

**Alexandre Kojève and his Quest to Actualize  
the ‘Universal and Homogenous State’:  
A Theory of *Droit* and its Application at the ‘End of History’**

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*This thesis is dedicated to Rebeka Bojboi and Professor Elizabeth Blackmar,  
who encouraged me to bring this project to completion when I considered abandoning it.*

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## Introduction

*“Human life is a comedy; one must play it seriously.”* — Alexandre Kojève<sup>1</sup>

The story of Alexandre Kojève is as dazzling as it is perplexing. Often ranked among the most influential philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he also helped to shape the post-World War II multilateral world order as a powerful bureaucrat and formidable negotiator within the French government. Despite his prominence in both academia and administration, his life and the relationship between his philosophy and political involvement remain shrouded in mystery. After Kojève’s death, his long-time friend and superior Robert Marjolin admitted: “I do not know who he really was.”<sup>2</sup> Similarly close associate Raymond Aron mused that Kojève may have been a “Stalinist,” while Olivier Wormser considered him a “man of the right.”<sup>3</sup> His colleague Raymond Barre described him as “elegant in appearance with an indisputable Slavic charm, a penetrating look behind narrowed eyes, and a certain taste for provocation.”<sup>4</sup> This thesis attempts to answer the question of who Kojève *really was*, what was lurking behind those ‘narrowed eyes,’ and implications for how we might understand the global post-war order.

Born in Russia in 1902, Kojève arrived in Europe in 1920 among hundreds of thousands of Russians fleeing the aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution. He studied at the Universities of Berlin and Heidelberg and received a PhD before moving to Paris in 1927. After the 1929 economic crash bankrupted him, a well-placed connection secured him a teaching position at the

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Barre, “Le conseiller du prince,” in *Hommage à Alexandre Kojève Actes de la « Journée A. Kojève » du 28 janvier 2003*, ed. Florence Lussy (Paris, France: Bibliothèque nationale de France), 64.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity: Memoirs 1911-1986*, trans. William Hall (London, England: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989), 52.

<sup>3</sup> Raymond Aron, *Memoirs*, trans. George Holloch (New York, New York: Holmes and Meier), 66.; Olivier Wormser. “Mon ami Alexandre Kojève,” *Commentaire* 1, no. 9 (Spring 1980): 120.

<sup>4</sup> Barre, “Le conseiller du prince,” 58.

*École Pratique des Hautes Études*, where he became renowned for his expertise and novel interpretation of the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel. During the 1930s, many of France's brightest students of the time, including Georges Bataille, André Breton, and Jacques Lacan coalesced around Kojève and formed a cadre of budding academic superstars. After World War II, he utilized this network to secure a civil service position at France's *Direction des Relations Économiques Extérieures* [Department of External Economic Relations] (DREE). Kojève quickly ingratiated himself with his superiors and by the 1950s, became a close advisor to some of France's leading diplomats and political leaders. This privileged position allowed him to influence policy on pivotal issues of multilateral diplomacy, including European integration, decolonization, and regimes of international trade.

This thesis begins by summarizing Alexandre Kojève's life and career before joining the French administrative state as well as analyzing key concepts in his philosophy and their implications for his metapolitical theory and action. It assembles and critically assesses testimony from Kojève's fellow civil servants to establish the nature and degree of his involvement at the DREE. Crucially, it employs a close reading of archived notes and memoranda he drafted to examine how his metapolitical theories influenced his advice to French policymakers and activity as a negotiator during the 1958 to 1968 spell. It furthermore contextualizes Kojève's ideology and involvement amid the period's key events and trends.

Expanding on existing scholarship, this thesis argues that Kojève's philosophical beliefs motivated his decision to trade the Sorbonne for the Quai Branly.<sup>5</sup> More specifically, his reading of Hegel led him to conclude that it was the duty of 'the philosopher' to participate actively in History by entering the machinery of power and influencing 'the tyrant.' His goal was to bring

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<sup>5</sup> "The Sorbonne" is a metonymic nickname for the pre-1970 University of Paris.;

"The Quai Branly" is a metonymic nickname for the former Ministry for the National Economy of France.

about the ‘End of History,’ which for him entailed an immanent ‘universal and homogenous state’ that erased all differences and conflicts. Achieving this state of universal recognition demanded the realization of a principle of absolute justice, or *Droit*, which a similarly universal and homogenous supranational order would enforce. To this end, Kojève developed a theory of ‘Giving Colonialism,’ which entailed instigating global economic integration under international law to eliminate material inequality and political division on Earth.

This thesis postulates that Kojève employed his position of influence over French diplomacy to advance and actualize his ideology through DREE action on issues of international trade, regionalization, and development finance. It recognizes that while Kojève arguably enjoyed some manner of direct success in terms of European integration, his attempt to bring about the ‘universal and homogenous state’ through globalist multilateral institutionalism was largely fruitless. Nonetheless, this thesis posits that ‘Giving Colonialism’ should be recognized as a Kojèvean doctrine of international law tailored to the post-historical era. Finally, it contends that while his *praxis* may have fallen flat, Kojève’s story suggests that philosophical and ideological motivations (beyond geopolitical, strategic, or economic) potentially shaped significant aspects of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century globalism’s establishment.

### **Historiography**

*“The acting or hesitating philosopher is a theatrical figure...  
Alexandre Kojève surely is such a dramatis persona.”* — Cristophe Kletzer<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Cristophe Kletzer, “Alexandre Kojève’s Hegelianism and the Formation of Europe,” in *The Cambridge Yearbook of European Legal Studies*, ed. John Bell and Catherine Barnard (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 133.

Alexandre Kojève is primarily remembered today for his contribution and output as a philosopher of extraordinary brilliance. However, academics in philosophy, political science, and history have devoted a degree of attention to the relationship between Kojève's neo-Hegelianism and the ideological and technical development of mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century French foreign policy. Nevertheless, this inquiry has been largely theoretical in nature and more concerned with questions of political science than history.

The most substantial work to cover the life and work of Alexandre Kojève beyond the level of pure philosophy is the 1990 biography *Alexandre Kojève : La philosophie, l'État, la fin de l'Histoire* [*Alexandre Kojève: The Philosophy, The State, The End of History*] by historian of philosophy Dominique Auffret. This work trod the line between an intellectual and personal biography. Its "Part II" examined Kojève's career in the French civil service as an advisor, negotiator, and diplomat.<sup>7</sup> In this section, Auffret investigated the broad spectrum of issues Kojève covered, namely European integration, international trade, and post-colonial relationships with the developing world. In summation of his analysis, Auffret wrote that "Kojève played an unusual, not to say 'strange' role in French affairs during this period" through which he "contributed to shaping, with others, the world as we know it."<sup>8</sup> While informative, Auffret's survey leaves much to be desired. His archival analysis was incomplete and relatively cursory, particularly pertaining to the latter half of Kojève's administrative career. He admitted that "to fully understand Kojève's action in the French administration between 1945 and 1968, specialized and comparative studies in the different simultaneous fields of his intervention would be necessary."<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Dominique Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève : La Philosophie, l'État, la fin de l'Histoire*. (Paris, France: Bernard Grasset, 1990), 290-356.

<sup>8</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 290.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Beyond Auffret, the intellectual study of Kojève's thought and its relationship to politics mostly emerged around the turn of the millennium.<sup>10</sup> In 1994, political scientist Shadia Drury published the book *Alexandre Kojève: The Roots of Postmodern Politics*. This work linked Kojève's Hegelian thought to that of Georges Bataille, Michel Foucault, and Francis Fukuyama though presented little in terms of concrete impact.<sup>11</sup> In 2006, jurist Christophe Kletzer published an article on "Alexandre Kojève's Hegelianism and the Formation of Europe." Though he mostly dealt with more abstract intellectual genealogy, Kletzer concluded that "Kojève's influence as a bureaucrat on the formation of Europe is mostly exaggerated" and that "where he really had a say was... in the negotiation of international economic relations."<sup>12</sup>

Ten years after Kletzer, political scientist Mark Lilla published *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics*, which devoted a chapter to Kojève and his political influence during the early years of European integration. However, this analysis remained mostly on the intellectual level. It surmised that the case for Kojève's "direct role" as an advisor and political actor "appears particularly convincing" vis-à-vis "the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the signing of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)."<sup>13</sup> In 2014, historian of philosophy Hager Weslati published an article on "Kojève's Letter to Stalin." This piece examined the political implications of his philosophy through the lens of letters he drafted to Josef Stalin, Charles de Gaulle, and other political leaders.<sup>14</sup> In 2017, political scientists Walter Rech and Janis Grzybowski published "Between Regional Community

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<sup>10</sup> This is likely due to the 1992 publication of the international bestseller *The End of History and the Last Man* by Francis Fukuyama, which leaned heavily on Kojève's philosophy. The publication of Auffret's biography around the same time may have also factored into the growth in interest around that time.

<sup>11</sup> Shadia Drury, *Alexandre Kojève: The Roots of Postmodern Politics* (New York, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Kletzer, "Alexandre Kojève's Hegelianism and the Formation of Europe," 151.

<sup>13</sup> Mark Lilla, "Alexandre Kojève" in *The Reckless Mind: Intellectuals in Politics*, by Mark Lilla (New York, New York: New York Review of Books, 2016), 108.

<sup>14</sup> Hager Weslati, "Kojève's Letter to Stalin," *Radical Philosophy* 184 (March and April 2014): 8-15.

and Global Society: Europe in the Shadow of Schmitt and Kojève.” This article focused on the intellectual relationship between Alexandre Kojève, Carl Schmitt, and the ideological foundations of European integration. It remarked (though did not elaborate on) Kojève’s conviction “in the possibility of increasing economic development beyond Europe and the West,... a fairer treatment of third world countries,... [and] the dissolution of political boundaries in favor of societal cooperation.”<sup>15</sup>

Besides being more theoretical, works covering Kojèvean political thought generally concentrate on his 1945 letter to Charles de Gaulle, his 1950 essay “The Political Action of Philosophers,” and more abstract neo-Hegelian philosophy. They also limit themselves to the sphere of European political action rather than examine the ramifications of Kojève’s thought and action apropos globalist multilateral institutionalism. Aside from Auffret, the relationship between Kojève’s thought and political action concerning the French state’s post-colonial strategy received little more than a passing mention in these works. Action in this area is closely related to important issues such as international trade, development economics, and the creation of regional blocs outside of Europe. This thesis attempts to demonstrate the importance of considering Kojève’s interest and impact beyond the European continent.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Walter Rech and Janis Grzybowski, “Between regional community and global society: Europe in the shadow of Schmitt and Kojève.” *Journal of International Political Theory* 13, no. 2 (2017): 149.

<sup>16</sup> Additional authors have published more exclusively philosophical major analyses and histories of Kojève’s thought, including: Roger F. Devlin’s *Alexandre Kojève and the Outcome of Modern Thought* (2004), Marco Filoni’s *Il filosofo della domenica: la vita e pensiero di Alexandre Kojève* [*The Sunday Philosopher: The Philosophy and Life of Alexandre Kojève*] (2008), James H. Nichols’ *Alexandre Kojève: Wisdom at the End of History* (2014), and Jeff Love’s *The Black Circle: A Life of Alexandre Kojève* (2018), among others.

## ‘The Philosopher’: Kojève’s Intellectual Years

“*The philosophic science of Right has as its object the Idea of Right, i.e., the conception of Right and the realization of that conception.*” — G. W. F. Hegel<sup>17</sup>

Aleksandr Vladimirovich Kojevnikov was born on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1902 in Moscow.<sup>18</sup> His father, Vladimir Kojevnikov, was a wealthy merchant, though Kojève was orphaned when his mother and father died in 1904 and 1905, respectively.<sup>19</sup> He was raised in the household of his uncle, the painter Wassily Kandinsky, and schooled at the well-regarded *Lycée Medvednikov* until 1917.<sup>20</sup> Amid the chaos of the Russian Revolution, the Bolshevik authorities arrested and imprisoned Kojève in 1918, despite his lack of political involvement.<sup>21</sup> Disturbed by the experience and seeking a university education abroad, he left for Berlin in 1920.<sup>22</sup> Kojève bounced between the Universities of Berlin and Heidelberg during the early 1920s but was able to dive deeply into the study of Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger.<sup>23</sup> In 1926, completed his doctoral dissertation on ‘The Religious Philosophy of Vladimir Soloviev’ under German philosopher Karl Jaspers, successfully defended it, and left for Paris almost immediately afterward.<sup>24</sup>

Kojève’s first three years in the French capital consisted of leisurely post-doctorate study at the Sorbonne.<sup>25</sup> However, the 1929 economic crash and poor financial decisions turned his life from one of comfort to bankruptcy by 1930.<sup>26</sup> Desperate and distraught, he caught a lucky break

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<sup>17</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. 1896. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. Samuel W. Dyde (London, England: G. Bell & Sons, 1896), 1.

