Fascism, Liberalism and Europeanism in the Political Thought of Bertrand de Jouvenel and Alfred Fabre-Luce

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On Private Life and Facial Hair

The private lives of our two protagonists have so far hardly been touched upon in this study. In order to explain some factors related to the post-war positions of Fabre-Luce and especially Jouvenel, it is necessary to consider them. Based on their post-war identity as, respectively, an outspoken and unrepentant extreme-rightist risking prison sentences under different regimes and a political scientist avoiding provocative statements while reading Thomas Hobbes in his Swiss village, one would expect Fabre-Luce's private life to be unruly and Jouvenel's to be that of a sedate family man. For a large part of their adult lives, the exact opposite seems to have been the case. While there is little information about his early years, in 1928 Fabre-Luce married Charlotte de Faucingy-Lucinge, a princess from a prominent French noble family who was an appreciated guest in France’s interwar high society.¹ Although the announcement of the wedding led notorious womaniser Drieu to write a ‘jealous’ letter of congratulations, Charlotte managed to escape Drieu's charms and the marriage seems to have been both happy and fairly uneventful.² Charlotte often accompanied Alfred on his travels, and they jointly published a book calling for the legalisation of contraception.³ The couple had two children, born in 1941 and 1942.

Jouvenel’s case was different. When he was sixteen years old, his father Henry’s second wife, the famous writer Colette, began a love affair with him. Soon after the affair started, she published Chéri, a book about a beautiful young boy being seduced by an older woman. This initiation into love by his 47-year-older stepmother, described by Jouvenel himself as a Flaubertian ‘sentimental education’, continued for five years. It did not

¹ For elegant pictures of ‘Madame Fabre-Luce’, see, for example, Vogue (November 1930), 53; Vogue (January 1935), 27.
² Pierre Drieu la Rochelle to Fabre-Luce (spring 1928), Fonds AFL, 472 AP 6. Reluctantly, Daniel Garbe addresses the possibility that during the late 1930s Charlotte slept with Alexis Leger, the secretary general of the French foreign ministry (and successful poet under the pseudonym Saint-John Perse), who wanted to take revenge against Fabre-Luce for attacking him in an article. See Garbe, Alfred Fabre-Luce, 142.
³ Fabre-Luce, Pour une Politique Sexuelle. See also Charlotte Fabre-Luce, ‘L’Exemple Hollandais’ and Alfred Fabre-Luce, ‘Nous Proposons...’, Pamphlet (12 May 1933).
fail to provoke a scandal, contributing to Henry’s divorce from Colette, and it only ended in 1925, when Jouvenel married Marcelle Prat, another writer who was seven years his senior. The marriage, which took place under considerable pressure from Jouvenel’s family who wanted to wrest him from Colette’s embrace, seems to have been an unhappy one, and Jouvenel had several affairs. The most serious of these was with the American writer and journalist Martha Gellhorn, whom he first met in Paris in 1930. Jouvenel and Gellhorn lived together in Paris, went on Swiss and Mediterranean holidays (where they once ran into Marcelle and her lover) and travelled across the United States in the ‘Lady Jane’, a platinum-coloured Dodge that they had bought for 25 dollars. Their marriage plans, mostly pursued by Jouvenel, were dashed by Marcelle’s refusal to agree to a divorce.

In 1937, as a prominent member of the PPF, Jouvenel spoke at a protest meeting in defence of general Edmond Duseigneur, a First World War hero who had been arrested for his implication in the fascist terrorist Cagoule conspiracy. His eyes fell on the general’s daughter Hélène, who was sitting in the front row. The two soon fell in love and would spend the main part of the rest of their lives together. It was with Hélène and their baby daughter Anne (born in 1943) that Jouvenel settled down in Switzerland, and from 1950 (with two more children) in Anserville in France. Jouvenel’s first years in exile were not only difficult in material terms, they probably also marked a personal crisis. While he enjoyed the quiet family life with Hélène, his past political engagements and adventurous behaviour continued to haunt him. In his private diaries, he painfully reflected on the intellectual mistakes of his ‘generation’ and those of his friends (Luchaire, Drieu, Bergery), while linking them to his own irresponsibility. After meeting with ‘Madame E.’, Jouvenel criticised his own ‘puerile’ habits of seduction that he claimed he could not escape practicing ‘every time’ he was ‘alone with a woman’.

