

# Eric Voegelin in Paris:

## The Critical Reception since 1994

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In 1926, beginning the third and final year of his Rockefeller Foundation fellowship, Voegelin left the United States for Paris where he would spend a year attending classes in law and philosophy. In the *Autobiographical Reflections*, Voegelin stresses his difficult apprenticeship in the French language and his readings in French literature, particularly Flaubert's *Trois Contes*, the poetry of Mallarmé and Valéry and, more idiosyncratically, the treatises of the eighteenth-century moralist Vaugenargues in whom he saw a precursor of Nietzsche.<sup>1</sup> [1]

Part of the fascination that Voegelin inspires results from the unusually profound combination of German-language and English-language, particularly American, philosophical influences on him, to the point where Voegelin cannot be labeled simply either an Austro-German or an American philosopher but must be considered as being at once a part of and above such categorizations. Voegelin recognized the importance of the great Western culture that lies between Austria and Germany and England and the United States, and the French language arguably furnishes the third largest contemporary cultural influence on Voegelin. But, I ask, how deeply can any of us penetrate into the third largest cultural influence on our thinking? Starting from the fact that Voegelin's analysis tends to be schematic-- Voltaire bad, Bodin good,

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1 [1] Eric Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1989) 34-37.

Sartre bad, Bergson good--we should ask: how deeply did Voegelin penetrate French philosophy? And how deeply will the French mind penetrate Voegelin in the twenty-first century now that, beginning in 1994, his books are being translated by Parisian publishers?

The first of Voegelin's books to be published in France eleven years ago was *Political Religions*, translated from the German by Jacob Schmutz who in 1998 gave a presentation at the Voegelin Society meeting in Boston entitled "Voegelin and French Philosophy." Between 1959 and 1994, Voegelin's English language books would occasionally receive short reviews in the French academic press, and they are listed in Geoffrey Price's bibliography. Reading them two themes stand out, and they will reappear in the reviews of the six books by Voegelin translated into French since 1994, four of them in 2003 and 2004.<sup>2</sup> [2]

First, Voegelin is considered to be writing from "a spiritualist point of view" such as in the following conclusion of a 1976 article in the *Review of Political Economy*:

In spite of its exasperating side, *From Enlightenment to Revolution* will be useful to anyone interested in the philosophy of history, on the condition that it is recalled that it belongs to the same current as *Meaning in History* by Karl Loewith, that is, it is a diagnosis of the crisis of Western civilization formulated from a spiritualist point of view.<sup>3</sup> [3]

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2 [2] *Les religions politiques*, trad. Jacob Schmutz (Paris : Cerf, *Humanités*, 1994). *La Nouvelle Science du politique: Une introduction*, trad. Sylvie Courtine-Denamy (Paris : Seuil, *L'ordre philosophique*, 2000). *Hitler et les Allemands*, trad. Mira Koller et Dominique Soglard (Paris : Seuil, *Traces écrites*, 2003). *Foi et philosophie politique, Correspondance Strauss-Voegelin, 1934-1964*, eds. Charles Embry et Barry Cooper, trad. Sylvie Courtine-Denamy (Paris : Vrin, *Bibliothèque des textes philosophiques*, 2004). *Science, politique et gnose*, trad. de l'allemand par Marc de Launay (Paris : Bayard, *Débat théologique*, 2004). *Réflexions autobiographiques*, éd et intro. Ellis Sandoz, trad. Sylvie Courtine-Denamy (Paris : Bayard, 2004).

3 [3] Bernard Cazes, Review of *From Enlightenment to Revolution*. *Revue d'économie politique* 86.5 (septembre-octobre 1976) 817. Translation of: "Malgré ses cécités

From this perspective--"Voegelin taken as a philosopher of faith"--, the critic of *The World of the Polis* and *Plato and Aristotle* in the 1959 *Review of the Philology of Literature and Ancient History* is inspired to announce his atheism proclaiming that Voegelin writes "according to a faith that I don't share."<sup>4</sup> [4] In French and French Canadian academic journals from about 1955 to 1980, the heyday of Sartrean existentialism, you sometimes see these fevered announcements of atheism. You don't get these in the recent reviews, but there is at times a resistance that recalls them.

