termed post-historical. In this stage, the social order would approximate to the regularity and predictability of a natural system, as economic principles became the dominant force shaping collective life, individual greatness declined, popular consumption increased, and politics lost ground to administration. In this 'final state' of civilization, 'society tends to assume, like a beehive, a virtually

42. *W-12*, p. 529; *PH*, p. 447: 'Never since the sun had stood in the firmament and the planets revolved around him had it been perceived that man's existence centres in his head, that is in thought, out of which he builds the world of reality.'

geometric pattern.'<sup>43</sup> Human actions become so tightly integrated into a set of interconnected social mechanisms that they no longer present the variety of incident and invention of a genuine history: the motions of the resultant structure would merely provide the sort of bulletins recorded in an official gazette. When history comes to an end, it is the realm of necessity that triumphs over chance.

In a century that saw many enterprises in the philosophy of history, this one stands out in the originality of its construction. Cournot's scientific background was, of course, a major influence on it. The general schema is clearly inspired by the trajectory of the natural world as it had been established by the advances of the time. The cosmos had moved from an initial state of chaos, without regular forms or laws, through a period of genesis in which the elements of an emergent order appeared, to a final state of stability, of indefinite duration. Within the solar system itself, which exemplified this curve, the history of the earth repeated it - from original molten mass through fierce convulsions to the tranquil regularity of the quaternary epoch we now enjoy; and in turn the evolution of life on earth reiterated the same movement, reaching relative biological equilibrium among contending species at the term of its development.<sup>44</sup> Cournot's aetiology of human history drew its analytic bias for persistence, as well as its schematic direction, from the prestige of such natural analogies. But if his diagnosis of a post-historical future had only rested on these, it would have been a more fragile and conventional speculation of his age. Its particular force, however, came from the field of his own authority. The basic paradigm informing the vision of a stabilized human condition was the market equilibrium whose mechanisms of price formation he had pioneered. Cournot himself was explicit about this: it was 'the economic idea, the utilitarian principle' that 'pervaded everything' in the contemporary world, providing the standard of social organization.<sup>45</sup> The statistical regularities of the market were the model of the final prevalence of necessity over chance, of rational order over vital impulse. 'The economist considers the social body in a state of division and so to speak extreme pulverization, where all the singularities of

43. *TF-II*, § 541 - p. 342; *OC-3*, p. 484. For the whole argument, see *TF-II*, § 528-546 - pp. 324-353, restated in *MVR*, pp. 227-235; *OC-3*, pp. 475-490 and *OC-5*, pp. 131-35.

44. See *TF-I*, § 194 - pp. 305-306; *OC-3*, pp. 185-86; and *CM-I*, pp. 20-22; *OC-4*, pp. 21-22.

45. *TF-II*, § 619 - pp. 464-65; *OC-3*, p. 552.

individual organization and life compensate and cancel one another. The laws he discovers or thinks to do so are those of a mechanism, not a living organism.<sup>46</sup>

Atomization – pulverization. Hegel and Cournot use similar terms when they view the market. But what in one was a subordinate system within the configuration of modernity has become for the other a dominant reality, that which defines it as the end of history. What was Cournot's political attitude towards this final state, as he foresaw it? His intellectual independence is striking here too. He spoke of 'the new idea of an administration of social interests, independent of political forms', which 'might be compared to a science or an industry capable of increasing perfection', as characteristic of the coming age.<sup>47</sup> But he was not a technocratic enthusiast for it, like Saint-Simon. Nor, on the other hand, did he express a romantic abhorrence of the mechanical uniformity and symmetry of the society he predicted; the vehement rejection of a long line of *Kulturkritiker* is missing. Cournot's comments on the post-historical future he projected are curiously detached in tone. By upbringing he was a Catholic and a conservative; but by outlook he was a rationalist and by profession a scientist.<sup>48</sup> The combination yielded a peculiar temperamental balance, if with a touch of melancholy. The progressive civilization under way involved the victory of rational and general principles over spontaneous life energies, bringing with it many drawbacks as well as advantages: 'in some respects a lowering and in other respects a perfecting of the conditions of humanity'.<sup>49</sup> The final state would be one in which 'history, absorbed by the science of social economics, would end like some river whose waters disperse (to the benefit of the greatest number) into myriad irrigation canals, losing what was once their unity and imposing grandeur'.<sup>50</sup> The substitution of the world of the gazette for that of the epic would bring well-being and security, as well as anonymity and accidie. For if modernity was a creation of European development,

46. *MVR*, p. 219; *OC-5*, p. 46.

47. *TE-II*, § 337 – p. 29; *MVR*, p. 227; *OC-3*, p. 311 and *OC-5*, p. 131.

48. He could be equally dispassionate about the future of his own faith. Christian belief had been virtually synonymous with European civilization, and it was safe to say no extant religion would ever replace it, not any new one succeed it. But 'objectively, science and religion have nothing in common', and it could not be excluded that one day Europe might astonish the world with its ingratitude and divorce itself from Christianity. Were that to happen, 'humanity would enter a new phase: God would personally withdraw from human societies, abandoning them to the laws of their natural mechanism, which also form part of his decrees'. *TE-II*, § 589–593, pp. 416–421.

49. *TE-II*, § 332 – p. 22; *OC-3*, p. 307.

50. *TE-II*, § 543 – p. 345; *OC-3*, p. 486.

what lay beyond it had been prefigured in Asian experience. Unlike Hegel's, Cournot's vision of the direction of world history is not exclusively Western. For centuries Chinese civilization had formed a parallel record to European, equal in achievements but distinct in values. Where Western societies had devoted themselves to the glorification of successive ideals – faith, fatherland, freedom – Chinese realism formed social institutions for the physical and moral improvement of individuals, the utility of men. It was in China, not in Europe, that principles of rational administration and industrial invention were pioneered which only prevailed much later in the West, after the heroic energies of its properly historical phase had flowered and faded.<sup>51</sup> Where for Hegel 'the earth forms a sphere, but history does not describe a circle round it',<sup>52</sup> Cournot envisaged European and Chinese civilizations converging, as the outward movement of their two populations joined on the Pacific shores of America, in a common post-historical order.

Cournot's end of history is a more definitely terrestrial destination than that of Hegel. But at the same time, because it lacks the back-up of a higher movement in the absolute spirit, it is also less categorical. Cournot took pains to stress that while civilization tended towards a final state, it would probably never 'rigorously attain it'.<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, there remained the problems with which Hegel had grappled: the market, the state, the international order of the time. Cournot's grasp of the structural logic of the market was, of course, much deeper. The economist who anticipated the neo-classical revolution was not, however, a *laissez-faire* theorist. The *Recherches* stressed that exchange values and use values were not only distinct but could be directly incompatible: the Dutch destruction of spice harvests in the East Indies was 'an act of selfish cupidity, evidently opposed to the interests of society', yet 'this sordid act of material destruction is a real creation of wealth in the commercial sense of the word', the only sense in which value admitted of treatment by political economy.<sup>54</sup> Equilibrium prices could be reached in conditions of monopoly or duopoly, as well

51. *TE-II*, § 563–574 – pp. 380–85, esp. 391–92; *OC-3*, pp. 505–514, 511–12. Cournot thought China had missed a heroic phase of history – *TE-II*, pp. 394–95; *OC-3*, p. 513.

52. *W-12*, p. 134; *LPH*, p. 103 – since 'world history travels from East to West, for Europe is plainly its end and Asia its beginning.' This is a rare occasion on which Hegel does use the word *Ende* when speaking of history, but in a spatial sense: the world spirit will not loop back towards its starting-point.

53. *TE-II*, § 543 – p. 344; *OC-3*, p. 485.

54. *Recherches sur les Principes Mathématiques de la Théorie des Richesses*, Paris 1838, § 3 – pp. 6–7; henceforward *RP*; *OC-8*, 1980, p. 10.

as perfect competition; and it was not the case that unrestricted free trade was always of benefit to a nation. The unfettered pursuit of private interests did not necessarily result in public welfare, as the ravages of deforestation or the evils of opium traffic had shown: the preordained harmony of the invisible hand was an illusion. The principle of *laissez-faire* was justified where the complexity of variables was too great for the consequences of intervention to be calculable. This negative rationale could well cover most cases, as a pragmatic rule. But it was not a scientific axiom, and regulation of the market—at the border or at home—might in other cases be preferable. Cournot had little more moral trust in the market than Hegel.<sup>55</sup>

His greater understanding of its dynamic, however, precluded any belief that corporations might be the agents of regulation. The State alone could perform this role. Within its structure, Cournot thought administration was becoming ever more important: it was from its bureaucracy that pressure for intervention typically came. Cournot, who spent the better part of his career as a civil servant under a regime—the Second Empire—in which public functionaries acquired unusual power, naturally had high regard for such administration, without deeming it a universal class. His hostility to representative democracy was no less marked than Hegel's. But in France, where Cournot lived through three revolutions of increasingly radical tenor, no Estates alternative was credible. The result was a political theory in sharp contrast to Hegel's. Freedom was no longer the central ideal of human life. Experience showed that it was of decreasing importance to the men of the nineteenth century: 'the political liberty which once inspired such generous sacrifices and noble impulses will not be such an object of worship to future generations.'<sup>56</sup> Power could not be founded on reason. The social contract was a myth and popular sovereignty a chimera. Universal suffrage and hereditary rule were equally irrational as principles. Political representation was as subjective a practice as artistic representation—there were as many forms of it as of portraiture. If administration served interests, government in the last resort reflected passions. No rational construction of sovereignty was possible: it could only be based on religion, tradition or force.<sup>57</sup> The corrosive scepticism of this doctrine was mitigated only by the assurance that political passions, though never entirely extinguishable, were

55. RP, §87–94—pp. 173–196; *TE-II*, § 477–482, pp. 250–59; OC—8, pp. 113–125 and OC—3, pp. 433–37.

56. *TE-II*, § 462—p. 230; OC—3, p. 422.

57. *TE-II*, § 465–67—pp. 233–36; *CM-II*, pp. 276–77; *MVR*, pp. 220–24; OC—3, pp. 423–25; OC—4, pp. 446–47; OC—5, pp. 127–130.

now subsiding as industrial civilization progressed. The contrast between this disabused account of public authority and the idea of the state as the realization of freedom marks, among other things, the distance between the two empires under which they were conceived.

If Napoleon could appear to one philosopher as the *Weltseele* on horseback at Jena, his nephew was little more than a pedestrian *pis-aller* for the other, writing just before the Mexican expedition.<sup>58</sup> A decade later, amid the ruins of the Second Empire, Cournot reflected on the international relations of the epoch. Here something of the same antinomy appeared as within each state. The advance of industrialization, creating ever more uniform social and political institutions in Europe, did not thereby cancel the ethnic and cultural differences between nations, which if anything acquired more subjective importance for the peoples concerned—not because they actually increased, but because even though reduced, they gained more relief amidst the larger surrounding commonality. Such ethnic identities gave force to the principle of nationality in contemporary politics, where states still stood arrayed against each other in the traditional balance of powers, and no neutral arbiter was conceivable between them. Could the cosmopolitanism of modern conditions eventually prevail over the rival patriotisms of the continent? Might a federal United States of Europe come into being one day? Only, Cournot thought, if there was a further transformation of society comparable to the changes which had put an end to feudalism.<sup>59</sup>

That was, of course, an idea common—in their own terms—to socialists. If the new scientific culture of the century formed the major difference of intellectual context separating Cournot from Hegel, the emergence of socialism as a threat to the existing order was the great political divide between their worlds. When Cournot came to ask the classical question of his generation of countrymen—was the French Revolution 'over'?—his reply in the wake of the Commune was that another kind of revolution, a social war of European dimensions taking volcanic shape in the First International, had replaced it.<sup>60</sup> Of all the themes in his work that anticipate later problems, none was to be so uncannily clairvoyant as Cournot's response to the revolutionary challenge of the labour movement. The penetration of his insight came,

58. See the comment that closes Cournot's memoirs, written in 1859—if there had to be a dictator after 1848, Napoleon's nephew was more likely to keep the masses in control than any other upstart: *Souvenirs*, Paris 1913, pp. 254–55.

59. *TE-II*, § 543—pp. 345–46; *CM-I*, pp. 227–230; *CM-II*, pp. 289–290; OC—3, p. 486; OC—4, pp. 152–53 and 453–55.

60. *CM-II*, pp. 414–420; OC—4, pp. 534–38.

no doubt, from the proximity of features in his own vision of a post-historical future to elements in the socialist culture of the time. But already in the ongoing present his own critique of the untrammelled free market posed him with a theoretical problem. If economic regulation by the state was in principle admissible, even desirable, where would it stop — might not its logic lead to, say, public control of woods and arable land, in the interests of better use or greater output? 'That would lead', he warned in 1861, 'straight to what is nowadays called socialism, the banner of a new sect of which the world has rightly taken fright, as it realizes the wounds within existing society.'<sup>61</sup> Economically, tariffs were indeed — *pace* Smith — often perfectly sensible; but what was to prevent workers arguing from the validity of measures of protection to laws of redistribution, on the same grounds of a common benefit for the greater number? Modern industrial competition inevitably led to periodic crises of overproduction; capital accumulation to concentration of fortunes; technological progress to mass unemployment. In these conditions of often acute social distress, the eternal conflict between rich and poor, which had always threatened the security of property, took on a new menace. For there now arose the idea of a social order equitably distributing the fruits of nature and industry, capable at once of a high level of output and reduced labour-times for all. The eighteenth century had known utopian schemes, but only as isolated dreams without social resonance. It was a mark of the nineteenth century that such utopias now acquired the force of a mass aspiration in the new working-class centres in the big cities, fostered by the levelling pressures of universal suffrage.<sup>62</sup>

What were their prospects of realization? Cournot argued that politically a proletarian revolution might succeed in doing away with capitalism, although it would run into formidable peasant resistance when it started to tax the countryside, which might overwhelm it. Economically, however, it was quite possible that socialism would be constructed more or less along the lines its theorists envisaged in a particular state — there were so many objective tendencies pointing in that direction. But while a socialist economy might be built internally within one nation, it would inevitably succumb to the pressures of the international environment surrounding it. No matter how authoritarian its state or vigilant its police, such a system could not withstand the forces of commercial competition from abroad. Even its best intentions — say, a desire to conserve natural resources from reckless exploitation

61. *TF-II*, § 481 — p. 258; *OC-3*, p. 437.

62. *CM-II*, pp. 250–56; *OC-4*, pp. 429–433.

— would turn to its disadvantage in foreign trade. Moreover, the world market was not just a system of commodity exchange: all factors of production were mobile within it. These included individuals themselves, who could not be indefinitely penned within single borders, and — above all — ideas or institutions: those that experience proved more efficient were bound to prevail across any frontiers, however closed.<sup>63</sup> The protective barriers a socialist economy would have to erect against the outside world were a sign of weakness, that would undo it.

The prevision of the fate of communism is remarkable. But it did not leave Cournot entirely sanguine. For within capitalism itself, there were trends at work which were inconsistent with the principles of economic freedom. The growth in the scale of public works, the absorption of a major portion of profits on capital by fiscal charges and public borrowing, the spread of progressive taxation, the subventions to social insurance by the state, the legislation on conditions of work, the organization of workers' associations themselves — did not all these developments promise to bring about a sort of gradual, partial socialism? Or, at any rate, a different pattern in the distribution of wealth than would be given by the laws of economic equilibrium alone?<sup>64</sup> By the time of his last work, *Revue Sommaire des Doctrines Economiques*, Cournot had read Marx and had become increasingly concerned to defend the socially beneficial functions of capital. Even if private property, inheritance and inequality were not abolished outright, the trend towards state intervention and redistribution might still discourage individual economic activity to the point where a 'disguised' socialism had the same depressive effects as the 'systematic' sort.<sup>65</sup> Cournot's sketch of processes leading towards social democracy, long before anything like it existed, is scarcely less impressive as a theoretical presentiment — Hayekian forebodings taking shape *ante diem*. But although Cournot feared such a development, he never thought the stark recipes of economic liberalism an effective antidote to it. Market mechanisms did not generate any spontaneous evolutionary order: governmental authority remained the only conceivable *arche* of large modern societies, their essential 'principle of internal coordination'.<sup>66</sup>

63. *CM-II*, pp. 258–260; *OC-4*, pp. 434–35.

64. *CM-II*, pp. 256–58; *OC-4*, pp. 433–34.

65. *Revue Sommaire des Doctrines Economiques*, Paris 1877, pp. 323–25 — henceforward *RS*; *OC-10*, 1982, pp. 176–77. Significantly, the image of the beehive is here associated, not with the post-historical society outlined in the *Traité*, but with socialism. The impact of the Commune in unsettling Cournot's late outlook can be compared to that of the July Revolution on Hegel.

66. *RS*, pp. 264–65; *OC-10*, pp. 145–46.



Pure *laissez-faire* was about as rational in economics as it would be in medicine. The cause of property must not be confused with that of economic freedom, nor the idea of socialism with that of regulation.<sup>67</sup> His own preferences could perhaps be said to anticipate the social market of a later Christian Democracy. But his reservations about the overall logic of unrestrained economic liberalism went deeper than its consequences for national solidarity. They strike an arresting contemporary note. What would happen to finite natural resources across the globe, if they were plundered without limit for the profits of the day? The disastrous consequences of deforestation were already evident, and man was a 'concessionnaire of the planet' for much else besides — its fossil fuels too. What was the responsibility of one generation to its successors, in the calculus of human welfare — where did the optimum distribution lie between them?<sup>68</sup> For its part, technological progress could in time lead to ever greater substitution of machinery for labour, realizing Bacon's perhaps ominous dream of rendering all natural forces the slaves of man. How then would the consequences of declining employment, within and above all across countries, be handled?<sup>69</sup> Last but not least, what of the international economic order that unfettered capital accumulation would bring — would the mechanisms of global competition not generate a racial hierarchy condemning societies and peoples with fewer comparative advantages to the injustice of crushing inferiority? Such were the troubled questions that Cournot confided to Walras, on the eve of the emergence of general equilibrium theory.<sup>70</sup> Paradoxically, for all its differences, Cournot's legacy contains the same kind of tacit dislocation as Hegel's, between philosophical vision and social observation, the prospect of a historical closure and intimations of political rending.

67. *RS*, p. 317; *OC-10*, p. 173.

68. *TE-II*, §477-79 — pp. 250-55; *CM-II*, pp. 239-240; *RS*, pp. 302-303; *OC-3*, pp. 433-35; *OC-4*, pp. 421-22. The last question anticipates concerns only recently raised to full philosophical dignity, in works like Derek Parfit's *Reasons and Persons*.

69. *RS*, pp. 292-99; *OC-10*, pp. 161-64.

70. 'I tremble at the thought that your curves of "intensive and extensive utility" will lead you to pure *laissez-faire*, that is to say, in national economies, to the deforestation of the earth, and in the international economy, to the suffocation of plebeian by privileged races in accord with the theory of Monsieur Darwin.' Walras, who had been trying to enlist Cournot's support for the reception of his work in Paris, hastened to reply: 'As for the remote consequences of "pure *laissez-faire*" which you glimpse beyond my premises, give me, Sir, a little time and trust and you will see that I shall know how to evade them.' *Correspondence of Léon Walras and Related Papers*, Vol. 1, ed. William Jaffé, Amsterdam 1965, pp. 332, 336; a poignant exchange in other ways as well. For the same themes in Cournot's own treatise, see *TE-II*, § 480 — p. 255; *OC-3*, pp. 435-36.