<sup>18</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 39.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-2.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 68-75.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-162.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

when fellow Russian émigré and philosopher Alexandre Koyré referred him to lead a seminar on Hegelian philosophy at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*.<sup>27</sup> It was these lectures that turned Alexandre Kojève from a relative unknown in the milieu of Continental European philosophy to a legend upon their conclusion in 1938.<sup>28</sup> With around twenty students, he undertook a line-by-line commentary on Hegel's masterwork, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. The seminar attracted many of France's brightest students of the time, including Georges Bataille, André Breton, Jean Hyppolite, Jacques Lacan, Éric Weil, Robert Marjolin, Raymond Aron, and Raymond Queneau.<sup>29</sup> The latter among these transcribed the content of these lectures, which were eventually published as the *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*.

In *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel presented "History" as a dialectical process in which human consciousness progresses toward self-awareness and freedom. At one point in the text, he conceptualized this process through the lens of a dialectical relationship between "Master" and "Slave," in which individuals struggle for recognition and self-consciousness.<sup>30</sup> For Hegel, "self-consciousness... exists only in being acknowledged."<sup>31</sup> This ongoing struggle eventually resolves at the "End of History," at which point "Spirit" attains ultimate self-awareness, and thus freedom.<sup>32</sup> The Master-Slave dialectic is thus a crucial element of the historical process, as it leads to the recognition of the individual as an independent and free agent and spiritual progression toward absolute self-knowledge and freedom.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 157.

<sup>28</sup> Kletzer, "Kojève's Hegelianism and the Formation of Europe," 132.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. M. J. Inwood (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2018), 6-7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 110-9.

In his seminars at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* did not so much illuminate Hegel's thought as forward his own reinterpretation, centered around Hegel's dialectic of 'Master' and 'Slave.' Whereas Hegel saw History as the process of spiritual progression toward absolute self-knowledge and freedom, Kojève conceptualized it as the dialectical struggle for "recognition" between 'Master' and 'Slave.'<sup>34</sup> Partially drawing on Marx's reading of Hegel, he grounded his philosophical understanding of History in materialist terms and infused it with a framework of class struggle. For Kojève, "all of History... [was] nothing but the progressive negation of Slavery by the Slave, the series of his successive 'conversions' to Freedom."<sup>35</sup> In this framework, the 'End of History' represented not a state of Spirit's absolute self-awareness, but man's reclamation of the idea of God for himself at the finitude of dialectical progression, brought on by the 'Slave's' work. For Kojève, this meant the realization of "a Universal that is immanent in the World" — a "universal and homogeneous State," in which all differences and conflicts have been erased.<sup>36</sup>

Kojève perceived History as being driven forward by 'Desire,' that it was man's pursuit to realize his desires that drove struggle between men. Following from this, man would cease to negate and transform Being through struggle at the 'End of History' because at that point, his "Desire" for recognition had been fully realized and "satisfied."<sup>37</sup> For Kojève, the universal posthistorical state was one in which "the strictly particular, personal, individual value of each is recognized as such" through the "synthesis of Particularity and Universality."<sup>38</sup> Thus, the 'End of History' was "only possible after the 'suppression' of the opposition between Master and Slave,"

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<sup>34</sup> Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. James H. Nichols, Jr., ed. Allan Bloom (New York, New York: Basic Books Publishers, 1969), 53-5.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-9.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 58, 191.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

and material and spiritual equality between them.<sup>39</sup> For Kojève, it would be through this that all men would become truly “free.”<sup>40</sup>

Kojève honed his approach to thought and action appears as World War II plunged Europe into chaos. Between 1939 and 1945, his philosophy became more concerned with concepts of law and authority and Kojève pivoted toward direct political participation. This was likely the result of the immediacy of ‘the political’ engendered by the events of World War II, as well as his growing comprehension of the ‘End of History’ as a philosophical reality. In 1941, Kojève crossed the demarcation line between German-occupied France and that controlled by the Vichy regime.<sup>41</sup> In 1943, his former student Éric Weil connected him to the French Resistance, which he assisted by distributing documents and infiltrating enemy lines across Southern France.<sup>42</sup>

Kojève’s turn toward ‘action’ likewise came in the form of his written production during the war, in which his “understanding of a practical philosophy shifted from a Phenomenology of Spirit to a Phenomenology of Right.”<sup>43</sup> In fact, he wrote this latter work in 1943 while lodging at Weil’s home.<sup>44</sup> The *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right* can be thought of as a synthesis of the philosophy of justice extolled by Hegel in the *Philosophy of Right*, the German legal philosopher Carl Schmitt’s *Concept of the Political*, and Kojève’s own theories on the ‘End of History’ to the domains of law, authority, and statecraft. For Hegel, “the state is the march of God on Earth,” insofar as it represents the highest expression of human rationality and embodies the will of the collective community.<sup>45</sup> He saw the State as divine and transcendent, meant to guide humanity

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<sup>39</sup> Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 58-9.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 67-9.

<sup>41</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 270.

<sup>42</sup> Weslati, “Kojève’s Letter to Stalin,” 12.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>44</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 27.

<sup>45</sup> Hegel, *Hegel’s The Philosophy of Right*, 22.

towards its ultimate destiny. Schmitt, on the other hand, believed that “the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, politics could be conceived as a dualistic struggle within this paradigm, based on moral or legal criteria, but rather on the perception of a shared threat or danger that requires the mobilization of collective action.

Kojève synthesized these Hegelian and Schmittian conceptions with his own in *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right* by emphasizing the role of recognition in the formation of the political community and a universal theory of justice. Like Schmitt, Kojève saw “the political” as a fundamental distinction between friend and enemy, but he went beyond Schmitt by arguing that this distinction is based on the desire for recognition.<sup>47</sup> Kojève likewise accepted Hegel's analysis of the state and law, seeing in it potential to embody and realize universal recognition. Kojève termed this universal principle of justice as “Absolute *Droit*,” the culmination of the “dialectic of relative *Droits*” that emerged in the “universal and homogenous state” at the “End of History.”<sup>48</sup> This universal principle of justice would necessarily synthesize “political and social equality” with “equivalence.”<sup>49</sup> This understanding, therefore, merged ‘equality under the law’ with reciprocity of rights, duties, contributions, and benefits, and “eliminat[ing] the inequality of the participants.”<sup>50</sup>

More granularly, Kojève contrasted ‘the political’ with ‘the juridical,’ relating the latter category to a universal principle of justice.<sup>51</sup> However, the possibility of universal agreement on

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<sup>46</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 26-9.

<sup>47</sup> Alexandre Kojève, *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right*, trans. Bryan-Paul Frost and Robert Howse (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 42-5.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 92, 266-9.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 266-9.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 85-7, 297, 327-28.

the proper sphere of the juridical (through *Droit*) rendered likewise possible universal agreement on the proper sphere of the “political.”<sup>52</sup> For Kojève, ultimate recognition would remove the rationale for war and struggle. It likewise enabled supranational constitutionalism whereby a disinterested and impartial “third” to enforces law “between those entities that have hitherto been called states.”<sup>53</sup> Thus, agreement about the “political” meant the end of the political: the elimination of the friend-enemy struggle between and within sovereign states.<sup>54</sup> The universal state would preserve the fundamental friend-enemy distinction inherent to ‘the political’ by internalizing it. His position was that *Droit* could only be rendered “real in actuality in the universal and homogenous state.”<sup>55</sup>

While a framework class struggle was latent in his interpretation of Hegel, Kojève’s relationship to political class struggle, namely communism, was confounding and indeterminate. Many of the notable attendees at his 1930s lectures at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*, were avowed communists, including Georges Bataille, André Breton, and Raymond Queneau.<sup>56</sup> Others, like Raymond Aron, were quite the contrary.<sup>57</sup> He recalled in his *Memoirs* “in 1938 or 1939, [Kojève] declared himself a ‘strict Stalinist’.”<sup>58</sup> In fact, Kojève penned a letter to Stalin in 1941, which according to historian Hager Weslati, contained a “dialectical introduction to philosophy drawing on the structure of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as Kojève himself reorganized it in light of Marxism–Leninism–Stalinism.”<sup>59</sup> It argued for revolutionary action to unify the “realized consciousness of the ‘man of action’ with the revealed self-consciousness of

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<sup>52</sup> Kojève, *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right*, 325.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 323-5.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>56</sup> Frédéric Bozo, *The French Communist Party in the Cold War: From the Liberation to the Warsaw Pact*, trans. Paul C. Mutter, (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2020), 43-4.

<sup>57</sup> Aron, *Memoirs*, 91.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>59</sup> Weslati, “Kojève’s Letter to Stalin,” 8-12.

‘discursive wisdom,’ that is: the ‘tyrant’ with the ‘philosopher’.”<sup>60</sup> The earnestness of Kojève’s ‘Stalinism’ is rather doubtful. Kojève envisioned Stalin as a “world-historical figure” capable of actualizing the ‘End of History.’ Whatever attachment he had was to the figure of Stalin as a personage of the ‘tyrant,’ but not the ideology of *Stalinism*.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, Aron interpreted his comments and action vis-à-vis Stalin as facetious in nature, with any seriousness to it having been abandoned by the end of World War II, at which point Kojève “served the French nation... with unshakable loyalty.”<sup>62</sup>

Despite Aron’s confidence in Kojève’s loyalty to the French state, his pre-war views and relationships raise questions about the extent that leftist or class struggle ideology influenced his views and action as a civil servant. While the French resistance to German occupation was a largely communist movement, Kojève appears to have abandoned any personal connection to the political left while a civil servant. François Valéry was the Director of the Economic Cooperation Section of the Ministry of Finance and Kojève’s friend while they served as bureaucrats. In his view, Kojève “was not a rightist but... certainly not a leftist.” Valéry assessed Kojève’s ideology as an indecipherable “mystery,” a confusion that matches the mix of takeaways from Aron, Marjolin, and Wormser.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, Valéry conceded that Kojève “had a certain number of genes in his hereditary system which should perhaps have carried him towards... the left.”<sup>64</sup> Indeed, his quasi-millenarian goal of a ‘universal and homogenous state’ spanning the Earth in which differences between class and nation are erased seems rather leftist or communistic. Kojève was far from an ‘orthodox Marxist,’ but ultimately shared a similar

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<sup>60</sup> Weslati, “Kojève’s Letter to Stalin,” 8-12

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>62</sup> Aron, *Memoirs*, 66.

<sup>63</sup> François Valéry, “Alexandre Kojève : Une vie, une œuvre,” interview by Jean Daive, *France Culture*, Radio France, November 10, 1990, audio, 35:00-39:00., [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQN5u8tTAA0&ab\\_channel=Maymyam](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQN5u8tTAA0&ab_channel=Maymyam)

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

vision. This vision would permeate into his more concrete political activity as a civil servant within the French government, even if he eschewed direct relationships with the political left after World War II.

As World War II concluded, Kojève looked toward the future and the fertile ground for political action it presented. In 1945, he penned a letter to Charles de Gaulle, then Chairman of the Provisional Government of Free France, entitled “Esquisse d’une doctrine de la politique française [The Latin Empire: Outline of a Doctrine of French Policy].”<sup>65</sup> This memo situated France at the ‘End of History’ and concretely proposed how its fledgling government should navigate this budding historical situation. For Kojève, the issues of “vital importance” facing French foreign policy were maintaining “effective neutrality amid an eventual war between the Russians and the Anglo-Saxons” and “economic and political supremacy over Germany in non-Soviet Europe.”<sup>66</sup> The memorandum proclaimed that “political reality [was] deserting Nations and moving on to Humanity itself,” but that it was “impossible to jump from the Nation to Humanity without going via Empire,” in other words, “union[s] of affiliated nations.”<sup>67</sup>

To these ends, Kojève put forth “the idea of the Latin Empire,” a hypothetical union between France, Spain, and Italy on the basis of “kinship of language, civilization, [and] general mentality”<sup>68</sup> He envisioned his ‘Latin Empire’ as “a real and effective political unity” which should come about through “real economic unity.”<sup>69</sup> This entailed “pooling colonial resources,” a consolidated agricultural and natural resources policy, “a rational distribution between participants of the costs imposed by political or military security and, . . . a common customs

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<sup>65</sup> Alexandre Kojève, “Outline of a doctrine of French Policy,” ed. Robert Howse, trans. Erik De Vries, *Articles*, Hoover Institution, 1 Aug. 2004, <https://www.hoover.org/research/outline-doctrine-french-policy>.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, I.2-II.1.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, I.1.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, III.1.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, III.2.

policy.”<sup>70</sup> This arrangement would enable France’s economic, political, and demographic status to exceed its size limitations and propel the country to “great stature.”<sup>71</sup> In terms of global geopolitics, the ‘Latin Empire’ would anchor Western Europe as a tertiary pole of attraction between the US and USSR, helping to secure sovereignty and peace.

