

The aim of the series of three articles by Tom Darby, a political Philosopher from Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada, is to familiarize us with the concept "globalization", that is much used and talked about as this century and millennium ends. In the previous issue (2/98), we published the first essay "The End of the History: Kojève's Serious Joke". Professor Darby introduces thinkers that are less familiar in our country and the region (Alexandre Kojève, Leo Strauss, Carl Schmitt) and will also stress the aspect of Martin Heidegger's work that makes him the foremost modern political philosopher. The last part will be published in the next issue.

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TOM DARBY **ON GLOBALIZATION** (2ND ESSAY)

2. Power and Wisdom: Politics as Destiny

As noted in the first part of this essay, Kojève, Strauss, Schmitt and Heidegger were, by varying degrees, collaborators. This clearly is true for Kojève and Strauss, whose association began in Berlin and Paris in the 1930s. There is a record of their sustained correspondence beginning in 1932 and ending in 1965. And, of course, there is the "Strauss-Kojève Debate", published in Strauss' *On Tyranny*.¹ As we shall see, despite their fundamental differences, Kojève and Strauss shared concerns, passions and even visions. There are rumours of an extant body of correspondence between Schmitt and Kojève, but as of yet, nothing has been published. However, Kojève had commented that - along with Strauss and Heidegger - Schmitt was among his few contemporaries with whom he cared to discuss philosophy.² And then there was the shorter but intense relation between Schmitt and one who soon was to become his erstwhile pupil, the then young Leo Strauss. This relation is documented by Strauss' published comments on Schmitt's best known work, *The Concept of the Political* (1932)³ This collaboration took place at the time Kojève was beginning his lectures in Paris, roughly at the same time Heidegger was writing his essays on technology, and, of course, when Hitler was coming to power. It was a dynamic and dangerous time.

So, let us begin here by stating the obvious : that twentieth century politics is unprecedented in human history. Western global exploration, leading to global conquest, and then to the global wars of the twentieth century, have made way for the planetary transformations that we now are experiencing with increasingly rapidity and thoroughness. This truly global politics - what Kojève called the U.H.S. (Universal Homogenous State), and what we, as of late, have come to call the process of 'globalization' - is the particular context for those questions pertaining to the status and relation of politics and philosophy and its effect on man.⁴ If Aristotle was correct when he said that man was a *zōon politikon*, a political animal, and if *epistēmīc*, or philosophical man, constitutes humanities' most developed, and therefore highest form, then what happens to humans if politics and philosophy (1) change their relation, (2) disappear altogether, or (3) metamorphize?

By the time Leo Strauss met Alexander Kojève, Strauss already had begun to take the position that despite the sweeping changes modernity had brought to the human condition, humans essentially have remained the same, and for this reason, are able to find access to truths that remain more or less constant. Thus this classical approach to reality, whether it be the reality of the antique world or the world of the late twentieth century could reveal certain truths about man, his politics and his philosophy, and the interrelatedness

of the two.⁵ The first complete study Strauss published of a work of classical philosophy was his aforementioned interpretation of Xenophon's dialogue, *Hiero* or *Tyrannicus*. To some extent we already have become familiar with Kojève's position about the relation of action to thought, together with his vision of the future; however, when we contrast what we already have learned about Kojève's perspective with that of Strauss', the questions asked above concerning the status of politics and philosophy today, and hence questions concerning the status of humanity, become sharp and grave. It is the sheer seriousness of these questions that kept this 'debate' between Strauss and Kojève from becoming partisan. Despite the stark difference between Strauss' and Kojève's positions, both realize that the other's position is the only other plausible one besides his own. Thus both Strauss and Kojève exhibit an urgency to find answers to these questions arising from their exchange and a determined openness to understand whatever answers they might yield.