The second theme I call the "guarded respect" category. In a 1960 article on the first three volumes of "Order and History" in *The French Review of Political Science*, the critic writes that "[T]he first volume retraces brilliantly and minutely the adventure of Israel." But also that Voegelin concludes: "[T]hat only Christianity will give to revelation as to reason, to history as to philosophy, their true universal dimensions." The reviewer is surprised by such a "retrospective dogmatism" and feels that "it is necessary to withhold judgement on the contestable vision of 'Order and History'" while recognizing an author whose "contribution is authoritarian but often

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exasperants *From Enlightenment to Revolution* sera utile à tous ceux qui s'intéressent à la philosophie de l'histoire, à condition de se rappeler qu'il se situe dans la lignée de *Meaning in History* de Karl Loewith, c'est-à-dire celle d'un diagnostic de la crise de la civilisation occidentale formulé d'un point de vue spiritualiste." All translations in this article are mine.

<sup>4</sup> [4] Édouard Will, Review of *The World of the Polis* and *Plato and Aristotle*, *Revue de Philologie de littérature et d'histoire ancienne* 33 (1959). Translation of: "Je n'ai point l'intention de railler, et considère l'attitude de l'auteur comme parfaitement légitime -- en fonction de cette foi, que je ne partage pas."

of the first order."5 [5] The tone of critics in this mode is: Voegelin is worthy of respect but I'm a little wary.

Understanding someone else's political cosmion wrapped as it is inside a cultural envelope is extremely difficult. Even getting the facts right is harder than in your own cosmion. In a 1981 article on *From Enlightenment to Revolution* in the *Review of Theology and Philosophy*, the critic opens by discussing this work left by "le regretté Eric Voegelin."6 [6] Which is to say, "the recently deceased Eric Voegelin" who was of course alive in 1981.

In 1994, *Les Religions politiques* is published by Cerf, a Catholic press. The critic in the *Philosophical Review of France and Foreign Countries*, congratulates "a clear and well done essay that deserved to be translated."7 [7] And in *The Louvain Philosophical Review*, the critic compliments "a virulent critique and a clear analysis of the rise of totalitarian regimes between

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5 [5] Pierre Hassner, Review of *Israel and Revelation*, *The World of the Polis*, Plato and Aristotle, *Revue Française de Science Politique* 10 (1960) 714-715. Translation of: "Le premier volume retrace brillamment et minutieusement l'aventure d'Israël," and, "Seul le christianisme donnera la révélation comme la raison, l'histoire comme la philosophie leurs dimensions véritablement universelles. On pourra s'étonner d'un tel dogmatisme rétrospectif chez un tel adversaire du progressisme historique et un tel défenseur du mystère ineffable. On ne peut que suspendre son jugement jusqu'à l'achèvement de l'œuvre, tout en reconnaissant combien des concepts et une vision contestables en eux-mêmes contribuent à éclairer des problèmes (allant de l'interprétation des *Psaumes* à la structure de la *République*) à la discussion desquels Voegelin fait une contribution toujours autoritaire mais souvent de premier ordre."

6 [6] Jean-Pierre Aguet, Review of *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 113.1 (1981) 91.

7 [7] Pierre Trotignon, Review of *Les religions politiques*, *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* 4 (octobre-décembre 1995) 566. Translation of: "Cet essai, clair et bien conduit, méritait en effet d'être traduit."

the world wars," but also regrets that Voegelin did not turn "to Montesquieu's opinions concerning the question of separation of powers, which would have given the work a more complete view."<sup>8</sup> [8] In 1994, Voegelin is entering the Francophone philosophical interpretive community and the reception of the three reviews I have read, these two and one from *Laval Theological and Philosophical* in Quebec City are all respectful, though the second French review has the grudging quality I have noted. The reproach that Voegelin has neglected an important French contributor to his subject, such as Montesquieu, will reappear in different forms later.