Kojève was not the first to forward the idea of a ‘Latin Empire.’ In 1927, Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini proposed the “Blocco Latino,” a political union based on shared culture and history between Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal. The plan enjoyed some positive reception across the four countries. During World War II, Mussolini, along with Spain's Caudillo Francisco Franco and Vichy France’s head of state Philippe Pétain negotiated regarding the proposal, though failed to attain any concrete results. Given the influence he had on the *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right*, it is also possible that Schmitt’s concept of the ‘*Großraum*’ or ‘great-space’ (which he popularized during the 1930s) influenced Kojève’s thought. The ‘*Großraum*’ is essentially a regional sphere of influence that goes beyond a single state or territory to encompass much larger scale spatial orderings, complexes, and arrangements (often economic).<sup>72</sup> Kojève never credited Mussolini, Schmitt, or anyone else with inspiring his conception of the ‘Latin Empire,’ which makes affirming direct influence impossible.

Regardless, Kojève took the idea of the ‘Latin Empire’ and injected it into his theory of the progression of History. In his mind, the future would be contested by “transnational political units” and the ‘Latin Empire’ would be one of these many regional unification projects covering progressively larger territories.<sup>73</sup> Eventually, this progression from national to regional polity would yield to the post-historical universal state covering the entire globe. In this sense, Kojève

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<sup>70</sup> Kojève, “Outline of a doctrine of French Policy,” III.2.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., III.3.

<sup>72</sup> Stuart Elden, “Reading Schmitt Geopolitically,” *Radical Philosophy* 151, no. 2, (March and April 2008): 18-20.

<sup>73</sup> Kojève, “Outline of a doctrine of French Policy,” III.1.

advised French political leaders as early as 1945 to transcend the boundaries of the nation-state and establish a form of universal *Droit*-driven ‘equivalence.’ In a sense, the “Latin Empire...” letter prefigured the themes that would animate his bureaucratic career.

1945 represented a clear turning point in Kojève’s orientation from a philosopher to a civil servant and his philosophical output and engagement declined significantly from that point onward. Nevertheless, he authored several works after World War II that further expounded upon themes and conceptions of political action. Among these are two essays, the 1946 “*Hegel, Marx et le Christianisme* [Hegel, Marx, and Christianity]” and the 1950 “The Political Action of Philosophers.” In the former, he returned to his view that “History is the history of bloody fights [between Masters and Slaves] for pure prestige carried on with a view to universal recognition.”<sup>74</sup> He furthermore clarified his conception of the universal State at the ‘End of History’ as a “classless society comprising the whole of humanity.”<sup>75</sup> Kojève also declared that “Man in his objective reality is Action,” and while this is meant in more philosophical terms, later on in the essay he suggested a more literal application.<sup>76</sup>

Kojève outlined his views on the role of philosophy and the philosopher in terms of history and statecraft in ‘The Political Action of Philosophers.’ He authored this essay as a response to his friend Leo Strauss’ 1948 work ‘Xenophon: *Hiero* or *Tyrannicus*.’ Kojève rejected Strauss’ position that the philosopher ought to remain isolated from and unfettered by the contemporary political issues and events of his age. Instead, he suggested that the philosopher enjoys many “advantages... when it comes to governing,” particularly when ““structural

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<sup>74</sup> Alexandre Kojève, “Hegel, Marx and Christianity,” trans. Hilail Gildin, *Interpretation* 1 (Summer 1970): 33.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

reforms' or 'revolutionary action' are objectively possible and hence necessary."<sup>77</sup> He wrote that "in order to reveal Being, the philosopher must... 'participate' in history" and become a "man of action."<sup>78</sup> Later in "Tyranny and Wisdom," Kojève characterized Alexander the Great as the paradigmatic statesman whose 'action' was "guided by the idea of empire, that is to say of a universal State."<sup>79</sup> Kojève formulated the idea of the "universal state" as a yet "never attained" lodestar of political History.<sup>80</sup> As such, the "universal and homogenous State" remained the "political goal" for 'men of action' in the contemporary age.<sup>81</sup>

Kojève conceived of Being and History as a participatory process, by which men "work" to resolve latent contradictions through philosophy, a kind of self-cognition whose endpoint is the realization of Freedom. His philosophical views contained a defined apotheosis: the 'End of History,' the state of universal recognition in which the categories of 'Master' and 'Slave' are neutralized, and a stateless, classless society spans the entire world. For Kojève, the battle on both the planes of the ideal and the material was still ongoing, with the fate of the world hanging in the balance. Thus, there are clear reasons why a man like Alexandre Kojève felt the existential need to enact them through a career in the French civil service and participation in the enactment of post-World War II globalist multilateral institutionalism.

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<sup>77</sup> Alexandre Kojève, "Tyranny and Wisdom," in *On Tyranny*, by Leo Strauss and Alexandre Kojève, ed. Victor Gourevitch and Michael S. Roth (New York, New York: The Free Press, 1991), 148-9.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 148-52.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-70.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 171-3.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

## The ‘Man of Action’: Kojève’s Entry into the Administrative State

“Kojève was the Arthur Rimbaud of modern bureaucracy: a philosophical writer who consciously became a martyr of the post-historical bureaucratic order.” — Boris Groys<sup>82</sup>

After neither de Gaulle nor anyone else in the French government responded to his “Latin Empire...” letter, Alexandre Kojève adopted a novel strategy: inserting his ideological aims into History through direct political action. France’s enormous project of rebuilding itself after World War II demanded reconstituting the Fourth Republic and aggressively assembling a new corps of civil servants to staff it.<sup>83</sup> Administrators for the nascent bureaucracy were largely drawn from the Free French government-in-exile during the war like Robert Marjolin, who served as its economic ambassador to the United States.<sup>84</sup> When the French Fourth Republic returned to Paris in 1945, he was appointed the Director of the Department of External Economic Relations (DREE) within the Ministry of the National Economy and Finance.<sup>85</sup>

Marjolin was a friend and admirer of Kojève’s. They met after Marjolin became a regular attendee at Kojève’s Hegel seminars at the Sorbonne in 1938.<sup>86</sup> According to Marjolin’s memoirs, Kojève visited him in 1945 and said that “he wanted to get into the civil service.”<sup>87</sup> In Raymond Aron’s assessment, Kojève “decided that he wanted to know how history happened,... he wanted to advise a tyrant, to exercise influence over the visible actors from the shadows.”<sup>88</sup> Marjolin initially hired Kojève as a translator due to his knowledge of Russian, German, and

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<sup>82</sup> Boris Groys, “Romantic Bureaucracy: Alexandre Kojève’s post-historical wisdom,” *Radical Philosophy* 196 (March and April 2016): 38.

<sup>83</sup> Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity*, 134-5.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-19.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> Aron, *Memoirs*, 67.

English.<sup>89</sup> In 1948, his intellect, personability, and panache earned Kojève a promotion to a *chargé de mission* post at the DREE.<sup>90</sup> This was a “special role” that placed him in an ambiguous advisory and negotiation capacity “independent of the hierarchy.”<sup>91</sup> Kojève would retain this status until he died in 1968.<sup>92</sup>

The organizational structure of the Ministry for the National Economy and Finance was such that the DREE wielded relatively broad and unrestricted control over French foreign trade policy during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>93</sup> Despite being nestled within the larger ministry, the DREE directly appointed France’s permanent representative to the Trade Committee of the Organization of European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) and that of France to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations.<sup>94</sup> The DREE’s main concerns were trade and payments issues within the OEEC framework, participating in multilateral trade negotiations including the GATT, and supporting the launch of the European Economic Community (EEC).<sup>95</sup> It also handled more specialized commercial diplomacy and financial issues. Its negotiator positions, along with the generally heightened importance of multilateral economic issues in the

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<sup>89</sup> Bernard Clappier, “Alexandre Kojève : Une vie, une œuvre,” interview by Jean Daive, *France Culture*, Radio France, November 10, 1990, audio, 44:00-46 :30.,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQN5u8tTAA0&ab\\_channel=Maymyam](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQN5u8tTAA0&ab_channel=Maymyam)

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Barre, “Le conseiller du prince,” 56.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>93</sup> Laurence Badel, “La naissance de diplomates économiques après 1945,” in *Diplomatie et grands contrats: L'État français et les marchés extérieurs au XXème siècle*, by Laurence Badel, (Paris, France: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2011), 136-7.

<sup>94</sup> The Organization for European Economic Cooperation was a multilateral organization dedicated to: coordinating and supervising the distribution of American ‘Marshall Plan’ aid to Western Europe, developing intra-European trade by reducing tariff and trade barriers, and studying the feasibility of a European customs union, free trade area, and payment multilateralization.;

The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was a multilateral agreement intended to promote international trade by reducing or eliminating trade barriers. It underwent several rounds of nearly continuous negotiation during the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century until its replacement by the WTO framework in 1995.

<sup>95</sup> The European Economic Community was a formalized economic policy and customs union created by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. It initially consisted of France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands, though several other countries joined before 1992, at which point the EEC was succeeded by the European Union established by the Treaty of Maastricht.

mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century, gave this relatively small and obscure department and its personnel “weight within the French administration.”<sup>96</sup>

Testimony from his immediate colleagues paints a portrait of Kojève as a powerful, competent, and motivated bureaucrat. Marjolin wrote that he was a “valued counselor” of DREE Director Bernard Clappier and Ministry of Foreign Affairs [*Ministère des Affaires Etrangères*] Director of Economic and Financial Affairs Olivier Wormser, among others.<sup>97</sup> He also confided that Kojève enjoyed “considerable authority” at the DREE through his advisory role.<sup>98</sup> Wormser went further, calling him “the great architect of French policy in international forums” of the era and the “man in France who best knew the text and deep meaning of the GATT.”<sup>99</sup> Clappier thought that he, Wormser, and Kojève together formed a “trio [that] ruled... over all international economic negotiations” during the 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>100</sup> He also praised Kojève’s “aptitude for the art of negotiation” and critical advisory role over DREE policy.<sup>101</sup> In the words of colleague Jean-Pierre Brunet, “he was very listened to.”<sup>102</sup> By the late 1950s, Kojève “acquired a certain authority” and he went to international conferences with the head of the delegation,... and his boss basically asked behind the scenes what needed to be done.”<sup>103</sup>

Kojève’s twenty-year tenure as *chargé de mission* at the DREE can be thematically divided into two halves of roughly equal length. In the first decade, his work centered on the nascent process of European political and economic integration. Starting around 1957, this focus

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<sup>96</sup> Badel, “La naissance de diplomates économiques après 1945,” 146.

<sup>97</sup> Marjolin, *Architect of European Unity*, 52.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Wormser, “Mon Ami Alexandre Kojève,” 120.

<sup>100</sup> Badel, “La naissance de diplomates économiques après 1945,” 147.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Jean-Pierre Brunet, “Alexandre Kojève : Une vie, une œuvre,” interview by Jean Daive, *France Culture*, Radio France, November 10, 1990, audio, 1:11:00-1:15:00.,

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQN5u8tTAA0&ab\\_channel=Maymyam](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQN5u8tTAA0&ab_channel=Maymyam)

<sup>103</sup> Bernard Clappier, interview by Jean Daive, 44:00-46 :30.

shifted to issues of a more global character, particularly the development of ‘third-world’ countries.<sup>104</sup> Both domains had evident ideological appeal for Kojève. As Aron deduced, the “organization of Western Europe” belonged to the phase of the ‘End of History’ during which “regional empires (or common markets) would precede the universal empire.”<sup>105</sup> Naturally, “Kojève had not abandoned the dialectic when he moved from the academy to diplomacy.”<sup>106</sup> Numerous colleagues at the DREE, including Jean-Pierre Brunet, Edgar Faure, and Raymond Barre (the latter of whom both later served as French Prime Minister) attested that his philosophical views influenced his decision to become a civil servant and the nature of his counsel.<sup>107</sup> Barre even claimed that he was “intimately linked to the development of the Latin Empire” insofar as he worked to bring Kojève’s plans to fruition.<sup>108</sup> In Barre’s view, Kojève was “dominated by the concern to provide an answer to what he called ‘the conflict of the intellectual brought face to face with action’.”<sup>109</sup> Kojève’s decision to enter the administrative state thus appears as the direct outgrowth of his philosophy and its conclusions. To render the ‘End of History’ immanent and actualize absolute *Droit*, he assumed his duty as a ‘man of action,’ advising ‘the tyrant,’ and realizing the “political goal” of the ‘universal and homogenous state.’<sup>110</sup>

Kojève’s power, competency, and motivation brought him into proximity to key episodes and processes of European integration onto which he could at least attempt to transpose his

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<sup>104</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, “third-world” refers to developing countries that were signatories to neither the North Atlantic Treaty nor the Warsaw Pact.