Strauss' choice of Xenophon's short dialogue provides him with a direct way for raising the question of the nature and relation of politics to philosophy. This is the theme of Xenophon's dialogue. The dialogue is between the tyrant of Syracuse, Hiero, and Simonides, a poet who was reputed to be wise, hence a kind of poet-philosopher. Their discussion is first about the burdens of rulership and what the tyrant can do to make his rule more satisfactory to himself and to his subjects, thereby bringing himself and his subjects more happiness. But while the dialogue also is about the lessons a wise teacher may bring to a corrupt pupil, the advice is not given for the purpose of transforming Hiero into another kind of ruler or about transforming his regime into another kind of rule. Rather it is advice that is supposed to make him a 'better' tyrant, hence a happier or more satisfied tyrant, and in this way, a more virtuous tyrant. I say 'supposed', for we never learn if, indeed, Hiero becomes 'better', that is more satisfied or virtuous.

So the dialogue is about the relation of theory to practice, knowledge to virtue. The poet-philosopher thus acts as advisor to the young tyrant, thereby guiding his actions. And what kind of guidance does the wiseman offer the unhappy tyrant? The advice can be described as a combination of the pedestrian and abstract. The advice is pedestrian in that it would not take a wiseman to imagine that rewarding subjects for actions that increase the wealth and honour of the regime would both please (satisfy) and honour (recognize) them, and honour, and thereby please the tyrant. While recognizing subjects, and in turn having the subjects recognize the tyrant, may make both happier, this does not make either better. Thus happiness does not necessarily beget virtue. The advice is far from delivering the results it promises, thus it is abstract, or as we might say today, ideological or utopian. The real question is this: is there *any* advice pertaining to action that can keep its promises?

Strauss does not think so. He holds that there always must remain a distance between theory and practice, and furthermore, that this relation is a constant as is the fundamental nature of such practices as tyranny and virtue. Tyranny and virtue are particular manifestations of the political, which is a Western perception of a constant human experience. No tyrant can learn to be virtuous no matter who his teacher might be. There has not been and can not be a good tyranny. Yet this is not to say that for Strauss theory has no relation to practice, that there is nothing political about philosophy or anything philosophical about politics. For Strauss, politics is *always* philosophical and philosophy *always* political. Philosophers are human and humans live in cities and cities are communities that are held together by opinions that sooner or later will become threatened by philosophy. This is so because philosophers are sceptics and sceptics question everything including that which the city takes for granted and likely is to hold dear, if not sacred. This both explains why there must remain a gap between the philosopher and the city - theory and practice, philosophy and politics - and why the two must exist together in order for either to exist at all.

For Strauss, the gap between theory and practice is not permanently bridgeable. But, at least, for a few, it is *temporally* leappable. It is the rhetorician who teaches the few who are fit for philosophy to leap over this gap, and in doing so, gain limited insights into the relation of theory to practice. I do not refer to the rhetoric of those who are reputed to be wise such as Gorgias, but to the philosophical rhetoric employed by

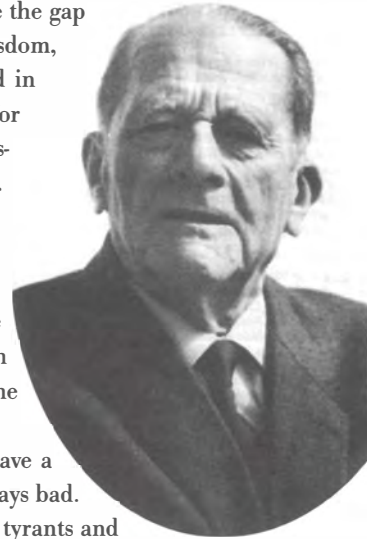
Socrates in the dialogue named for Gorgias himself. One learns from this non-reflective and self-satisfied Gorgias that his kind of rhetoric is used for the single purpose of increasing one's power. Socrates' philosophical rhetoric makes possible what becomes the classical understanding of politics. It begins there, but it does not end by bringing philosophy and politics together in such a way as to cancel their differences. Philosophical rhetoric begins with common sense observations, expressed as opinions. Thus philosophy itself begins with opinion, and, for a few, transcends the city and leads to a quest for wisdom. But the philosopher, because he is a man, never leaves the city for long, and it is to the city that always he must return. Thus the thinker and the actor remain forever apart. This is why philosophy is a love of wisdom. And we only love that which we do not possess. Thus the philosopher by definition can never possess wisdom, for if he does, his quest is over, and, like Gorgias, he becomes non-reflective and self-satisfied.