In 1995, Schmutz published an article on Voegelin in *The Louvain Philosophical Review*, published at the Catholic University at Louvain in Belgium. Its first sentence introduces Voegelin's two *compagnons de route* in Francophone philosophical discourse:

We seem to be assisting today, in Europe as in the United States, in a revival of interest in a political philosophy by authors who have built their work on the great tradition of the Classics illustrated by the writings of Hannah Arendt, of Leo Strauss, or else Eric Voegelin. But if the work of the first two authors mentioned is today widely known in the Francophone world, that of Eric Voegelin has received on the other hand a very marginal attention. The reasons for this ignorance are without doubt multiple and in addition to the traditional resistance of France to everything that comes from across the Atlantic, it also comes perhaps above all from the very paradoxical character of an *œuvre* that resists easy labels, etc.<sup>9</sup> [9]

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<sup>8</sup> [8] Paul Monville, Review of *Les religions politiques*, *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 98.4 (novembre 1995) : 658. Translation of: "Enfin et surtout, ce livre est une critique virulente et une analyse claire de la montée des régimes totalitaires de l'entre-deux-guerres. On peut cependant regretter, malgré l'abondance ces références sur lesquelles l'auteur s'appuie, de ne pas trouver, par exemple, les avis de Montesquieu concernant la question de la séparation des pouvoirs, ce qui eût donné l'ouvrage une vue plus complète."

<sup>9</sup> [9] Jacob Schmutz, La philosophie de l'ordre d'Eric Voegelin, *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 93.3 (août 1995) : 255. Translation of: "On semble assister aujourd'hui, en Europe tout comme aux États-Unis, à un regain d'intérêt manifeste de la philosophie politique pour des auteurs ayant bâti leur œuvre sur la grande tradition des Classiques, telle qu'elle se trouve

The order of presentation of the three authors mentioned--Arendt, Strauss, and finally Voegelin--is an indication of their name recognition and importance among Francophones today. Schmutz mentions the marginal place of Voegelin, untranslated and virtually unknown, in 1994.

Before then, however, there were French academics who, based on the American and German editions of Voegelin's books, took an interest in him. There is no Voegelin Society in France, but Pierre Manent, who has written at length on Strauss, a professor of Political Science who divides the academic year between *Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* in Paris and Boston College, Philippe Beneton, Professor of Political Science and Law at the University of Rennes, and Nicolas Weill, a journalist at *Le Monde*, among others, have written on Voegelin.<sup>10</sup> [10] In addition, Tilo Schabert from the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and the University of Rennes has lectured on Voegelin in France.<sup>11</sup> [11]

In 2000, when Sylvie Courtine-Denamy publishes her translation of *The New Science Politics*, a quantitative leap occurs. The publisher is *les Editions du Seuil*, a major commercial

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illustrée dans les écrits de Hannah Arendt, de Leo Strauss ou encore d'Eric Voegelin. Or, si l'œuvre des premiers est aujourd'hui largement connue dans le monde francophone, celle d'Eric Voegelin (1901-1985) n'a en revanche reçu qu'une attention très marginale. Les raisons de cette ignorance sont sans aucun doute multiples, et outre la résistance traditionnelle de la France à tout ce qui provient d'outre-Atlantique, cela tient peut-être surtout au caractère très paradoxal d'une œuvre rétive aux étiquettes faciles."

10 [10] Pierre Manent, "Strauss et Nietzsche," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 94.3 (juillet-Septembre 1989) : 337-345. Philippe Beneton, *Introduction à la politique moderne, Démocratie libérale et totalitarisme* (Paris: Hachette, 1987).

11 [11] Schabert spoke on "La Pensée d'Eric Voegelin" at the University of Rennes on March 12, 1991 and at the *École des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales* in Paris on March 11, 1994.

press, and reviews will appear outside academic journals in literary print media like *Le Quinzaine Littéraire* and *Le Monde des Débats*.

