

# Responses to Fukuyama

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*The editors invited six comments, representing diverse disciplines and viewpoints, on "The End of History?" Robert Tucker's Quarterly at the end of the issue also bears on the subject.*

## Allan Bloom

FUKUYAMA'S BOLD and brilliant article, which he surely does not present as the last word, is the first word in a discussion imperative for us, we faithful defenders of the Western Alliance. Now that it appears that we have won, what are we and what are we to do? This glorious victory, if victory it really is, is the noblest achievement of democracy, a miracle of steadfastness on the part of an alliance of popular governments, with divided authorities and changing leaderships, over a fifty year period. What is more, this victory is the victory of justice, of freedom over tyranny, the rallying of all good and reasonable men and women. Never has theory so dominated practice in the history of human affairs, relieving the monotony of the meaningless rise and fall of great powers. As Fukuyama underlines, it is the *ideas* of freedom and equality that have animated the West and have won by convincing almost all nations that they are true, by destroying the intellectual and political foundations of alternative understandings of justice. The challenges to the West from fascism and communism were also *ideas*, formulated to oppose the success of the historical embodiments of Enlightenment principles which swept the world after the American and French Revolutions. Both fascism and communism constituted themselves as the enemies of the *bourgeois*, the unflattering description of the citizen

of modern liberal democracy. Fukuyama's rejection of the various reductionist accounts, such as those of economic determinism or power politics, of the struggle against these twin threats is certainly fully justified. It is not that accounts of the kind are ignoble and take away the gloriousness and freedom from human deeds. It is simply that they cannot accurately describe or explain the phenomena and must distort them to fit their rigid molds.

This fifty years of opposition to fascism and communism provided us with clear moral and political goals, but they were negative. We took our orientation from the evil we faced, and it brought out the best in us. The threat from outside disciplined us inside while protecting us from too much depressing reflection on ourselves. The global nature of the conflicts we were engaged in imposed an unprecedented uniformity on the world. It has been liberalism—or else. The practical disaster of the anti-liberal Right and Left has in general been taken to be a refutation of the theories which supported or justified them.

Now, however, all bets are off. The glance back towards ourselves, as Fukuyama indicates, is likely to be not entirely satisfying. It appears that the world has been made safe for reason as understood by the market, and we are moving toward a global common market the only goal of which is to minister to men's bodily needs and whims. The world has been demystified, and at the end of history all the struggles and all the higher dedications and

myths turn out to have served only to satisfy the demands of man's original animality. Moreover, with the loss of our negative pole of orientation, one can expect a profuse flowering of positive demands, liberated from Cold War sobriety and reflecting the non-rationalized residue of human longing. There will be movements agitating for the completion of the project of equality in all possible, and impossible, ways. Religion and nationalism will also be heard from in the name of higher callings.

Kojève's decision to spend the hours when he was not philosophizing as a bureaucrat preparing the ground for the Common Market was his response to the atmosphere of existential despair so fashionable in France after the war. He said he wanted to re-establish the Roman Empire, but this time its goal would be a multi-national soccer team. A serious man, he implied, would adapt himself to the vulgarities which would necessarily accompany the dull business of providing for all equally and the suppression of the anomalies of nation, class, sex, and religion. The existence of the Soviet Union which, according to Kojève, professed that its intention was to establish the universal homogenous state, was forcing the West to actualize the like promise contained in its principles. All snobisms—which is how he described the various reactions against equality—were being extinguished. This is a universal movement. The science, natural and political, of the West has won in the non-Western world, and it is largely Western nostalgia that wants those old, rooted cultures to be preserved when those who belong to them no longer really want them and their grounds have disappeared in the light of reason.

And it must be underlined that for Kojève and Kojève's Hegel we are at the end of history because reason has won, the real has become rational. Socrates' dialectic has come to an historic end (in both senses of end, final and perfect), because the last contradictions have been resolved. Everything that stood in the way of the reciprocal recognition of men's dignity as men always and everywhere has

been refuted and buried by history, i.e. the supra rational claims of religion, nation, family, class, and race. For the first time there are no essential contradictions between our reason and our duties or loyalties. Thus the world is now a feast for reason, replacing piety. What was a project of Enlightenment has, through history, become a part of being. The historicist who is also a rationalist must hold that there is an end of history, for otherwise there could be no knowledge and every principle, every frame of reference, would be impermanent and changing, even historicism itself. The end of history is both a philosophic necessity and a political fulfillment, each supporting and enhancing the other. The goal of philosophy, wisdom, is attained, and that of politics, freedom and equality, is simultaneously reached.