### 3. Kojève

By the end of the century, the cultural climate had changed. Conceptions of progress of any kind were now, as Niethammer notes, subject to a surfacing doubt. Nietzsche, its most influential voice, subject precisely the two versions of historical development that Hegel and Cournot had advanced. In the vocabulary of *The Use and Abuse of History*, Hegelian philosophy was reduced to a variant of grey-headed 'antiquarian history' — but the most dangerous sort, since instead of instilling a crippling modesty before the past, the painful awareness of the epigone, it had prompted the shameless illusion among Germans that they were the peak of the species: 'The belief that one is a late-comer in the world is anyway harmful and degrading; but it must appear frightful and devastating when it raises our late-comer to godhead, by a deft turn of the wheel, as the true meaning and object of all past creation, and his conscious misery is set up as the perfection of the world's history.' Accurately enough, Nietzsche did not tax Hegel himself with having proclaimed the end of history — but rather with *not* having drawn this necessary conclusion from his system, so leaving his successors with the conceit of doing so: 'For Hegel the highest and final stage of the world-process came together in his own Berlin existence. He ought to have said that everything after him was merely to be regarded as the musical coda of the great historical rondo — or rather, as simply superfluous. He did not say it; and thus he implanted into a generation saturated by his influence a worship of the "power of history" that practically turns every moment into a sheer gaping at success, an idolatry of the actual.'<sup>71</sup> A decade later, Nietzsche drew a famous portrait of the quite different ending that modern industry and democracy might bring about, a 'time when man will no longer launch the arrow of his longing beyond man' and 'the earth has become small', without labour or danger, inequality or solitude, rule or passion: a world of human 'ground-fleas', who persist the longest — the last men. 'They have their little pleasures for the day, and their little pleasures for the night; but they are careful of their health. "We have discovered happiness" say the last men, and blink.'<sup>72</sup> Here the imagery of insect life has sunk below the hive: the post-historical vision of a society of

71. *Werke III/1* (ed. Colli-Montinari), Berlin 1972, pp. 303-305; *Thoughts out of Season*, Vol. 2, London 1909, pp. 71-72.

72. *Werke VII/1*, Berlin 1968, pp. 12-14; *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, London 1908, pp. 12-13.

symmetry and utility has become the sphere of universal *Leistungen*, the final state of mankind 'the most contemptible of all'.

Nietzsche was, of course, unaware of Cournot, whose intellectual isolation during his lifetime was not much less than his own. Unlike the great German, the French thinker never acquired posthumous general renown. But within the universities of the Third Republic, he was not forgotten. The rationalist and solidarist ambience of the emergent social sciences found affinities with him, and in the Belle Époque he received belated tribute with a special issue of the leading academic journal of the day, and a comprehensive monograph on his thought. This attention continued into the interwar period. It was then that for the first time his views on post-historical stability received extended treatment from a young philosopher whose ontology had been conceived as a modernization of Cournot's work, Raymond Ruyer. His level-headed study *L'Avènement de l'Humanité d'après Cournot* noted at the outset the similarity between Cournot's forecasts and Nietzsche's apprehensions.<sup>75</sup> Writing in 1929, however, he asked whether the novel turbulences of bolshevism and fascism did not contradict the expectation of a secular decline of political energies as the rule of increasingly impersonal administration took hold. Yet since these were one-party regimes suppressing political debate and aiming at complete control of social and economic life, perhaps their destination was ironically the kind of state Cournot had envisaged — though if they did not afford the modicum of civil freedom for individuals he believed inseparable from modern civilization, they would not last.<sup>76</sup> Still, even if they passed, Cournot had probably both overestimated the degree of institutional stability that could ever be achieved by humanity, and underestimated the social costs of the type of stabilization he projected. Any imaginable equilibrium would be more relative, but also on a lower plane, than he had thought. History had hitherto always developed through a variety of human civilizations. Now the European form alone was becoming a universal model imposed across the globe, even as Europe itself was visibly becoming enervated in its own edifice

75. Cournot announces the birth of a diligent, average, temperate humanity, without nobility or genius, a reasonable species — the "last man", despised by Zarathustra, who in his paltry wisdom says "formerly all the world was mad"; *L'Avènement de l'Humanité d'après Cournot*, Paris 1930, pp. 6–7. The aim of Ruyer's *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Structure*, published in the same year, was to develop a defensible contemporary version of a mechanist view of the world, as close to the truths of twentieth-century science as Cournot had been to those of the nineteenth: p. 11.

76. *L'Avènement de l'Humanité d'après Cournot*, pp. 35–37.

of utilitarian calculation and consumption.<sup>75</sup> The result looked like being an increasingly uniform world, in which humanity no longer had any counter-assurance in alternative cultures. In these conditions, the mechanisms of the future could well become seized by a general rust.

With the onset of the Depression and the victory of Nazism, the conditions in which this judgement was made were struck away. A product of the same professional milieu as Ruyer, Raymond Aron turned sharply against it under the impact of his experience of Germany in 1931–33. Originally formed under the influence of the Gallic version of neo-Kantian rationalism, Aron's exposure to the work of Rickert and Weber, Husserl and Heidegger in the years of Hitler's rise to power led to a strong rejection of what he saw as the complacency and provincialism of the established French philosophy and sociology of the time.<sup>76</sup> His *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* of 1938 was a summons to take the measure of the European crisis that the traditions of Durkheim or Brunschwig had failed to register — and for which German historicism and existentialism were better preparations. Aron has described the disarray into which the work threw his superiors.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps, however, this was not due only to the unfamiliarity of its themes. For the book is even in retrospect a curious hybrid, whose mixture of claims depends on its discontinuous structure. Significantly, however, Aron's first move was a consideration of Cournot, whose philosophy dominates the *mise-en-scène* of the work. Cournot's view of history, Aron argued, was not so much empirically as methodologically flawed, by its assumption of an end-state whose ultimate order was the only guarantee that the path towards it was a logical evolution, rather than a random becoming — but which the historically situated knowledge of the philosopher could never justify. Cournot could seek to distinguish between chance and necessity in the weave of events only because he had determined their final pattern in advance.<sup>78</sup> Aron rejected not only such metaphysical determinism, but also more specific doctrines of social or economic determination: Durkheim's conception of collective forces, Simiand's preoccupation with bullion flows, or Marx's account of the primacy of infrastructures. All causal relationships in society were at best only partial and probable: there was no first cause or original motor in history, whose processes were irreduct-

75. *Ibid.*, pp. 136–150.

76. See the account in his *Mémoires*, Paris 1983, pp. 67–73.

77. *Mémoires*, pp. 105–106.

78. *Introduction à la Philosophie de l'Histoire*, Paris 1938, pp. 19–24, 178–79. Henceforward *PH*.

bly plural. 'Neither the reality of local ensembles nor the objectivity of fragmentary determinisms excludes the incoherence of atomic facts or the incertitude of the whole.'<sup>79</sup>

What then were the constituents of a valid philosophy of history, one that had learnt to abandon binding epistemological and political certainties? For Aron, its object emerged in a new light, quite foreign to Cournot. 'The concept of history is not essentially tied to the hypothesis of a total order. What is decisive is rather our consciousness of the past and our will to define ourselves in terms of it. The distinction between truly historical individuals and peoples and those who are ahistorical does not have to do with the pace of social change or the character of institutions. To live historically is to preserve, to re-live and to judge the existence of one's ancestors (and of other societies).'<sup>80</sup> For this programme, Aron invoked the authority of Hegel. But if the idea of an appropriation-internalization of the past by a consciousness in the present could be termed a Hegelian derivation, mediated by Dilthey, the other moments of this agenda – not preserving or re-living, but judging and willing – bear the stamp of Weber and Heidegger. By what value-standards should the past be judged, once a plurality of ethical standpoints was sociologically conceded? How could the subjective adoption of one perspective, among others, be reconciled with the objectivity of historical knowledge itself? Unable to settle for Weber's formalist solution, Aron found himself driven towards its exasperated sequel in Weimar decisionism – arguing, in Heideggerian fashion, that 'man determines himself and his mission by measuring himself against nothingness', with 'the power of he who creates himself by judging his milieu and choosing himself, and so surmounts the relativity of history by the absolute of his decision'.<sup>81</sup> Here it is confrontation, not with the complexity of a social past, but with the abyss of the existential present that gives meaning and direction – the void of death rather than the legacy of life. In this key, Marxism itself was to be understood as an existential attitude among others, a practical will independent of the theoretical validity of its claims.

The relativist logic here led to not a recriticism but a dissolution of the philosophy of history as Aron had initially conceived it. In the unstable compound of his text, however, it oscillated with its reverse. For elsewhere, Aron sought to anchor his project in permanent disposi-

79. *PHI*, pp. 208–225, 276.

80. *PHI*, p. 46. These formulations are expressly directed against Cournot's views.

81. *PHI*, p. 375.

tions of human nature. The historian could not escape the danger of substituting his own preferences for the actual realities of the past, unless he assumed a common standard between them as an 'inevitable vocation in the nature of man and of the mind'.<sup>82</sup> If history was made up of a multiplicity of partial totalities, each of these was nevertheless 'the imperfect work (perfect retrospectively) of a humanity' whose 'unity was equivalent to a goal situated on an infinite horizon: the totality which the philosopher would grasp if man had exhausted his history, by completing his creation and self-creation.' The idea of an end of history, in other words, recurs even in a discourse that seems to set its face against it. In this register, 'only the human species is engaged in an adventure whose goal is not death but the realization of itself.'<sup>83</sup> Here essence unmistakably commands existence. In the *Introduction* the gesture of this ontological reversal is only sketched: it remains without empirical referent. But its inspiration was to become clear elsewhere in Aron's work, and was never disavowed by him: it lay in Kant's notion of reason as the regulative principle of a society governed by law and a world assured of peace. Forty-five years later, reflecting on the political disorders and nuclear dangers of the century, he wrote at the end of his life: 'I continue to believe that a happy ending is possible, far beyond our political horizon, in the Idea of Reason.'<sup>84</sup>

While Aron was composing his *Introduction*, another and more powerful one was under way in Paris at the same time. Kojève had started to lecture on Hegel in 1933. A Russian who had spent his formative years in Germany, Kojève too had absorbed the impact of Heidegger – much more deeply. But in his case it was mediated by the influence of Marx, and led to an interpretation of Hegel that was a genuine intellectual synthesis, of striking coherence and originality. Kojève's fundamental move was to exfoliate the centre of Hegel's system into a double development. The movement of the Spirit through time, in the metaphysical passage of the Absolute to itself, was brought to earth in two complementary figures. The first was existential, and traced the dynamic of human identity as a freedom negating its situation in pursuit of a desire whose fulfilment can only lie in its free acknowledged negation by others. The second was social, and traced the pattern of class relations as they developed in successive conflicts from aristocratic domination through bourgeois ascendancy to popular equality. For Kojève, these two figures were interwoven in a single

82. *PHI*, pp. 279, 46.

83. *PHI*, pp. 349, 52.

84. 'In the Kantian sense', Aron explains: *Mémoires*, p. 741.

narrative that gave its sense to the history of the world. At its origin, the nihilating action of every consciousness, moved by a desire for what it is not, engages in contest with that of every other, as each seeks to extort the recognition of itself that alone can satisfy it, and in this quest accepts the risk of death to achieve dominance over the other. Out of this battle emerge the first social relations, of master and slave in Antiquity. These are in turn transformed by the labour of the slaves to yield the world of capital, whose formal equality is anticipated in Christianity. That world is then overturned by the victory of workers over capital, in a revolution assuring the universal recognition of all in substantive equality. Kojève made no secret of the sources of this construction. Heidegger had understood the primordial projection of human existence towards death in Hegel's philosophy, that ensues from the struggle of each consciousness to wrest symbolic tribute — honour or prestige — from its rivals; but he had largely ignored the transformative processes of labour. Marx had grasped the material dynamic of work unleashed by the drive for recognition, but had neglected the struggle to death behind it.<sup>85</sup> Hegel's philosophy united these themes: death, struggle and labour — enchainate in one movement as humanity proceeds towards its goal.

In Kojève's reconstruction, this goal acquires a peculiar relief. For the first time, Hegel's philosophy is credited with a full conception of an end of history, as not just the result of human development but also its halting-place. How novel this account was can be seen from the reading of Hegel that prompted Kojève's undertaking, to which he acknowledged his debt. In 1935 Alexandre Koyré, linked to him in the Russian emigration, had published a pioneering essay on the concept of time in Hegel's recently discovered *Jena Logik* and *Realphilosophie*, which had concluded that for all its majesty Hegel's philosophy was a failure because its system was only possible if history was completed, which was just what its dialectic of time, as perpetual negation of the present by the future, precluded. Human freedom and historical finality could not be reconciled.<sup>86</sup> This was just the verdict Kojève sought to overthrow. He argued that Hegel had indeed affirmed the end of history, in perfect accord with the structure of his philosophy and the logic of modernity —

85. *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel* (first edition), Paris 1947, p. 573. Henceforward *IIH*.

86. 'Hegel à Jena', *Revue d'histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, September–October 1935, pp. 457–58: 'The philosophy of history would only be possible if history was finished, and there was no more future — if time had stopped.' But 'if time is dialectical, and always constructed as from the future, it is — whatever Hegel says — perpetually unfinished.'

and had identified its arrival with the First Empire. What Napoleon's victory at Jena had represented for Hegel, Kojève maintained, was the advent of a 'universal and homogeneous state', in which the opposition of master and slave is finally overcome in the synthesis of a citizen soldiery combining the traditionally antithetical roles of war and work, in equality under the law. Once the revolutionary armies of this state have vanquished every enemy, and universal equality is realized, the drive for recognition is fulfilled: 'desire thus being entirely satisfied, struggle and labour cease: history is over, there is nothing more to do.'<sup>87</sup> All that remains, at the end of time, is the natural existence of man as a biological being — and the contemplation of the historical process of his becoming, in the wisdom of Hegel's philosophy itself.

Kojève's explication of Hegel was at the same stroke a validation. In its essentials, the structure of history was as Hegel had seen it to be. There were only two reservations to be made to his account. Under the influence of Schelling, Hegel had mistakenly extended his dialectic to nature, the domain not of negativity but of identity, to construct a single ontology for the physical and historical worlds that was manifestly untenable.<sup>88</sup> To grasp the truth of Hegel's philosophy, it was necessary to strip nature out of it. The other correction was more local, and affected the historical account itself. Hegel's timetable needed an adjustment. He had miscalculated the hour of the end of history, for Napoleon had not in the event realized it. The universal and homogeneous state had only germinated at Jena, and over a century later was still far from fruition. The political order Hegel had envisaged was not an established reality, but an ideal requiring the negativity of an ongoing action to be brought into existence.<sup>89</sup> The 'perfect state' was a project still to be accomplished. Kojève left little doubt where it was being carried forward. In lectures rife with allusions to the Communist movement of the time, he hinted that Hegel's philosophy already furnished, in advance, the necessary judgements to be made of a virtuous reformism that was no more than a form of bourgeois individualism; of self-indulgent intellectuals incapable of effective social action; of dreams of permanent revolution that could only lead to anarchy or the destruction of the dreamers. Successful revolutionary struggle required other qualities: among them, the capacity to connect with tradition, and to engage with terror (whose historical necessity

87. *IIH*, pp. 384–85.

88. *IIH*, pp. 483–88.

89. *IIH*, pp. 290–91.

Marx himself had underestimated).<sup>90</sup> It was not difficult to see whose silhouette was being traced here, and Kojève made no secret of it at the time. The role of Napoleon had fallen to Stalin. The end of history was now under preparation in the East.

Kojève's lectures made a deep impression on his listeners – to more various and influential effect than probably any others in France this century. But what was the relation between his vision and Hegel's? Kojève based his reading of Hegel all but exclusively on the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Neither the early theological texts, which had caused an intellectual flurry in the time of Dilthey, nor the Jena writings that had fascinated Koyré, and still less the *Philosophy of Right* or the *Lectures in the Philosophy of History*, which had dominated discussion in the time of Marx, feature in his account. This choice gave him maximum hermeneutic latitude. For the *Phenomenology*, bearing at once on the formation of the self and the development of the world, in language of opaque passion and elusive intensity, invites the largest interpretive constructions while withholding most of the empirical specifications needed for them. The political background of the text cannot be mistaken, where it nears the French Revolution, and Hegel himself claimed it had foreseen the denouement of the Napoleonic adventure.<sup>91</sup> But it is entirely lacking in historical or institutional particulars. Not so much as one proper name from the annals of power appears in its pages. Unencumbered by the detailed references and explicit proposals of Hegel's later works, Kojève was free to develop his own formidable variations on the darkling admirations at Jena. The result is a decisive political shift. The 'universal and homogeneous state' Kojève ascribed to Hegel could, in fact, be described as an inversion of his programme. For Hegel, at all stages in his career,

90. *I.H.*, pp. 89–91; 502; 518–19; 555–57; 573.

91. After the final defeat and abdication of Napoleon in 1814, he wrote: 'Great events have transpired about us. It is a frightful spectacle to see a great genius destroy himself. There is nothing more tragic. The entire mass of mediocrity, with its irresistible weight of gravity, presses on like lead, without rest or reconciliation, until it has succeeded in bringing down what is high to the same level as itself or even below. The turning point of the whole, the reason why this mass has power and – like the chorus – survives and remains on top, is that the great individual must himself give that mass the right to do what it does, thus precipitating his own fall. I may pride myself, moreover, on having predicted this entire upheaval. In my book [the *Phenomenology*], which I completed the night before the battle of Jena, I said: "Absolute freedom" – which I had previously described as the purely abstract formal freedom of the French Republic, originating as I showed in the Enlightenment – "passes out of its own self-destructive actuality over into another land of self-conscious spirit" – I had in mind here a specific land: *Briefe*, II, pp. 28–29; *Letters*, p. 307. This retrospective gloss, of course, is completely at variance with Kojève's account of Hegel's expectations in the *Phenomenology*; but given the temptations of hindsight, it should not be overly relied upon.

believed that the state had to be differentiated in structure and delimited in territory: articulated into corporate divisions, and organized in national forms. This political ideal was to be spelt out most expressly in the *Philosophy of Right*. But it is unequivocally indicated in the *Phenomenology* too, whose allusions to the French revolutionary experience repeatedly insist on the 'moment of difference' that requires an 'organic articulation' – *organische Gliederung* – of freedom, dividing the social world into 'stable spiritual "masses" or spheres' into which 'the plurality of individuals' are assigned as 'specific estates'. The Terror signifies the abolition of these, but with its passing they take shape once more, as 'the individuals who have felt the fear of death, their absolute master, again submit to negation and distinctions [*Unterschiede*], arrange themselves in their spheres, and return to apportioned and limited tasks, but thereby to their substantial reality.'<sup>92</sup> Kojève's commentary on Hegel's text moves in exactly the opposite direction. The post-revolutionary order is constituted by the definitive reality of the Napoleonic Empire, which is 'a *universal and homogeneous State*, for it unites the whole of humanity (or at least that which counts historically) and "suppresses" within itself all "specific differences": nations, social classes, families.'<sup>93</sup> The state that brings history to an end is universal because it admits of no further expansion, and homogeneous since it is exempt from contradiction.

This is a drastic change of definition. Kojève's alteration of Hegel's agenda is not limited, moreover, simply to the structure of the ideal state: it involves a transformation of its substance too. For Hegel, the *Rechtsstaat* is the rational embodiment of modern liberty. The leading themes of his whole account of political development are Reason and Freedom: it is these that are realized in the ethical substance of the modern state. In Kojève's vision of the end of history, they fade into the background – references to them become no more than residual, even vestigial. In their stead, two quite different concepts hold the stage: Desire and Satisfaction. Kojève drew these from the dialectic of self-consciousness in the fourth chapter of the *Phenomenology*: human desire is fundamentally desire for what is not itself – the desiring consciousness of others. It is this dynamic which unleashes the reciprocal contest of subjectivities whose first historical figure is the dialectic of lord and bondsman, whose stake is recognition. Victory in this struggle – first one-sided in the pagan–aristocratic world, then mediated in its Christian–bourgeois sequel, finally generalized among the worker-

92. *W-3*, pp. 434, 436, 438; *PS*, pp. 358, 359, 361.