The death of his first son Roland, born out of his union with Marcelle, probably further contributed to Jouvenel’s personal crisis. In May 1946, aged fourteen, the boy died of an unknown disease. While Jouvenel stayed in Switzerland, Emmanuel Berl visited Roland at his sickbed every day and
informed Bertrand of his son’s situation. There is little information on the bond between Bertrand and his first-born son. A year after Roland’s death, he accused Marcelle in a letter to Berl of having estranged his son from him, which he considered the main reason why he had not been a responsible father. Marcelle had given Roland ‘instructions to talk about her’ when they met and demanded that she always be present at their meetings: ‘it wasn’t me who charged him with a burden too heavy for a child, it was her.’ Jouvenel’s bitterness may have been inspired by his frustration with Marcelle, who, still refusing to divorce, was causing serious problems for Jouvenel and his new ‘illicit’ family. In a series of letters to Berl, all written in the last months of 1947, Jouvenel elaborated on the problems with his wife. Optimistic at first, he told Berl that he felt more tenderness for Marcelle than ever before, ‘as I wake up from the buzzing thoughtlessness of my youth’. He just wished that she would agree to end the ‘legal fiction’ of their marriage, for the sake of his children and their good relationship. Anne grows and develops an intelligence that is reminiscent of her grandmother: soon she will ask why her mother doesn’t have the same name as her father.

Since Berl was in touch with Marcelle, Jouvenel hoped that he would talk to her on his behalf. While Berl was reluctant to become involved in the connubial conflict, Jouvenel grew increasingly exasperated with Marcelle’s refusal to even answer his letters. When Jouvenel visited the United States and found out that his wife had followed him there, he wrote to Berl that he was fed up with the situation. Marcelle was free to travel wherever she pleased but should stop doing so as ‘Miss Jouvenel’. As late as 1952, when preparing for a stay in the United States and wanting to take his family with him, Jouvenel worried about possible problems due to his marital status. He asked Gellhorn for advice, who warned him that due to the ‘protestant puritanism’ predominant in American society he would be considered living ‘in sin.’ Just two months after Roland’s death, Hélène gave birth to a healthy son, Hugues. The contrast between the two events was almost unbearable to Jouvenel, who noted in his diary: ‘between Hélène’s success and Marcelle’s total failure there is a disproportion that haunts me.’

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8 Jouvenel to Emmanuel Berl (undated, late 1947), Fonds Emmanuel Berl, BNF, NAF 28216 (28); Morlino, Émmanuel Berl, 359.
9 Jouvenel to Emmanuel Berl (9 November 1947); Jouvenel to Berl (undated, November/December 1947), Fonds Émmanuel Berl.
10 Jouvenel to Emmanuel Berl (undated, November/December 1947), Fonds Émmanuel Berl; Martha Gellhorn to Jouvenel (1952), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (300).
11 Cited in Dard, Bertrand de Jouvenel, 202; Jouvenel to Wilhelm Röpke (undated, July 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
Roland’s death had a different effect on Marcelle, who became interested in communicating with her deceased child and started to experiment with automatic writing. Convinced that her son had saved her from suicide and was sending her important messages from beyond, she published several books about their exchanges.\(^\text{12}\)

\(^{12}\) Marcelle de Jouvenel, *Au Diapason du Ciel*. 
Any attempt to determine the extent to which these personal elements influenced Jouvenel's political and intellectual positions is speculative. Nonetheless, it is striking that his professional transformation went along with a transformation at a personal level. The pre-war raging journalist, ever in the vanguard of political action, open to fighting duels, meeting the important men of his times and seduced by the idea of an anti-bourgeois fascist youth revolution, changed into a cerebral political scientist who preferred a quiet life away from political turmoil. Physically, the change was dramatic too. The pre-war ‘playboy’ (in the words of Pascal Jardin) adopted the unfashionable looks of a sage. Although the 1946 newspaper reports about the monocle and the chinstrap beard were baseless communist propaganda, Jouvenel did grow a beard that was notable enough for his friends to comment upon it with disdain and disbelief. While Boegner was sure that the beard would affect his chances of a fair Épuration trial even more negatively, Colette found that it belonged in a movie rather than on his chin. Berl merely hoped that Hélène would catch Jouvenel in a moment of sleep to shave it off.