<sup>105</sup> Aron, *Memoirs*, 66-7.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> “Alexandre Kojève : Une vie, une œuvre,” interview by Jean Daive, *France Culture*, Radio France, November 10, 1990., [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQN5u8tTAA0&ab\\_channel=Maymyam](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQN5u8tTAA0&ab_channel=Maymyam)

<sup>108</sup> Barre, “Le conseiller du prince,” 64.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Kojève, *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right*, 85-7, 126, 266-9, 325-8; Kojève, “Tyranny and Wisdom,” 148-9.

ideology. His engagement mostly involved the Trade Committee of the OEEC due to its direct connection to the DREE.<sup>111</sup> Kojève's colleague Annie Moussa credited him with having "played a very active part in the preparation of the French position" on the disbursement of Marshall Plan aid through the OEEC.<sup>112</sup> He also assisted in setting the French position for negotiations on the 'Schuman Plan,' particularly in terms of creating a European Payments Union (EPU).<sup>113</sup> The EPU was included as part of the final Schuman Plan that was signed into force in 1950 likely due to Kojève's efforts.<sup>114</sup> According to Barre, it was "Kojève's idea... to move gradually towards the opening of markets with common lists of products that countries could exchange freely."<sup>115</sup> Through his conception of Common Liberation Lists and the EPU, he proved instrumental in helping the French government achieve these long-term goals ahead of their inclusion as part of the framework of the European Economic Community.<sup>116</sup> Indeed, Barre commended Kojève for having "rendered great services in the context of the negotiation of the Treaty of Rome," the 1957 treaty that established the EEC and Common Market in Western Europe.<sup>117</sup>

While issues of European integration dominated the first phase of Kojève's time at the DREE, he partially forayed into the questions of international trade and development that would later become more central to his work. In 1948, Kojève was one of the French negotiators sent to Cuba to discuss what would become the Havana Charter.<sup>118</sup> This was an agreement signed by

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<sup>111</sup> Barre, "Le conseiller du prince," 59.

<sup>112</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 293.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.;

The Schuman Plan was a proposal by French Minister of Foreign Affairs Robert Schuman to place French and West German production of coal and steel under a single authority, which later became the European Coal and Steel Community. The European Payments Union was a monetary agreement that helped regularize trade between OEEC participants and thereby increase the volume of trade between Western European countries.

<sup>114</sup> David de Giustino, "Europe Emerges 1944-1954," in *A Reader in European Integration*, by David de Giustino (New York, New York: Longman Books, 1996) 28-9.

<sup>115</sup> Barre, "Le conseiller du prince," 60.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 303.

fifty-six countries intended to supplement the GATT by establishing an ‘International Trade Organization’ to enforce rules against anti-competitive business practices and an ‘International Clearing Union’ to stabilize international currency exchange.<sup>119</sup> Barre recalled Kojève as “very attached” to the charter and highly disappointed by its eventual failure due to US opposition.<sup>120</sup> The disappointment of the Havana Charter potentially explains Kojève’s relative withdrawal from international trade issues until the round of GATT talks that began in 1956. In any case, the policy objectives of the Havana Charter prefigured those that would shape the latter half of Kojève’s tenure as a senior civil servant.

### **The ‘Nomos’ of the ‘End of History’: Kojève’s ‘Giving Colonialism’**

*“Humanity is now being integrated, ... the whole world becomes a melting pot, ... Alexandre Kojève [commemorates] the discussion over Palatinate wine in Dusseldorf.”* — Carl Schmitt<sup>121</sup>

During the late 1950s, the direction and character of international affairs shifted significantly as Eurocentrism ceded to globalism. Three critical events encapsulate the nature of this shift. In 1955, representatives from twenty-nine countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia convened in Bandung, Indonesia “to promote Afro-Asian economic and cultural cooperation and to oppose colonialism or neo-colonialism.”<sup>122</sup> This seminal conference fostered a spirit of political and economic unity across the third world and portended the eventual creation

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<sup>119</sup> Douglas A. Irwin, “The GATT’s Contribution to Economic Recovery in Post-War Western Europe,” in *Europe’s Post-War Recovery*, ed. Barry Eichengreen (New York, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 131.

<sup>120</sup> Barre, “Le conseiller du prince,” 60.

<sup>121</sup> Alexandre Kojève and Carl Schmitt, “Alexandre Kojève-Carl Schmitt Correspondence,” trans. Erik de Vries, *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 29, no. 1 (2001): 114.

<sup>122</sup> A. S. Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development of 1964*, (Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Rotterdam University Press, 1969), 3.

of the Non-Aligned bloc.<sup>123</sup> In 1956, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser — with the support of the US and USSR — repelled an invasion of his country by France and the UK. The so-called ‘Suez Crisis’ exemplified the beginning of the end for the European empires that emerged during the ‘Age of Imperialism.’ It also heralded new structures ascending to the forefront of global politics, such as the American and Soviet spheres and the growing power of non-Western countries.<sup>124</sup> In 1957, representatives from France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands met to draft and sign the Treaty of Rome, which formally created the EEC and the Common Market. European countries like France thereby concretized their own political and economic integration as they simultaneously engaged in ‘de-integrating’ their patchworks of colonial possessions.

Alexandre Kojève’s focus and activity as a diplomat and civil servant mirrored the global shift from Eurocentrism to globalism and his views on the metapolitics of global foreign affairs and how best to navigate them changed too. According to former French Minister of Foreign Affairs Pierre Mendès-France, “the development of poor countries” became “the main axis of [Kojève’s] action during his last ten years at the DREE” (from 1958 to 1968).<sup>125</sup> This was in part driven by the hard political reality of decolonization, as the growing number of independent third-world states and the salience of their concerns demanded greater attention by the French state. However, the late-stage adjustment seems in part driven by Kojève himself. He likely viewed the regional organization and integration of Europe as sufficiently underway with the Treaty of Rome and saw it as time to catalyze an analogous process on the world stage.

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<sup>123</sup> The Non-Aligned Movement was a bloc of mostly developing countries that were members of neither the Western nor Eastern blocs. It was formally established in 1961 and helped third-world countries wield power as a unified front in international affairs during the Cold War.

<sup>124</sup> Giuliano Garavini, *After Empires: European Integration, Decolonization, and the Challenge from the Global South 1957-1986* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2016), 46-47.

<sup>125</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 308.

Much as he developed the ‘Latin Empire’ as a theoretical framework to galvanize his quest for European integration, Kojève developed a theory he termed ‘Giving Colonialism’ to galvanize his quest for global integration. The philosophical basis for Kojève’s shift in focus should be read as a synthesis of his neo-Hegelian views and many of the ideas outlined in Carl Schmitt’s *The Nomos of the Earth*, infused by 1950s-era conceptions of the international political economy. Schmitt forwarded a copy of *The Nomos of the Earth* to Kojève in May 1955, initiating a multi-year correspondence and friendship between the two thinkers.<sup>126</sup> Schmitt broadly formulated global political history through the lens of “*nomos*,” which he took to signify a system of spatial order defined by the “division and distribution” of territory and resources.<sup>127</sup> Law and conflict within and between polities could thus be reduced to a struggle over ‘taking,’ or the capacity for it. Though distinct from Hegel’s conception of it, Schmitt extended his own rendition of the ‘End of History’ in which the “old *nomos* of the Earth dissolve[s] in the face of the extraordinary abundance of the Industrial Age.”<sup>128</sup> In this world, “wars and crises [cease] because unchained production no longer is partial and unilateral” and “man can give without taking.”<sup>129</sup> For Schmitt, ‘the political’ as traditionally understood was founded upon the need ‘to divide’ up some scarce quantity. Thus, the dissolution of the old ‘*nomos*’ rendered the traditional wisdom and practice of politics as null and void.

For Kojève, the end of ‘the political’ was an intrinsic aspect of the ‘End of History,’ the finitude of dialectical evolution that was necessary to achieve through the establishment of the ‘universal and homogenous state.’ In his correspondence with Schmitt, Kojève connected the

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<sup>126</sup> Schmitt, “Schmitt-Kojève Correspondence,” 94.

<sup>127</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*, trans. G. L. Ulmen (New York, New York: Telos Press, 2006), 67.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

dissolution of the old ‘*nomos*’ with the post-historical state, in which “taking” ceases and political action reduces to “grazing,” or mere accumulation.<sup>130</sup> Kojève’s position was that the “universal and homogenous state” remained the “political goal” of the contemporary age.<sup>131</sup> Thus, “foreign policy [had] only one goal: to rid the world of politics” (i.e. division), to be achieved through “homogenous distribution.”<sup>132</sup> For Kojève, the “‘world prognosis’ on a Hegelian basis” developed as follows: “Disarmament,... Point IV politics, ‘rational division’ of raw materials and industrial products in the West,” and the “equalization of income within each country and between countries ([namely] ‘underdeveloped countries’).”<sup>133</sup> From this paradigm, Kojève developed his concept of ‘Giving Colonialism:’ the centrally-organized redistribution of resources from rich to poor countries to achieve the ‘universal and homogenous state.’ ‘Giving Colonialism’ was essentially the ‘*nomos*’ of the Earth at the ‘End of History.’<sup>134</sup>

In May 1956, Schmitt invited Kojève to deliver a public lecture in Germany to an audience of industrialists and politicians on these themes.<sup>135</sup> Schmitt proposed that it cover “the problem of the underdeveloped regions” in light of current events, infused by Kojève’s unique political perspectives and expertise on Hegelian philosophy.<sup>136</sup> Kojève accepted the invitation and a date was set for January 1957.<sup>137</sup> It was at this lecture that Kojève outlined his doctrine of ‘Giving Colonialism’ in an explicit and consolidated manner. In this speech, he set about crafting a program to “reconstruct” colonialism in a “rational way” to prevent its collapse, “analogous to

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<sup>130</sup> Kojève, “Schmitt-Kojève Correspondence,” 95.

<sup>131</sup> Kojève, “Tyranny and Wisdom,” 148-9.

<sup>132</sup> Kojève, “Schmitt-Kojève Correspondence,” 95, 98.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.;

“Point IV politics” refers to the Point IV Program of economic and technical assistance for developing countries unveiled by US President Harry Truman in 1949. It is often considered the first such program of its kind.

<sup>134</sup> Alexandre Kojève, “Colonialism from a European Perspective,” trans. Erik de Vries, *Interpretation: A Journal of Political Philosophy* 29, no. 1 (2001): 112.

<sup>135</sup> Schmitt, “Schmitt-Kojève Correspondence,” 108.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 109, 112.

the way in which capitalists before, around, and after Ford reconstructed the old capitalism.”<sup>138</sup> However, he also framed such a project as necessarily “anti-colonialist.”<sup>139</sup> It seems plausible that Kojève fancied himself as a kind of a ‘contemporary Ford,’ or at least a ‘man of action,’ engaged in resolving capitalism’s “economic defects” on the front lines of History.<sup>140</sup>

For Kojève, the theory of ‘Giving Colonialism,’ in its simplest form, was a methodology for advanced countries to “give[ ] the backward countries more than [they] take[ ] from them,”<sup>141</sup> and it could be realized by modulating the economic relations between them. Multilaterally orchestrated commodity agreements governing “terms of trade” could “stabilize the prices of raw materials” at an artificially high level. This would increase capital inflows to net-exporter countries (whose economies tend to be underdeveloped) and thereby improve their standards of living.<sup>142</sup> This would be supplemented by developed countries collecting the “surplus value” extracted from underdeveloped countries and using “direct contributions” and “on-the-spot investment” to redistribute it, and more, to the third world.<sup>143</sup> Organizing this would require a scheme of “legally-required disbursements” based on “natural economic regions.”<sup>144</sup> This latter qualification is reminiscent of the “imperial unions” expounded in the “Latin Empire...” letter and Schmitt’s ‘*Großraums*.’<sup>145</sup> Kojève suggested similar regional divisions in the 1957 speech, cordoning off Russo-Asian (inspired by the Mongolian Empire), Anglo-American (inspired by the British Empire), and European spheres (inspired by the Roman Empire) as the units through which ‘Giving Colonialism’ could function. Moreover, he stated that “European ‘Giving

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<sup>138</sup> Kojève, “Colonialism from a European Perspective,” 120.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-4.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 124-5.

<sup>145</sup> Kojève, “Outline of a doctrine of French Policy,” III.1.