93. *I.H.*, p. 145.

warriors of the universal state — is *Befriedigung*: satisfaction. Hegel indeed uses the term to indicate the object of the dialectic of desire: 'self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness.'<sup>94</sup> But this is itself only one episode in the adventure of the spirit. Once Hegel's account reaches the fifth chapter of the *Phenomenology*, the vocabulary of desire and satisfaction falls away: another and higher drama is now played out, whose stage is reason. Beyond that, in turn, lie the vicissitudes of freedom inaugurated by the general will. By the time he came to write his political philosophy proper fifteen years later, Hegel makes little mention of desire or recognition. Satisfaction is still a central category, but its register is now mainly economic — related to material needs.<sup>95</sup> Kojève was thus not wholly unfaithful to Hegel; but he highlighted what Hegel tended to relinquish, or surpass.

The result is a quite distinct historical upshot. Its hallmark is no longer liberty. This is not because freedom as such plays no significant role in Kojève's philosophy of history — but rather because it features so radically at the beginning that it has little left to do at the end. One could call this the characteristic paradox of existentialism. Once human consciousness is defined *ab initio* as non-identity, and freedom as the movement of its mitigation in the world, its essential quest is for *identity* — that is, 'recognition' — not a second liberty. The satisfaction it seeks, in Hegel's original schema, is the fusion of its own self-awareness as for-itself with its presence as an in-itself acknowledged by others. It was Sartre who developed the most famous philosophical construction around this idea. In the phenomenological drama of *Being and Nothingness*, the pursuit by consciousness of a stable transparency in the in-itself-for-itself is an unavoidable yet impossible quest: freedom is a useless passion. The rest of Sartre's philosophy was one long attempt, in different ways, to reinsert freedom as an ethical or political goal still to be attained, back into an ontology which guaranteed it as a necessary burden in the first place. Kojève's version of the dialectic of recognition lacks the self-defeating thrust of Sartre's, but the logic of its relationship to the political realm is much the same. Since in Kojève's equation 'Liberty = Negativity = Action = History'<sup>96</sup> from the start, the output of the last term can add little to the input of the first. Satisfaction lies beyond this series. That is why it, rather than reason or freedom,

94. *W*, 3, p. 144; *PS*, p. 110.

95. For the isolated references to each, see *W*—7, § 57 and § 192 (recognition), and § 190 (*déire*) — the latter here said to be checked by the multiplication of needs; pp. 124, 149, 149.

96. *HH*, p. 481.

becomes the principle of the perfect state. It was not just Hegel from whom Kojève took his leave here, but also Marx. He noted that his concept of *Befriedigung* is not to be found in Marx's writing. What takes its place, of course, is a concept whose absence is symptomatic in Kojève's: emancipation. The end of history signifies something else for Kojève. So little does its order primarily mean liberation for its citizens that at the limit he could write: 'Certainly, only the head of the universal and homogeneous state (Napoleon) is *really* "satisfied" (that is, recognized by all in his personal reality and value). Hence only he is really free.'<sup>97</sup> But, he went on, the citizenry could nevertheless be potentially satisfied since, with careers now open to talents, all might aspire to head the state. The role of the philosopher was to understand this conclusion of human development with the knowledge of the sage — as Hegel believed he had comprehended Napoleon, with an insight beyond the Emperor himself.

This conception was the occasion of a famous exchange after the war. When the lectures on the *Phenomenology* were finally published in 1947, Leo Strauss, a friend of Kojève from his time in France, and another thinker who had felt the influence of *Sem und Zeit*, greeted them as an extraordinary feat: 'No one has made the case for modern thought in our time as brilliantly as you.'<sup>98</sup> In the same letter, however, he also made a number of penetrating critical observations on Kojève's work. Kojève did not reply directly to these, but when Strauss published his own work *On Tyranny* the following year, Kojève responded with a pregnant restatement of his position in 1950, 'Tyranny and Wisdom'. Strauss's text, a meditation on Xenophon's *Hiero*, had warned his contemporaries that: 'We are now brought face to face with a tyranny which holds out the threat of becoming, thanks to "the conquest of nature" and in particular of human nature, what no earlier tyranny ever became: perpetual and universal.' He left the name of the danger in no doubt — humanity was now 'confronted by the appalling alternative that man, or human thought, must be collectivized either by one stroke and without mercy or else by slow and gentle processes.'<sup>99</sup> Against this menace, the abiding task of the philosopher was more urgent than ever: to expose the threat of tyranny as misrule, and to guard the detachment of philosophy from the city. Kojève's reply was

97. *LLH*, p. 146.

98. Letter of 22.8.48, in Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny* (ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael Roth), New York 1991, p. 236 — henceforward OT. This revised edition contains the correspondence between the two men, as well as Kojève's essay on Strauss's text, and Strauss's reply to it.

99. OT, p. 27.

an extended rejection of both conclusions. Tyranny did not invariably call for condemnation, and philosophers had been natural advisers to rulers, rather than their scourges, from the time of Aristotle onwards. The original relation between the Stagirate and his pupil was, in fact, exemplary. Alexander, the architect of the first universal empire, was not only perhaps the greatest statesman to have arisen within the horizon of Western philosophy, but 'certainly the one whom the great tyrants of our world have imitated for centuries (and who was only recently imitated again by an imitator of Napoleon who imitated Caesar, who was himself an imitator)'. Now, however, the goal pursued by humanity was not only a politically universal state but also a socially homogeneous — that is, classless — society, and once again the linkage of philosophy and power was repeated in the relation of Marx to Stalin. 'The tyrant who here initiates the *real* political movement towards homogeneity consciously followed the teaching of the intellectual, even if in doing so 'the tyrant has falsified the philosophical idea in order to "transpose it from the realm of abstraction into that of reality"'. If all the major political enterprises of history had in this sense been guided by philosophical conceptions, 'these two examples effectively exhaust the great political themes of history'.<sup>100</sup>

For Strauss, this was an unabashed apology for Stalin's regime, which — if it did indeed bring a universal and homogeneous state — would represent a universal and final tyranny destructive of humanity as such. No social order could bring the kind of satisfaction Kojève envisaged: as the ancients had always insisted, the weakness and dependence of human nature precluded it. Dissatisfaction, of workers or of thinkers, would break out in any imaginary fulfilment of history. Hence Kojève's tacit admission — inscribed in the notion of a perfect state, rather than its withering-away — of the necessity for continuing coercion to suppress it. Philosophical wisdom pointed away from this, and every other, modern utopia. Political activity was a limited realm within the eternal order, and men were properly held by sacred restraints within it: limited constitutional government by a class of gentlemen — an open or covert aristocracy — was the only alternative to the brutal chaos of permanent revolution.<sup>101</sup> Kojève's prescriptions could only lead to a world of technological terror.

But as it turned out, Strauss's interlocutor eluded him. Kojève's political itinerary awaits detailed reconstruction. But his debate with Strauss revealed only one side of it. During the war, his confidence in

the Soviet state as the advance guard of history seems to have reached its height. In 1943 he wrote what can actually be regarded as his major work, *Esquisse d'une Phénoménologie du Droit*, a remarkable study of Law and the State that is his *Rechtsphilosophie*, which he left in manuscript and was only published in 1981. Here his leading philosophical themes are developed more systematically than in his *Introduction*, as the foundation for a historical typology of justice as the pursuit of recognition: from aristocratic equality to bourgeois equivalence, to their synthesis in socialist equity. The political conclusion of the book is in effect a set of proposals for the civil code of the universal and homogeneous state, which Kojève here straightforwardly terms the Socialist Empire with which history ends.<sup>102</sup> But the outcome of the war, after the Allied landings in Normandy, changed his thinking. By 1945, he had already developed an alternative prospectus. In a memorandum on post-war France, he argued that if the nation-state was now outdated, the universal state had not yet arrived. In this situation, where socialist internationalism and liberal anti-statism were equally impotent, the only effective structure was an intermediate form — the 'imperial union of related states', as both Churchill and Stalin had understood. If France was to overcome the weakness it had so fatally revealed as a nation-state in 1940, it must take the same path as the UK and the USSR. Its task was the construction of a Latin Empire, based on the Mediterranean and embracing Spain and Italy, to counterbalance the Anglo-Saxon and Soviet blocs which otherwise would dominate Europe. Under the leadership of de Gaulle, both the Catholic Church and the Communist parties could be integrated into such a project.<sup>103</sup>

102. *Esquisse d'une Phénoménologie du Droit*, Paris 1981, pp. 575–586. It is a paradox, due to the date of its appearance, that Kojève's richest work should still be the least discussed. The influence of Carl Schmitt is visible in it, confirming Niechammer's conjectures of the relations between them. It is here that Kojève explained most clearly the difference between his conceptions and those of Marx or the Utilitarians. For Hegel, the act of working presupposes another, that of the struggle for prestige, to which Marx did not give sufficient importance. But there is no doubt that economic man is always doubled by vainglorious man, whose interests can collide with his economic interests. . . . To seek "Hegelian" satisfaction is a very different matter from pursuing what is "useful" in the ordinary sense of the term, in other words what is necessary for "happiness" or "well-being". If society is born from the desire for recognition, its supreme goal is the satisfaction and not the happiness of its members. On the contrary, at the limit, in the Ideal State, man satisfied socially is also (in principle) happy individually. But when a choice must be made between the two, it is satisfaction that wins. For it is the desire for satisfaction, not happiness, which determines social life as a whole. Otherwise one could never explain, let alone "justify" the phenomenon of war. Now experience shows that no healthy society ever refuses war when circumstances impose one on it': pp. 196, 202.

103. See the account of Kojève's 'Esquisse d'une Doctrine Politique Française', in Dominique Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, Paris 1990, pp. 282–89.

100. 'Tyranny and Wisdom', *OT*, pp. 168–173.

101. *OT*, pp. 193–94.



A few weeks after composing this document, Kojève joined the foreign section of the Ministry of Finance under Robert Marjolin, a former pupil in his Hegel seminar, and one of the architects of the Common Market. A year later, in his first publication after taking up official life, Kojève reiterated all the main themes of his pre-war interpretation of Hegel, while noting that the *Phenomenology* lacked a theory of the dialectic between masters that lay at the origin of states. But he ended it by saying: 'If there was from the beginning a Hegelian Left and a Hegelian Right, that is also *all* there has been since Hegel.' History had unfolded within the categorical framework the German philosopher had conceived, even if its exact outcome was still uncertain. 'It cannot be said that history has refuted Hegelianism. At most one can say that it has still not arbitrated between "left" and "right" interpretations of Hegel's philosophy.'<sup>104</sup>

What these were to be was spelt out with great clarity in a letter to Strauss shortly after their exchange. History, Kojève wrote, was moving towards a calculable conclusion, but the roads that led to it were varied, the product of alternative choices. 'For example: if the West-erners remain capitalist (that is to say, also nationalist), they will be defeated by Russia, and *that* is how the End-State will come about. If, however, they "integrate" their economies and policies (they are on the way to doing so); then *they* can defeat Russia. And that is how the End-State will be reached (the same universal and homogeneous State).'<sup>105</sup> As late as 1953 Kojève seems to have suspended judgement as to which alternative would prevail. But the elision in the first parenthesis – capitalism: i.e. nationalism – proved decisive. By the time the European Economic Community, in which he was to play an active role, was formed, the issue was settled: it was the West, not the East, which held the future of the world. The truth of Hegel had fallen to the Right, after all. Kojève died in 1968, dismissing with sardonic scorn the crowds in Paris who had failed to understand it.<sup>106</sup>

A few months earlier, he had written his codical. In a famous footnote to the second edition of the *Introduction*, he explained that he had realized after the war that Hegel's timing had been correct after all – history had indeed come to an end on the field of Jena, rather than on the banks of the Volga. 'What has happened since is no more than an extension in space of the universal-revolutionary force actualized in

104. 'Hegel, Marx et le Christianisme', *Critique*, No. 3–4, August–September 1946, p. 365.

105. Letter of 19.11.50, *OT*, p. 256.

106. See Aron's report of his exchange with Kojève, more confident than he that no revolution was on the cards, on 29 May 1968, in *Mémoires*, p. 481.

France by Robespierre–Napoleon', as backward societies caught up with European principles. The Soviet and Chinese Revolutions were of the same order of events as the independence of Togo or Papua – of greater moment only in so far as they had prompted post-Napoleonic Europe to rid itself more briskly of its anachronisms. American society, now virtually classless in the abundance of its consumption, presented the rest of humanity with the image of its future.<sup>107</sup> Kojève's political reversal could hardly, it would seem, have been more complete. Yet there was a philosophical coherence behind it. He had always defined the end of history as the advent of a universal and homogeneous state. Compared with the ideals of Hegel himself, not to speak of those of Marx, the most striking feature of this description of the good society is its formalism. It lacks, very pointedly, any specification of property regime or constitutional structure. The reason is clear enough: this is an end-state deduced all too rigorously from the original figure of a bare dialectic of consciousness, shorn of social or institutional complication. As such, in its abstraction and simplicity, it was always liable to capsize of reference. Universality and homogeneity – the all and the same – are categories sufficiently wide to accommodate an ample spectrum of contents. There was thus no conceptual barrier to stop Kojève from switching the end of his story from socialism to capitalism, without major adjustment. There was just one material change that was necessary. Homogeneity might assume any number of guises, but universality at least precluded one – the nation-state. This, which Hegel had upheld, Kojève consistently and vehemently rejected. The condition of his conversion to the West was its supersession of this form. The 'imperial union' advocated in 1945, recast as 'integration' in 1950, became a reality at Rome in 1957, and Kojève could end his days as counsellor to Giscard and Barre, performing the office of the philosopher as he had wished it.<sup>108</sup>

The geopolitical shift in Kojève's construction was thus smooth enough, once the Community was in place. Yet it did not leave its historical substance unaffected. However tacitly, the change of compass altered the meaning of the end of history. In the original conception, the disappearance of wars and revolutions ushered in a world in which politics and philosophy faded away, to leave a humanity at peace with itself and nature, engaged in 'art, love, play, in short everything that makes man *happy*'. This was the prospect Marx had described as

107. *ILH*, second edition, Paris 1967, pp. 436–37.

108. For Kojève's relations with the President and Prime Minister of the seventies, see Aron, *Mémoires*, pp. 17–99; Auffret, *Kojève*, pp. 416–423.

the realm of freedom, that lay beyond the struggle between classes and the duress of necessity. But now, with the substitution of the prosperity of capitalism for the promise of socialism, it underwent a transmogrification. The same condition emerges in a different light, as a degraded animality. In the new version, 'after the end of History, men would construct their edifices and works of art as birds build their nests and spiders spin their webs, would perform musical concerts after the fashion of frogs and cicadas, would play like young animals, and would indulge in love like adult beasts.'<sup>109</sup> This could not be described as happiness, but at most as the contentment of a post-historical species whose discourse itself would approximate to the signal-language of bees. The reign of such animality had already begun in the United States.

Strauss had, as it happened, taxed Kojève with just this prospect in his criticism of the *Introduction*, arguing that its projection of a Hegelian-Marxist idyll at the end of history in fact conjured up only the wilderness of Nietzsche's last men.<sup>110</sup> In effectively conceding the case, however, Kojève now turned it against its maker: not the land of the final tyrant, but that of the rule of ostensible gentlemen, was the breeding-ground of the species. The world-historical victory of the West is thus tainted with a philosophical irony. Kojève, who had always believed that wars and revolutions were the driving-force of history, at length concluded that after all it was markets and commodities that decided its outcome. But the heroic stamp of his Hegelianism was never quite effaced. The final mordancy of his image of post-history is the sign of a political nostalgia. It was in character that he added a twist to it. Perhaps the future did not lie in North America after all, but Japan — where for three centuries the ruling class had disengaged from war or work, yet without descending to animality, by transforming the common activities of life into pure exercises of style. A culture of ceremony rather than consumption might be the ultimate resting-place. In this scenario Japan would make over the West, and existentialism survive as formalism.

#### 4. Three Sequels

With this last touch, the three major speculations on the end of history were in place. Hegel's vision of it, as we have seen, was oblique —

109. *H.H.*, p. 434; and (second edition), p. 436.

110. *OT*, p. 208. It might be said that Strauss's echo of Royer found its ironical answer in Kojève's final echo of Cournot.

refracted through the higher medium of the spirit's return to itself in the realm of philosophy; and, partly also for that reason, incomplete — leaving significant contradictions unresolved. But its central theme was unambiguously affirmative: the goal of history was the realization of freedom, whose form would be the modern constitutional state. Cournot's account was a much more explicit conception, taking the form of an overall prediction derived from the trend of human development to date. Here it was the spread of rational administration, enabled by the interdependence of the market, that would bring history to an end, for the greater amenity — but not necessarily liberty — of the race. This vision too had its uncertainties: the rise of socialism as a threat to the market, the blindnesses within the market itself. Kojève's construction was declarative in a quite new way, foregrounding its theme as a philosophical leitmotif and a political guide to understanding the contemporary world. Here the end of history, initially conceived as universal recognition in an egalitarian state, ultimately became a social existence reduced to the routines of consumption, or to the rituals of style: the pursuit of fun or the devotion to form.

Each of these original versions has had its sequels. Cournot's legacy passed, without much attention to its detail or background, into the repertory of the German theorists of *Posthistoire* discussed by Nietzsche, as a founding allusion. The conduit here was Henri de Man, in exile from Belgium after the war, whose intellectual formation dated from the time when Cournot's work was still current in French universities. De Man's usage of it is indicated by the title of the work in which he called Cournot's notion of a morphological stabilization of society to his aid: *Vermassung und Kulturverfall*. Written at the height of the Cold War, as it threatened to break out into hostilities, this connected military catastrophe and cultural decline. As the experience of two world wars and the increasing likelihood of a third demonstrated, modern civilization was numbed by an institutional massification in which the sheer scale of large organizations precluded any intelligent human direction. History necessarily lost meaning once social cause and effect became so disconnected, producing the political paralysis of an age of fear.<sup>111</sup> In de Man's version of post-history, rational administration is emptied of its reason, and Cournot's sceptical meliorism turns into nuclear pessimism. Suggestively, at virtually the same moment Aron published the most highly-strung of his writ-

111. *Vermassung und Kulturverfall*, Berne 1952, p. 125. Nietzsche perhaps understates the military theme in de Man's prognosis.

ings during the Cold War, *Les Guerres en Chaîne*, in which he drew on Cournot's doctrine of independent causal series to analyse the conjuncture that had brought the world to the brink of its third 'hyperbolic war'.<sup>112</sup> But as the immediate danger of hostilities in Europe receded, it was the theme of bureaucratic petrification and cultural involution, not military escalation, that was transmitted to the German conservatives who took up the notion of a post-historical society. The most influential of these, Arnold Gehlen – who naturalized the term in the Federal Republic – argued that the sign of *Posthistoire* was a 'crystallization' of culture, in which no new constituents could any longer be generated. Just as the history of religions was to all intents and purposes manifestly over, leaving a range of major faiths to which no further creeds could be added, so now all secular ideological and aesthetic forms had become a fixed inventory. No more general philosophies of the kind once developed from Darwin or Marx or Nietzsche were any longer possible, though the key attitudes they inspired lived on – just as new avant-gardes in painting or literature, with capacity for radical innovation, had ceased to appear. The development of specialized sciences and the administrative structures built around them now precluded any chance of intellectual synthesis. The communist and democratic worlds still staged an ideological confrontation, to the advantage of the latter as more diverse and tolerant; and claimants to aesthetic rupture continued to parade, with varying degrees of talent. But in their basic forms, no further development of politics or art now seemed conceivable, as if the arsenal of historical experience was closed. All that remained was the recycling or crossing of the same elements, hybridization or repetition, great surface variety and deep underlying fixity.<sup>113</sup>

Advanced in 1960, Gehlen's thesis anticipates much of postmodernism twenty years later – was perhaps the first sharp glimpse of it. But if

112. The three great series were the unification of the planet as a single field of political force, the rise of Marxism as a secular religion, and the development of a military technology of mass destruction – each containing its own mixture of necessity and chance. *Les Guerres en Chaîne*, Paris 1951, pp. 197–203. Aron himself later expressed discomfort with this work (see *Mémoires*, pp. 284 ff.), but for all its failings of composition and rhetoric, it arguably remains his most imaginative piece of historical writing. It is clear from it that Cournot had left a deeper impression on him than the *Introduction* of 1938 might have suggested.