This was not the first time Jouvenel changed his course, as we have seen. Despite his fascist engagement, at the turn of the 1940s the rediscovery of a sense of national belonging prevented him from fully embracing collaboration within the framework of a German-dominated national socialist Europe. In the same way, half a decade later it was probably a combination of a personal crisis and a feeling of collective failure – of his ‘generation’, his friends and the political ideology he had identified with for a long time – that led Jouvenel to reconsider his positions and even his identity. This new identity was built upon the remains of the old, however, and in some respects his political thought changed little. Having discussed Jouvenel's proximity to the post-war extreme right in the last chapter, it is now necessary to ask how these elements relate to Du Pouvoir, the magnum opus that won him a new notoriety and set off the academic career that would dominate the second half of his life, as journalism had dominated the first. In a larger sense, it brings up the question of the relationship between Jouvenel’s (and to a lesser extent also Fabre-Luce’s) affiliation with fascism and the extreme right, and his integration into the world of early post-war neoliberalism.

14 Philippe Boegner to Bertrand de Jouvenel (21 March 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (293); Colette to Jouvenel (undated, 1954), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (297); Emmanuel Berl to Jouvenel (undated, 1945/1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (295).
On Power: Pessimism, Aristocracy and the Distrust of Democracy

Published in 1945, the almost 600 pages of *Du Pouvoir: Histoire Naturelle de sa Croissance* were the result of years of work. During the war years, Jouvenel spent a large part of his time reading and researching at the French national library, and the unfinished manuscript was among the few personal belongings that he carried across the Swiss border in 1943. To a large extent, *Du Pouvoir* was a continuation of the ideas and research that were already present in his preceding books, but two things were radically different: its unprecedented scale and the political conclusions that can be drawn from the work. Essentially a political history of humankind since the very beginnings of civilisation, the book analysed history as a story of rampantly growing state power, eating its way through institutions, human collectivities and ultimately individuals. Although translated as *On Power*, the English word fails to convey the full meaning of the French term. In the words of Dennis Hale, while the English term ‘power’ generally refers to a quality or an attribute, *le pouvoir* is ‘a thing, a force and ultimately an institution’.15

In a modern context, Jouvenel’s *pouvoir* meant state power, but it also included all pre-modern kinds of power and authority of a ruler over his subjects and territories. The concept had the convenience of bypassing questions of regime and form of government, which according to Jouvenel were of secondary importance. In his analysis, what was key was state power, a largely independent category with a particular agency that surpassed all others. This *pouvoir*, described as a ‘minotaur’ in the introductory chapter, has manifested itself throughout human history, constantly extending its grip on society and on individual citizens. Regardless of its particular structure or supporting ideology, Jouvenel asserted, state power in the end only served itself, its own growth and survival. Changes of government were often the occasion for an extension of state power and the replacement of weak rulers by stronger ones. Paradoxically, revolutions, albeit begun in the name of freedom, always led to a heavier kind of *pouvoir*: ‘First, there was the authority of Charles I, Louis XVI, Nicholas II. Afterwards, the one of Cromwell, Napoleon, Stalin.’16 Profoundly pessimistic on Western society’s

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16 Jouvenel, *Du Pouvoir*, 322. This observation about revolutions may have originally been Lenin’s. In his working diaries from 1943, Jouvenel relates how he received this Lenin citation from André Malraux, who read a part of his manuscript. Journal de travail, cahier I [20 April 1943], Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (37). Citations, French or translated, are taken directly from the French-language version of *Du Pouvoir*. 
capacity to invert this trend, he concluded by suggesting that the same powerful impetus that had led to its flowering would also bring about its downfall, after which there would be nothing but ‘an amorphous mass, bound for despotism or anarchy’.17

Written during the war, Du Pouvoir was inspired by Jouvenel’s experience of the conflict, with the French debacle of 1940 and the (impending) defeat of Nazi Germany four years later as the two main events. Jouvenel shared Hobbes’ view of war as the natural state of affairs ‘between two powers of the same kind’, while he also saw it as intrinsically linked to the growth of state power through history. War inevitably acted as a catalyst of state power (and vice versa) by the means of competition between states. In the modern era, this competition took the shape of an arms race and more importantly of a struggle for the mobilisation of national resources, both material and human. This law of political competition prescribed that any state that failed to mobilise its resources on the same scale as its enemy was bound to perish.18 Repeating the same explanation of the French defeat that had figured prominently in Après la Défaite, Jouvenel used this approach to explain how, during the first phase of the Second World War, Germany – a streamlined war society that mobilised all private and public national resources – was able to crush the Western democracies ‘like a cruiser’ attacking ‘a transatlantic passenger ship equipped with canons, on board of which the stewards continue to serve drinks to idle passengers’. Things went differently for Germany as soon as it came up against its totalitarian nemesis: ‘a country where, since twenty years, individual tasks are assigned by public authority: Russia.’19