Ms. Courtine-Denamy has translated three of the six French Voegelin books, in addition to *The New Science of Politics*, the *Strauss-Voegelin Correspondence* and *Autobiographical Reflections*, both published in 2004. And according to her web site she is presently at work on *Race and State*. Ms. Courtine-Denamy is a translator, writer, and speaker. She becomes a figure of note in 1994 with the publication of her biography of Hannah Arendt, which is the major biography today in French.<sup>12</sup> [12] She seems to have discovered Voegelin through her exegesis in that book of the exchange between him and Arendt in 1953 concerning his criticism of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. She has done two more books centering on Arendt including *Le Souci du monde* (Concern for the World): *Dialogue between Hannah Arendt and some of her contemporaries* in which her letters to and from Voegelin figure.<sup>13</sup> [13]

It may be difficult for anglophones to understand the eminence of Arendt in the Francophone world today where she is not considered an important commentator of the events of her time but as one of the greatest minds of the twentieth century. The tone is exemplified by Julia Kristeva's trilogy on female genius published between 1999 and 2002, three books which analyze Arendt, Melanie Klein, Colette, in that order.<sup>14</sup> [14] In 2003, Jean-Claude Monod in

12 [12] Sylvie Courtine-Denamy, *Hannah Arendt* (Paris: Belfond, 1994).

13 [13] Sylvie Courtine-Denamy, *Le Souci du monde, dialogue entre Hannah Arendt et quelques-uns de ses contemporains : Adorno, Buber, Celan, Heidegger, Horkeimer, Jaspers, Jonas, Klemperer, Levi, Levinas, Steiner, Stern-Anders, Strauss, Voegelin* (Paris: Librairie philosophique, 1999).

14 [14] Julia Kristeva, *Le Génie féminin, Tome 1: Hannah Arendt* (Paris: Fayard, 1999).

*Esprit* analyzed the Voegelin-Arendt debate and came down firmly on the side of the Arendt arguing that the analyses of Voegelin "attached [as they are] exclusively to the 'genesis of a spiritual illness,' appear less rich and 'realist' than those developed by Arendt who includes in her genesis of totalitarianism an ensemble of historic, economic and social givens (imperialism, colonialism, etc.)."15 [15]

The reviews of *The New Science of Politics* are more critical than those for *Political Religions*. Jean-Luc Pouthier adopted the "spiritualist" perspective in *Le Monde des Débats* writing that "*The New Science of Politics* can be read as a radicalization of the Catholic analysis of contemporary atheism," and mildly reprimands the book's conclusion for not elaborating on why it is only American and English institutions that represent most solidly the truth of the soul thus offering a ray of hope.16 [16] Louis Aronilla in *Le Quinzaine Littéraire* also mentions the final paragraph of *The New Science of Politics*, destined, it seems, to irritate sensibilities in

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15 [15] Jean-Claude Monod, "Repères: Coup de Sonde, Eric Voegelin et l'interprétation du nazisme," *Esprit* 297 (août-septembre 2003): 208. Translation of: De telles analyses, exclusivement attachées à la genèse d'une maladie spirituelle, paraissent moins riches et moins réalistes que celles qu'a tenté de développer Arendt, en insistant sur la genèse du totalitarisme un ensemble de données historiques, économiques et sociales (impérialisme, colonialisme, constitution d'un prolétariat d'origine, crises économiques, etc.)."

16 [16] Jean-Paul Pouthier, "Les religions politiques, Eric Voegelin: les trois degrés du divin," Review of *La Nouvelle Science du politique*, *Le Monde des Débats* (juin 2000): 30. Translation of: "En fait, sa *Nouvelle Science du politique* peut aussi se lire comme une radicalisation des analyses catholiques sur l'athéisme contemporain" and "Voegelin voyait une lueur d'espoir dans les démocraties américaine et anglaise, dont les institutions représentent de la manière la plus solide la vérité de l'homme, sans davantage de précision."



France.<sup>17</sup> [17] In both cases, the message between the lines is: and what of our French Republican model?