113. 'Über kulturelle Kristallisation', *Studien zur Anthropologie und Soziologie*, Neuwied 1963, pp. 311–328. Gehlen took the term 'crystallization' itself from Pareto. He ended his address, prophetically, by remarking that if there were two political problems that still loomed, one lay in the pressures building up among students in conditions of massified education, and the other in the call of hunger and overpopulation in the Third World.

there is a single source for the characteristic tone of the exit from history that came to be celebrated by the (mainly) French theorists of post-modernity, it is to be found in Kojève. The intellectual generation of Baudrillard or Lyotard never had any of his original sympathy for the Soviet regime – hostility to Stalinism was a touchstone of its political outlook. But it too originally looked for a social revolution, in quasi-situationist or workerist colours: the year 1968 was its 1942. But the general reestablishment of order which followed the turbulence at the turn of the seventies changed its mind. Capital was here to stay. There was no positive engagement in the enterprise of extending its horizons, of the kind that marked Kojève. But passive acceptance of its victory led to what might be termed a wiffully demoralized assimilation of his conclusions. Whether in the variant that proclaimed all grand narratives dead, or which explained the passing of reality into simulation, the hallmark of the postmodern version of the end of history has been a fusion of the two motifs that Kojève had opposed as alternatives: no longer a civilization of either consumption or style, but of their interchangeability – the dance of commodities as *bal masqué* of libidinal intensities.<sup>114</sup> In this space, where aesthetic form and advertising function naturally interpenetrate, and a playful artifice models objects and persons alike, time has lost its strength. Modernity spent, history reaches its standstill in the streamlined whirl of a merry-go-round.

Just this vista is the critical target of the major heir to the Hegelian theme of the fulfilment of reason. In Habermas's work the relationship of philosophical conception to the original source has been much more deeply worked through than in the theorists of post-history or post-modernity, and yields results on quite another scale. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* opens by rejecting both the theory of crystallization and the claims of postmodernism. The dynamic of modernity is not exhausted, Habermas argues. If the Enlightenment idea of a modern epoch can be defined as a present time breaking with the past, not in a single rupture, but in a continuous renewal, towards an elective future, Hegel stands near its starting-point – greeting the dawn of a new period as the sudden flash of lightning over the world, in the first pages of the *Phenomenology*. Hegel's philosophy is seen here as the commanding attempt to develop, out of the disturbing principle of a subjectivity freed from all traditional norms, self-validating structures

114. The most un inhibited version is Jean-François Lyotard, *Economie Libérale*, Paris 1974. An ironic cameo of the post-historical landscape on view after 1968 can be found in Henri Lefebvre, *La Fin de l'Histoire*, Paris 1970, pp. 213–14.

of intellectual and institutional life. For Habermas, Hegel grasped with unmatched profundity the divisions within the culture and society of the Enlightenment, which pitted recently separated forms of thought and belief, and newly antagonistic systems of labour and rule against each other; and he rightly sought to reunite them in a historically grounded reason. But Hegel went astray in locating the site of such a solution was to postulate an absolute already inhabiting the subject, and thereby necessarily capable of overcoming its diremptions, in the passage of the spirit to itself. The result was a reason rendered too powerful: politically in a still authoritarian state, and philosophically in a devaluation of the present. Habermas does not tax Hegel with exalting his own time as the end of history, but rather with rejecting it in his reaction to the emergent demands for democracy in France and England.<sup>115</sup> The first great theoretician of modernity thus failed to remain true to it. But his work posed all its basic problems at such a depth that Habermas insists – echoing Kojève's dictum forty years earlier – we still remain contemporaries of the Young Hegelians.

For every subsequent discourse of modernity has been dominated by the same issue with which they grappled. Habermas defines this as the one-sided development of reason – whether as scientific knowledge, economic exchange, or bureaucratic power – at the expense of social cohesion and human possibility. The quest for a salve has taken many forms: Marx's recourse to production, as the secret of an alienated world and hope of its emancipation; Nietzsche's appeal to the archaic energy of an ecstatic will, against the pretensions of morality and the illusions of individuation; Heidegger's remembrance of an original being, before the arrival of hubristic metaphysics, and destructive technologies. None of these critiques of actually existing modernity achieved its objectives. Their failure, Habermas argues, calls for a basic change of paradigm from a subject-centred to a communicative conception of reason, of the kind set out in his earlier work. This alone is proof against both the distortions exhibited by a purely instrumental reason, and the no less dangerous antidotes recurrently proposed for them. Only in such communicative reason can the means of fulfilling the promises of modernity be found. Here Habermas's epistemological revision leads directly to political conclusions. Contemporary societies suffer from two central problems. They are divided into impersonal systems coordinating social action through mechanisms that bypass

115. *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, London 1987, pp. 41, 43 – hence forward PDM.

intersubjective communication – the steering media of money and power which rule market and state; and life-worlds which are the province of direct communicative understanding between subjects – family, education, art, religion. The differentiation between these forms of social living is a structural necessity of modernity, which cannot be lifted. But capitalist development has led to increasing encroachments of the systems into the life-world – bureaucratic and financial imperatives invading or corrupting its textures, with manifestly damaging consequences. At the same time, the inner coherence of the life-world itself is threatened by a multiplication of expert cultures, without any common vocabulary, weakening the bonds of spontaneous daily understanding between subjects – while the inherited particular identities on which any stable culture depends are undermined by growing pressure from rationalized universal norms. In these conditions, the self-reproducing springs of a free sociability are under threat from within and without.

What are Habermas's remedies? The life-world cannot reclaim the systems that have become detached from it. But the colonization by the systems back into its own space can be resisted by the erection of 'sensors' to detect and check the intrusions of money and power into the fabric of everyday relationships where these do not belong. At the same time, certain 'impulses' from the life-world can be transmitted in the opposite direction towards the systems, to influence their steering.<sup>116</sup> The public sphere is the natural site of such movements, which are strongest when based on collective identities. These always reflect concrete forms of life that cannot be severed from tradition without loss. But communicative reason can mediate between their particular contents and the requirements of a universalist ethics, in such a way as actually to strengthen the skein of customary meanings by lending them reflexive force. 'Critical testing and fallibilist consciousness even enhance the continuity of a tradition that has stripped away its quasi-natural state of being.' In so doing, they preserve 'the context of social integration by the risky means of an individualistically isolating universalism'.<sup>117</sup>

There is an audible echo in these proposals. What they call for, in effect, is a *Neue Sittlichkeit*. For the most striking feature of Habermas's construction is the way in which it remaps Hegel's philosophy of right. Here the division between state and civil society becomes the contrast between systems and life-world; and with the shift of the

116. PDM, p. 364.

117. *Ibid.*, pp. 346–47.

market to the former, and the family to the latter, the relative values attached to them are reversed. But the strict dualism of the underlying scheme, in which each structure has its own zone of competence, not to be infringed by the other, is retained. The same problem is then posed – how are the two domains to be pragmatically or morally integrated? The bridging role of the corporations falls, in Habermas's version, to the 'public sphere', located within the life-world but reaching out towards the systems beyond it. The common ethical substance that then underwrites the whole uncannily reproduces Hegel's own squaring of the circle, in the alchemy of a particular culture that yet displays a universal reason. The correspondence between the two architectures is indeed more than formal. Politically, adjusting for the lapse of time, there is a curious resemblance in their upshots. Each accepts the market of the epoch as the objective order of any modern economic life, while noting 'social dysfunctions of it for which there appears to be no structural remedy. Each accepts the state of the day as the necessary form of subjective freedom, and warns against attempts to move beyond it towards more radical forms of self-determination. The Federal Republic is some way from post-Reform Prussia, but Habermas's commitment to parliamentary democracy is historically as conventional for its time as Hegel's was to constitutional monarchy. It leads to no greater hopes for political transformation from below. Popular sovereignty is a fiction: elective governments cannot transpire a collective will. No direct intervention from the life-world into the self-steering systems of the state and the economy is possible – only movements to 'sensitize' them from afar to needs finding their voice in the public sphere. The latter is, however, a somewhat ghostly space in this conception. The corporations which were to bind Hegel's construction together were extinguished virtually as he wrote. The public sphere that mediates social with systemic integration in Habermas's is one whose decline he himself charted long ago.<sup>118</sup> The measure of greater lucidity is part of what explains the lesser confidence of Habermas's scheme. His programme is largely a defensive one, of protection and delimitation, that no longer expects much from public authority. For today the state cannot be deemed the central institution in which 'society brings together its capabilities for organizing itself' – any more than society itself possesses 'capacities for self-organiza-

118. See the famous fifth and sixth chapters of *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, New York 1962. It is a measure of how beleaguered Habermas's conception of the relations between life-world and systems has actually become that he now typically speaks of the 'sensors' that should be erected by the former against the latter – a term belonging to the world of private security guards and military surveillance.

tion'.<sup>119</sup> The philosophical rejection of Hegel's conception of reason as too powerful issues into a political theory of democracy that is congenitally underpowered. What disappears most strikingly is the original demand that the structure of the state afford not only instrumental liberty but also expressive identity to its citizens. The fundamental need that took collective shape in the *polis* and which Hegel sought to lodge in the modern *Rechtsstaat* has retreated to the quiet conversations of the life-world. Or so it would seem. But there is a gesture that recalls it to a wider stage. Habermas ended his work by invoking the horizon of a European identity beyond the national one, to be constructed in contrast to the dominant American definition of the period, of unfettered military and market competition. The memory of Kojève comes back. But if Habermas's appeal is to the vision of a Europe more radical than that of Kojève – one not to be identified with the narrow institutions of the Common Market – it is also more tenuous. The structural transcendence of the nation-state as a political form, which was decisive for the Russian, acquires no relief in the German. Europe here is rather simply the soil in which 'universalistic value-orientations can take root'.<sup>120</sup> The move beyond Hegel's inter-state system is to that degree weaker. The strength of Habermas's commitment to a politics of solidarity and emancipation is not to be questioned. In a way it is just this that makes the theoretical upshot of his intervention so significant. Against the current of what he has criticized as neo-conservative or neo-anarchist theories of postmodernism, Habermas insists that modernity is a project still to be completed. But it might be said that his recommendations paradoxically amount to a judgement that it already is. For something very like the Hegelian end of history has tacitly arrived, when the limits of the existing liberal state and market economy are held insurpassable, as systems effectively beyond further popular control.

### S. Fukuyama

These, then, are some of the principal strands in the intellectual background against which the latest contribution to the theme of the end of history is best seen. There was a substantial and intricate history behind the idea with which Fukuyama startled the world's journalists in the summer of 1989. Fukuyama's own version has developed

119. *PDM*, pp. 361–62.

120. *PDM*, p. 366.

significantly between its initial statement as an essay and its subsequent expansion as a book. In considering the merits of his case, it makes sense to look at these separately, since the first was responsible for a public debate that posed some of the issues raised in the second with especial clarity. In his original article, Fukuyama invoked Hegel and Kojève as the philosophical warrants for his intervention. The extent to which this appeal was legitimate should be now be apparent. What Fukuyama actually did here, however, was to combine the legacies of Hegel and of the late Kojève in a novel way. From Hegel he took two strands: the constitutionalism of the *Rechtsphilosophie* – what can, as we have seen, properly be called Hegel's liberalism; and the optimism of his conception of the end itself, as the realization of freedom on earth. The first of these was always foreign to Kojève, for whom liberalism – political or economic – was a relic of the past. The second animated Kojève's original interpretation of his time, when he looked to a socialist road to the realm of freedom, but was abandoned for the irony of his final vision of the spread of capitalism. From Kojève, on the other hand, Fukuyama took the sense of the centrality of the hedonism of modern consumption, and of the caducity of the traditional significance of the national state – themes quite absent in Hegel. The resultant synthesis is an original one, tying liberal democracy and capitalist prosperity together in an emphatic terminal knot.

The great change that has inspired this version of the end of history is, of course, the collapse of communism. When Habermas completed his *Philosophical Discourse*, Gorbachev was not even yet in power. Four years later, *perestroika* was already in agony, and the processes leading to the fall of the Soviet state far advanced. Fukuyama's vision is a product of this moment. Its author was well equipped for it. The classical discourse of conclusion has been the work of philosophers, acutely interested in the politics of their time, but at some professional distance from them. With Fukuyama, this relationship is reversed. A fully political mind is here trained on the structure of history, seen from a philosophical standpoint. That would have been appreciated by Kojève, in his office at the Quai Branly. The functionary of the State Department is – contrary to superficial report – a worthy successor of the *chargé de mission* at the Ministry of Finances.<sup>121</sup> The outcry his

121. For an example of Fukuyama's professional skills, see his fluent analysis of the dynamics of the breakdown of apartheid in South Africa, a field far from his original training in Sovietology: 'The Next South Africa?', *The National Interest*, Summer 1991, pp. 13–28.

original thesis provoked was a token, not of its ineptitude, but of its disturbing force.

In the reaction to it, what were the principal objections to Fukuyama's argument that after the gigantic conflicts of the twentieth century, 'the unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism' over all competitors means 'not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end-point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government'<sup>122</sup>? They can be grouped into three categories. The first was a chorus of disapproval at the very idea of a historical conclusion, whatever its character. The great majority of Fukuyama's commentators in the world's press greeted his argument with incredulity – after all, do not common sense and daily news tell us that there are always fresh and unexpected events, and even that their pace is exponentially quickening, as the sensational close of the decade demonstrates? The response is, of course, a non-sequitur. Fukuyama's case allows for any number of further empirical events, as he has pointed out: it simply contends that there is a set of structural limits within which they will now unfold, that has been reached within the OECD zone. Kojève replied to this objection in his time, with characteristic vigour: the movement of history was accelerating more and more, but it was advancing less and less – all that was happening was 'the alignment of the provinces'.<sup>123</sup> Another, somewhat more doctrinal, complaint was that Fukuyama ignored the perennial passions and follies of human beings, which would always ensure instability in human affairs. This had essentially been Strauss's criticism of Kojève and was now typically repeated by conservatives.<sup>124</sup> Fukuyama's rejoinder was entirely Hegelian: human nature no doubt exists, but it also changes historically – today, for example, democracy looks like becoming a need of humanity as much as sleep.

Beyond such generic reactions, of least significance, a second sort of criticism focused on specific problems taken to be unresolved within Fukuyama's vision. It is a tribute to the continuity of his enterprise that the three major issues most consistently identified by his critics should be precisely those that were originally left unsettled by Hegel. The first

122. 'The End of History?', pp. 3–4.

123. *La Quinzaine Littéraire*, No. 53, 1–15 July 1968 – Interview with Gilles Lapouge, published just after his death.

124. See the comments by Hassner, Kristol, Huntington, Gray, among those noted above.

of these was war. There was no reason to think that the traditionally hierarchical and rivalrous relations between states would disappear even after a putative generalization of liberal democracy. The Hobbesian logic of the international field would continue to generate violent conflicts between great powers, or small. What was to guarantee that these might not one day explode into nuclear war itself? To this Fukuyama answered, with justice, that modern states have never simply pursued power as an independent goal in itself, but rather as a means to secure particular interests that are always ideologically defined. A world in which all states shared a common normative commitment to free markets and free elections would not be one that generated the classical range of military hostilities. In support of this claim, Fukuyama could point to the evidence that completed representative democracies have not waged war with each other to date: one that a significant independent literature has been insisting on for some time.<sup>125</sup> If Kant's vision of the conditions for a perpetual peace still remains far from reality, a plausible case can be made that with the spread of constitutionally elected government around the world, the trend of development is moving closer towards them.

The second principal criticism of Fukuyama's scheme was to be that it ignored the persistence of inequality and misery within the advanced capitalist societies themselves — not least the United States — which must qualify any liberal triumphalism. There is no doubt that Fukuyama's treatment of social questions in his essay was cavalier to a degree: repetition of Kojève's *horizade* that Marx's classless society had virtually come to pass in America did not help it. Poverty, he conceded, did exist, and inequality might have grown in the most recent period. These, however, were not a function of class, but of culture: black handicaps were a pre-modern legacy of slavery and racism, unrelated to the egalitarian logic of liberalism. The more general phenomenon of under-classes in the West received no mention. Fukuyama's confidence in the consumer abundance of modern capitalism — VCRs for all, as he put it — expresses the outlook of officialdom in the eighties. Hegel's fear that a menacingly destitute and deracinated rabble would be reproduced by the mechanisms of civil society itself, as it generated crises of overproduction and unemployment, has receded. Poverty still lingers, but its causes lie in cultural drawbacks rather than market forces.

125. The standard source is Michael Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs', *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, Summer 1983, pp. 205–235, and Fall 1983, pp. 323–353; and 'Liberalism and World Politics', *American Political Science Review*, December 1986, pp. 1151–1169.

Whether the new explanation assures a readier cure for it was not spelt out. In its original statement Fukuyama's idealism appears to hesitate here, between a belief that liberal principles must eventually carry all before them, bringing cultural laggards up to a common material standard, and a sense that cultures form wider meaning-complexes whose appeal cannot be reduced to the interests of liberty and plenty. In the latter case, no clear-cut solution would be in sight.

The third objection commonly made to Fukuyama's prospect was that it fails to address just those human needs to which a culture in the deeper sense answers. A society built simply on votes and videos lacks *Sittlichkeit*. How stable can it be, in the long-run? Hegel's theory of the State had envisaged a synthesis of freedom and identity — self-determination as both representation and as expression. What comparable moral substance does the contemporary political order in the West have to offer? The most frequent liberal response today is to dismiss the question as misplaced: in a democratic society, the public arena is necessarily no more than the instrumental space in which substantive private goals of diverse kinds may be pursued. The quest for meaning is an individual, not a social affair. One response to this *fin de non-recevoir* is to try to fuscate its distinction. This is, in effect, the function of the notion of 'intersubjectivity' in critics like Habermas, which glides back and forth between private and public contexts along a referential continuum — from the conversational to the congressional, so to speak. If such solutions typically deliver less than they promise, the reason lies in their starting-point: the nuclear 'dialogue' between two persons is a domestic, not a civic model. Replying to his critics, Fukuyama neither denied the problem nor floated a solution of this sort. Acknowledging the force of the objection, he suggested that it was a more serious critique of the liberal state than one based upon the persistence of racial or social inequities. Victory over the communist adversary in the Cold War, which did provide the West with a transcendent collective goal, could only accentuate the lurking vacuum within the value-order of liberal capitalism. It was at this, concluding point that Fukuyama's account altered register, and moved towards a Kojévian irony: for all its vast — definitive — benefits to humanity, the end of history risks being a 'very sad time', as the epoch of high endeavours and heroic struggle becomes a thing of the past.