Jouvenel’s pessimism was also reflected in his view on the direction Western societies were planning to take once the war was over. The plans for a post-war order based on social security would only deliver new ways for the state to extend its influence, and thereby its grip, on the lives of men. To make the state ‘responsible for all individual destinies’, it was necessary to equip it with tremendous means, with dire consequences:

Unfortunately, we cannot believe that by breaking Hitler and his regime, we’re fighting evil at its source. [...] How can we not feel that a state that binds men to itself by every link of needs and feelings, would be the abler to devote them to martial means. The greater the attributions of power,
the greater also the material means for warfare; the more manifest the services it renders, the swifter the obedience to its call. 20

It would take only one new Hitler to reanimate the whole infernal machine of political competition, with all other states forced to extend their military might and their control over the population in his image. To give, in the name of social progress, even more responsibility to the state, ‘as reassuring as its face is today’, meant risking the ‘nourishing of the war to come’. Waged by a still stronger and more totalitarian state, this future war would ‘compare to the present war like the present war compares to the French Revolutionary Wars’. 21

This view on war and the law of political competition was not the only thing that linked Du Pouvoir to Après la Défaite and other works from around 1940. The original version of Du Pouvoir carried the subtitle ‘Natural History of its Growth’, an indication of the lasting importance of biological and organicist impulses in Jouvenel’s thought. 22 Both in his treatment of early civilisations and in his interpretation of recent history, Jouvenel showed a propensity for Darwinist explanations. He acknowledged the existence of peaceful societies but stated that all human progress came about as the result of belligerent ones with a strong ‘will to power’. Only in these societies could a ruling ‘gerontocracy’ be replaced by a young warrior elite, achieving power and prestige through victory on the battlefield. He criticised monogamy for giving the weak, who belonged to ‘the lower strata’ of society, the possibility to reproduce, while in a situation of polygamy this privilege would have been largely reserved for the strongest warriors, considered the forebears of the aristocracy. 23 Noting that most revolutions broke out under weak kings rather than their despotic predecessors, Jouvenel observed that they were ‘not the moral punishment of despotism but the biological sanction of impotency [impuissance]’. While the people feared and instinctively respected strength and authority, they had nothing but contempt for softness, just like ‘a hesitant rider makes even the most obedient mount ferocious’. Equating political struggle with natural selection, Jouvenel concluded that the merit of revolutions was to replace these ‘sceptical and tired’ rulers with ‘athletes emerging victorious from the bloody qualifiers of the revolution’. 24

20 Ibid., 26.
21 Ibid., 27.
22 In the English translation, the subtitle was reformulated as: Jouvenel, On Power: Its Nature and the History of its Growth.
23 Jouvenel, Du Pouvoir, 126, 130.
24 Ibid., 326.
There is a striking resemblance between this last sentence and Jouvenel's description in *Après la Défaite* of the way German ‘athletes’ triumphed over the crumbling remnants of France's tired and obsolete bourgeois society.\textsuperscript{25} In the same way, his rejection in *Du Pouvoir* of parliamentarianism as a ‘lowering’ mechanism that selected its politicians for their docile obedience to the party line, their incapacity of independent action and their willingness to be part of a ‘political machine’ echoes similar statements made in 1941 about the mediocrity of France’s political class under the Third Republic.\textsuperscript{26} Similarly, Jouvenel lamented how, as a result of the 1789 Revolution, France had lost its guilds, social bodies and all other ‘associative instincts’ acting as countervailing powers to the state. This echoed his emphasis in *Après la Défaite* on the survival of these organisations in Germany as a reason for that country’s superiority.\textsuperscript{27}

Jouvenel was especially scornful of democracy and those who expected salvation from it. Rather than naively seeing it as the end of despotism and oppression, Jouvenel saw the rise of democracy as the occasion for a further dramatic increase of state power at the expense of freedom. The principle of popular sovereignty led the power of the state to become associated not with a specific will but with the general will. As soon as the state was supposed to no longer represent somebody’s interests but the interests of society as a whole, there could be no more challenge to its authority or a reasonable limitation of its power, opening up the ‘age of tyranny’.\textsuperscript{28} Thus, revolutionary France soon saw a range of measures that would have been utterly unachievable during the heydays of absolute monarchy: heavy taxation, conscription and the abolition of provincial autonomy. While under the ancien régime, royal power was limited by established traditions and divine sovereignty based on unchanging laws, the fundamentally variable nature of popular sovereignty gave the state potentially unlimited manoeuvring space that could easily result in ‘popular absolutism’.\textsuperscript{29}