A Parisian professor in *Politics and Society*, which is published at the University of Quebec in Montreal, criticizes "the outrageous simplifications" of Voegelin. In spite of the "rare subtlety" that Voegelin demonstrates in his analysis of "Puritan gnosticism," "the numerous passages where he mechanically associates the names Comte, Marx and Hitler are at the limits of the tolerable."<sup>18</sup> [18] The review in the French journal *Esprit* is calmer, but notes that "Like Leo Strauss, one can find irritating the simplistic side [of *The New Science of Politics*], of the call for a return to the virtues of the Christian tradition, to prudence and wisdom, even to a 'faith informed by charity' as solutions to contemporary crises."<sup>19</sup> [19]

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<sup>17</sup> [17] Louis Arnauld, "Philosophie et politique," Review of La Nouvelle Science du politique, *Le Quinzaine Littéraire* 787 (16-30 juin 2000): 17. "L'auteur met toute sa confiance dans les démocraties anglaise et américaine dont les institutions représentent de la manière la plus solide la vérité de l'homme."

<sup>18</sup> [18] Augustin Simard, Review of La Nouvelle Science du politique, *Politique et Sociétés* 20.1 (2001): 177. Translation of: "Nul doute que le potentiel explicatif de la thèse de E. Voegelin soit acquis au prix élevé de simplification outrancière," and "Si E. Voegelin sait faire preuve d'une subtilité rare dans l'analyse, par exemple, du gnosticisme puritain du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle ou du tour de force intellectuel (p. 162) qui permet à Augustin de clore la question de la *theologia civilis* dans la Rome impériale, les nombreux passages où il associe mécaniquement les noms de Comte, de Marx et d'Hitler sont à la limite du tolérable."



<sup>19</sup> [19] Jean-Louis Schlegel, "Sécularisation et mal politique moderne: propos de la Nouvelle Science du politique, d'Eric Voegelin," *Esprit* 265 (juillet 2000): 68. Comme Leo Strauss, on peut trouver irritant le côté simpliste de certains appels à revenir aux vertus de la tradition chrétienne, à la prudence et la sagesse, voir la foi informée par la charité pour dominer les crises contemporaines."

The first two books by Voegelin that were translated into French created the image of the anti-Nazi and the anti-gnostic. Two of the four books published in 2003 and 2004, *Hitler and the Germans* and *Science, Politics and Gnosticism* strengthen these images, while the publication of the *Strauss-Voegelin correspondence* and *Autobiographical Reflections* introduces more firmly Voegelin the philosopher.

*Hitler et les Allemands* is a translation of Volume 31 of the Missouri Collected Works. In its French translation, it is an interesting and expensive object. Designed as a notebook for student use, it is large format and printed with lines in the margins to facilitate note taking. The French version of *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*, translated from the German, differs from the American edition and, for me, is diminished by the absence of the article "Ersatz Religion."

Concerning *Hitler and the Germans*, Monod, the already mentioned *Esprit* critic who supported Arendt's position in her 1953 debate with Voegelin advances, other criticisms of him. According to Monod, Voegelin's vision of modern decline leads him "to flatten the differences between distinct political projects (the progressivism of the philosophers of the Enlightenment  la Condorcet, Comtian positivism, Marxist communism) all held to be commonly gnostic because progressive."20 [20] In 1979, a reviewer criticized Voegelin for neglecting Montesquieu, Monod accuses him of deforming "*les Lumières*" and Comte. In both cases Voegelin's treatment of French Age of Reason and its aftermath is criticized.

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20 [20] Monod, "Repères," *Esprit* 211. Translation of: "Sur le plan de l'histoire, sa vision du déclin moderne conduit Voegelin à niveler les différences entre des projets politiques distincts (progressisme des Lumières  la Condorcet, positivisme comtien, communisme marxiste .

In June 2004, Voegelin appears in the pages of *Le Monde* where Nicolas Weill reviews the Strauss-Voegelin correspondence. The article is entitled "Faith and Philosophy: record of a courteous disagreement," with Voegelin playing, as usual, the role of the philosopher of faith. Weill is more subtle than the average French commentator, however, and he brings into his article Bergson's idea of humanity as a site of tension to buttress Voegelin's argument against Strauss that in the meeting of Athens and Jerusalem, the contribution of the latter is not incommensurable with the former.<sup>21</sup> [21] This bias in favor of Voegelin's perspective is rare in France where Strauss' views are more compatible with those of the majority of its intellectuals.