Colonialism’... should cover the entire area which lies around the Mediterranean and which has historically proven itself to be a viable economic region.”<sup>146</sup> In Kojève’s view, this structure would altogether invert the colonial paradigm and become the “the ‘*nomos*’ of the modern Western world.”<sup>147</sup> Such an arrangement was the logical evolution of political action toward the ‘universal, homogenous state’ in a post-historical world in which “everything has already been taken.”<sup>148</sup> The natural response in a state no longer contained by borders and material scarcity is to ‘give’ unto universality.

Kojève framed his theory in practical terms and as a matter of Western strategic interest for his audience in Dusseldorf. He claimed that “if ‘Giving Colonialism’ is not practiced,... then the southern and eastern Mediterranean clients will remain, as before, poor clients; and that also means: bad or even ‘dangerous’ clients.”<sup>149</sup> However, he also invoked “a pure moral-religious... foundation” behind his call for the first world to curtail the consumption and quality of life of its citizens so that resources may be distributed more evenly around the world.<sup>150</sup> The logic behind ‘Giving Colonialism’ transplanted the framework of class struggle that Kojève injected into his materialist interpretation of the Hegelian ‘Master-Slave’ dialectic onto the political and economic divisions between the developed and developing world. It provided a schema for the practical realization of *Droit*, the universal principle of justice would necessarily synthesize “political and social equality” with “equivalence.”<sup>151</sup> In other words, ‘Giving Colonialism’ was a framework for ‘men of action’ like Kojève to make immanent the ‘End of History’ through global economic integration.

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<sup>146</sup> Kojève, “Colonialism from a European Perspective,” 125-6.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 126-7.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 124, 126-7.

<sup>151</sup> Kojève, *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right*, 92, 266-9.

‘Giving Colonialism’ should accordingly be read in the immediate ideological, political, and economic, context of the twilight of the French colonial empire. After the end of World War II, several figures in France attempted to reformulate its imperial sphere as one of cooperation and support.<sup>152</sup> A key motivating ideology in France and Europe alike was that of ‘Eur-Africa,’ which promoted varying degrees of integration between Europe and Africa, oriented toward economic development and political stability on both continents.<sup>153</sup> This concept intersected with the decolonization of the French Empire, as France sought to maintain its influence and control over its possessions to its south. Leading figures in French and European politics alike supported the idea, including Georges Bidault (French Prime Minister, 1949-51), Pierre Mendès-France (French Prime Minister, 1954-5), Jean Monnet (European statesman), and Robert Schuman (French and European statesman).<sup>154</sup> In one of his letters to Schmitt, Kojève also noted his approval of “the ‘Euro-African’ idea,” which suggests its integration into the theory of ‘Giving Colonialism.’<sup>155</sup>

Conceptions of ‘Eur-Africa’ dovetailed with attempts to render the political and economic relationship between France and its imperial sphere progressively more egalitarian and less extractive. In 1956, the French National Assembly passed the *Loi-Cadre*, which increased territorial autonomy over some social and economic issues.<sup>156</sup> In 1958, French overseas possessions nearly unanimously approved (by popular referendum) the Constitution of the Fifth French Republic and thus joined the ‘French Community,’ essentially a commonwealth of

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<sup>152</sup> Garavini, *After Empires*, 47.

<sup>153</sup> Peo Hansen and Stefan Johnson, “Bringing Africa as a ‘Dowry to Europe’: European Integration and the Eurafrikan Project 1920–1960.” *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 13, no. 3 (July 2011): 444-6.

<sup>154</sup> Hansen and Johnson, “Bringing Africa as a ‘Dowry to Europe,’” 453-7.

<sup>155</sup> Kojève, “Schmitt-Kojève Correspondence,” 112.

<sup>156</sup> Teresa Hayter, *French Aid* (London, England: The Overseas Development Institute, 1966), 28.

independent yet economically integrated states.<sup>157</sup> Several funds were also established in the late 1940s and early 1950s to direct capital from the *metropole* and into the economies of the country's colonial possessions.<sup>158</sup> The most substantial was the *Fonds d'Investissement en Développement Économique et Social* [Fund for Economic and Social Development], which was created in 1946 largely to spur the development of French territories in Africa.<sup>159</sup> By 1960, the total annual volume of French foreign aid amounted to 1.35% of the country's Gross National Product.<sup>160</sup> Kojève proudly noted such policies in the Dusseldorf speech, claiming that France had "invest[ed] five to six times more in its colonies and former colonies than these colonies and ex-colonies suppl[ied] in surplus value."<sup>161</sup> Algeria was considered an integral territory of France rather than a colony and specially afforded billions more in investment to develop its economy and aid to support its local population.<sup>162</sup> Nonetheless, as efforts to politically and economically integrate France and *Françafrique* intensified, so too did African rejection of them. From 1954 onward, Muslim Algerians fought a violent, revolutionary struggle for independence, which the country eventually achieved in 1962. Likewise, despite joining the French Community in 1958, all fifteen French possessions in Africa achieved independence by 1961 at the behest of national political leaders in each country.<sup>163</sup>

Decolonization and economic crisis also heightened the concern felt by developed and developing countries alike toward the economic and social problems faced by the increasingly independent third world. A precipitous decline in global commodity prices brought these ideas

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<sup>157</sup> Hayter, *French Aid*, 28-32.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 35-6.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>160</sup> Gordon Cumming, "Western Aid in a Cold War Context." in *Aid to Africa: French and British Policies from the Cold War to the New Millennium* by Gordon Cumming (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), 41.

<sup>161</sup> Kojève, "Colonialism from a European Perspective," 122.

<sup>162</sup> Hayter, *French Aid*, 37.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-32.

and the plight of developing countries to the forefront of the international economic policy conversation during the late 1950s and 1960s.<sup>164</sup> Commodity prices rose in the early 1950s in response to high demand related to the Korean War and ongoing reindustrialization in Europe and Japan.<sup>165</sup> The tide turned midway through the decade at which point commodity prices fell during a recession in 1957 and did not recover from that decline.<sup>166</sup> By their very nature, developing countries' incomes and balances of payments are disproportionately related to the price of raw materials and unfinished goods.

During the 1950s, Argentine economist Raúl Prebisch developed the 'Theory of the Peripheral Economy,' generally considered the genesis of the field of development economics.<sup>167</sup> This theory posited that the imbalanced nature of international trade in the industrial economy causes capital to flow out of underdeveloped areas, thus widening the wealth gap between developed and developing countries.<sup>168</sup> Prebisch believed that policymakers should manipulate the 'terms of trade' in the global market to address imbalances and close the income gap between rich and poor countries.<sup>169</sup> Prebisch's ideas were controversial but they attracted many influential adherents, including Alexandre Kojève, as evidenced by their foundational role to the 'Giving Colonialism' theory concerning raw materials prices.

Other figures critical to establishing the field of development economics during the 1950s included W. Arthur Lewis, Albert Hirschman, and Gunnar Myrdal.<sup>170</sup> Kojève's theory of 'Giving

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<sup>164</sup> Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 6-7.

<sup>165</sup> Marian Radetzki, "The anatomy of three commodity booms," *Resources Policy* 31, no. 1 (2006): 64.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>167</sup> Raúl Prebisch, *The Economic Development of Latin America and Its Principal Problems*, (New York, New York: United Nations, 1950).

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-2.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-9.

<sup>170</sup> Agnès Giraudy, "Development Economics in the 1950s: The Bifurcation of the Discipline," *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 37, no. 3 (Fall 2015): 393-424.

Colonialism’ resembles the theory of the ‘welfare world’ advanced by Myrdal.<sup>171</sup> This theory forwarded the use of international aid, debt relief, and trade policies to replicate national-level welfare states on a transnational basis and redistribute wealth from rich to poor countries.<sup>172</sup> However, Myrdal did not explicate this theory until the 1960 publication of his book *Beyond the Welfare State*, rendering any mutual influence unlikely.

The ideological basis for Kojève’s shift in focus as a civil servant toward global integration and the theoretical basis for ‘Giving Colonialism’ represents a synthesis of his reading of Hegel and Schmitt, founded upon the economic theories of Prebisch, within the context of decolonization and the growing clout of the third world. Ultimately, Kojève’s policy prescriptions differed little from those of Prebisch and other figures in development economics. Similarly, the proposals outlined in the Dusseldorf fit relatively well within the milieu of ‘Eur-African’ thought, or otherwise attempts to maintain links between European countries and their former African colonies. Amid the ongoing Algerian War and general push toward decolonization at the time, ‘Giving Colonialism’ appears superficially as merely yet another approach to rationalizing the continuation of the French or European imperial sphere and keeping Algeria part of France.

What therefore renders Kojève’s civil service participation and theory of ‘Giving Colonialism’ unique from the development economics or ‘Eur-African’ political literature at the time was its thus its esoteric, not its exoteric significance. In the *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, Kojève transposed a framework of class struggle onto Hegel’s dialectical struggle for “recognition” between Master and Slave. The finitude of this struggle at the ‘End of History’

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<sup>171</sup> Marianne Johnson, “Swedish intellectual thought on inequality and a ‘welfare world’,” *Global Intellectual History* 7 (2022): 1.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

would realize the ‘universal and homogeneous State,’ in which all differences and conflicts have been erased.<sup>173</sup> He saw this as “only possible after the ‘suppression’ of the opposition [or difference] between Master and Slave.”<sup>174</sup>

Likewise, in the Dusseldorf speech and throughout the latter decade of his bureaucratic career, Kojève transposed a framework of class struggle and the Master-Slave dialectic onto the political and economic relationship between developed and developing countries. ‘Giving Colonialism’ represented the “*nomos* of the Earth” at the ‘End of History,’ a state of universal recognition in which the categories of Master and Slave are neutralized, and a stateless, classless society emerges and spans the entire world. It provided a schema to practically realize this ‘neutralization’ through wealth redistribution and global integration. This represented the culmination of *Droit*, the universal principle of justice would necessarily synthesize “political and social equality” with “equivalence,” in accordance with the conditions of the late 1950s.<sup>175</sup> ‘Giving Colonialism’ was Kojève’s guide as a ‘man of action’ with the ear of the tyrant to make immanent the ‘universal and homogenous state’ through global economic integration. Between 1958 and 1968, this is precisely what Alexandre Kojève attempted to achieve as an advisor and diplomat at the DREE.

### **Kojève’s ‘Imperial’ Approach to External Economic Relations**

*“A regional solution to... the process of revaluation and price stabilization of raw materials... seems to be essential.” — Alexandre Kojève<sup>176</sup>*

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<sup>173</sup> Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 67-9.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-9.

<sup>175</sup> Kojève, *Outline of a Phenomenology of Right*, 92, 266-9.

<sup>176</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note pour Monsieur Clappier, Objet: La XIVe Session du GATT,” 5.

Kojève's shift in focus as a civil servant toward the economic and social problems of developing countries represent Kojève's attempt to realize 'Giving Colonialism' as a 'man of action.' Themes of regionalism, the structural redistribution of surplus value from developed to underdeveloped countries, and a 'Fordist' approach to resolving colonialism are plainly identifiable in at least eight significant documents attributable to Kojève on questions related to decolonization and multilateral trade. These themes less directly pervade numerous other documents as well. The way these ideas inspired these documents was often modulated by their respective contexts. Due to the nature of the DREE as a bureaucratic organ, these views were seeded through notions of multilateral customs unions, raw material price revaluation, and international taxation and transfers in internal memos, which were then incorporated into oriented policymaking in varying degrees.

Several of these memos deal with the process of inter-regional external economic relations, between the EEC and regional groupings of states beyond the European continent. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, this was a new phenomenon, as due to the 1957 Treaty of Rome, France's external economic relations suddenly related to the EEC and not merely its national policy.<sup>177</sup> The nature of inter-regional external economic relations intersects with the Kojèvean framework that regional 'empires' would proceed the global 'universal and homogenous state.' Indeed, Kojève used his advisory capacity at the DREE to attempt to incite the regionalization of countries outside of Europe on several occasions, presumably to effectuate this transition. It is particularly useful to read these themes in the context of the decolonization of the French

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<sup>177</sup> Louise Fawcett, "Regionalism in Historical Perspective," in *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order*, ed. Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 18-20.

Community in Africa and the Algerian War. Kojève's schemes additionally offered a plan by which France or Europe could keep linkages to their former colonies alive and continue to exert some manner of patriarchal influence over them.