If the sequel is compared with the original over these three areas, there has been a change of weighing. For Hegel, war persisted as a necessity of the inter-state system, with its bracing effects on the life of societies. Consciously, it posed no problem for him — even if, logically, it contradicted the universality of the realization of freedom. Poverty,



on the other hand, was a tare that tormented society, and for which his system confessed its lack of solution. Finally, community posed an acute problem with the new atomism of civil society, but the philosophy of right had an answer in the organic articulation of the state. For Fukuyama, by contrast, poverty was a residue of former times that is subject to attitudinal improvement. War was an evil to be overcome, whose necessity is diminishing as states approach their rational norm. Community, however, has become less imaginable today than in Hegel's epoch, and its absence haunts liberalism even in its apotheosis. But whereas the totalizing claim of Hegel's system as Absolute Knowledge rendered it vulnerable to empirical tensions or puzzles it could not resolve, casting doubt on the implication that history had reached its end, Fukuyama's argument was not subject to the same kind of effect. Quite expressly, his schema did not require the suppression of every significant social conflict or the solution of every major institutional problem. It simply asserted that liberal capitalism is the *ne plus ultra* of political and economic life on earth. The end of history is not the arrival of a perfect system, but the elimination of any better alternatives to this one.

No reply to Fukuyama is of any avail, therefore, if it contents itself with pointing out problems that remain within the world he predicts. An effective critique must be able to show that there are powerful systemic alternatives he has discounted. Were his critics able to do so? Here too three main lines of riposte can be distinguished. The first insists on the tidal force of nationalism, as the most formidable political passion of the century — one whose spread is still gathering momentum, rolling humanity towards unknown destinations. In this line of argument, emphasis can be given either to the boiling of ethnic hatreds between and within newly emergent states — in the Subcontinent, in Eastern Europe, in the former Soviet Union; or to the potential for renewed national rivalries to set in motion Great Power ambitions of the kind that dominated the scene before 1914 — the favourite candidates are Japan, once it becomes the largest economic power, or a more industrialized China, mustering the largest population in the world. Fukuyama's case, however, contained careful consideration of just these possibilities. Neither, he pointed out, amounted to a real contradiction. The spread of small to medium-sized national conflicts in the Third or former Second Worlds would continue, as typical symptoms of regions still trapped in history. But these would be peripheral disturbances, without major incidence on the inter-state system dominated by the large powers — Fukuyama's geographical gesture deliberately recalls Kojève's: 'it matters very little what strange thoughts occur

to people in Albania or Burkina Faso.<sup>126</sup> Competition between the large states, on the other hand, would threaten the new world order only if one or more of them were seized by the kind of nationalism that is global in ambition — that is, which aims at universal empire. Fascism was precisely such a creed, in the Third Reich and Showa Japan. Its destruction throws into sharp relief the limits of the jockeying for national advantage that has followed, now devoid of any universal dynamic of a comparable kind. Even before completing the journey to liberal capitalism, Chinese foreign policy resembles that of Gaullist France more than Wilhelmine — let alone Nazi — Germany. Once within the zone of advanced capitalism proper, the level of antagonisms drops much further — relations between the US and Canada, or within the European Community, providing the emergent standard.

Fukuyama's cool refusal of certain kinds of conventional wisdom is nowhere more striking than in his judgement of this issue. The conflict in the Gulf which excited so many of his critics, igniting enthusiasm on Right and Left alike for the battle to uphold the cause of national independence and democracy in the Middle East against the menace of a new Hitler, he was to compare with the quarrel between a fifteenth-century condottiere and a thirteenth-century clerical seigneurie. Nationalism is virulent where not much counts, where things are of greater moment, inoculation has occurred, or is under way. In neither case is nationalism a serious challenge as a future doctrine. Although provocatively expressed, the underlying judgement here is not outlandish. It substantially concurs, as it happens, with the views of two of the most prominent recent analysts of the phenomenon, one a liberal and the other a socialist, Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm — whose political attitudes to nationalism differ, but whose historical diagnosis of its future is quite similar. The taming of national passions by consumer pursuits is a common theme of these writers — in effect, the modern version of the role ascribed to *le doux commerce* in the world of absolutism. Its force is unquestionable. Fukuyama's general case is, taken on its own, strong enough. There is a contingency his essay overlooked, however. Nationalist conflicts in themselves may indeed be of less structural significance in world politics; but connected to nuclear weaponry, in the zone of history, they could have greater material consequences even than in the past. Formally speaking, this would not necessarily alter Fukuyama's verdict, since military devastation from a Third World exchange offers no prospect of positive

<sup>126</sup> 'The End of History?', p. 9.

social substitution in the First World. But it is a reminder of the fact that the end of history has another familiar meaning, and that arrival at one kind of terminus in the rich countries does not preclude engulfment in the other kind so long as there are poor countries with modern armaments – that is, of no more than yesterday.

The second potential challenge to the universal hegemony of liberalism to be adduced by Fukuyama's critics was fundamentalism. The Shi'ite revolution in Iran, the growth of Hindu communalism in India, the spread of Sunni rigorism in North Africa – even such movements as the Moral Majority in the US, Komeito in Japan, Solidarity in Poland: do they not reveal the renewed political appeal of revealed religion in today's world? The argument that phenomena like these may presage wider theological enthusiasms to come can draw on sociological speculation about 'the return of the sacred' that dates back to the seventies. A motley cast of figures – Woytilla, Solzhenitsyn, Khomeini, Sin, Tutu – is sometimes invoked in support of it. But if nationalism does not provide a credible alternative to Fukuyama's scenario, still less does fundamentalism. Unlike national creeds, religious doctrines are typically – though not invariably – universal in their claims, as truths valid in principle for all of humanity, rather than particular communities within it. But the status of these tenets is also, of course, more vulnerable to the advance of secular culture and technology: faith in supernatural authority may be morally loftier than belief in state power, but the latter is less at risk from the progress of the natural sciences. The actual incidence of religious fervour in the world at large is patchier than that of patriotic zeal. Indeed, it typically catches fire as an additive to inflammable national sentiment, rather than as a combustible material in its own right. The mixture is then nearly always of exceptional potency, as the examples of Poland, Iran, Ireland and elsewhere show. Its price, however, is the limitation of the religious to the national – spiritual faith reinforcing territorial identity rather than transcending it. The one major exception to this rule is to some extent from the Twelver sect of Shi'ism in Iran, a major cross-national force. It is usually the centrepiece of arguments for the growth in importance of religion in global politics. But here too the intertwining of religious and national strands is very close – the origins of Islam, as a religion of conquest and a doctrine of the sacred, inseparable from the definition of Arab ethnic and linguistic identity as such. For all the intervening differences, Islamic fundamentalism is in this respect a successor to the Arab nationalism that failed. It remains to be seen whether it will prove more effective. But even were it to do so, its appeal would still remain

fairly limited, as Fukuyama points out – at most extending into West-Central and South-East Asia, and the Sahel. Fundamentalism, a return to theological origins, is not a serious candidate for prolonging the ideological evolution of humanity beyond the term of liberalism.

Matters are different with the last of the forces to be enlisted as a refutation of Fukuyama's central argument. Communism may have collapsed (even if the final episode has still to unfold in China), but – it was argued – this does not mean that socialism as an alternative to capitalism has disappeared. It is alive and well as the most advanced form of democracy in our time – the variety that calls itself social. In Western Europe, temporary setbacks may have checked its progress in the eighties, when international capital increasingly outflanked national governments; but the proportion of the national product absorbed by public expenditure has not qualitatively fallen, and the coming of a Federal European Union will create the conditions for renewing a forward march. Marxism and totalitarianism finally buried, social democracy emerges in its true colours as the only real socialism from the beginning – its aims now clarified to a responsible regulation of the market, an equitable system of taxation, a generous provision of welfare, within the framework of parliamentary rule.<sup>127</sup> If much still remains to be done, this is because the structures of democracy itself – often the creation of popular movements that had to battle against liberalism for it – are by no means complete in the West: the agenda of socialism is to extend them. A variant of this form of response shares its emphasis on democratic development, but maintains not so much that socialism is a survivor, as that capitalism is a misnomer. Are we not already beyond it, in the increasingly hybrid societies of today, in which the most successful economies – Japan and Korea, or Germany and Austria – reveal high levels of state coordination of the market, or corporatist organization of industrial relations?<sup>128</sup> For Ralf Dahrendorf, the very idea of a capitalist 'system' can be dismissed – in the democratic world today, there are only heterogeneous societies with

127. For this general argument, see Michael Mann, 'After Which Socialism?', *Contention*, Winter 1992, pp. 183–192, a reply to Daniel Chirot, 'After Socialism, What?', *Contention*, Fall 1991. Chirot's version of the eclipse of socialism is similar to Fukuyama's, but with greater emphasis on the scale of the problems left outstanding by it, and less confidence that new forms of fascism might not emerge in the poorer countries in reaction.

128. This position is best represented by Paul Hirst: 'Endism', *London Review of Books*, 23 November 1989.

different institutional mixtures; and so it will be in the ex-communist countries tomorrow.<sup>129</sup> Criticisms of this kind have typically, of course, come from the Left or Centre-Left in Europe; although isolated voices from the Right also warned against too facile an assumption that socialism has been finally defeated – since creeping statism has, despite every effort by Thatcher or Reagan, not been genuinely scotched in the past decades.<sup>130</sup> Common to all these objections is the belief that capitalism is less triumphant, because more hedged and blended, than it seems. In the radical versions of this case, the future lies in the continuing expansion of social democracy beyond it, as truly existing socialism.

The impulse behind this rejection of Fukuyama's vision is an honourable one. The desire not to minimize the social gains in human welfare and security that have been achieved against the straightforward logic of capital accumulation, and the hope that these are a pledge of what more might be won, belong to any radical politics of the Left. Progressive loyalty and analytic clarity are, however, two different things. Western Europe as a zone is, of course, distinct in its Social-Democratic – and Christian-Democratic – traditions from the USA or Japan; though the practical effect of these has dwindled over the past two decades, when mass unemployment has actually been higher in the EC. But the economies of the Community are, of course, capitalist on any definition – classical or contemporary – of the term, structurally driven by competition between enterprises hiring wage-earners to produce profits for private owners. Hayekians, Keynesians, Marxists, have no difficulty in agreeing on this. The wish to drape a softening veil over this reality, in the name of local improvements, is idle. The attempt to quit the realm of concepts altogether, by denying the very existence of capitalism – since every advanced society differs from every other – is equally fruitless, a search for a nominalist bolt-hole in the sand. What such postures really represent is a strategy of intellectual consolation. Fukuyama's inventory of the world appears unpalatable; but if it is difficult to find forces capable of altering the world, why not change the inventory? With the wand of a redescription, we can dispose of

<sup>129</sup> *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe*, London 1990, which develops this theme, contains an uncharacteristic outburst on Fukuyama.

<sup>130</sup> See David Stove's comment: 'The welfare state still grows every year at about the same staggering rate as it has done since 1900. Does not this process have the genuine feel of irresistibility about it, the irresistibility which Fukuyama's hypothetical opposite thesis so conspicuously lacks?' – *The National Interest*, Fall 1989, p. 98.

capitalism or reassure ourselves of socialism. The truth is that the growth of both economic regulation and social provision were foreseen over a century ago by Cournot, not as disproof of the halting of history at advanced capitalism, but as characteristic of it as a final constellation. Unless a convincing trend-line can be shown, pointing from present welfare arrangements or dirigiste practices towards the threshold of a qualitatively distinct type of society, neither social democracy nor industrial policy is a witness against Fukuyama; and no critic from the Left suggested one. In the debate which followed Fukuyama's essay, here as elsewhere, the score-card was in his favour. The criticisms made of capitalist democracy – its degrees of material inequality, national rivalry, want of community – are compatible with it as an end-state; the alternatives proffered to it as an end-state – nationalism, fundamentalism, corporatism – lack empirical or conceptual credibility. From this first testing, Fukuyama's case emerged relatively intact.

Some three years later, there has appeared the book-length version. *The End of History and the Last Man* discharges the promissory note of the essay with conviction and elegance. Here, for the first time, the philosophical discourse of the end of history has found a commanding political expression. In a remarkable feat of composition, Fukuyama moves with graceful fluency back and forth between metaphysical exposition and sociological observation, the structure of human history and the detail of current events, doctrines of the soul and visions of the city. It is safe to say that no one has ever attempted a comparable synthesis – at once so deep in ontological premise and so close to the surface of global politics. What are the principal developments in the original argument that it brings? Fukuyama now mounts his interpretation of the dramatic turning-point in world affairs at the turn of the nineties in an overall theory of universal history. Human evolution displays directionality because of the cumulative advance of technical knowledge, perceptible from the dawn of the species, but given decisive impetus with the birth of modern science in early modern Europe. Scientific reason, once unleashed, has over time transformed the world at large by obliging all states to modernize – militarily and socially – if they wish to survive pressure from powers technologically ahead of them; and by opening up unlimited horizons of economic development for the satisfaction of material needs. Fukuyama dubs this process 'the mechanism of desire'. Science supplies the fundamental machinery for the fulfilment of wants. Imposing a rational organization of labour and

of administration – factories and bureaucracies – it has raised living standards to previously unimaginable levels. Once its dynamic creates a mature industrial economy, it inexorably selects out capitalism as the only efficient – because competitive – system for raising productivity within a global division of labour.

On the other hand, even a highly successful capitalist economy does not necessarily guarantee political democracy. The path to liberty differs from that to productivity. Its starting-point lies in the contest that Hegel, and Kojève after him, rightly identified – the willingness to risk death to wrest acknowledgement of the self by others, at the origin of the dialectic of master and slave.<sup>131</sup> It is the struggle for recognition that drives humanity towards the goal of freedom: the impulse to self-assertion, rather than self-preservation. Contrasting the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Hobbes and Locke, construing politics principally as the rational pursuit of interest (security or property), with Hegel's vision of it as a quest for existential recognition, Fukuyama argues that this was the opposition originally set out in Plato between *epithymia* and *thymos* – 'desire' and 'spiritedness'. Throughout most of history, as Hegel had seen, thymotic striving was an aristocratic pursuit – the prerogative of lords, doing battle with each other, after subduing their bondsmen. But when modern science eventually brought a commercial society, this warrior ethos declined, as the spirit of greatness – *megalothymia* – yielded to softer comforts, and a newly spirited sense of equality – *isothymia* – sprang up, demanding not particular but universal recognition: the modern ideals of liberty and equality born with the American and French Revolutions. It is the final triumph of these that we witness at the end of the twentieth century. The crowds in Leipzig, the students on Tian An Min Square, step out of the pages of the *Republic* and the *Phenomenology*.

The worldwide liberal revolution of our time, in which capitalism and democracy can be seen sweeping across the globe, is a product of the convergence of the two dynamics, of desire and recognition. The most striking sign, Fukuyama argues, of the irresistible force of the principles of liberal politics (the rule of law, free elections, civic rights) is not just the speed and scale of the collapse of so many dictatorships round the globe – starting in Southern Europe in the mid-seventies,

131. Fukuyama is now careful to disclaim any binding authority for Kojève's interpretation of Hegel, and to set his own ideas free from textual issues. 'While uncovering the original Hegel is an important task, for the purposes of the present argument we are interested not in Hegel *per se* but in Hegel-as-interpreted-by Kojève, or perhaps a new, synthetic philosopher named Hegel-Kojève', *F.H.M.*, p. 144.

spreading to Latin America in the eighties, stretching across the Pacific, then moving to Eastern Europe and the USSR at the end of the decade, before finally reaching Africa – but also the absence of violence that has overwhelmingly marked it. Already inwardly converted to the superiority of their opponents' ideas, the elites of authoritarian regimes of Left and Right have caved in, one after another, without a fight. In these same years, moreover, it was not merely that the central planning of the communist economies proved itself a dead-end. The belief that poor countries could not develop capitalist economies capable of competing with the rich was also shown to be a myth. The astonishing success of the new industrial states of East Asia – Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, tomorrow perhaps Thailand or Malaysia – has destroyed the superstition that late-comers to the world market are fated to penury and dependency. It is now clear that capitalist prosperity is available to all countries that respect the principles of liberal economics. The lesson is rapidly being learnt elsewhere – in Mexico, Argentina, and beyond. A universal consumer culture now beckons all peoples of the world alike, and no underdeveloped region is shut out from the prospect of its bounty.

For Fukuyama it is this double demonstration, of the magnetism of representative institutions and of competitive markets, that has sealed the victory of liberal capitalism. Out of the bloody tumult of the century, an uncontested winner has finally emerged. Today, 'liberal democracy remains the only coherent aspiration that spans different regions and cultures around the globe', and 'we cannot picture to ourselves a world that is essentially different from the present one, and at the same time better' – 'a future that is not essentially democratic and capitalist', and would 'represent a fundamental improvement over our current order'.<sup>132</sup> Many outstanding social problems – lack of homes, jobs, opportunities; need and crime – remain even in the rich countries; and differing solutions can be envisaged to them within the range of trade-offs between liberty and equality that a democratic capitalism affords. If there are outer limits to the range, set by the principles of effective private property, there is no stable optimum along it, and more social democracy can be pressed here and there, without altering the basic parameters of the time. For the central political fact today is that there are no programmes claiming to overcome capitalism left. The liberal revolution is not yet accomplished everywhere. But in the

132. *The End of History and the Last Man*, New York 1992, pp. xiii, 46, 51. Henceforward *F.H.M.*

an affective magma, whose instability of moral definition arises from the absence of any clear conception of the will. But its usage gave no general support for Plato's gloss. The most famous single judgement of *thymos* was made by Euripides: as she surrenders to it, Medea's last words before committing her crime simply speak of *thymos* as 'the cause of the greatest ills to human beings'.<sup>136</sup> Plato himself scarcely persisted with the notion, and when his successor came to *thymos*, its incoherence flew apart – Aristotle simultaneously invoking it as the spring of political rule and freedom, and dismissing it as the rush of a wild beast.<sup>137</sup> The reason why the tripartite soul is both so prominent in the *Republic* and so transient afterwards is, of course, that it is derived from the structure of the Platonic state, whose hierarchy of philosophers, warriors and toilers it is designed to match. 'As the state is held together by three great classes, the producers, the auxiliaries and guardians, so also in the soul spiritedness constitutes a third element, the natural ally of reason.'<sup>138</sup> When Plato revised his political doctrine in the more realist key of *The Laws*, where government rests on a class hierarchy of wealth, spirit loses its salience and the soul veers back towards the original Socratic division between reason and the appetites.

What is the effect of Fukuyama's adoption of the tripartite model? In his construction, the role of *thymos* is in one sense antithetical to everything urged by Plato, and yet its profile is no less polymorphous. On the one hand, it is the engine of democracy; on the other, it is the ambition for supremacy. It can represent a pride in personal autonomy or a culture of collective conformity; a sense of equality or a validation of hierarchy. In these variations, a basic autonomy is being repeatedly conjugated, in which the self is both asserted against and assimilated to others. At the limit, Fukuyama offers prebices to distinguish the two – *megalo: iso* – but the question is whether the compounds share any

contradictory usages more or less together: *The Republic of Plato*, New York 1968, pp. 355–57, 375–77. For a much more extravagant attempt to demonstrate the seamlessness of Plato's whole construction in the *Republic*, see the recent interpretation – decked out with every device of analytic philosophy – of C.D.C. Reeve, *Philosopher-Kings*, Princeton 1988, who renders *thymos*, 'the dark horse of the psychic parts', in more elevated style as 'aspiration', with the naive claim that anger essentially involves a belief about the good': pp. 136–37.