Finally, in a double review of *Science, Politique et gnose* and *Réflexions Autobiographiques*, in October 2004 in Montreal's *Le Devoir*, a philosophy professor at the University of Quebec in Montreal, Georges Leroux loses the francophone "guarded" quality in his respect for Voegelin and writes the only article I have found in the French-language that resembles the kind of panegyrics concerning Voegelin that occasionally appeared in American journals of the 1950s and 1960s. While Leroux's tone is different, his article's structure is now classic for French-speaking analysts of Voegelin. It opens with the obligatory remark that Voegelin is little translated and unknown by Francophones, it passes quickly to the inevitable comparative reference to Leo Strauss and later to Arendt, her concept of the "acosmion." The summary biography is accurate, the reference to Frenchman Marcel Gauchet's well-regarded book *Le Désenchantement du monde* (The Disenchantment of the World) not surprising.

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<sup>21</sup> [21] Nicolas Weill, "Foi et philosophie: constat de désaccord courtois," *Le Monde*, "Des Livres," (4 juin 2004): 8.

Leroux's closing paragraph begins: "The *œuvre* is great, very strong and carried by a powerful comparativism that evokes Israel as well as China."<sup>22</sup> [22]

Voegelin's entry into French culture is being mediated by two figures who are considered to be greater. On his left is Hannah Arendt, the female genius, and on his right is Leo Strauss. Strauss' *On Tyranny* was published in English in 1950 and his *Natural Right and History* in 1953. They were both published in French translation for the first time in 1954. Thus, Strauss has been accessible to the French for much longer than Voegelin, though only in the 1990s were his less important books translated. Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* had a twenty year wait before its three parts were all translated in the early 1970s, but her other important books--*On the Human Condition*, *Between Past and Present*, and *A Life of the Mind*--were all translated within five years of their American editions.

Norman Podhoretz in his gossip book *Ex-Friends* describes a dinner scene in which Arendt mockingly criticizes English philosophy as being less profound than German philosophy. Podhoretz defends the English tradition.<sup>23</sup> [23] The unusually profound combination of German language and English-language philosophical influences in Voegelin did not take place in Arendt, which explains in part her popularity in France where, as Schmutz notes, there is a resistance to all things from across the Atlantic. Like Voegelin, Arendt became an American

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<sup>22</sup> [22] Georges Leroux, "Voegelin, penseur de l'histoire," Review of Science, politique et gnose and *Réflexions Autobiographiques*, *Le Devoir* 2-3 octobre 2004) F6. Translation of: "L'*œuvre* est grande, très forte et portée par un comparatisme puissant, évoquant aussi bien Israël que la Chine."

<sup>23</sup> [23] Norman Podhoretz, *Ex-Friends: Falling Out with Allen Ginsberg, Lionel & Diana Trilling, Lillian Hellman, Hannah Arendt, and Norman Mailer* (New York: Free Press, 1999).

citizen, but I think it is fair to say that she remained a European intellectual and never read William James and Charles Peirce with the attention that Voegelin did in *On the Form of the American Mind*.

The French resistance to Voegelin is in part a reaction to the Voegelinian resistance to France. In a 1928 article entitled in English "The Meaning of the Declaration of the Rights of Man," a young Voegelin concludes with a discussion of the historian Michelet's commentary on Abbé Sieyès's Epicurean defense of freedom and concludes with the sentence: "Michelet touches on the core problem of the French national psychology:  *paresse* (laziness)."24 [24] A bit of the same Germanophone philosophic superiority that Arendt showed toward England is present here. In interviews from the early 1970s, Voegelin describes the American Revolution as a successful conservative reversal of power and the French Revolution as radical and unsuccessful, a point of view that dovetails with that of the very anglophile, very American patriot Russell Kirk. Voegelin is not a francophobe, but he keeps his distance and does find in Voltaire, Comte and Sartre three very real sources of the spiritual crisis of the West.

For future work on Voegelin and France, first, from a literary perspective, there is the question of his fascination with Valéry's poem "Le Cimetière Marin," usually translated "The Cemetery by the Sea." Valéry was venerated in France between the wars as the successor of Baudelaire and Mallarmé, the nation's "poet." It would be useful to do a close reading of the poem with Voegelin's comments in mind and try to explain the reasons for his fascination.