Popular sovereignty in fact came down to parliamentary sovereignty, via the ‘bold fiction’ that parliament should actually be seen as a gathering of the people itself. Approvingly citing Rousseau’s rejection of parliamentary democracy as a system in which men were ‘citizens for one day and subjects for four years’, Jouvenel argued that elections were the only ‘very loose

\textsuperscript{25} Bertrand de Jouvenel, *Après la Défaite* (Paris, 1941), 37.
\textsuperscript{26} Bertrand de Jouvenel, *La Décomposition de l’Europe Libérale*, 440; id., *Du Pouvoir*, 402.
\textsuperscript{27} Jouvenel, *Du Pouvoir*, 428; idem, *Après la Défaite*, 195.
\textsuperscript{28} Jouvenel, *Du Pouvoir*, 380.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 47, 68, 389.
umbilical cord’ still linking the people to power. Instead of ‘power by the people’, there was rather ‘power over the people’ – a power, however, that was ‘the greater as it authorises itself through this cord’.30 Worse still, with the rise of political parties and the extension of clientelist networks, elections increasingly became ‘plebiscites’ during which the people delivered themselves to a ‘team’. Deputies could no longer operate independently and became bound to a party leader exercising control over their numbers. Jouvenel saw the ‘military’ behaviour of the Nazi fraction in the 1933 Reichstag as this development’s culmination point, while stressing that the communists would have done the same in French parliament had they had the same numeric weight. Democracy thus bred totalitarianism, since totalitarianism was nothing but a team that had – thanks to better organisation, propaganda, brutality and more shameless lies – overtaken its rivals and seized its ‘prey’ without wanting to let it escape again.31

Once this take-over happened, Jouvenel had little respect for the ‘outraged complaints’ of the members of the losing ‘teams’. Had they not ‘all contributed to this result’?

One man, one team disposes of immense resources accumulated in the power’s arsenal. Who successfully piled them up if not the others who never found the state developed enough when they were its occupiers? In society there exists no counterforce capable of stopping the pouvoir. So who destroyed these powerful bodies that the monarchs of yore did not dare touch? A single party makes the entire national flesh feel the master’s claws. So who was the first to flatten individualities under the crushing weight of the party? And who dreamt of his own party’s triumph? The citizens accept this tyranny and only start to hate it when it is too late. But who made them lose the habit to judge by themselves, who replaced the independence of the citizen with the loyalism of the party militant? There is no freedom anymore, but freedom only belongs to free men. And who has worried about educating free men?32

According to Jouvenel, the fundamental mistake was to believe that a political system could be built on the principle of popular sovereignty alone. Under such a regime, Montesquieu’s separation of powers was nothing but a façade behind which the pouvoir was supposed to hold itself in check, a

30 Ibid., 375, 388.
31 Ibid., 405, 410.
32 Ibid., 411.
situation that gave free rein to ‘a crushing of liberty like Europe had never known before’.33

Only two elements had been able to alleviate the historical trend towards ever more despotic state power: the authority of divine or otherwise immutable law and the existence of a strong aristocracy. If the legal system was considered changeable according to the will of the people, Jouvenel saw it subjected to the pouvoir, whereas divine law, which was traditionally supposed to be above the king, could maintain a certain autonomy. Praising the Catholic legal scholar Léon Duguit, Jouvenel specified this autonomy as possible only if society consisted of a profound community of feelings rooted in a common faith, giving rise to an uncontested morality and supporting a divine law.34 In other words, an uncontested religious mystique was needed against division and democratic despotism, just like the mystique of constitutional monarchy was necessary to end the political division of the Fourth Republic. Jouvenel recognised that universal human rights could theoretically play the same role, but he stated that they were much less effective.35

In line with statements both he and Fabre-Luce had made during the 1930s, Jouvenel continued to exempt the British parliament from his critique of democratic society. In England, he explained, the Bill of Rights had permitted the aristocracy to retain its historic role as a parliamentary check on ‘statocracy’. Due to its continued relevance as the guarantor of civic freedom, the British aristocracy never lost its prestige amongst the masses, as was demonstrated by its continued electoral support. The French aristocracy had been too divided and too stupid to play a comparable role, with the old nobility shielding itself from the new and both groups snubbing the higher bourgeoisie of state servants. As a result, France’s ‘plebeian elite’ had become ‘jacobinised’, turning its back on the nobility and working closely with the monarch, ‘so naturally a servant of royal power that it could only continue it, without a king’.36 Jouvenel cited a statement by John Stuart Mill about the essential difference between the English and the French people. Whereas the French were all too willing to sacrifice their individual freedom for the mere appearance of power, the English were less interested in exercising power but the more willing to oppose a power transgressing its traditional boundaries. Jouvenel concluded that in England freedom was a ‘generalised privilege’, the result of a process by which aristocratic privileges had gradually been extended over