136. *Medea*, 1078–80: 'I understand what evils I am about to do, but *thymos* is stronger than my reasonings, the cause of the greatest ills to human beings.'

137. Compare *Politics* at 1327b–1328a, referring directly to Plato, with *Nicomachean Ethics* at 1115a–1117a.

138. *Republic*, 441.

underlying substance. Are the quest for liberty, the talent for industry, the ideal of community, the will to primacy, all manifestations of the same high spirits? The semantic overload appears acute. To sustain it, Fukuyama essentially appeals to Hegel. 'Plato's *thymos* is therefore nothing other than the psychological seat of Hegel's desire for recognition.'<sup>139</sup> The juncture between the two is not without its logic. Hegel, like Plato, developed a theory of the state in parallel to a theory of the mind in the *System der Sittlichkeit* of 1802–3, with a social hierarchy visibly modelled on the moments of the spirit, in the fashion of the *Republic*. The movement of self-consciousness, when it is recapitulated in the *Encyclopaedia*, passes from desire to a struggle for recognition, here indeed associated with 'honour', and then out into the rational reciprocity of universal freedom.<sup>140</sup> The similarities look quite close. But there are two critical differences. The idea of the soul as a repertoire of constant dispositions defining human beings was alien to Hegel, who even refused to credit it of Plato – affecting to believe it was only his vivid imagery that had led to such a misrepresentation.<sup>141</sup> The soul appears in the *Encyclopaedia* as no more than a lowly preamble to consciousness – 'the soul is only the *sleep* of the mind'.<sup>142</sup> Any conception of human nature at all was, of course, rejected yet more categorically by Kojève, who – unlike Hegel – was scathing about Plato's idealism in general, and his doctrine of the psyche in particular.<sup>143</sup> In place of a substantification of the soul, what this tradition generated was a dialectic that developed desire, recognition and free-

139. *EHM*, p. 165.

140. *W 10*, § 432, pp. 221–22; *HPM*, pp. 172–73.

141. *W 19*, pp. 30–31; *LHP*–2, p. 21.

142. *W 10*, § 389, p. 43; *HPM*, p. 29.

143. In his three-volume study of Greek philosophy, Kojève dismissed Plato's

psychological doctrine as unworthy of serious consideration: a mixture of edifying or popular opinions, without relation to his theory of Ideas, and self-contradictory claims about the transcendence and autonomy of the soul, which absurdly denied that men had created the world of technology and history. The *Republic* was simply a satire on any State, to mark its distance from an Academy. Aristotle's psychology merited more attention, as a fully-fledged naturalism, which Kojève attacked without remission. Although Aristotle at least granted man's capacity to act in (innate) pursuit of his own satisfaction, rather than being drawn passively towards it as a divine grace, his doctrine was still a crude biologism of human nature. What it yielded was a kind of ancient behaviourism, that reduced the dialectic of master and slave to a division between races, without a glimpse of the struggle for recognition as a contest between one free consciousness and another. Aristotelian virtue – a fortiori Platonic *thymos* – was a vitalist value, or as Kojève scornfully put it, a merely veterinary matter. In a remark with more than one echo, he described the *Politics* as a work of apiculture when it spoke of the Greeks, and a manual of techniques when it touched on barbarians. *Essai d'une Histoire Raisonnée de la Philosophie Grecque*, Vol. II, Paris 1972, pp. 116–117, 131–132, 184, 329–335, 393.

dom as intelligibly related phases in a single adventure of the spirit. This is why a phenomenology of the mind could generate a philosophy of history. In other words, the movement from the stirring of desire, through the contest for mastery and the work of slavery, to the emergence of modern liberty is a genuine *concatenation*, whose progress explains the structure of world history. It was not just the principle of subjective freedom, singled out by Hegel himself, that lay beyond Plato, but any dynamic conception of this kind at all.

What happens, then, when Fukuyama marries Platonic substance and Hegelian spirit? The original logic of the historical dialectic disintegrates, as human development becomes the field of interplay of three component forces — drives that are persistent and distinct. This is no failing in itself. The unity of the scheme traced by Hegel, or amended by Kojève, was bought at the price of abstraction — it remains a speculative figure, closer to a metaphor than a narrative of the historical record.<sup>145</sup> Fukuyama's account embraces the empirical world in much greater breadth and detail. But its ambition is the same: to explain the logic of universal development. Does the result yield a more grounded equivalent to the Hegelian concatenation? A closer look at the dynamics of Fukuyama's universal history provides the answer. Its starting-point is science, for this alone has given clear-cut directionality to human affairs. Reason, in other words, comes first. Once it takes the form of modern science with the Renaissance, it decisively transforms the world, unfettering material desire in technological development and awakening the need for spiritual recognition in democracy. This sequence, which could be compared to Ernest Gellner's account of modernity, seems unambiguous enough. But it is no sooner advanced than disavowed. Science 'should in no way be regarded as the ultimate

144. Its principal weakness, even on its own terms, lies, of course, in its account of the dynamic of labour. Empirically, the suggestion that slaves (however broadly interpreted) progressively transformed the world by their work, so ultimately emancipating themselves for victory over their masters, has no plausibility as a theory of economic development. Kojève seems to have realized this, but the result was only to render his slave who works transforms the natural world in which he lives, by creating within it a specifically human technical world... it is he who has changed the given world by his labour on it', whereas 'the master evolves because he consumes the products of the slave's work... he undergoes history, but does not create it; his "evolution" is passive, like that of nature or an animal species'. On the other hand (a page later), Kojève could write: 'To be sure, the "poor" benefit from technical progress, but it is not they, or their needs or desires, that create it. Progress is realized, started and stimulated by the "rich" or the "powerful" (even in the socialist state)'. *II*, pp. 497-499. The two claims are plainly incompatible.

cause of change'<sup>145</sup> — for it needs to be explained itself. What has always essentially driven it is desire, for material goods and security. This would seem to yield an economic interpretation of history, not so remote from Marx. If desire is the standing *præsumptio*, however, what explains its sudden ability to galvanize reason into the shape of modern physics? Rather than attempting an answer, Fukuyama shifts his emphasis again, to 'the desire that lay behind the desire of Economic Man'. In this register, 'the primary motor of human history' is 'a totally non-economic drive, the *struggle for recognition*'.<sup>146</sup> Here Hegel is given the palm: the origin of development lies in a battle for prestige that creates the bondage which prompts work that transforms nature. After apparent oscillations, the first mover comes to rest, not in desire or reason, but in *thymos*.

But this is a claim that obtains, so to speak, on the meta-historical plane. It is not cashed into any empirical account of pre-modern origins, before or after the rise of civilization in the Middle or Far East, the Mediterranean or elsewhere. A real macro-history is only sketched from the Industrial Revolution onwards. On this plane, the narrative — nearly always shrewd and lively — does not deliver the order projected above it. Here it is quite clear from Fukuyama's own account that, although economic development to high technological levels is not a sufficient condition of political democracy, it is a necessary one — and that the reverse does not hold: there can long be remarkably successful industrialization — in the 'market-oriented authoritarianism' of the ROK or Taiwan, the fastest growth of all — without electoral liberalization.<sup>147</sup> In this asymmetry, the priority of *thymos* is overthrown. The affirmation that thymotic passions are what propel history forward is put aside: the stress now falls simply on the defensive claim that the advent of democracy cannot be reduced to the coming of mass consumption, even if economic modernization does prepare the educational ground for it. Silently, the original directionality reasserts itself. Spiritiveness becomes in effect a residue — the extra fillip needed to take a society across the threshold from prosperity to parliaments, and the surplus charge that needs to be earthed once they are installed.

The ontological division of the soul, in other words, does not generate a coherent historical sequence. In its general tendency, Fukuyama's narrative veers between a rhetorical priority of spirit and a factual priority of desire. If there is a mediation between the two, it is to

145. *EHLM*, p. 80.

146. *EHLM*, p. 136.

147. *EHLM*, pp. 133-5, 134.

be found in the suggestion that the birth of modern science liberated material desires from the thymotic drives which had hitherto dominated history – but how these generated science in the first place is unexplained. The directionality of technique and the strivings of honour remain competing principles of explanation, whose claims of precedence are not to be reconciled. In the design of the account, a true concatenation is missing. It is perhaps significant that the category which is finally most central to Hegel's philosophy of history becomes curiously marginal in Fukuyama's. For there is a sense in which reason is displaced to the side of the construction, as little more than the enabler of desire – as against a spiritedness beyond reason. The contrast with Plato is equally noticeable: where he made *thymos* an ally of reason, Fukuyama makes reason an ally of desire.<sup>148</sup> The result is to tilt the outcome of the enquiry towards the stark dichotomy between a rational hedonism and an elemental agonism with which Fukuyama's reflections conclude.

Their diagnosis of the tensions of 'the old age of mankind' presupposes, of course, that history has indeed reached its appointed term. In its compressed initial statement, Fukuyama's argument could handle most of the objections to it. How does his extended version stand? On the terrain where criticism was originally concentrated, there can be little doubt that his hand is further strengthened. Fukuyama's coolly judicious treatment of nationalism, his critique of the superstitions of great-power 'realism', his relaxed view of advanced capitalism, make an impressive suit. But in laying out his cards more fully, a gap in them can be seen. For the structure of his case has a damaging weakness at the join between its registration of the progress of political democracy and its forecast of the spread of capitalist prosperity. In the real world, there is a visible contrast between the intercontinental sweep of the one and the regional basis of the other. Free elections were extended across a zone numbering some 850 millions in the past two decades; entry into the ranks of advanced capitalism was confined to less than 70 million – essentially, just the two front-line states of the Cold War in East Asia, and a pair of large cities. Fukuyama might have made an argument for the primacy of the struggle for recognition over the mechanism of desire out of this. To have done so, however, would have underlined the empirical imbalance between the two sides of the contention that history has come to an end. South Korea and Taiwan are slender shoulders for the Atlas needed to bear the weight of the Third World. Can their example be so readily broadened? As it happens, Fukuyama

148. E.H.L.M., p. 372, following Bloom – see *The Republic of Plato*, p. 376.

himself elsewhere displays a significant unease about the East Asian model of capitalism. Is Japan itself, let alone the ROK or Taiwan, really a true liberal democracy? Ruled by a 'benevolent one-party dictatorship', it is nevertheless 'fundamentally democratic, because it is formally democratic', since it maintains regular elections and civic rights.<sup>149</sup> But there is an obvious question to ask here. Has Japan ever historically met Fukuyama's own criterion that 'democracy can never enter through the back door; at a certain point, it must arise out of a deliberate political decision to establish democracy'?<sup>150</sup> Decision there was, of course, but taken in Washington. Fukuyama's own misgivings become evident when he speculates that a further weakening of social and family bonds in the US might so discredit liberalism in Japanese eyes that 'a systematic anti-liberal and non-democratic alternative combining technocratic economic rationalism with paternalistic authoritarianism may gain ground in the Far East'<sup>151</sup> – given that the superior performance of East Asian capitalism is already based on much tougher social discipline and less political diversity than in the West. What this line of thought really indicates is an underlying contradiction within the prospectus of universal capitalist democracy. Outside the West, full economic success in building a high-technology capitalism has so far been confined to one region of Asia – whose political cultures conform least to liberal-democratic norms. Where it matters most, the dovetailing of the two great revolutions of our time seems to go awry.

The significance of the misfit is that it points to a larger difficulty in the argument. The enormous change in the world that gives its central force to Fukuyama's case has been the collapse of the USSR and its *glacis* in Eastern Europe. Without this global turning-point, the other parts of his story – restoration of democracy in Latin America, export growth in East Asia, breakdown of apartheid in South Africa – would remain scattered episodes. The conviction that there is no viable economic alternative to the free market owes far more to the failure of Soviet communism than to the success of Korean capitalism. In the same way, the decisive comprobation of liberal democracy was not the retirement of military dictatorships in Latin America or the Pacific which had traditionally paid their respects to it. It was the surrender of bureaucratic regimes in the Warsaw Pact which in the past had always denounced it. If the end of history has arrived, it is essentially because

149. E.H.L.M., p. 241.

150. E.H.L.M., p. 220.

151. E.H.L.M., p. 243.



the socialist experience is over. Much of the intuitive appeal of Fukuyama's argument comes, indeed, from the sense that we are witnessing across what was once the Soviet bloc a gigantic historical upheaval that for the first time in history seems to bear no new principle within it, but rather to move as in a vast dream where events are already familiar before they happen. But the dissolution of Stalin's empire still leaves a great question unanswered. It is clear that the primary cause of its downfall was its failure to compete in productivity with the major capitalist powers surrounding it – a fate envisaged by Stalin's opponent over half a century ago.<sup>152</sup> The superior economic performance of the West was the magnet that pulled the system apart, drawing rulers and ruled alike pell-mell into its field of force. The political appeal of liberal democracy counted too, of course, especially among the more educated and privileged. But in broad terms, for the population at large, it was less compelling in its own right than as a concomitant of the consumer wealth perceived abroad. The fall of communism has brought liberal democracy to them, and is bringing capitalism. What kind of levels of consumption can they expect from the change?

To pose this question is to see the real limits of Fukuyama's vision. For his projection of a Taiwanese or Korean future for the rest of the world beyond the OECD not only begs the question of their replicability – which might be answered, with further specification, although this would be a much more demanding task than a simple argument from local example. More deeply, it commits a fallacy of composition. The fact that one or two agents can achieve a goal does not mean that all may do so – the attempt to generalize a target may simply ensure that none can achieve it. The per capita income even of Taiwan is still only half that of the United States. Even on the heroic assumption that its economic growth became normal for all underdeveloped countries, in a common move upwards towards OECD standards of today – is there any material possibility of the Second and Third Worlds reproducing current patterns of First World consumption? Manifestly, there is not. The style of life enjoyed by the majority of citizens of the rich capitalist nations today is what Harrod called oligarchic wealth, and Hirsch subsequently termed a positional good, whose existence – like a site of natural beauty – depends on its restriction to a minority. If all the peoples of the earth possessed the same number of refrigerators and

152. 'Socialism could not be justified by the abolition of exploitation alone; it must guarantee to society a higher economy of time than is guaranteed by capitalism. Without the realization of this condition, the mere removal of exploitation would be but a dramatic episode without a future': Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, New York 1945, p. 78. The chapter is entitled 'The Struggle for the Productivity of Labour'.

automobiles as those of North America and Western Europe, the planet would become uninhabitable. In the global ecology of capital today, the privilege of the few requires the misery of the many, to be sustainable. Less than a quarter of the world's population now appropriates eighty-five per cent of world income, and the gap between the shares of the advanced and backward zones has widened over the past half century.<sup>153</sup> The difference between living standards in Europe and in India and China increased from a ratio of 40:1 to 70:1 between 1965 and 1990 alone. In the eighties, over 800 million people – more than the populations of the EC, USA and Japan combined – became yet more grindingly poor, and one out of three children went hungry.<sup>154</sup> If all human beings simply had an equal share of food, at a diet with less than half American consumption of animal-based calories, without altering any other distribution of goods whatever – scarcely a radical demand – the globe could not support its present population; were US food consumption to be generalized, half the human species would have to become extinct – the earth could support no more than 2.5 billion inhabitants.<sup>155</sup> But even with such staggering inequality, the ozone layer is being rapidly depleted, temperatures are rising sharply, nuclear waste is accumulating, forests are being decimated, myriad species wiped out. This is a scene where Hegel's Spirit, internalizing nature within itself, is lost. Fukuyama has nothing to say about it. It was Gournot who understood what the world market might bring, and criticized the 'economic optimism' of his time for the finite resources it threatened to plunder, the disadvantaged peoples it was likely to condemn, the future generations it could not but despoil.

Today, those generations are multiplying at a rate never seen before in the history of humanity. The population of the globe, which has doubled from two and a half to five billion in the past fifty years, is

153. For the detailed figures of this pattern, distinguishing between the 'organic core' of capitalism (North-Western Europe, North America, Japan, Australasia) 'intra-continental' (Italy, Spain, South Korea, Brazil), the Communist countries and the rest of the South, see Giovanni Arrighi's essay, 'World Income Inequalities and the Future of Socialism', *New Left Review* 189, September–October 1991, pp. 39–65 – a fundamental map of our time. The general problem of positional wealth in an ecological setting with natural entropies is forcefully etched by Elmar Altvater, *Die Zukunfts des Marktes*, Münster 1991.

154. *Worldwatch Institute, State of the World 1992*, New York 1992, pp. 4, 176.

155. Even with an entirely vegetarian diet, the upper limit for a population receiving an equal distribution for food would be 6 billion, a figure that will be reached in a little over a decade. For these estimates, see the sombre survey by Sir Crispin Tickell, British Ambassador to the UN under Margaret Thatcher, *The Quality of Life – Whose Life? What Life?* (British Association Lecture, August 1991), an author who must be referred to as above suspicion of exaggeration.

likely to be nearing ten billion by the end of the next half century. Ninety per cent of that increase will occur in the poor countries, where already another 90 million are being added a year. But not all of them will stay there. The ever tighter integration of the world capitalist economy, as it now for the first time comes within sight of encompassing the whole earth, and the increasingly visible polarizations of wealth within it, are generating tremendous pressures for entry into the privileged zones. Already there are some 25 million refugees from political and economic despair in the poor countries. Flows of immigration on a tidal scale are the logical outcome of a bifurcation of the globe that makes residence in the rich countries – of any kind, even as an underclass – of incomparable value, for the positional benefits of their infrastructures and social services alone. Since the First World cannot be reproduced in the Third, without common ecological ruin, increasing numbers from the Third, and the Second, will try to come to the First. The tensions and conflicts that will arise from this crossing of two previously separated universes are easy to predict – their premonitory signals are already evident in Europe. The political economy of the advanced capitalist countries, now paying for the asset-inflation and speculative overdrive that led the boom of the eighties, but failed to restore post-war levels of profit, is likely to suffer new turbulence as it adjusts to the sudden transformation of its parameters with the breakdown of former barriers from the East and South.

That adjustment will not be confined to the financial institutions and corporations of the metropolitan triumvirate. It will involve the states of North America, Japan and the European Community as well. Fukuyama has a view of this, but it is a singularly bleak one. The relations between the post-historical zone of a fortunate liberal capitalism and the zone of misfortune still enmeshed in history will, he suggests, not be close. But they will involve collisions along three axes. Oil supplies must be safeguarded; immigration must be filtered; and advanced technologies – especially, but not exclusively, armaments – must be blocked, where necessary. NATO is a more suitable instrument for enforcing a new world order that would secure these aims than the UN Security Council, whose unity in the campaign against Iraq could prove transient. After effectively criticizing the conceptual basis of Kissinger-style 'realism', Fukuyama admits that such policy recommendations scarcely differ from it. What they amount to, of course, is a set of border patrols. In this prospect, the risks of nuclear proliferation do not gain the relief that might be expected. What many would regard as the major single development capable of blasting any post-history apart is virtually ignored – perhaps as too radically at variance with an

end-state that supposes a well-nigh complete insulation of the more from the less wealthy states of the world. But even if this were given greater salience, Fukuyama's prescriptions for dealing with the underdeveloped zone – forcible invigilation and preemption by the dominant powers – would not alter, but only be executed more urgently. Such is in any case the consensual wisdom of the hour. But the programme of a consortium of great powers durably policing the rest of the world, in the interests of keeping weapons of mass extermination to themselves, is utopian. The nuclear monopoly of five or six states has neither moral basis nor practical staying-power. On Fukuyama's own premises, there is no chance of every lesser or newer power accepting the inequity of such arrangements indefinitely: how could that be reconciled with the thymotic striving of the states that feel themselves slaves in the international system? His logic, and current realities, spell out the inevitability of a struggle for nuclear recognition. The only way that could be averted is for the nuclear powers themselves to renounce their deadly ephemeral privilege. So long as there is no sign of that, the lack of right can only deepen, and the arbitrariness of *de facto* possession become more exposed, as in the latest attempts, without even pretence of moral reason, to deny Ukraine or Kazakhstan what accrues without saying to Russia or Israel. No pacific union can be founded on this myopia.