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24 [24] Eric Voegelin, "The Meaning of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen of 1789," *Published Essays, 1922-1928*, The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin, Volume 7, trans. M.J. Hanak, eds. Thomas W. Heilke and John von Heyking (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003) 335.

Second, from a philosophic perspective, Voegelin and Bergson need to be read together. Nicolas Weill's comments in a journalistic context get to the roots of their common conception of man as a site of tension. Is there a clear Bergsonian equivalent to the Voegelinian "metaxy"? How do Bergsonian symbols like "creative evolution" and "*élan vital*" play in a Voegelinian context? Third, no definitive biography of Voegelin exists at present, but a contributing study to it would be a detailed examination of the year in France. Why did Voegelin spend so much time studying Russian in Paris? Why was there no French John Commons, or was there an equivalent figure?

Finally, a commentary on the role that Voegelin may come to play in the mainstream of a French culture that has its own unique historic dynamic.

The French victory in 1918 bought at a heavy price of devastation, mutilation and senseless massacre on its own soil, the national collapse of May 1940, the military defeat in 1954 at Dien Bieu Phu by Vietnamese communist nationalists, the humiliating end of the Algerian War and the abandonment of a million Europeans, mostly French Catholics, who washed up on the shore near Marseilles in 1962 and 1963 to be integrated into a nation who wanted to ignore their existence. It's not just that this one horrendous military victory destroyed the nation's will to fight or that its three losses were accompanied by capitulation to the ideas that defeated it, the French mind itself in the twentieth century entered a defeatist phase. Having never recovered from these experiences, then comes the invasion of American culture into its living rooms and centers of town adding another reminder of proud France's lesser importance.

How to assimilate a philosopher like Voegelin who struggles against the spiritual illnesses of our time into a defeated political cosmion that does not want to struggle? I wonder if it can be done on any but a superficial level. The test will follow the translation of "Order and

History" and the essays from after 1966, an enormous translation project which as of today has been avoided.

#### Books by Voegelin translated into French

1. *Les religions politiques*, trad. de l'allemand par Jacob Schmutz (Paris : Cerf, *Humanités*, 1994)
2. *La Nouvelle Science du politique: Une introduction*, trad. Sylvie Courtine-Denamy (Paris : Seuil, *L'ordre philosophique*, 2000)
3. *Hitler et les Allemands*, trad. Mira Koller et Dominique Soglard (Paris : Seuil, *Traces écrites*, 2003).
4. *Réflexions autobiographiques*, éd et intro. Ellis Sandoz, trad. Sylvie Courtine-Denamy (Paris : Bayard, 2004)
5. *Science, politique et gnose*, trad. de l'allemand par Marc de Launay (Paris : Bayard, *Debat théologique*, 2004)
6. *Foi et philosophie politique, Correspondance Strauss-Voegelin, 1934-1964*, eds. Charles Embry et Barry Cooper, trad. Sylvie Courtine-Denamy (Paris : Vrin, *Bibliothèque des textes philosophiques*, 2004).

#### Articles on Voegelin in French

Aguet, Jean-Pierre. Compte rendu de de From Enlightenment to Revolution. *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 113.1 (1981) : 91.

Arinilla, Louis. Compte rendu de La Nouvelle Science du politique, *La Quinzaine Littéraire* 787 (16-30 juin 2000) : 17.

Assouline, Pierre. *Actualités* : Les carnets, Hitler et les Allemands. *Lire* (février 2004) : 5-9.

Béneton, Philippe. *Introduction à la politique moderne : Démocratie libérale et totalitarisme.*

Paris : Hachette, 1987.

Birnbaum, Antonia. Compte rendu de Hitler et les Allemands, *La Quinzaine Littéraire* 858 (16-31-juillet 2003) : 30.

Bodéüs, Richard. Deux propositions aristotéliennes sur le droit naturel chez les continentaux d'Amérique. *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 94.3 (juillet-septembre 1989) : 369-389.

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