33 Ibid., 431, 441.
34 Ibid., 456, 461.
35 Ibid., 453, 460.
36 Ibid., 286, 290, 409.
the entire plebs, which had been ‘aristocratised’ as a result. In revolutionary France, the absolutist instrument of state had fallen into the hands of a people that understood itself as a mass and saw individuals as subjects.37

Throughout human history, Jouvenel considered the aristocracy as the incorporation of its etymological meaning: rule by the best men. In the chapter ‘The Aristocratic Roots of Freedom’, he described how the aristocracy traditionally represented society’s strongest and most courageous individuals, who had alone been able to limit state power in its despotic voracity. He contrasted these ‘virile’ and ‘sanguine’ people with the weaker ‘securitarians’, who were overrepresented in the lower echelons of society. While the former group, dubbed ‘libertarians’, valued freedom above all and was willing to take risks, the latter put security first and appealed to the state for protection. Only the people with the first mentality could put up the pretense of real freedom, while the ‘securitarians’ contributed to the de facto subversion of liberty by seeking shelter with the state. Jouvenel specified that, while the effects of ‘heredity’ tended to conserve the character of the two groups, he did not consider them as hermetically closed. The aristocracy could develop ‘securitarian’ tendencies, just like the lower classes occasionally produced individuals of an outstanding ‘libertarian’ character. In the normal situation, however, the ruling classes consisted of the bravest men, while ‘timid souls’ sought protection in a ‘subjugation almost exactly matching their fears’. While recognising its fundamental inequality, Jouvenel still called this situation a ‘social equilibrium, because freedoms correspond to risks’.38

In modern society, the aristocracy had either lost its power (as happened to the nobility) or become bound to the state apparatus (as was the case with a new elite of higher civil servants), thereby losing both its independence and its ‘libertarian’ mentality. These aspirations were adopted by the middle class, which mistakenly tried to extend liberty to all social classes, including the ones that could not carry the weight. The exploitation of workers in the nineteenth century was a direct consequence of the abstract application of the principle of human rights, since it had imposed a freedom so absolute that there could be no more protection of the weak or restriction of the strong, leading to an ‘intolerable’ level of insecurity for the lower classes. After the First World War, with both the aristocracy and the proletariat looking to the state for protection, only the middle classes remained to defend freedom, but they too became insecure as a result of inflation and unemployment. This resulted in an ever stronger appeal for state protection.

37 Ibid., 497, 498.
38 Ibid., 507, 510, 511.
in the form of social security, which came down to ‘men handing over to the state their individual rights in exchange for social rights’. Western societies became ‘social protectorates’ like the United States under Roosevelt and Germany under Hitler, in which the state held all power:

The Minotaur is indefinitely protective, but it also needs to be indefinitely authoritarian. It needs to never doubt itself, and to convince in order to be obeyed: it unites the spiritual and the temporal. It combines the two powers that Western civilisation always kept separated.

With this description of the monstrosity of an infinitely protective state, Jouvenel directly contradicted his own longing in 1938 for an early-Islam-like fusion of the spiritual and the temporal under the authority of a revolutionary fascist regime. Likewise, there is a clear opposition between his negative reference to Hitler and Roosevelt’s state interventionism as infinitely authoritarian and his mid-1930s call for France to be inspired by the German and American examples. To a certain point, Jouvenel was aware of these contradictions himself. While working on Du Pouvoir, he wrote in his diary about his hesitation as to whether it would ‘at first sight’ not be considered strange for the author of L’Économie Dirigée to presently write an ‘indictment against the state’. While remarking that the ‘abuses of the state should not eclipse the economic disorder as we have known it in the period 1920-29’, he decided that he should analyse the interwar economy more systematically to determine whether its collapse was a consequence of excessive laissez-faire or the opposite. In resignation, he decided: ‘I will have to explain myself about the économie dirigée. It is the most unfortunate adventure that can happen to an author to see his formula receive an immense publicity meaning something different than what he was aiming for.’ For many other statements, Jouvenel would be spared the obligation of having to explain himself, since they were hardly different from his earlier positions. In a statement seemingly anticipating Zygmunt Bauman’s thesis of the quintessentially modern ‘gardening state’, Jouvenel described the ‘noble temptation’ of any ruler confronted with mankind’s ugly insufficiency to ‘garden in the disorder’ of society: ‘What a world ours is, in which