But if war is unwarrantably minimized as a consequence of nuclear proliferation in the historical zone, it unexpectedly returns in a strange after-life in the zone beyond history. In his final chapter Fukuyama, while avowing that nuclear weapons make traditional wars between rich states unthinkable, nevertheless seems to endorse Hegel's assumption that wars will continue at the end of history – criticizing Kojève for the opposite judgement, and dwelling on the redemptive role of war as a collective bond: even spiritual adventure.<sup>156</sup> The inconsistency of these musings with the political logic of his portrait of the end of history is so marked that it invites explanation. The reason why Fukuyama's argument takes this curious concluding turn, however, lies in the way he has construed the alternatives for the last men. The choices before them are effectively two – either the orderly quest for material pleasures within the framework of an instrumental state, or the pursuit of thymotic ambitions that explode inordinately beyond it: Bentham or Nietzsche. What is missing is any conception of the state as a structure of collective self-expression deeper than the electoral sys-

156. *FHM*, pp. 331–32, 391. The anomaly of these remarks is underlined by the use that Fukuyama otherwise makes of Kant's theory of perpetual peace, missing from his essay, but given due importance in his book.

terms of today. Democracy is indeed now more widespread than ever before. But it is also thinner — as if the more universally available it becomes, the less active meaning it retains. The United States itself is the paradigmatic example: a society in which less than half the citizens vote, ninety per cent of Congressmen are re-elected, and the price of office is cash by the million. In Japan money speaks still louder, and there is not even nominal alternation between parties. In France, the Assembly has been reduced to a cipher. Britain lacks so much as a written constitution. In the freshly minted democracies of Poland and Hungary, electoral indifference and cynicism exceed even American levels — less than a quarter of the voters participating in some recent polls. Fukuyama nowhere suggests that any significant improvement is possible in this dismal scene. Reveries of impossible war function as compensation for the absence of any prospect of change in the political quality of peace. Hegel's vision of another kind of state, embodiment of an articulate community rather than mere convenience for rule, has receded, along with the primacy of reason as the realization of freedom — leaving the calculations of desire and the jactations of spirit alone to confront each other. The inadequacy of this as a response to the devitalizing of modern liberty is all too evident. That process is the outcome not just of the power of money and waning of choice within nation-states, but also of their surpassal by international markets and institutions that lack any semblance of democratic control. The European Community, so far the only attempt to transcend national forms for a higher collective sovereignty, still remains yet less accountable to its peoples than the states that compose it. But just as environmental balance cannot be achieved, social equity furthered, nuclear safety assured, so too popular sovereignty cannot acquire new substance, without a different international settlement. The Hegelian problems — poverty, community, war — have not gone away, but their solutions have moved to another plane.

There was one sphere, however, that remained untroubled in Hegel's scheme of things. Beneath the tensions in state and civil society, the family was whole and stable. Today, it is the bed of the fastest currents of change in the rich capitalist world. Fukuyama alludes to the weakening of traditional family patterns, when he speaks of the United States, but it plays little role in his view of the way of the world at large. In fact, this is the arena of the most dynamic struggle for equal recognition in metropolitan societies today. The emancipation of women has achieved more gains in the West over the past twenty years than any other social movement: in law, employment, custom, public doctrine. At the same time, it remains massively far away from real sexual

equality, whose ultimate conditions are still scarcely imaginable today. On the other hand, because — unlike the labour movement of the past — it does not directly challenge the central value of this society, private ownership of the means of collective labour, but rather appeals to its formal commitment to individual rights, the established order has found it difficult to muster head-on ideological resistance to it. There is no officially respectable way of rejecting equality between the sexes — only practical expedients for evading it. These, however, have all the inert force of time out of mind — a history longer than that of class divisions themselves. The result is the most glaring single discrepancy between what can be said and what is done in the rich capitalist countries today. It will be difficult to hold that gap constant. It is no accident that where these societies have traditionally contained the most powerful movements of the Left, in Scandinavia, progress has been impressive in gains for equality between the sexes in a period where little has been achieved in advancing it between the classes. There, the beginnings of what is likely to be the real crux of women's liberation, social measures to ensure that maternity is not an economic handicap in relations between the sexes, has already reached the threshold of the political agenda. The structural upheaval that would be involved, in transfer payments and work patterns alike, if equalization of this kind were ever to occur, is the guarantee that it is an unforeseeable distance away. It is far from clear to what extent the capitalism we know today could accommodate it. But just for that reason, any sounding of the end of the century that misses this current is deficient. Rather than looking at the issue of equal rights where it is actually causing most change, Fukuyama diverts it to the fate of viruses — as if it could be deflated by a mere *reductio ad absurdum*. Here too the resort, unusual in this work, to a persiflage suggests an uncomfortable awareness of possibilities not allowed for. The end of history may see the last men, as they now are. Women willing to see themselves as the ultimate exemplars of their sex are likely to be fewer.

## 6. Socialism?

These are all evident limitations of Fukuyama's construction. But if the extended version of it is more vulnerable than the initial sketch, just because it is richer and therefore more specified, it still puts the same onus on any critique. For Fukuyama's case to fail, it is not enough to show that it understates or overlooks the defects in the world order dominated by liberal capitalism. It must be possible to indicate a

objective changes that have transformed the credit of socialism is without its ambiguity. Socialization of the forces of production understood as their physical concentration – massing of plant-size and geographical location – has certainly declined. But understood as technical interconnection – the linkage of multiple productive units in an ultimately integrated process – it has enormously increased. Self-sufficient manufacturing systems have become far fewer as multinational enterprise has spread, creating a network of global interdependencies unimaginable in the time of Saint-Simon or Marx. The industrial proletariat of manual workers in manufacturing and mining has significantly decreased in the rich capitalist countries, and on present trends of productivity and population will never recapture numerical predominance on a world scale. But the number of wage-earners, still a minority of the earth's population at mid-century, has been increasing at a pace without precedent, as the peasantry moves off the land in the Third World. Command planning has been discredited and dismantled in the former Soviet bloc. In the capitalist world, however, corporate planning has never been so complex and ambitious, in the scale and range of its calculations – girdling the earth and stretching time. Even equality, everywhere decried as a fetter on economic progress, has been in the same period steadily extended as a legal claim and customary norm. The sources of socialism, as it was traditionally conceived, have not so simply dried up.

To register this, however, involves no assurance that they will prove more effective in the future than in the past. The test for the validity of socialism as an alternative to capitalism lies in whether it retains a potential for solutions to the problems confronting the latter in its hour of historical triumph. In the epoch of *The Communist Manifesto*, Mill remarked that 'if the choice were to be made between Communism with all its chances, and the present state of society with all its sufferings and injustices; if the institution of private property necessarily carried with it as a consequence, that the produce of labour should be apportioned as we now see it, almost in an inverse ratio to the labour – the largest portions to those who have never worked at all, the next largest to those whose work is merely nominal, and so in a descending scale, the remuneration dwindling as the work grows harder and more disagreeable, until the most fatiguing and exhausting bodily labour cannot count with certainty upon being able to earn even the necessities of life; if this or Communism were the alternative, all the difficulties, great or small, of Communism would be but as dust in the balance.' But that was not the case, he pointed out. For 'to make the comparison applicable, we must compare Communism at its best, with the regime

of private property, not as it is, but as it might be made. The principle of private property has never yet had a fair trial in any country.' Only the future could decide between the comparative advantages of the two systems, in which the final criterion would probably be which was 'consistent with the greatest amount of human liberty and spontaneity'.<sup>157</sup> The system of private property did transform itself, even if not quite in the way Mill envisaged, and the comparison has turned to its advantage. But the question as Mill posed it is still unsettled. For the boot is now on the other foot. Has socialism been given a fair trial – have we seen it, not as it actually existed, but as it might exist, 'at its best'? The changes involved might be as far from the expectations of Marx as were those that altered capitalism from the ideas of Mill. But for such a possibility to have meaning, it is not utopian circumstances that should be looked to, but the real conditions of the world in the next century. What are the prospects that socialism could cope with these more successfully than capitalism?

Intellectually, the culture of the Left is far from having been demobilized by the collapse of Soviet communism, or the impasse of Western social democracy, as a glance at the distinguished recent symposium *After the Fall* shows.<sup>158</sup> In this sense, the vitality of the socialist tradition continues to be displayed on many sides. Amidst a range of proposals for renewal, two themes stand out as most consensual. A socialism beyond the experience of Stalinist tyranny and social-democratic *stuvisme* would represent neither an impossible abolition of the market, nor an uncritical adaptation to it. Differing forms of collective ownership – cooperative, municipal, regional, national – of the major means of production would be combined with market exchanges

157. *Collected Works*, Vol. II, Toronto 1965, pp. 207–208.

158. Robin Blackburn, ed., *After the Fall – the Failure of Communism and the Future of Socialism*, London 1991. Among the many significant contributions to this volume, Habermas's essay 'What does Socialism Mean Today?' is of particular interest here. Written with rare passion, it reveals once again the depth of his personal commitment to the Left, while also reproducing in more political key some of the paradoxes of his writing on modernity. Here he asks whether, after the collapse of communism and the deadlock of social democracy, the Left 'must now retreat to a purely moral standpoint, keeping socialism as nothing more than an ideal', without an objective anchorage in existing society – and replies that to do so would be to 'defuse socialism and reduce it to a regulative notion, of purely private relevance'. Yet he also argues that 'a dynamic of self-correction cannot be set in motion without introducing morality into the debate, without universalizing interests from a normative point of view', and 'rethinking topics morally'. Less categorical than before in scouting popular sovereignty, Habermas's agenda for the Left still remains essentially remedial, 'to prevent the institutional framework of a constitutional democracy from becoming desiccated': pp. 37–38, 43–45. But as the wider problems of world poverty and insecurity have gained more relief in his thinking, the accent has changed.

between them, under the guidance of broad public planning of macro-economic balances. The most impressive of such conceptions, developed by Diane Elson, turns the tables on the familiar notion that it is the advent of an economy increasingly based on information that has rendered any alternative to capitalism obsolete, by calling for abolition of the anachronisms of commercial secrecy. Here the objective is a socialization of the market that transfers powers to producers in competing enterprises with knowledge of each other's techniques and costs, and secures the freedom of households with guaranteees of basic income.<sup>159</sup> The mechanisms of planning in a socialized market of this kind could be of various kinds, but all involve some central controls over the credit system. Such controls, in turn — this is the second principal theme of current literature — would have to be accountable to a democracy far more articulated in its forms than anything the capitalist version has to offer: encouraging electoral participation rather than indifference, minimizing barriers between deputies and constituents, opening and regulating executive processes, diversifying arenas in which decisions are taken, securing representation of gender as well as of number. Among schemes along these lines, David Held's model of a developed democracy is one of the most detailed so far.<sup>160</sup> Finally, of course, there is general agreement that the social forces needed to work towards a socialism of this kind would have to embrace a much broader coalition of wage-earners than was envisaged in earlier conceptions relying on the industrial labour-force alone.

No re-foundation of the socialist project, whatever its particular direction, could hope to be credible that failed to come to terms with the historical experience of the Second and Third Internationals. Mere repudiations are no more use today than were simple pieties yesterday. Any culture of the Left that tries to start again *ex nihilo*, or take shelter in the principles of 1789 (or 1776), will be stillborn. Serious reflection on the political and intellectual legacy of the modern socialist movement, in its various forms, reveals many riches that were forgotten as well as roads that were mistaken — also many more interconnections with the critics of socialism than have been customarily remembered. It is not an accident that the most fundamental survey of the problems confronting any socialism of the future should also be the richest stock-taking, with many surprises, of the main tradition of the past: Robin Blackburn's balance-sheet of the economic and political heritage

159. 'Market Socialism or Socialization of the Market?', *New Left Review* 172, November–December 1988, pp. 3–44.

160. See *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge 1987, pp. 267–299.

of Marxism.<sup>161</sup> Its theme is complexity — of the circumstances in which the October Revolution was made and unmade; of the differing strands within Bolshevik and social-democratic thought confronting the Soviet experience; of the structure of any possible society beyond capitalism, which nearly all of them underestimated. In this reconstruction, Kautsky and Mises, or Hayek and Trotsky, turn out to have had more in common than might be imagined, in their critique of the idea of a universal intelligence capable of rationally directing the countless transactions of a modern economy; but the very dispersal of knowledge on which social and technological progress depends also tells against the presumptions of unaccountable private management. Here the idea of a socialism after communism is posed on the appropriate contemporary scale. The effect is to bring into relief the real exigencies, but also some of the difficulties of an alternative to the present world order.

For the central case against capitalism today is the combination of ecological crisis and social polarization it is breeding. Market forces contain no solution to these. Driven by the imperatives of private profit, their logic is to disregard environmental damage and to entrench positional hierarchy. The global consequences of their spontaneous development are the visible refutation of Austrian conceptions of it as a beneficent catalaxy. Here, if anywhere, the case for deliberate collective intervention — the constructivist *tabula rasa* rejected by Austrian theory — would seem unanswerable. At this higher level, where the fate of the earth itself will be decided, do not the classical arguments of socialism for intentional democratic control of the material conditions of life stage their comeback? If there is to be, as the most prescient analysts insist, an Environmental Revolution comparable in significance only to the Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions before it,<sup>162</sup> how could it be other than consciously realized — that is, planned? What else are the targets already feebly set by various national governments and international agencies? The reply to these questions is in one sense obvious. But in another sense, it remains politically ambiguous. For the paradox

161. 'Fin-de-Siècle: Socialism after the Crash', in *After the Fall* — an essay which makes good its dictum that 'a doctrine's capacity for integral self-criticism and self-correction is as important as the starting-point since the latter is bound to be mistaken or inadequate in various ways', p. 180.

162. 'The pace of the Environmental Revolution will be far faster than that of its predecessors. The agricultural revolution began some 10,000 years ago and the industrial revolution has been under way for two centuries. But if the environmental revolution is to succeed, it must be compressed into a few decades... Muddling through will not work': Lester Brown, 'Launching the Environmental Revolution', *State of the World 1992*, pp. 174–75.

is that the terrain on which the socialist economic critique of capitalism has most contemporary power also poses it with even more difficult tasks than those it failed to acquire in the past. The central stumbling-block to a planned economy is the coordination problem — its incapacity, as the Austrians saw it, to match market pricing as an information system, in conditions of dispersed knowledge. (The incentive problem, or lack of an entrepreneurial function, occurs at a lower analytic level, and could be regarded as more remediable.) There are simply too many decisions to process, a complexity defying any conceivable computation. If socialist planning was defeated by this problem at the level of single national economies, how could it handle the immeasurably greater complexities of a global economy? Is it not more likely that ecological balance will be reached by selective regulation, that deters or proscribes certain forms of production within the world market, rather than stipulating any — as energy taxation or pharmaceutical legislation does (more or less badly) today?

A solution of this kind, within the familiar framework of capitalism, is nevertheless quite unworkable. For the central problem is not simply the (rising) absolute levels of damage to the biosphere, but the relative contributions to it of rival national economies. This, however, could only be resolved by a mixture of deterrents and quotas: in other words, not just prevention, but allocation — or planning proper. Allocation, however, inevitably poses the issue of equity. On what principles should the consumption of fossil fuels, the production of nuclear waste, the emission of carbon, the substitution of CFCs, the employment of pesticides, the logging of forests, be distributed among the peoples of the world? Here the market, however curbed, has nothing to offer. The malignant appropriation of the world's riches by a privileged minority, with which the destruction of its resources is now fatally interwoven, threatens any common solutions to the massive dangers now gathering momentum. Socialism meant planning, not for its own sake, but in the service of justice. It is quite logical that Austrian economic theory, as the most cogent rationale of capitalism, should exclude the idea of justice even more rigorously than that of planning. But it is precisely an alliance of the two that is required for any genuine global settlement. The environmental revolution will not occur without a new sense of egalitarian responsibility.

Much the same paradox recurs on the ground of representative institutions proper. The attenuation of democratic forms in the major capitalist societies is increasingly evident. The executive branches of the state have gained steadily greater power at the expense of legislative

declined. Above all, the most important changes affecting the well-being of citizens have been transferred sideways to international markets. In these conditions, the construction of effective supranational sovereignties is the obvious remedy to the loss by national states of so much of their substance and authority. Western Europe contains the one significant start towards such a federation. The European Community was expressly designed as the framework for a robust continental capitalism. It took a considerable time for many socialists to see it as an opportunity for long-term advance in another direction. Today that awareness is much more widespread. On any realistic reckoning, it is clear that a major task of the Left will be to press towards the completion of a genuine federal state in the Community, with a sovereign authority over its constituent parts. That, of course, will require a democratically empowered European legislature, rather than the shadow parliament of the present — just the prospect that is anathema to the Right across the region. Such a Union is the only kind of general will that can contest the new power of the invisible hand as the arbiter of collective destinies.

But realism also dictates an awareness that, just as the larger an economy the more difficult it is to plan, so the greater the territory and population of a state, the less subject it tends to become to democratic control. The United States, with its lawless executive and paralytic legislature, is the most vivid example of this today, as Russia might become tomorrow. Scale tends to afford economies in civic participation too. The reason is partly that it renders central government spatially and structurally more distant from its electorate, increasing its bureaucratic autonomy. But it is also because it sharply raises the costs of political organization, giving disproportionate advantages to groups that are concentrated in numbers and well-endowed with resources — hence with good internal lines of communication and ample means of opinion formation — as against widely scattered masses lacking the expensive requirements for their own voluntary association. The path to a more relevant democracy today points beyond the nation-state; but the price of it is likely to be a more remote one too. The socialist critique of capitalist democracy will thus confront many of the same problems it now diagnoses, in a yet more acute form at the very level towards which its own programme should move. Here too the dialectical figure seems to shift into reverse: the contradictions of capitalism do not resolve but augment the difficulties of socialism.

If this is true of economic principles and political institutions, what



declined in absolute numbers in the advanced countries, and in relative size as a proportion of the world's population. At the same time, the number of all those who depend on wages for their livelihood has vastly increased, although it still probably falls short of a majority of humanity. The greatest single change in global society since the Second World War, after the contraction of the peasantry, has been the entry of women into the paid labour-force of rich and poor countries alike. With this change, the human potential of opposition to the dictates of capital has become more truly universal than it was at the height of the traditional labour movement, confined to only one sex. Migration is also mixing populations once again, on a scale not seen since the previous century. How far do these transformations offer a realistic basis for resuming a socialist project? The answer is at best deeply ambiguous. For if their net effect is to broaden the social forces open to the appeal of a different kind of world order, it is also to divide them. Even within the metropolitan industrial working class itself, there is less occupational similarity and cultural likeness than in the past. Outside it, heterogeneity of every kind — income, employment, gender, nationality, faith — proliferates. Many of these divisions, of course, operated in the past too. But the core support of the classic labour movement was nevertheless relatively homogeneous: it was essentially manual, overwhelmingly male and predominantly European. No equivalent to such coordinates obtains today. The distances between a Korean seamstress, Zambian field-hand, Lebanese bank-clerk, Filipino sailor, Italian secretary, Russian miner, Japanese auto-worker, are vastly greater than those that were once bridged in the ranks of a unitary Second International, even though not a few might even be employees of the same conglomerate. The new reality is a massive asymmetry between the international mobility and organization of capital, and the dispersal and segmentation of labour, that has no historical precedent. The globalization of capitalism has not drawn the resistances to it together, but scattered and outflanked them. In due course, perhaps, an 'interstitial surprise' of the kind tracked by Michael Mann — the emergence of a new social agent catching all others unawares — may appear. But for the moment no change in this unequal balance of forces is in sight. The potential extension of social interests in an alternative to capitalism has been accompanied by a reduction in social capacities to fight for one.