We concluded in the first part of this essay that for Kojève the history of man is also the progressive cancellation of the difference between thought and action. For Kojève the gap between philosophy and politics is bridged by Hegel. Hegel, is the possessor of wisdom, the wiseman, and after Hegel, the principles of the U. H. S. become elaborated in reality. But whereas Strauss and his classical approach employs the rhetorician for a limited form of transcendence, the gap between theory and practice, or philosophy and politics, is bridged, and the difference between them eradicated. According to Kojève, this is accomplished by the 'political intellectual'. But the political intellectual does not use rhetoric. He uses technology to replace deeds and propaganda to replace speech. Unlike the poet-philosopher, Simonides, the political intellectual both can account for his words and deliver his promises. He is a thinker-actor. Plato's Philosopher-King comes to mind, as does the twentieth century thinker who described the process of globalization before we invented the name, that architect of the EU, Alexander Kojève himself.

Let me repeat: for Strauss it is impossible to either be a good tyrant or to have a good tyranny. For Strauss and his classical perspective tyrants and tyranny are always bad. But this is not so for Kojève and his modern (Hegelian) perspective. Indeed, good tyrants and good tyrannies are possible. But the best and therefore final tyranny is the U.H.S.. It is good because in it everyone is (or can be transformed into) a free citizen. The citizen is free in the negative sense in that he is provided with at least the necessities of life. First, he is free from need, and sooner or later, from want. And he is free in the positive sense as well, in that each citizen is capable of realizing his potential. He is free to pursue the 'life-style' he wishes (provided he can pay for it). All choices are equal, thus the worth of each individual is honoured (recognized) equally. It is this freedom that makes these citizens of the U.H.S. happy, and for them happiness is virtue. Since there are no external standards such as the Good or God by which can be measured either the truthfulness of what we say or the virtue or wickedness of what we do, then both philosophy and politics are over. Thus the end of history is beyond good and evil. So the question becomes: what of man?

So now we will turn to Carl Schmitt. Schmitt was a jurist and political theorist who taught at the University of Berlin, joined the Nazi Party in 1933, and who, despite the fact that he later was denounced by the party, rightly has been associated with the Hitler regime in particular and with anti-liberal thinking in general. It is understandable why Schmitt's political theory largely had been ignored from the time of the allied victory until almost the last decade of the twentieth century.⁶

But not only does the passage of time erode prejudices, it seems that the great shifts in global politics that lead up to the collapse of the U.S.S.R., together with the eroding of the categories with which we, for so long, have attempted to make sense of political life, have cleared the way for the legitimation of interest in this "theorist of the Reich".⁷ The single best example of Schmitt's recent legitimation came in 1987 when



CARL SCHMITT

Telos, the long-standing premier English-language journal of the 'left', published an issue featuring the thought of this erstwhile arch-pariah of the 'right'. Since the beginning of the decade, like a great well of revelation pent up for half a century, mounting interest in Schmitt has burst forth giving buoyancy to theorists of whatever political stripe. The journals - especially the English-language ones - are inundated.⁸