39 Ibid., 514, 519, 523.
40 Ibid., 529.
41 Jouvenel, Le Réveil de l’Europe, 279, 283; idem, Un Voyageur, 114; idem, La Crise du Capitalisme Américain, 343.
42 Journal de travail, cahier I [25 April 1943], Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (37).
children conceived by accident grow up like weeds, in which cities grow on the impulse of sordid speculations like blind beasts crawling among their own excrement.' As big as the temptation was to ruthlessly intervene in this mess to build ‘cities of the sun, inhabited by a nobler race’, Jouvenel warned against such thoughts. Intoxicated by such grand designs, a ruler may decide that ‘the happiness of a continent demands the full suppression of fermented drinks, or worse, the extermination of an entire race accused of having impure blood’. In Jouvenel’s view, only the ‘mundane wisdom of an ancient aristocracy can protect against enthusiasms that intend to be constructive but risk being incendiary’. These last words were remarkably close to his praise in 1941 of the virtues of an aristocracy that should have led France instead of its political elite of mediocre middle-class politicians.

There is considerable ambiguity in Jouvenel’s attitude towards force and power as expressed in Du Pouvoir. He felt little more than contempt for the intellectual capacities of the masses, who were permanently inclined to sacrifice freedom by seeking shelter with the state and allowing themselves to be exploited by its propaganda. Rebellious only against weak rulers, the plebs almost longed to be dominated, accepting ‘any masters as long as they show themselves courageous and severe towards themselves’. In Jouvenel’s description of rulers, caution about the consequences of unchecked state power was occasionally eclipsed by outright admiration for authoritarian leadership. Citing Oswald Spengler’s The Decline of the West, whose fundamental pessimism about the course of Western civilisation he shared, Jouvenel stressed that there was always and inescapably an ‘egoistic’ component to state power. Any ruler, as altruistic or democratic as his motives may be, would be transformed intellectually ‘and almost physically’ through the exercise of power, to the point of becoming an Übermensch-like version of himself. It was lonely at the top:

The command is an attitude. One breathes a different air there, one discovers other perspectives than down in the valleys of obedience. The passion of order, the architectural genius that our species has been endowed with, deploy themselves. From high up in his tower, this enlarged man sees what he could forge from the squirming masses that he dominates.

43 Jouvenel, Du Pouvoir, 527. See also Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust, 13; Griffin, ‘Modernity under the New Order’, in A Fascist Century, ed. Feldman, 43.
44 Jouvenel, Du Pouvoir, 528; idem, La Décomposition de l’Europe Libérale, 439.
45 Jouvenel, Du Pouvoir, 518.
46 Ibid., 179.
Just as Jouvenel evolved little in his contempt for the weak and powerless and his admiration for the courage, power and physical strength of an elite, so too was there little change in the people whom he deemed deserving of admiration. He dropped his earlier fascist praise of the land-working peasantry, the ‘families rooted in the earth’, at the expense of traders. Rather than attacking the ‘mercantile spirit’ of the English, Jouvenel now ranked intrepid risk-taking merchants amongst his aristocratic heroes. At the same time, in a distinction also inspired by Spengler, he remained dismissive about capitalism’s industrial elite, which he accused of having lost its mass support due to financial speculation and risk-avoiding behaviour, just like the Roman patriciate who had been defeated by the emperors after degenerating from austere military leaders into greedy capitalists illegally enriching themselves and practicing usury. There remained a certain similarity between Jouvenel’s glorification of courageous, severe, quasi-military aristocratic leaders – superior men avoiding the comforts of an easy life and being rewarded for that choice with freedom – and his earlier praise of the bravery of fascist youth avoiding the comforts of bourgeois society and preferring a life of risk, joy and heroism.