All these difficulties have a common origin. The case against capitalism is strongest on the very plane where the reach of socialism is weakest — at the level of the world system as a whole. That weakness has always been there, from the earliest hopes of revolution in one

country, or even continent, expressed by Marx and his contemporaries. But increasingly, as the twentieth century advanced, the movement that prided itself on having overcome national boundaries fell ever further behind the system it set out to replace, as the civilization of capital became steadily more international, not just in its economic mechanisms — with the arrival of the multinational corporation — but also in its political arrangements, with the machinery of NATO and the G-7. The contrast with the record of what was once the 'socialist camp' says everything. The age continues to see nationalisms exploding like firecrackers across much of the world, not least where communism once stood. But the future belongs to the set of forces that are overtaking the nation-state. So far, they have been captured or driven by capital — as in the past fifty years, internationalism has changed sides. So long as the Left fails to win back the initiative here, the current system will be secure.

Where, then, does this leave socialism? History suggests a range of ideal-typical outcomes, which more or less set the spectrum of possibilities. In stylized fashion, these can be taken as paradigms for different versions of the future. The first possibility is that the experience of socialism in this century will simply be regarded by historians of the future as something like the Jesuit experiment in Paraguay. This was an episode that fascinated the Enlightenment — Montesquieu and Voltaire, Robertson and Raynal all reflected on its significance. For over a century, between the 1610s and the 1760s, the Jesuit fathers organized Guaraní tribes into egalitarian communities under their authority in the territories upstream from the River Plate. In these settlements, each Indian family had the right to a personal field, tilled privately, but the bulk of the land was cultivated collectively as God's property by the obligatory labour of the whole community, to the sound of religious song and music. Its produce was distributed for the benefit of all those who worked the fields, with a reserve for the ill, the old and the orphans. There were storehouses, workshops, small factories and well-built towns. But there was no money. Simply, a tradable surplus of *yerba* was exported to Buenos Aires, to pay for manufactures which the reductions did not produce. The Jesuits devoted great care to the education of their charges, ingeniously adapting their doctrinal duties to local beliefs. There was conscription, and the Guaraní cavalry did outstanding service for the Spanish monarchy outside the borders of the Jesuit domain. But no Spanish official was permitted to reside within it, no traders (with a few designated exceptions) could visit it, and no Spanish was taught to the Indians, who were given instruction



and literacy in their own language, under the autocracy of the Order. In its complete reversal of the treatment meted out to the native populations everywhere else in the Americas, in its careful isolation from the surrounding Viceroyalty, in its relative prosperity (exaggerated by legend), the Jesuit state in Paraguay came to attract the hatred and greed of the local landowners, the suspicion and jealousy of the court in Spain. Ultimately, in a sudden decree, Madrid ordered the expulsion of the Order from Paraguay. The operation, ruthlessly conducted by the Viceroy, met no resistance. The fathers obeyed their instructions from Rome. The Indians were disarmed with promises of the preservation of their communities and the provision of a university that they had missed. But once the Society was gone, their lands were soon seized, their townships destroyed, their populations dispersed. Today, all that is left of an experience that had won the ambivalent admiration of the *philosophes* are a handful of handsome church ruins, and perhaps the survival of the local idiom.<sup>163</sup> In Europe, the Jesuits adjusted their ambitions and eventually became an inoffensive part of the overall scene, their name respected and their cause absorbed in a civilization moving in another direction. In the nineteenth century, their singular experiment in Paraguay was occasionally mourned by romantic socialists like Cunningham Grahame, a friend of William Morris, or deprecated by rational conservatives like Cournot.<sup>164</sup> But in the consensus of later generations, when it was remembered at all, it was seen as a weird historical sport – an artificial social construction, contradicting every known law of human nature, doomed to rapid extinction. In the same way, future – even present – historians might look back on the cycle of attempts to build socialism in the twentieth century as a set of exotic aberrations in backward lands, fated to vanish after briefly disturbing the main course of history as it proceeded to its appointed conclusion, leaving only the innocuous traces of absorption in more advanced regions. Already in the seventies François Furet spoke of the ‘closing of the socialist parenthesis’, as civilization resumed its

163. Raynal's verdict has a contemporary ring. In the benevolent security of the Paraguayan missions ‘perhaps never was so much good done to men, with so little ill’, yet the Guarani did not resist the expulsion of the Jesuits because, he thought, they had fallen into a kind of melancholy under too uniform a mode of life, that deprived them of licence of tumult, emulation or passion, as well as the freedoms of the forest: *Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Établissements et du Commerce dans les Deux Indes*, Vol. 4, Geneva 1780, pp. 303–304, 320–23.

164. R. C. Cunningham Grahame, *A Vanished Arcadia*, London 1900; Cournot, *Revue Sociale*, p. 311. The most interesting modern reflection is Bartolomeu Mella, ‘Las Reducciones Jesuíticas del Paraguay: un Espacio para una Utopía Colonial’, *Estudios Paraguayos*, September 1978, pp. 157–168.

long-term development towards liberal capitalism. In the perspective of that progress, the eventual fate of socialism would be oblivion.

The second possibility is that the outcome of modern socialism would be closer to the legacy of the first revolution against divine right monarchy. In England in the 1640s, the dynasty and episcopacy were overthrown, a revolutionary army emerged, a republican state was founded, and an extraordinary ferment of radical ideas bubbled up. The most remarkable of these, as a collective achievement, was the first theory of modern democracy that emerged in the ranks of the Levellers. Their political demands included widespread male suffrage, a written constitution, entrenched clauses to protect civil liberties, annual parliaments, popular election not only of MPs, but of military officers and civil servants as well. This was a programme so far ahead of its time that most of its concerns have even today still not been realized in Britain, which has neither republic, nor written constitution, nor a bill of rights, let alone annual parliaments or an elected officer corps. The Leveller vision of democracy, the product of popular mobilization during the Civil War and the experience of rank-and-file representation in the General Council of the Army, did not outlast the military struggle against the monarchy, as an effective movement. But the Leveller moment in the Civil War remains the most deeply impressive political spectacle of its time. It is not surprising that its ideals should have won such frequent admiration from contemporary historians.

Yet what was their actual historical legacy? The English monarchy was restored in 1660, and within another fifty years a stable aristocratic oligarchy was in place, that lasted down to the epoch of the industrial revolution. In this development, the memory of the radical ferment of the English Republic was completely effaced. Neither the Commonwealth itself, nor the Levellers who had fought to democratize the revolutionary state, left any durable traces in British political life. The Putney Debates were only rediscovered in the late nineteenth century, and the Leveller programmes seriously examined in this century. Just as the English Revolution left no major institutions behind, so it bequeathed no continuous heritage of ideas, living on as an active influence in subsequent generations. The reason lay not so much in its political defeat as in the intellectual change that occurred after it was over. For the great revolutionary excitement at mid-century was still cast in essentially religious terms. The Civil War issued into a Puritan Revolution, whose principal leaders and militants were committed to the creation of a Commonwealth of the Godly, in a mental universe still saturated with Biblical myths and Protestant doctrines. It was this theological casing which cut it off so abruptly. Providence,

sign of the Lord's blessing when Cromwell's armies were victorious, became proof of divine anger when the Republic fell, leading to a characteristic collapse of morale. More profoundly, however, the religious stamp of the Revolution came to seem anachronistic, as polite culture and popular beliefs became increasingly secularized over the next century.

The result was a gap of some hundred and forty years between this the English Revolution and its historical successor in France. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, the slogans of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, were objectively sequels to the Leveller Agreements of the People. But subjectively, there was little or no connexion between them, because the whole language of political insurgency had changed. Now, whatever other energies it drew upon, the vocabulary of revolution was radically secular, indeed for the most part intransigently anti-clerical. So it might be said that Leveller democracy did not quite suffer the fate of Jesuit equality, since after the lapse of another century, its equivalent did reappear — much more strongly, explosively and durably, but in the form of a transvaluation. In this process, ideas at work in the Good Old Cause found expression in a very different idiom, with other connotations and justifications. If something like this were to unfold at the end of the twentieth century, socialism would indeed disappear — but at some later date we could expect to find its characteristic goals and values recoded into some new compelling vision of the world, objectively related but subjectively disconnected from its predecessor. Some might imagine that a certain ecologism could fit this role — discarding what it would see as the religious dimensions of socialism, faith in the proletariat and disdain for nature, but rearticulating other of its key themes: above all, conscious collective control of economic practices, in the interests of equal life-chances for all humanity.

A third possibility is that the trajectory of socialism might rather come to resemble that of the Jacobinism unleashed by the French Revolution itself. Unlike the Levellers, the Jacobins — less committed to personal liberty, more effective in state construction — succeeded in winning power, although they did not hold it for long. Their rule was the radical crest of a revolutionary process which lasted a decade, convulsing the European scene. Like the English before it, the French Revolution created no lasting political order, it too issuing into a military dictatorship followed by a restoration. But this time the old order had to be reimposed from without, for the Revolution itself had gone much further: setting in train deeper popular mobilization, broader ideological development, vaster strategic consequences for Europe at large. In so doing, it had become not just a national but a

universal event, whose memory could not be forgotten. Within France itself, just because the restoration had been external, the revolutionary legacy could not long be suppressed. Fifteen years later, Paris was covered in barricades and the government in flight. The July Monarchy lasted little longer, before being consumed in the flames of 1848. The French Revolution, in other words, founded a cumulative political tradition, inspiring successive later attempts to realize the principles of 1789 or 1794 — not only in France, but in Europe as well, and ultimately even beyond it.

On the other hand, this tradition also quite soon underwent a decisive mutation. For out of the bourgeois-democratic matrix of the French Revolution, there issued the distinct and eventually antagonistic conceptions of modern socialism. In this process, there was no break in temporal continuity, of the kind that lay between the age of the Levellers and that of the Jacobins. The birth of socialist ideas effectively overlapped with the emergence of the secular notions of popular sovereignty and equality before the law that would become the normal foundations of capitalist democracy. Babeuf, the first thinker of the socialist tradition proper, was an actor in the Revolution itself. Saint-Simon, its first systematic theorist, was a volunteer in the American War of Independence, and a witness of the Revolution, who developed his doctrines in reaction to it under the Restoration. Fourier published his first scheme for phalansteries under Napoleon. Marx himself was profoundly steeped in the heritage of what he often called simply the 'Great Revolution', and modelled the proletarian upheaval to come by backward projection from it. So when the 1848 Revolution broke out, it was natural that the Second Republic should see a brief united front between old Jacobins and new Socialists, Ledru-Rollin and Louis Blanc. As late as the Commune, a coalition between the two still held in Paris. But as Cournot noted, watching the red flags with foreboding, the proximity was now deceptive. Socialism did present itself as the heir of the Revolution, the only programme capable of giving effective reality to liberty, equality and fraternity. But it was also a genuine mutation. This was a different species of movement from the Jacobin, aiming at another kind of society than Robespierre's Republic of Virtue, which involved a break with its respect for private property, a critique of its understanding of the past, a reordering of the trinity of 1789, and a wager on a new social agent that only emerged with the spread of modern industry, after the French Revolution was over.

Were the Jacobin paradigm to be pertinent, socialism too would undergo a similar mutation in its turn — with the overlapping emergence of a new kind of movement — the 'normal' of

society, in some respect acknowledging its debt to socialism, but in others criticizing and repudiating it quite sharply. This, of course, is something like the role that feminists often attribute to the struggle for sexual equality. The modern origins of campaigns for women's emancipation go back to the time of the Second International, when the central texts of the labour movement themselves spoke of abolishing inequality between sexes as well as classes, and Bebel's work on *Woman in the Past, Present and Future* was the most popular single book in the literature of German social democracy — just as the central text of modern feminism, de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, was to be written from a declared socialist standpoint. But suffragism and its successors nevertheless always represented a distinct historical tradition, and as socialism came to accord steadily less place to sexual equality in the twentieth century, the distance between the two widened. The contemporary forms of second-wave feminism have generally been marked by clear differentiation from socialist traditions. If the social changes it has achieved still remain quite modest, the structural consequences of real sexual equality for a capitalist economy and society look imponderably large. Whether it will come to this, no one can now say. But feminists might well argue that, by contrast with the uncertain future of the labour movement, the cause of women's emancipation can be reasonably confident that it has the better part of its life in front of it.

There is another possibility, which is that the destiny of socialism might after all prove closer to that of its historical rival, liberalism. If the economic origins of modern liberalism lay in classical political economy, as formulated by Smith and Ricardo, and it became a political doctrine in the time of the Restoration, given classical expression by Constant, the two streams did not fully merge until the mid-nineteenth century, in the epoch of Gladstone and Cavour. Then, as a general theory of free trade and the rule of law, a market society and a limited state, whose influence was much broader than the parties which bore its name, it became the ruling conception of progress in the Old and New Worlds alike. By the turn of the century, having presided over substantial economic growth and international peace, liberalism seemed set to guide the civilization of the Belle Époque into a world of wider prosperity and less restricted democracy.

From this zenith, the descent was abrupt. With the outbreak of the First World War, liberal civilization suddenly collapsed into industrial barbarism. As millions fell in the inter-imperialist killing, under the leadership of its most respectable politicians and ideologues, its value-order seemed bent on committing moral suicide. The profound discredit that ensued from this debacle was then followed by the devastat-

ing blow of the deepest slump in world history, between the wars. If the Great War seemed to spell the unbingeing of the constitutional state, the Depression appeared to demonstrate the bankruptcy of the free market. Still worse was to come, when the combined legacy of Versailles and Black Friday brought Nazism to power within the framework of parliamentary democracy, while the world market broke up into antarctic blocs. By the end of the first third of the century, it looked to many observers as if liberalism might be destroying itself from within as a major historical force.

Events proved otherwise. In and through the ordeal of the Second World War, liberalism staged a remarkable recovery. In the struggle against fascism, the American economy recovered its dynamism, and the Anglo-Saxon states their reputation. With the return of peace, liberal democracy based on universal suffrage was for the first time generalized across the whole advanced capitalist zone, and consolidated with the economic assistance and political supervision of the United States. At the same time the world capitalist economy was durably re-liberalized, and as international free trade revived on a gold-dollar standard, a long boom brought rapid growth and mass prosperity without precedent across the OECD. By any historical measure, this was a formidable dual transformation. Liberalism now looks forward to a third achievement, of comparable order — the gradual spread of its economic and political model throughout the less developed world. Scarcely any country in the Third World launched industrialization on free market lines, or started out as a true constitutional state. But once accumulation has reached a certain threshold, political democracy and economic deregulation have begun to exhibit a certain trend-line in selected regions of the South too. This, of course, is the story told by Fukuyama.

Socialism, for its part, emerged onto the world stage at just the moment when liberalism entered into its modern crisis. At a time when most liberal thinkers was still bathed in the euphoria of Herbert Spencer, convinced that industry would spread peace between states, Luxemburg and Lenin, Hilferding and Trotsky were predicting the outbreak of the imperialist war that would bring the *fin-de-siècle* settlement to an end. It was the Marxist tradition which likewise foresaw the possibility of the Great Depression, and Marxists who first perceived the full consequences of the fascism that emerged from it. At the same time, as Marx himself — and following him Russian Marxists — had also thought possible, a socialist revolution did indeed break out in Russia, and lead to the creation of a communist state in what

major power in the twentieth century. That state was in turn the prime force in the defeat of European fascism in the Second World War – a defeat which laid the foundations for the historical recovery of liberalism in the West, while a second great revolution broke out in Asia.

No political movement ever realizes exactly what it sets out to achieve, and no social theory ever foresees just what goes on to occur. There is no difficulty in enumerating all the mistaken claims and predictions made by Marx, Luxemburg or Lenin. But no other body of theory in this period – the first third of the century – came near to the twofold successes, of anticipation and accomplishment, of the socialist tradition. On the other hand, these proved in practice to be as vulnerable to time – and their own crimes – as those of liberalism before them. Already before the defeat of Nazism, Stalin's regime had made war on its peasantry and unleashed the purges, in two great waves of mass terror that can only be compared in toll of lives to the First World War, and may have exceeded it. If the moral-political balance with liberalism was thereby lost, the economic balance soon gave the East no advantage over the West either. The stormy Soviet industrialization of the thirties, which secured victory over Hitler, unfolded against a background of depression and stagnation in the West. But after 1950 capitalism entered on the most dynamic boom in its history, and when recession set in again twenty years later, its growth rate proved to be well above that of the Soviet bloc, by now sunk in acute economic stagnation and social paralysis under unreconstructed bureaucratic rule. The social-democratic branch of the socialist tradition, on the other hand, which had not challenged the murderous plunge into the First World War, and furnished little remedy against the Depression, flourished within West European capitalism after the Second World War, pioneering welfare systems that were to render it significantly more humane than its American or Japanese counterparts. But with the altered economic conditions of the eighties, these too entered into crisis as social-democratic parties steadily lost office or abandoned commitments to their traditional goals. By the end of the decade, communism was everywhere in crisis or collapse, and social democracy was rudderless. The historical potential of socialism at large, even allowing for the lesser discredit (but also lesser weight) of social democracy, seems to many as thoroughly exhausted as did that of liberalism fifty years ago.

If the liberal paradigm were pertinent, however, an ulterior redemption of socialism as a movement could not be excluded. Liberalism recovered, despite every dire prediction, by adopting diluted elements of its antagonist's programme – state monitoring of macroeconomic

balances, securing of social peace through welfare schemes, broadening of democracy to all adults. Communism tried to modernize itself in similar fashion, by introducing elements of the rule of law and of competitive markets. The result was a complete failure, at any rate in the Soviet bloc. There capitalism is now politically and intellectually triumphant. On the other hand, full privatization of large-scale property – that is, a complete economic reproduction of capitalism and its concomitant social structure – is still some way off. Its achievement will require a feat of long-run social engineering without precedent in the liberal tradition, in harsh conditions. The resources needed to finance it are already overstretched in the superintending powers. For the underlying structural malaise of advanced capitalism, revealed in the seventies, has not been overcome. Rates of profit are still no more than half those of the long post-war boom – and have been sustained at this level only by massive credit expansion, postponing the day of reckoning. The advent of any severe new crisis in the OECD would change all political calculations, West and East, unpredictably. The tightening of the linkages in the global capitalist order is anyway bound to force the tremendous pressures of poverty and exploitation in the South into the arena of the North for the first time. All these tensions could create a new international agenda for social reconstruction. Were it able to respond effectively to them, socialism would not so much be succeeded by another movement, as redeemed in its own right as a programme for a more equal and livable world.

Historical analogies are never more than suggestive. But there are occasions where they may be more fruitful than predictions. It would be surprising if the fate of socialism reproduced any one of these paradigms in all fidelity. But the set of possible futures now before it falls within a range such as this. Oblivion, transvaluation, mutation, redemption: each, according to their intuition, will make their own guess as to which is more probable. Jesuit, Leveller, Jacobin, Liberal – these are the figures in the mirror.