Schmitt's early concerns are reflected in his works that first lay the ground for and then developed into a theme that would serve as the underpinning for his subsequent writings - the theme of sovereignty and his famous Friend/Enemy distinction - the base for the extension of his theory of sovereignty into a general theory of politics. The political fate that had befallen Germany between the wars, the humiliation of defeat, the economic woes and most of all the 'Weimar Imposition', was the experiential ground for the development of the theory. In his *Politische Romantik*, (Political Romanticism, 1919),⁹ Schmitt sought the roots of Germany's troubles in the nineteenth century with thinkers such as Shelling and Novalis. These thinkers Schmitt named "Aesthetic Romantics" who despised the modern world and sought to escape it by immersing the 'self' in the medieval or classical past. However, these Aesthetic Romantics were only interested in their private experience and were incapable of action. Alas, while the Aesthetic Romantic may experience a sovereignty of the self, this sovereignty was (is) a dead letter. It was (is) a self-indulgent, impotent and unmanly sovereignty. It was (is) personal, thereby private and anti-political.

To the Aesthetic Romantic, Schmitt juxtaposed the "Romantic Politician" who is not concerned with life as self-indulgent, effete poetry but with transforming life - through action - into a work of art. From the actions of the Romantic Politician is derived Schmitt's notion of 'decisionism', an idea based on the decisive exercise of the will resulting in genuine action that always entails risk and danger. 'Decisionism' becomes the cornerstone for Schmitt's theme of sovereignty,¹⁰ which, in turn, is the foundation for his concept of the political, and as we shall see, his theory of the political alters, to the extent of cancelling out, the difference between the thinker and the actor.

'Decisionism' also forms the basis for Schmitt's critique of liberalism which he saw as subverting action through incessant debate, compromise and its obsession with bureaucratic processes. The priviledging of economics, security, and procedural justice he saw as akin to Aesthetic Romanticism. It was but another instance of feminization, but worse, it was a systematic form of "neutralization and depolitization". For Schmitt, from a practical, ergo existential standpoint, the liberalism imposed on Germany during the Weimar years constituted a case of the 'exception', and thus was an 'emergency' requiring action.

This leads directly to Schmitt's general theory of politics. Reflecting on Hobbes state of nature, Schmitt locates the origin of sovereignty in politics and politics in "the possibility of combat"¹¹, or in the state of natural enmity or war. But unlike the fearful and solitary creature of Hobbes state of nature, Schmitt's creature recognizes danger (a fear that does not consume him, if you will,) and he looks for allies. He thereby joins a group and the groups divide into members and non-members - friends and enemies. When these friends and enemies glare at each other from across the creek, politics is born. With the birth of politics these creatures become "dangerous and dynamic".¹² They become human.

Strauss begins his critique by noting that by Schmitt's own admission Schmitt's theory, in being political is polemical. The polemics are directed at Schmitt's enemies, the greatest of which is liberalism, but under the bellicose words there is a deeper meaning. Thus Schmitt's theory - like any true theory - is about what he *meant* and what he *means*. Schmitt claims that there is no moral dimension to his theory, but Strauss argues that this is but the surface meaning, for if one interprets Schmitt correctly he will find that Schmitt is really concerned with the "order of human things".¹³ To make his claim clear Strauss attempts to show that man is "dangerous" because he has "a need of dominion"¹⁴. Because this will to dominate, in the modern transformed (Machiavellian) sense, is *virtu* as success, and in the classical sense, a vice and the basis of a tyrannical nature, Schmitt's philosophical anthropology, the cornerstone of all political philosophy, is really about morals. Strauss agrees with Schmitt that it is liberalism that most corrupts man

because, as Schmitt says, it “neutralizes and depoliticizes” man and the human world. In a word, liberalism attempts to make man a non-political animal, and in so doing, ‘man’ ceases to be human. Politics metamorphizes into technology. The human world becomes bereft of seriousness. It becomes a world of “entertainment”.¹⁵ But this ‘virtual world’ is only what we see on the surface, for in its interior, the obliteration of the difference between the public (politics) and private (economics) - acting and thinking - has vanished. Furthermore, Strauss claims that Schmitt’s theory not only contains a moral dimision, but that Schmitt fails to transcend the horizon of liberalism. So, at least for now, liberal speech is the only legitimate ‘discourse’. But for later? Strauss, in his 1932 critique, asked, “which men will rule the world-state?”¹⁶ And Kojève in a 1952 letter to Strauss answered the question:

