

# Where the Chicken-Hawks Got Their Love of War

by Tony Papert

Thanks largely to exposés by the LaRouche Presidential campaign, which have been picked up and echoed in electronic and print media worldwide, many of the inner workings of Vice President Dick Cheney's ongoing "cold coup" in Washington since Sept. 11, 2001, are now very well known internationally. The world now knows that the footsoldiers for Cheney's power-grab are the neo-conservatives, also known as the "chicken-hawks," because, although military hawks today, they earlier "chickened out" of military service in Vietnam. The identities of the leading chicken-hawks, many of their institutions and conduits, have become household words.

More recently, further exposés from LaRouche and others have put a spotlight on the the "Straussian" core of the chicken-hawk phenomenon: that is, the organization of the students of the late Leo Strauss (1899-1973) of the University of Chicago, with the students of his students (like Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz), their own students (like Wolfowitz's student Lewis Libby, who is Cheney's Chief of Staff), and so forth.

The duality Strauss himself built into this sect, is also being widely publicized: that on the one hand, he created the hard core of the "esoterics," like the late Allan Bloom, Paul Wolfowitz, Werner Dannhauser, Thomas Pangle, and many others, who share Leo Strauss's secret Nietzschean doctrines, and secretly view themselves as Nietzschean "supermen," a caste which Strauss, in his peculiar terminology, renamed "philosophers." But on the other hand, around this inner group, is the softer outer layer of the "exoterics," like William Bennett, Harry Jaffa, and quite likely Donald Rumsfeld, who are loyal to Strauss and his sect, but at the same time innocent of Strauss's actual views. Instead, they are committed to versions of traditional morality, patriotism and religion—commitments ridiculed by Strauss.

Just as Strauss called the first group "philosophers," he called the second, "gentlemen," using a more dignified term than Lenin's "useful fools."

## Alexandre Kojève's Cult of Violence

What is not yet as widely known, but now soon will be, is what could be called Dick Cheney's "French Connection."

It first came to light for us some weeks ago, because a friend had become puzzled at the lack of a doctrine of *purgative violence*, in the known work of Strauss and his followers,

at just the moment when those followers are plunging the United States and the world into what chicken-hawks Eliot Cohen and James Woolsey of Rumsfeld's Defense Policy Board, openly call "World War IV." What greater orgy of purgative violence could there be? In pursuit of the call for "purgative violence" which he thought must be found somewhere in the Strauss concoction, our friend looked into the connections between Leo Strauss and a man called Alexandre Kojève, as adduced by Shadia Drury, in her 1994 book, *Alexandre Kojève: The Roots of Post-Modern Politics* (New York: St. Martin's Press).

There it was.

Kojève, a Bolshevik in Russia until 1920, met Leo Strauss in Berlin in the late 1920s, and the two became lifelong friends. Although Strauss and Kojève claimed to have important philosophical differences, each one wrote to the other, words to the effect: You are one of only two or three individuals worldwide, who are capable of fully understanding my thought. All of Strauss's students knew this. Given the intimate connection, the Strauss sect should instead be called the Strauss-Kojève sect, headquartered simultaneously out of Chicago and Paris.

Kojève situated his ideas as a far-reaching commentary on G.W.F. Hegel's *Phenomenology*, beginning with the enslavement of the "slave" by the "master," as the first truly human act, since humanity equals the negation of nature. By risking his own life to conquer the slave, the master negates his own natural fear of death, for the sake of "recognition," or "pure prestige," something which is purely human rather than natural, according to Kojève. In this way, the master first becomes truly human. The slave, by surrendering to slavery through the fear of death, in turn becomes less than human. But in the course of time, the ancient society of noble slave-masters is ultimately superseded by the society of slaves, which is—Christian society. The "End of History," finally, is an "homogeneous universal tyranny" in which everyone "recognizes" everyone else as simultaneously slave and master.

Within this context, Drury describes Kojève's demand for purgative violence. "It is important to realize that Kojève does not lament the terrors of revolution. On the contrary, he places special emphasis on terror as a necessary component of revolution. For Kojève, man cannot be liberated simply by having Hegel renounce God and introduce an age of atheism. The liberation of the slave is 'not possible without a fight.' Kojève explains that the reason for this is metaphysical—since the idea to be realized is a synthesis of mastery and slavery, the slave must be a worker as well as a warrior. This means that he must 'introduce into himself the element of death' by risking his life while being fully conscious of his mortality. But how is this possible in a world without masters, in a world where everyone is a slave? Kojève stumbles on an idea. Robespierre's Terror is the perfect vehicle for transcending slavery. . . . Kojève applauds the Jacobin Terror that followed on the

heels of the French Revolution. It is 'only thanks to the Terror,' he writes, 'that the idea of the final Synthesis, which definitively satisfies Man, is realized.'

"Stalin understood the need for terror and did not shrink from crimes and atrocities—whatever their magnitude. This was integral to his greatness in Kojève's eyes. Kojève thought that the crimes of a Napoleon or a Stalin were absolved by their success and their achievements."

## Role of Michel Foucault

Kojève's student Georges Bataille (1897-1962) was a sociologist and anthropologist. Drury writes, "In Bataille's view, the deathlike state of modern life has its source in the undisputed triumph of God and his prohibitions, reason and its calculations, science and its utilitarianism. . . . The first task at hand is to kill God and replace him with the vanquished Satan, since God represents the prohibitions of civilization. To reject God is to reject transcendence in favor of the 'immanence' achieved through intoxication, eroticism, human sacrifice, and poetic effusions. Replacing God with Satan also means replacing prohibition with transgression, order with disorder, and reason with madness."

Best-selling postmodernist writer Michel Foucault acknowledges a great debt to Bataille and especially Kojève. Foucault's study of Pierre Rivière, a young man of the 19th Century who killed his mother, sister and brother with an axe, echoes Bataille's work on Gilles de Rais. Rivière wrote a long account, in which he gave the details of his life and the reason for the crime. Rivière's defense declared him to have been insane at the time of the crime, but "Foucault protests that in declaring Rivière to be mad, the court has silenced an act of protest against the regime of reason. By dismissing him as a madman, the court divested all his actions of their significance."

In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault bemoaned the extinction of "sovereign power," which he thought displayed itself most dramatically in the public medieval torture-execution. Drury paraphrased Foucault's argument as follows: "Sovereign power inspired awe and terror precisely because it allied itself with *death*. The 'spectacle of the scaffold' and its terror were its distinguishing marks. Knowing that the sovereign did not shrink from atrocities struck fear into the hearts of the subjects. Foucault's harrowing description of the public execution of the would-be regicide, Damien, is meant to show that sovereign power did not shrink from gratuitous and altogether unnecessary cruelty."

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