There are elements of Kojève's thought about the end of history to which Fukuyama does not give sufficient weight. The goodness of the end of history, and for Kojève it is good, consists in the possibility of unconstrained philosophizing *and* in the moral recognition of all human beings as ends in themselves. Fukuyama's presentation emphasizes the gray uniformity of life in "the post-historical" world. He says, "The end of history will be a very sad time," and almost predicts that he will rebel against it in order to get history started all over again. He finds the satisfactions presented by Kojève paltry, so paltry he does not mention them. However, rebellion against history is not criminal, Kojève would say, but foolish. To do so would be to rebel against reason, which no sensible man can do.

Of course, Fukuyama doubts that these satisfactions are as real as Kojève says they are. If wisdom, the owl of Minerva, flies at dusk, as Hegel says it does, is it not evident that the end of history is a night? Does the attainment of wisdom not mean the end of philosophizing? And is the peace and reciprocity of the market really moral or is it herd-like calm? Does not, finally, Kojève's thinking through of Hegel and Marx, the profoundest thinking through of that position, amount to a refutation of the claim that the end is a peak

and of the possibility that reality can ever be rational?

Kojève himself is the source of Fukuyama's doubts about the goodness of the end of history. In his later writings there is much to suggest that he began to believe that we are witnessing the ultimate trivialization of man and his reentry into the merely animal order. These writings were very witty, but one wonders whether he quite had the right to them. The note on Japan inserted in the second edition of *Introduction to Reading Hegel* to which Fukuyama refers is a case in point. I disagree with his interpretation of it. Kojève did not mean that in Japan history had not ended, but rather that there they had invented, centuries ago during a long peaceful period, an interesting way of spending the end of history: a pure snobism of forms, like the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and the No play, which provide graceful empty activity. The alternative to the Japanese formalist is the American consumer—stereos, power tools, etc. This he suggested would be the post-historical contest for the taste of the universal homogenous state: the Japanization of America vs. the Americanization of Japan. Nothing is at stake.

It would seem that Kojève had moved, or had always been, closer to Nietzsche's interpretation of modern man as the "last man" than to Hegel's description of him. The "last man" is such a degraded being that he necessarily evokes nausea and revolt. And if, as Nietzsche believed, the "last man" is the ultimate product of reason, then reason is bad and we must look more closely to unreason for hope of salvation. God is dead, and we need new gods. The consequences of this analysis are earth-shaking, and this is the thought of the most modern modernity. Certainly Fukuyama points in this direction.

These issues were addressed in a stunning debate between Kojève and Leo Strauss contained in Strauss's *On Tyranny*. This may well

be the profoundest public confrontation between two philosophers in this century, and the most important task of these remarks is to point the readers to it, as Fukuyama has pointed us to Kojève. They were friends, at the peak of their powers, differing completely about the answers while agreeing about the questions, and able to discuss the weightiest matters with levity. In it Strauss depicts the irrational culmination of Kojève's reason and asks whether the fate of reason is simply identical to that of Hegel. Must reading for today. Their clarity about the problems enabled them to see thirty-five years ago what we feel now.

To conclude, liberalism has won, but it may be decisively unsatisfactory. Communism was a mad extension of liberal rationalism, and everyone has seen that it neither works nor is desirable. And, although fascism was defeated on the battlefield, its dark possibilities were not seen through to the end. If an alternative is sought there is nowhere else to seek it. I would suggest that fascism has a future, if not *the* future. Much that Fukuyama says points in that direction. The facts do too. The African and Near Eastern nations, which for some reason do not succeed easily at modernity, have temptations to find meaning and self-assertion in varieties of obscurantism. The European nations, which can find no rational ground for the exclusion of countless potential immigrants from their homelands, look back to their national myths. And the American Left has enthusiastically embraced the fascist arguments against modernity and Eurocentrism—understood as rationalism. However this may be, Fukuyama has introduced practical men to the necessity of philosophy, now that ideology is dead or dying, for those who want to interpret our very new situation.

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