*If the Westerners remain capitalists (that is also to say nationalists), they will be defeated by Russia, and that is how the End-State will come about. If, however, they “integrate” their economies and politics (they are now on the way of doing so) then they will defeat Russia. And that is how the End-State will be reached (the same Universal and Homogenous State) . But in the first case it will be spoken about in “Russian” ... and in the second case - in “European”.*¹⁷

Reading Strauss’ critique starkly reminds one that Schmitt was a student of Max Weber, for while there are major differences between him and his teacher, in the darkest corner of the heart of Schmitt’s theory is a profound concern about the ‘iron cage’ of technology and the ‘disenchantment of the world’. Schmitt’s political philosophy is, at least on the surface, an attack on liberalism or on the liberal state; but the deeper meaning is that Schmitt’s real enemy is the state that is everywhere, the World-State, the End-State, the U.H.S. Without this process of ‘globalization’ all this would be a fantasy. But it is technology that makes the process itself possible. Thus Schmitt’s theory - in its most profound depth - is about technology : technology, the new sovereign, the thing that authors the appearance of the ‘new’, and the only thing that we do not question. Thus, Schmitt’s gravest concern is about technology, this new authority.

Schmitt argued in *Political Theology* that “[a]ll significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts...”¹⁸. When putting Schmitt’s own political theory in this context one must conclude the following: that the End-State, World-State or U.H.S. is God, and since technology will save us by bringing us to God, then technology is the new Christ. But the new Christ is the Antichrist.

While the inference is clear, perhaps it is too clear. On the surface, the Antichrist (technology, like Christ, appears to be the Savior. In his essay, *The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations*, Schmitt makes a distinction between technology and “the spirit of technicity which has lead to a mass belief in an anti-religious activism“ He goes on to say that technicity is an “evil“ and “demonic“ spirit, and that “[t]he process of continuous neutralization of various spheres of cultural life has reached its end because technology is at hand.”¹⁹ He adds that technology no longer is neutral, and that the way we will eventually understand technology will depend on the appearance of a politics strong enough to master it. Thus Schmitt’s stance viz. technology is ambiguous, but so is technology - at least “provisionally“ it is . Technology is our destiny, but it also is our fate, and as we will see in part III, this ambiguity is a key to its meaning.

END NOTES

- 1) Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*: Including the Strauss, Kojève Correspondence, Victor Gourevitch and Michael Roth, edited (New York: Free Press, 1991)
- 2) Mark Lilla, *The Enemy of Liberalism in The New York Review of Books* (May, 15, 1997). Shortly before his death in Brussels in 1968, Kojève visited Schmitt, who Kojève said was “...the only person in Germany worth talking to.“ On this trip Kojève told a fawning group of students that if they really wanted to do something radical they should learn to read classical Greek.
- 3) Carl Schmitt, *On the Concept of the Political*: With Leo Strauss’ Notes on Schmitt’ s Essay, trans. and introduced by George Schwab, Foreword by Tracy B. Strong (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1996) On Schmitt’s anti-Semitism and ‘betrayal’ of Strauss see, Heinrich Meier, *Karl Schmitt and Leo Strauss:: The Hidden Dialogue: Including Strauss’ Notes On Schmitt’s*

On the Concept of the Political & Three Letters From Strauss to Schmitt, trans. by J. Harvey Lomax, Foreword by Joseph Cropsey (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995) see esp. p.81, pp.130- 131. Also for a differing opinion on the 'betrayal' and other matters discussed in Meier, see, *Heinrich Meier, Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und "Der Begriff des Politischen; Zu einem Dialog unter Abwesenden* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler Verlag, 1988), 139 pp. also see "Paul Gottfried, a review in *Telos*, 96 (summer, 1993), p.167, see esp. n30.