The earliest documents to evidence the ideology of 'Giving Colonialism' and inter-regionalism is the August 1958 memo for DREE Director Bernard Clappier on "La politique commerciale de la CEE [EEC Trade Policy]," which dealt in large part with Euro-Arab relations.<sup>178</sup> In this note, Kojève suggested economic policies that, in his view, would catalyze the replacement of "the Anglo-Americans" by the EEC as the standard-bearer of the "political presence of the West" in the Arab world.<sup>179</sup> He suggested a highly regionalistic solution to achieve this hegemony, "for the Arab countries to form among themselves a customs union, even an economic and monetary union" that would closely coordinate with the EEC.<sup>180</sup> One is left with the impression that French and European trade policy is being used to establish an erstwhile 'Latin Empire' or structure "European 'Giving Colonialism'... cover[ing] the entire area which lies around the Mediterranean."<sup>181, 182</sup> Kojève's stated goal in this document is to extend European hegemony so that it may raise up its Middle Eastern and North African neighbors by means of the EEC's wealth and power. Thus, while not mentioned by name, the shadow of 'Giving Colonialism' looms robustly over this slice of DREE communication.

This note was written in 1958, at nearly the high point of the struggle by Algerian Muslims to secure their country's independence from France. The May 1958 Crisis had just seen an attempted coup by elements of the French military and the emergency election of Charles de

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<sup>178</sup> Notes d'Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, "Note pour Monsieur Clappier, Objet: Politique commerciale de la CEE," 1.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>181</sup> Kojève, "Outline of a doctrine of French Policy," III.1.

<sup>182</sup> Kojève, "Colonialism from a European Perspective," 125-6.

Gaulle as French President. Algeria was governed as an integral territory of France (not a colony or overseas territory) and thus was not subject to the DREE's purview. Nonetheless, it is hard to read Kojève's memorandum outside of the context of the Algerian War. It perhaps points to a growing sense inside the French government that Algerian independence was something of an inevitability and something to be rationalized rather than fought. Kojève's suggestions seem in line with such a vision, that it would be better for France to maintain hegemony over an independent Algeria than no relationship at all.

Kojève persisted in his bent toward European-directed regionalism in a June 1959 note, also for Bernard Clappier, titled: "Quatorzième session du GATT [Fourteenth Session of the GATT]." <sup>183</sup> Its contents were primarily apropos of Latin America. <sup>184</sup> Here, he argues that "even the simple beginning of a regional organization... in Latin America presents a matter of capital importance for the EEC."<sup>185</sup> He provides several reasons for this, firstly that such an organization would "lead to the adhesion to the GATT of all Latin American countries."<sup>186</sup> This would "replac[e] the GATT's Anglo-Saxon majority with a Latin-European majority," presumably more favorable toward Kojèvean ideas. <sup>187</sup> Kojève also implied the connection between regionalism, raw material price revaluation, and the 'Fordist' approach to resolving colonialism. He wrote that regional integration would "resolve [for Latin American countries] two fundamental problems,... namely the question of raw materials prices and that of the [production] of manufactured products, produced by countries in the process of industrialization at low wages."<sup>188</sup> In his view, "the price level of... raw materials and the possibility of selling

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<sup>183</sup> Notes d'Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, "Note pour Monsieur Clappier, Objet: La XIVe Session du GATT," 1.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 5.

their future industries' production on the markets of developed countries are the two *sine qua non* conditions of their prosperity.”<sup>189</sup>

Kojève furthermore suggested that this process be conducted via defined spheres ('empires,' so to speak), with “the Commonwealth... ensur[ing] the flow of future industrial production from Asian countries,... the EEC accepting production from Africa and the Near East,” and the United States covering Japan and Latin America.<sup>190</sup> As will become clearer in later writings, Kojève saw increasing global raw material prices as a backdoor means by which wealth could be transferred from developed to developing countries. In addition, he saw tariff regulation on the part of developed countries as a means by which unacceptable labor conditions could be prevented from taking root in developing countries. Thus, this document demonstrates the three main components of his philosophy concerning post-colonial development coming together in his active participation in foreign policy.

The July 1959 “Quinzième Session du GATT: Remarques présentées par la Délégation française [Fifteenth Session of the GATT: Remarks Presented by the French Delegation]” document shows how Kojève's concerns entered into official strategy in international trade negotiations. Written in these remarks is the statement that “the positive action of the GATT for the benefit of underdeveloped countries should be oriented in two main directions,... contributing to the stabilization of major raw material prices at a satisfactory level [and] solv[ing] the problem of the disposal of the new industrial production of underdeveloped countries, by definition with low wages, which is destined to increase from year to year.”<sup>191</sup> Also

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<sup>189</sup> Notes d'Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note pour Monsieur Clappier, Objet: La XIVe Session du GATT,” 5.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>191</sup> Notes d'Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Quinzième Session du GATT, Remarques présentées par la Délégation française,” 8.

included is a solution to the latter ‘problem’ that proposes “a new type of negotiation within the GATT... intended to cancel out the difference in prices due to a difference between the wages of producers” in developed countries and developing countries.<sup>192</sup> The proceeds of this tax would be “paid into a Development Fund... managed by the GATT.”<sup>193</sup> Not only did this continue to focus on disincentivizing substandard labor conditions but the tax-based development fund recalls Kojève’s suggestion in his Dusseldorf Speech for investment in developing countries to be “centralized through [multilateral] organizations.”<sup>194</sup>

Returning to European-led regionalism, the specter of Kojève’s ‘Euro-African’ idea emerged in a January 1961 memo, once again to Clappier, on the subject of the “Association des États africains à la CEE [Association of African States with the EEC].”<sup>195</sup> In this piece, Kojève advocated that the French government stimulate — via the EEC — the creation of an economic and financial union of African countries to manage relations between them and France, and Europe as a whole. The logic is that it would be “preferable [if] associated [African] state[s] would only be able to present demands to the EEC with the unanimous agreement of all the other associated states.”<sup>196</sup> At the time, independent African countries were free to unilaterally dissociate from France or the EEC and Kojève feared that if one were to take such action, the rest would follow suit.<sup>197</sup> Thus, he suggests that the “associated African states should be grouped together in a regional organization... which could be called the ‘Organization for African Economic Cooperation’” through which “reciprocal relations between the EEC and each of the

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<sup>192</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Quinzième Session du GATT, Remarques présentées par la Délégation française,” 9.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Kojève, “Colonialism from a European Perspective,” 122.

<sup>195</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note pour Monsieur Clappier, Objet : Association des États africains à la CEE,” 1.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

associated states” would pass.<sup>198</sup> This was of such importance that Kojève advised for “the EEC to help the associated states to organize themselves into an OAEC or even to impose this organization upon them.”<sup>199</sup>

The idea of Euro-African regionalization evidently captured Kojève’s mind strongly. At any rate, he pulled from his experience with the Marshall Plan and the OEEC and proposed that an association of African countries could be similarly constructed. For him, this organization should be “like the OEEC” and “follow the example of the Marshall Plan” in so far as the EEC would “make the sums [of aid] intended for the associated States available not to each of them, but to all of them” together.<sup>200</sup> In addition, the organization would be staffed by “European experts,” despite African administration.<sup>201</sup> Kojève had high hopes for its expansion, writing that “it should be open to all African countries (possibly including the Arab states).”<sup>202</sup> Kojève thought that this concept “would serve the interests both of the EEC and those of the associated African states” and “make it possible... to coordinate, financial, economic, and commercial policy.”<sup>203</sup>

The vision of an ‘Organization for African Economic Cooperation’ is an eminently ‘imperial’ one (in the Kojévian sense) and appears quite related to ideas of ‘Giving Colonialism.’ Whether such an organization and such a post-colonial relationship to Europe would have been (or was, depending on one’s historical perspective) beneficial to either party is a matter for much more extensive examination. Nevertheless, Kojève was evidently at the heart of deliberations

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<sup>198</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note pour Monsieur Clappier, Objet : Association des États africains à la CEE,” 2.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

within the French government on this subject and likely that his views did in fact carry over into material policy.

Kojève delved into deeper elaboration on ‘imperialist’ regionalism in Africa in a March 1962 memo for Thomas van Ruymbeke (an associate of his at the DREE) pertaining to “Réflexions sur les produits tropicaux et l’association des pays africains au Marché commun [Reflections on Tropical Products and the Association of African Countries with the Common Market].”<sup>204</sup> In this memo, he maintained that the “importance” of French commercial interests in Africa (particularly in light of Algeria’s impending independence) “provide[d] a basis for relaunching an attempt at a Franco-African community which would maintain... a sort of French commonwealth.”<sup>205</sup> He assigned “particular” priority to the inclusion of Morocco and Mauritania in such a community.<sup>206</sup> As a point of clarification, by ‘Franco-African community,’ Kojève referred to a proposed customs union between France, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauretania. This concept was distinct from his proposed ‘Organization for African Economic Cooperation’ which covered Sub-Saharan Africa. Even so, the economic objectives Kojève foresaw for a Franco-African community were largely similar. Its general policy objective was in line with what Kojève had sought to achieve through the GATT negotiations, specifically: “a general increase in the [‘world’] prices of tropical products by the establishment of regional protective mechanisms as a prelude to the establishment of global agreements.”<sup>207</sup> This would be achieved through a “new definition of relations between Algeria and the Common Market [and] granting derogations for the entry into France of Moroccan and Tunisian agricultural

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<sup>204</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Réflexions sur les produits tropicaux et l’association des pays africains au Marché Commun,” 1.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid. 3.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., 6.

products.”<sup>208</sup> These bureaucratic suggestions were made at the height of the Algerian War, and thus could be read as a means by which to reformulate and reconstitute French influence on the other side of the Mediterranean in a new way.

While Kojève’s proposed customs union between France, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Mauretania never materialized, his dream of an ‘Organization for African Economic Cooperation’ inter-regionally integrated with Europe seems to prefigure Eur-Africa’s future. France concluded several cooperation agreements with its former African possessions in the early 1960s and the 1963 Yaoundé Convention notably established a framework for inter-regional trade between it and the Associated African States and Madagascar (AASM).<sup>209</sup> In addition, in 1963, thirty-two African states convened in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and established the Organization of African Unity intended to encourage the political and economic integration of the continent.<sup>210</sup> While the level to which the regionalization of the African continent was a successful project is debatable, the 1960s were a key period in the process. Though it is impossible to ascertain the exact level of Kojève’s influence over this process, the DREE was the key force within the French government behind fostering the Yaoundé Convention. This suggests that even if Kojève were not directly working on the negotiation of the agreement that emerged from the conference, he was closely associated with those who were.

The degree to which Kojève influenced DREE policy, and thus that of the French state, through his advisory memoranda to superiors like Clappier and Wormser is unverifiable and

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<sup>208</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Réflexions sur les produits tropicaux et l’association des pays africains au Marché Commun,” 6.

<sup>209</sup> John Chipman, *French Power in Africa*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 109.;

The Associated African States and Madagascar (AASM) was an intergovernmental organization created in 1961 to promote cooperation among the newly independent states of Francophone Africa.

<sup>210</sup> Alan K. Henrikson, “The Growth of Regional Organizations and the Role of the United Nations,” in *Regionalism in World Politics: Regional Organization and International Order* (New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 136-7.

intrinsically nebulous. In retrospectives, however, these figures could not have spoken higher of Kojève and his influence on them and their action as high-ranking civil servants. Thus, it is conceivable Kojève inserted his views and ideological presuppositions into his wide-ranging policy-related advice at the DREE, which then was passed along to the desk of his superiors, which then filtered into French policy on key issues such as inter-regional trade. The level of direct influence by Kojève as advisor and bureaucrat is even more evident insofar as it related to issues of international commodity agreements and the first iteration of UNCTAD.

### **Kojève's Attempt at Global Integration through UNCTAD**

*“The political goal to be achieved is the progressive elimination... of the differences between different per capita national income.” — Alexandre Kojève<sup>211</sup>*

The most direct relationship between Alexandre Kojève's views and their influence over external French government policy is made evident in the lead up to and occurrence of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964. The UN organized and intended this conference to address problems related to international trade in commodities and manufactured goods, with particular regard to the plight of developing countries.<sup>212</sup> Archival documents indicate that Alexandre Kojève played a substantial role in grappling with and generating ideas to address the issues at hand both ahead of and during UNCTAD I. He was also empowered to negotiate on France's behalf as one of the country's representatives sent to the conference.<sup>213</sup> He likely had broad command to define the French positions in these economic

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<sup>211</sup> Notes d'Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note sur le Plan des Experts de l'ONU, le Plan Mellen et les propositions Forthomme,” 4.

<sup>212</sup> Alethea MacLaren, “The Genesis of UNCTAD” (MA diss. Columbia University, 1967), 97-8.

<sup>213</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 352.

policy niches, and his superiors seemed to have largely ‘rubber stamped’ his proposals, giving them a bureaucratic seal of authority. Kojève attempted to employ the conference to propel the ideas of ‘Giving Colonialism’ and render them as effective international ‘*nomos*’ through the UN’s authority. To this end, he sought to create a truly global ‘universal and homogenous state’ using the same playbook as he had previously on the regional level regarding European integration.

In many ways, the convocation of UNCTAD I was an outgrowth of the newfound power enjoyed by third-world countries and the Non-Aligned bloc on the international stage. This allowed them to press for a conference on international economic and trade issues through the UN, given their sense that GATT did not adequately address the unique needs of developing countries.<sup>214</sup> This process began with various summits between developing countries, including the Bandung Conference in 1955, the Belgrade Conference in 1961, and the Cairo Conference in 1962.<sup>215</sup> In 1962, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) passed Resolution 917 (XXXIV) and thereby “resolved to convene a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.”<sup>216</sup> After some logistical and preparatory consultation, UNCTAD I was set to convene in Geneva between March and June 1964.<sup>217</sup>

The theories of economist Raúl Prebisch exerted a high degree of influence over the international economic policy conversation at the time (including Kojève), particularly among the UNCTAD circuit. As such, in 1963, Prebisch was selected to lead the conference as its Secretary-General.<sup>218</sup> He also set the tone through his “The Problem of International Trade and

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<sup>214</sup> Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 4-6.; MacLaren, “The Genesis of UNCTAD,” 15.

<sup>215</sup> Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 10.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-3.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

Development” report, which was meant to constitute a working basis for the conference.<sup>219</sup> It employed the ‘Theory of the Peripheral Economy’ to argue in favor of transnational income transfers through artificially inflated commodity prices and preferential treatment for developing countries’ exports.<sup>220</sup> Though the report was rather accusatory toward Western countries, Kojève seems to have mostly agreed with its contentions and went even further in his proposals to equalize global incomes and lift the ‘terms of trade.’

Though Kojève authored several memoranda and letters on the trade-related issues facing developing countries before, the earliest one most obviously connected to the lead up to UNCTAD I was in April 1962.<sup>221</sup> This “Note sur le Plan des Experts de l’ONU, le Plan Mellen et les propositions Forthomme [Note on the UN Experts Plan, the Mellen Plan, and Forthomme’s Propositions]” dealt with some of the proposals that emerged from earlier consultations on trade and development economics. Kojève sought to deconstruct them and instead put forth his own plan, which he hoped would become the French government’s position. The “UN Experts’ Plan” refers to the 1961 report by the Expert Group appointed under UNGA Resolution 1423 (XIV) to study “offsetting the effects of large fluctuations in commodity prices on balances of payments, with special reference to compensatory financing.”<sup>222</sup> Often called the ‘Posthuma Plan,’ it called for the creation of a ‘Development Insurance Fund’ to compensate developing countries for “instability in world commodity markets.”<sup>223</sup> The “Mellen Plan” likely refers to the American bias toward the free play of market forces, non-discrimination, and the ‘Most Favored Nation’ clause in international trade.<sup>224</sup> “Forthomme’s Propositions” refers to proposals by Belgian

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<sup>219</sup> Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 70-8.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-83.

<sup>221</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note sur le Plan des Experts de l’ONU, le Plan Mellen et les propositions Forthomme”.

<sup>222</sup> Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 8-9.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.;

Permanent Representative to International Economic Conferences Pierre-Atilio Forthomme.

These forwarded selective tariff preferences and redistributive taxes to boost and stabilize the terms of trade enjoyed by commodity exporters.<sup>225</sup> Kojève rejected both the “Mellen Plan” and the “Experts’ Plan” as too economically liberal.<sup>226</sup> However, he saw Forthomme’s views as something off which to build a more rigorous plan of his own.

Kojève began the elaboration of his plan by recognizing a foundational principle of ‘Giving Colonialism,’ setting his “political goal” as the “progressive elimination... of the differences between different *per capita* national incomes.”<sup>227</sup> Echoing Prebisch, Kojève claimed this should be achieved through a “reversal in the current terms of trade to the advantage of poor countries and to the detriment of rich countries” by “gradually rais[ing] the ‘world’ prices of raw materials.”<sup>228</sup> He suggested the levy of an “import tax” in developed countries, equal to the difference between a ‘fair’ price (“from an economic, social, and political perspective”) and the “price charged on the so-called ‘world’ market paid by other importers.”<sup>229</sup> The idea would be for developing countries to use the proceeds “for investments intended to raise their national income.”<sup>230</sup>

Kojève reiterated but also modified these themes in a January 1963 memo to Jean Wahl (Head of the Trade Department at the DREE) titled “Note pour Monsieur Wahl, Objet : Sous-

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Discerning what Kojève meant by the “Mellen Plan” proved extremely difficult for me. My best guess is that the terminology refers to some sort of proposal issued by Sydney Mellen, a relatively obscure US State Department official with some relationship to the American representatives to the ‘Kennedy Round’ GATT negotiations.;

The ‘Most Favored Nation’ clause refers to a principle of international trade that requires countries to offer the same trading terms to all trading partners.

<sup>225</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note pour Monsieur Wahl, Objet : Sous-développement et régionalisme,” 3.

<sup>226</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note sur le Plan des Experts de l’ONU, le Plan Mellen et les propositions Forthomme,” 1.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

développement et régionalisme [Note for Mr. Wahl, Subject: Underdevelopment and Regionalism].”<sup>231</sup> In this memorandum, he repeated the claim that “the problem of economic underdevelopment in the Western world cannot be solved without a substantial rise in the prices of raw materials from underdeveloped countries.”<sup>232</sup> As in previous documents, he proposed a “reversal of the terms of trade to the benefit of the underdeveloped countries,” which would allow them to become wealthier and industrialize.<sup>233</sup> Kojève also openly noted that “the doctrine of Prebisch can be considered as a natural extension of the French theses.”<sup>234</sup>

Kojève also injected regionalism into his proposed solution. He pointed out the problem of “the discrepancy in wage levels between developed countries and developing countries” (permitting the production of relatively inexpensive manufactured goods) and the difficulty of taxing away this discrepancy.<sup>235</sup> Therefore, he recommended the “creation of regional economic entities by the underdeveloped countries” which would allow them to pool convertible currency resources through a payments union and more capably transact with the developed countries of the Western World.<sup>236</sup>

Kojève cited the OEEC’s role in rebuilding post-war Europe as a corollary.<sup>237</sup> In his view, “the OEEC proves that a discriminatory liberalization of intra-zonal exchanges is a much more effective means of integration than customs preferences.”<sup>238</sup> Within this paradigm, Kojève wrote that while the process was already underway in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America, the “EEC could tackle [the] task” of “the regionalization [of] the Arab world and South-East

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<sup>231</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note pour Monsieur Wahl, Objet : Sous-développement et régionalisme,” 1.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 3-4

<sup>238</sup> Ibid., 4.

Asia.”<sup>239</sup> He likened this project to that of “the Roman Empire” and claims that “the EEC could ‘patronize’ the Arab world,... that is to say not only the Maghreb but also the Islamic Near and Middle East.”<sup>240</sup> The conceptual affinity to the Dusseldorf speech, in which Kojève draws inspiration from “*Imperium Romanum*” to pose “the Mediterranean region's economic unity” under European leadership, is unmistakable.<sup>241</sup> He suggested a further imperial division of the world in the “Underdevelopment and Regionalism” memorandum, in which “cooperation between the EEC and the [British] Commonwealth is essential in black Africa, just as cooperation with the United States is necessary in Latin America.”<sup>242</sup> Just as in the “Latin Empire...” letter and the Dusseldorf speech, Kojève’s beliefs that regionalism and redistribution could be used to solve the issue of global post-colonial inequality infiltrated internal departmental communication.

Both the “Note on the UN Experts’ Plan, the Mellen Plan, and Forthomme’s Propositions” and the “Underdevelopment and Regionalism” memoranda appear to have provided a basis for the November 1963 document “*Éléments pour le Mémoire français [Elements for the French Memorandum]*.”<sup>243</sup> This document largely constituted the French government’s positions ahead of UNCTAD, slated to begin in March 1964.<sup>244</sup> However, Kojève employed this piece to outline an even more ambitious synthesis: the global “organization” of markets for commodities and manufactured products.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note pour Monsieur Wahl, Objet : Sous-développement et régionalisme,” 5.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>241</sup> Kojève, “Colonialism from a European Perspective,” 126.

<sup>242</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Note pour Monsieur Wahl, Objet : Sous-développement et régionalisme,” 6.

<sup>243</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “*Éléments pour le Mémoire français*,” 2.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

Like previous documents authored by Kojève, “Elements for the French Memorandum” began with the assertion that “the flagrant inequality in the distribution of national income between the peoples of the world has become a problem of major importance, not only psychologically and morally, but also politically.”<sup>246</sup> It stressed “the necessity of carrying out national income transfers in order to attenuate, or at least not to accentuate, the disparities which currently exist in the world between the incomes of different countries.”<sup>247</sup> The memorandum likewise noted that the “international trade of foodstuffs from temperate zones gives rise to capital transfers from certain rich countries to other rich countries, the trade in tropical products sometimes causes transfers from poor countries toward rich countries.”<sup>248</sup> It thus advised a “reform of the current system of international trade in foodstuffs” to be to purposefully “increase... the global price of foodstuffs exported by developing countries.”<sup>249</sup> As Kojève previously noted, these views were in line with those of Prebisch and thus nothing particularly unique.

Where Kojève departed from the international consensus heading into the UNCTAD conference is in his proposal to “organize the global market for foodstuffs in such a way that the level of world prices makes any export subsidy for these foodstuffs unnecessary.”<sup>250</sup> This entailed the creation of a network of intergovernmental commodity agreements spanning the entire globe that would aim to increase commodity prices to a “fair” level to be realized by fixing a centrally-determined reference price.”<sup>251</sup> Agricultural production quotas would be placed on developed countries and any excess production would be donated to developing countries.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Éléments pour le Mémorandum français,” 2.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

This would have the advantage of allowing food prices in developing countries to remain low while enjoying higher prices for the commodities they sell abroad.<sup>253</sup> Such a program claimed to find “inspiration” for this schema in “the methods used by industrialized countries to transfer a fraction of income from city-dwellers to rural populations.”<sup>254</sup> Perhaps drawing from the Posthuma Plan, Kojève suggested that “the proceeds of refundable taxes collected for a given product would be paid to a Central Fund jointly managed by all the exporting countries of said product and entitled to a refund in taxes.”<sup>255</sup> Indeed, the process of international trade could be quasi-centrally managed by an global regulatory system toward a particular direction: equalization and homogenization.

Beyond the raw material revaluation and surplus redistribution, the French memorandum also takes on a veneer of Kojève’s ‘Fordist’ approach to resolving colonialism. The memorandum expanded the scope of the preferential system proposed for the international trade in foodstuffs, saying it “should have as its main aim to enable these countries to industrialize without impoverishing themselves and without needing to exploit their labor in the manner that occurred at the beginning of European industrialization.”<sup>256</sup> The document further argued that low wages would contribute to the industrialization not of the exporting country in the process of development but of the importing country which is already highly industrialized,” thus being of “inequitable and uneconomic character.”<sup>257</sup> In addition, it put forward a quasi-regionalized system on the international stage. It lamented the fact that “no group of developing countries yet has a regional body comparable to the OEEC capable of organizing free intra-regional trade but

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<sup>253</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Éléments pour le Mémorandum français,” 6.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

protected vis-à-vis the outside world and financed by a system of credit analogous to the [European Payments Union].”<sup>258</sup> The memorandum again brought in the experience of the European model, proclaiming that “some of the methods that were successfully applied in Europe at that time could be adopted in the case of developing countries.”<sup>259</sup>

Kojève’s November 1963 draft “Elements for the French Memorandum” constituted the bulk of what France’s delegation to UNCTAD submitted as its position paper the next year.<sup>260</sup> In his opening statement to the conference, head of the French delegation and Minister for Finance and Economic Affairs Valéry Giscard d’Estaing reiterated most of its primary contentions. He proclaimed the French preference for the “organization of world markets” and proposed “new international agreements” and for “agreements applying within a regional framework” to be “extended to the world market as a whole.”<sup>261</sup> D’Estaing also spoke in favor of forging import quotas within regional unions of the developed world for tariff-free imports of manufactured goods from developing countries to boost their manufacturing sectors and incomes.<sup>262</sup>

The French proposal for the organization of commodity markets was uniquely ambitious among those from any country or bloc at UNCTAD. Historian Alfred S. Friedeberg characterized them as having gone “even further than Prebisch.”<sup>263</sup> The proposal was also highly illiberal in nature, by Western standards. Friedeberg critiqued it as potentially giving “rise to all kinds of bureaucratic implications,” along with failing to recognize the difficulty to negotiating comprehensive international agreements, the loss of supply and demand signal function of

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<sup>258</sup> Notes d’Alexandre Kojève (1958-1964), 314PAAP/9, “Éléments pour le Mémorandum français,” 21.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 120-2.