4) Globalization is a dynamic process that progressively makes manifest (concrete) the concept of the U.H.S., thereby transforming the given (human and non-human nature) into the made (artificial or virtual). Just as the condition that is the U.H.S. would be impossible without the process of globalization, globalization would be impossible without technology. Technology, its meaning and its relation to this process and condition are the main subjects for the forthcoming part III of this essay.

5) For the best general essay on Strauss, his position concerning such matters as the relation of politics to philosophy - action to theory - and how Strauss' approach is 'classical', yet confronts modernity, see Allan Bloom, *Leo Strauss: September 20, 1899 - October 18, 1973* in Giants and Dwarfs: Essays 1960 - 1990 (Toronto: Simon and Schuster, 1990), pp. 235-254.

6) The most notable exception is the Frankfurt School in general, but in particular, Walter Benjamin. See Ellen Kennedy's essay that began a controversy over this matter, in *Telos*, 71, (spring 1987). After having abandoned Marx for Nietzsche in the years following 1968, the 'left' now has forsaken Nietzsche for Schmitt. Although there is much here to which one may take issue, for the best example of this kind of appropriation, see John McCormick's well researched and most illuminating book, Karl Schmitt's Critique of Liberalism: Against Politics and Technology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

7) I refer to the earliest major source on Schmitt to have appeared in English. See Joseph Bendersky, Karl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983) This is an 'intellectual biography' of Schmitt. It also is an apology in the most commonly used sense of the term.

For a thorough account of the great number of articles on Schmitt appearing in *Telos* and other Journals, together with major works published since Bendersky's work, see John McCormick, note 6. McCormick also mentions that the greatest interest in Schmitt has been expressed by those associated with what he calls the "New Left". Remembering, that I heard this term over twenty-five years ago, we must ask the following: Is the 'New-Left' constituted by the same people who called themselves the 'New Left' then? The answer is both 'no' and 'yes'. While some are the same, all are 'newer'. Some of the 'New Left' just cannot let go and others are trying to adjust. Whatever the case, this is the fact: Our conceptual apparatus, and thereby our political vocabulary, has become uprooted from the experiential ground, leaving us with an inability to make the kind of distinctions necessary for explaining our experience. And, in the case of 'right and left', that ground is the French Revolution. How can this or any other revolution serve as an experiential ground when the 'Age of Revolution' is over? It seems that when it is over all one can do is to *play* it over. This may help to explain why in 1993, *Telos* devoted an entire issue to Fascism, with articles by neo-fascist writers such as Alan de Benoit. This 're-cycling' is the comic moment of a civilization stuck under its own horizon. At the end of history there is nothing *new*, merely combinations and permutations of the same.

9) Carl Schmitt, Political Romanticism, trans. by Guy Okes (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985). pp. 31-33, pp. 57-56, pp. 112-113.

10) Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty, trans. by George Schwab (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985) "Sovereign is he who decides on the exception." p.5.

11) Carl Schmitt, On the Concept of the Political, trans. by George Schwab, foreword by Tracy B. Strong (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 1996), p 35. Tracy B. Strong's *Foreword: Dimensions of the New Debate around Carl Schmitt* is an excellent general source.

13) Leo Strauss' Notes in On the Concept of the Political, p.104

12) Carl Schmitt, op. cit., p.36

14) Leo Strauss' Notes, pp. 98-100.

15) On the Concept of the Political, p.53., and comments from Strauss' notes, p.101. For 'neutralization and depolitization' see, Carl Schmitt, *The Age of Neutralizations and Depolitizations* (1929), trans. by John McCormick, in *Telos*, 96 (summer, 1993), pp. 119-130

16) On the Concept of the Political, p.98

17) On Tyranny, p.256

18) Carl Schmitt, Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty, p. 36

19) Carl Schmitt, *The Age of Neutralizations and Depolitizations*, p. 141.