<sup>261</sup> United Nations. 1964. “Volume II: Policy Statements.” *Proceedings of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*: Geneva, 23 March - 16 June 1964. New York, New York: United Nations Publication. 1-556., 196-7.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 126.

commodity prices, potential stockpiling, and the highly arbitrary nature of aid disbursed via high commodity prices.<sup>264</sup> However, the superficial oddity of the French proposal gives way to retrospective clarity when it is understood as the outgrowth of Kojève’s imagination and a vehicle by which he sought to actualize his philosophy. Rather than a potential downside, the bureaucratic implications of this managerial framework were an upside: the scope and intricacy of Kojève’s plan would have necessitated the formation of a class of civil servants empowered to enact, administer, and enforce it. Their loyalty would be not to any nation, but to the nascent ‘universal and homogenous state.’ The centralized organization of commodity markets would herald global integration much as the EEC and Common Market prefigured European integration and engendered a new class of civil servants to effectuate it.

At UNCTAD, the French positions clashed with those of the US and the UK, and those of the developing world, particularly on commodities. The US and the UK, particularly the latter with its ‘Ten Key Point Plan,’ were heavily biased toward economically liberal solutions that prioritized free exchange and access to markets.<sup>265</sup> For their part, developing countries did not want to choose between the ‘organization of markets’ or ‘access to markets,’ but rather “wanted both at the same time.”<sup>266</sup> In any case, this compromise between both approaches resulted in them largely neutralizing one another.<sup>267</sup>

Perhaps because of their uniqueness and divergence from those of other Western countries and those of the developing world alike, the French proposals as drafted by Kojève did not substantially influence negotiations at UNCTAD I.<sup>268</sup> Neither were they incorporated into the

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<sup>264</sup> Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 126.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 123-4.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

language of the final document. In general, the attempt to reconcile issues of international trade in Geneva between March and June 1964 achieved little in general in terms of concrete results. According to Friedeberg, the conference “frequently had the character of an exercise in political persuasion rather than a serious attempt to solve economic questions.”<sup>269</sup> No meaningful agreement was reached on the commodities question, the question of tariff preferences was passed onto a different committee, and discussions on compensatory finance ended merely in requests for further studies on the issue.<sup>270</sup> Instead, UNCTAD I largely served to further publicize Prebisch’s economic theories and political views stemming from them, and further mobilize global opinion in favor of developing countries.<sup>271</sup> In addition, UNCTAD became a permanent organ of the UN, which resulted in such negotiations and talks becoming a regular affair and the focus on the economic needs of developing countries becoming institutionalized.<sup>272</sup>

Despite the general anticlimax of UNCTAD I, the French positions taken at the conference offer an invaluable window into how Kojèvean perspectives progressed from internal departmental communication to an external directive emanating from the French government. The “Elements of the French Memorandum” can be appraised as almost an apotheosis of the second phase of Kojève’s involvement as a civil servant. Their content and his involvement at the conference suggests that they ought to be considered as Kojève’s attempt to actualize the ‘universal and homogenous state’ on a global scale. In this framework, the first phase of Kojève’s career consisted of the first stage, in which the groundwork for the ‘universal and homogenous state’ was laid through economic, then political, and then cultural unification in Europe. Once this were all but achieved through the Treaty of Rome, Kojève shifted focus and

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<sup>269</sup> Friedeberg, *The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development*, 194.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 194-5.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 201.

set his sights on the world. Much the Common Agricultural Policy was arguably the most critical policy framework to achieving full European integration, commodity and industrial trade agreements were to be the decisive catalyst in Kojève's vision of global integration at the hands of a centralized bureaucracy.

## Conclusion

*"The man who works recognizes his own product in the world that has actually been transformed by his work. He recognizes himself in it, he sees his own human reality"*

— Alexandre Kojève<sup>273</sup>

Geneva remained the locus of Kojève's activity as a diplomat even after UNCTAD I officially concluded there in June 1964 as the 'Kennedy Round' of negotiations on the GATT began there at almost the same time.<sup>274</sup> These talks primarily sought to reduce global tariffs (particularly between the US and EEC), reduce non-tariff barriers to trade, address the issue of 'dumping,' and help the economic position of developing countries.<sup>275</sup> Kojève's engagement in the 'Kennedy Round' mainly centered on this latter goal. According to Auffret, Kojève was instrumental in these negotiations in achieving "tariff preferences granted to developing countries" on their agricultural exports.<sup>276</sup> The 'Kennedy Round' ended in May 1967. Kojève's attention then shifted back to the preparatory meetings for the second iteration of UNCTAD, set

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<sup>273</sup> Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, 27.

<sup>274</sup> The "Kennedy Round" was named for the late US President John F. Kennedy because he oversaw the passage of the 1962 US Trade Expansion Act, which authorized the American president to conduct multilateral tariff negotiations.

<sup>275</sup> Sidney Wells, "The Developing Countries' GATT and UNCTAD," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 45, no. 1 (January 1969): 64.;

"Dumping" refers to the trade practice whereby a company exports a product at a price lower than that which they charge in their home market.

<sup>276</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 412

to convene in January 1968 in New Delhi. While he represented France at UNCTAD II between January and March 1968, the extent of Kojève's activity or achievements at this conference is unknown. On June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1968, while speaking to a group of representatives to the European Common Market in Brussels, Alexandre Kojève suffered a heart attack and died at the age of 66.<sup>277</sup>

Auffret summarizes his (relatively narrow) reading of the latter half of Kojève's administrative career by asserting that his "action thus los[t] the attraction of the goals that had animated it for many years" and that "philosophy ceased to interest him in the last years of his life."<sup>278</sup> I find this to be a gross misreading in consideration of Kojève's philosophy, his more concrete political frameworks such as 'Giving Colonialism,' and his body of writing from 1958 and onward as a civil servant. I believe that, when considered in aggregate, these writings conclusively suggest that Kojève remained productive in his work and that his work and its content remained highly motivated. Furthermore, Kojève continued to use his position at the DREE to attempt to actualize his ideological goals, much as he has in terms of European integration from 1948 to 1957.

Given the circumstances of his death, Alexandre Kojève could be considered a martyr for the 'universal and homogenous state' who fell on the managerial battlefield of the 'End of History.' One hopes that Kojève and his renowned sense of humor would have seen the wonderful comedy that was his life, but also find satisfaction in that he did truly "play it seriously." The story of Alexandre Kojève is as dazzling as it is perplexing. His interpretation of Hegel and his own philosophy is complex, original, and compelling. His career as a civil servant suggests competence, intrigue, and influence over what mattered to him. He overcame the

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<sup>277</sup> Auffret, *Alexandre Kojève*, 414-5.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 353.

intrinsic unlikeliness that one man could excel and achieve in two rather separate domains over the course of one life. From the outside, one might question why a commanding philosophical talent like the young Kojève — one who enjoyed esteem in academia and a circle of loyal admirers — would give up such a career for the French bureaucracy.

The answer to this question raises Kojève and his life from the level of the perplexing to that of the captivating. His story ought not be understood as that of a man with two disparate lives, one as an intellectual and one as a powerbroker, but rather a unified synthesis of philosophy and action. It was from his very philosophical beliefs that Kojève concluded that it was the duty of ‘the philosopher’ to participate actively in History. In his view, the philosopher could best become a ‘man of action’ by influencing ‘the tyrant,’ or political figures who had control over the events of history. For this reason, Kojève abandoned the life of the academic and took on that of a civil servant at the DREE. The elected official must electorally answer to his constituents and is somewhat removed from the machinery of power’s inner workings. In contrast, the bureaucrat or diplomat is constrained by no term limits and little oversight and can accrue immense power amid administrative obscurity and uninhibited dictate, particularly in international affairs.

Kojève’s reading of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* led him to believe that the ‘End of History’ — the finitude of the ‘Master-Slave’ dialectic — was not so much a matter of the ideal and consciousness, but rather a condition that could and needed to be realized in the material world by ‘men of action.’ For him, the ‘End of History’ meant the end of political division and the actualization of the ‘universal and homogenous state’ through class struggle. This “state” would make immanent a principle of justice called *Droit* between individuals and between

countries through equality under the law and equality of material conditions. Kojève believed that the ‘End of History’ was near but still required work to finalize its actualization.

Adapting his views to the historical context of his age, Kojève believed that a stage of ‘empire,’ regional unions of similar nations, would come between the nation-state and the ‘universal and homogenous state’ and eventually help usher in the latter. As a functionary with a measure of authority over France’s external economic policy, Kojève sought to assist this transition. Through ambition, intelligence, and charm, he rose to a position of relative influence at the DREE, which gave him power over the nascent process of European integration. During the first half of his career as a civil servant, he worked to forge supranational administration by negotiating the disbursement of Marshall Plan aid via the OEEC, working to create the European Payments Union, and formulating components of the Treaty of Rome.

After the Treaty of Rome and the creation of the EEC constituted a veritable ‘empire’ in Europe, Kojève sought to replicate a similar process on the world stage to integrate humanity into the ‘universal and homogenous state.’ He devised a theory of ‘Giving Colonialism’ wherein the framework of class struggle was transplanted to demand equalization across the countries and regions of the world by transferring wealth and incomes from rich to poor countries. This represented a means by which *Droit*, the universal principle of justice at the ‘End of History,’ could be realized. During the second half of his career as a civil servant, Kojève attempted to implement ‘Giving Colonialism’ and actualize the ‘universal and homogenous state.’ This manifested in spurring regionalization projects outside Europe and employing international institutional arrangements like the GATT and UNCTAD toward international equalization. Kojève worked to raise the terms of global commodities trade to the benefit of developing countries and create a global organizational framework to enforce this. Archived documentation

shows that he routinely injected his ideological presuppositions and goals into his advisory and diplomatic capacity at the DREE. This permeated into the outlook of French external economic policy, evidenced particularly by the control Kojève had over setting the French position at UNCTAD.

Beyond perhaps achieving tariff exemptions for developing countries' agricultural exports through the GATT, it is unlikely that Alexandre Kojève's actions directly enacted tangible results on the global stage to any significant extent. The French proposals to UNCTAD I were largely ignored by the participants at the conference and the hand that Kojèvean ideology may have played in fomenting the establishment of an African regional union is impossible to verify. Nonetheless, his story offers an alternative reading of 20th-century globalist multilateral institutionalism. These historical trends, encapsulated by phenomena like flows of investment and aid from the developed to developing world or the establishment of organizations like the GATT and UNCTAD, are often ascribed to geopolitical or economic incentives. In these perspectives, figures in the American, European, or Soviet governments felt it was in their strategic or financial interests to raise incomes in the third world and engage in international institutionalism and thus pursued these policies.

The intellectual and bureaucratic work of Alexandre Kojève suggests the potential of a different logic behind these policies and the impact they had on global history. That is not to say that many or even any other 'globalist' civil servants were motivated by a desire to "end History" and actualize the 'universal and homogenous state.' However, a potential general philosophical or ideological impulse behind the construction of the 20th-century globalist system should not be discounted. Kojève's life speaks to the power that 'progressive' and 'universalizing' philosophy

or ideology can have over the thought and behavior of an individual and a history forged by those who believe in it.

Despite Kojève's lack of immediate success in terms of actualizing the 'universal and homogenous state' through his direct action as a bureaucrat, the contemporary world could indeed constitute a form of global universality and homogeneity or at least a transitional stage on the path toward it. Detractors would naturally invoke the ongoing strategic competition between the US and China, the war between Russia and Ukraine, or internal dissension within the Western world as proof to the contrary. In *The End of History and the Last Man*, Francis Fukuyama characterizes the 'End of History' as the "universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government," distinct but not dissimilar from Kojève's understanding.<sup>279</sup> The alternatives to Western liberal democracy presented by the Chinese, Russian, or other systems seem fundamentally nonviable. On the economic level, substantial income and wealth gaps still exist within and between countries. And yet, many countries that were underdeveloped during Kojève's time have achieved prosperity, including South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, and Chile.<sup>280</sup> The volume of global trade and degree of international economic integration has steadily increased since the 1960s.<sup>281</sup> Mass immigration has partially homogenized the world's populations and English now approaches the status of a universal language. If "human life is a comedy," maybe Alexandre Kojève is the one having the last laugh.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York, New York: The Free Press, 1992), 1.

<sup>280</sup> "World Economic Outlook Database, October 2022," World Economic Outlook, *International Monetary Fund*, last modified October 11, 2022, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/weo-database/2022/October>.

<sup>281</sup> "Evolution of trade under the WTO: handy statistics," Statistics, *World Trade Organization*, last modified June 1, 2021, [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/statis\\_e/trade\\_evolution\\_e/evolution\\_trade\\_wto\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/trade_evolution_e/evolution_trade_wto_e.htm).

<sup>282</sup> Barre, 'Le conseiller du prince,' 64.

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