A Mountain in Switzerland: Neoliberalism and the Mont Pèlerin Society

Published in Geneva as part of the Cheval Ailé’s collection of fascist and collaborationist books, *Du Pouvoir* initially failed to draw much attention in France. Hardly a bestseller, the book also suffered from unavailability in France, and it took Jouvenel decades (and a long-running financial conflict with Bourquin) to solve this problem by buying back the rights and republishing *Du Pouvoir* with a French editor. The *Écrits de Paris* was one of the few newspapers to publish a (largely positive) review of the book. Fabre-Luce repeatedly cited the book with approval, and a few friends wrote Jouvenel to congratulate him with his magnum opus (or to tell him

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47 Jouvenel, *Du Pouvoir*, 518; idem, ‘Comment on Restaure un Pays’, *L’Émancipation Nationale* (1 October 1937).
49 See the correspondence between Jouvenel, Constant Bourquin and Le Cheval Ailé (1952, 1954, 1964) included in the folder ‘Éditions du Cheval Ailé’, Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (296). *Du Pouvoir* was finally published in France by Hachette in 1972.
they had not yet finished reading it). The book’s breakthrough came from outside the French-speaking world.\textsuperscript{50} In Italy, the renowned philosopher and president of the liberal party Benedetto Croce was immediately interested in \textit{Du Pouvoir}, and he discussed it (albeit critically) in two articles. Thanks to Croce’s support and an intervention by the German economist Wilhelm Röpke, who also lived in Switzerland and had become a close friend of Jouvenel, several Italian editors became interested in the book, publishing a translation in Milan in August 1947. Röpke also tried to interest his Swiss publisher in a German translation, but in vain.\textsuperscript{51}

In his criticism of the ‘voracity’ of state power in \textit{Du Pouvoir}, Jouvenel described how the state would not tolerate any other societal power to exist besides itself. If unchecked, this process would result in ‘social atomisation, the rupture of all particular links between men only held together by their common serfdom to the state’.\textsuperscript{52} Although it is almost certain that when writing these lines, Jouvenel was unfamiliar with Friedrich Hayek and his \textit{Road to Serfdom} (1944), readers who were could not help but notice the similarity of the two books. Both Hayek and Jouvenel analysed fascism and communism not as political aberrations but as the results of a larger trend in Western societies towards ever greater state power. Both saw totalitarianism as a permanently looming presence inside democratic society and warned that planning and social security represented a major step towards it. In terms of positioning and self-image, both claimed to represent the voice of reason, a tiny minority in an age of passions and fanaticism.\textsuperscript{53} Hayek himself enthusiastically reviewed Jouvenel’s book in \textit{Time and Tide}, praising it as a ‘monumental study’ that provided a ‘masterly and frightening picture of the impersonal mechanisms by which power tends to expand until it engulfs the whole of society’\textsuperscript{54}.

To a large extent, this explains why, upon its publication in the United States in 1949, \textit{On Power} had such a large impact. By that time, \textit{The Road to Serfdom} had become a bestseller that had provoked reactions from both sides of the political spectrum, and Jouvenel’s book was immediately interpreted as an important Hayekian publication. Within months of its publication, \textit{On Power} was reviewed in all the major American newspapers, with reactions ranging from enthusiasm (including the obligatory Tocqueville comparison)

\textsuperscript{50} Fabre-Luce, \textit{Hors d’Atteinte}, 110; idem, \textit{Le Siècle Prend Figure}, 156.

\textsuperscript{51} Dard, \textit{Bertrand de Jouvenel}, 243; 247; Wilhelm Röpke to Jouvenel (20 September 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305); Jouvenel, \textit{Il Potere}.

\textsuperscript{52} Jouvenel, \textit{Du Pouvoir}, 255.

\textsuperscript{53} Hayek, \textit{The Road to Serfdom}, 70, 185, 239.

\textsuperscript{54} Cited in De Dijn, ‘Bertrand de Jouvenel and the Revolt Against the State’, 382.
to outright dismissal as capitalist propaganda, depending largely on the newspaper’s political orientation. This is not to say that Jouvenel and Hayek agreed on everything. Besides needing only a third of the number of pages of Jouvenel’s book, Hayek also did not share Jouvenel’s distrust of party politics, and he was less pessimistic about democracy’s chances of survival. Whereas Hayek cited Spengler (especially his *Preußentum und Sozialismus*) only to describe the danger of his ideas and to associate Nazism with socialism, Jouvenel approvingly used his analytical concepts. While Hayek concluded with a plea to return to something not far removed from classical liberalism, Jouvenel dismissed classical liberalism as ‘fully utopian’ for its completely mistaken idea of state power and how to limit it.

In the UK, *On Power* was published in October 1948 and was almost as successful. British interest in the book was considerable, mainly thanks to a laudatory commentary on *Du Pouvoir* by D. W. Brogan (who also prefaced the English translation) published on the first page of the *Times Literary Supplement* in early 1946. Jouvenel received a less flattering review in *The New York Times*, where Hugh Trevor-Roper ripped the ‘pretentious’ book apart and called its author ‘a laboriously learned man who has not learned to think’.

Hans Morgenthau had very mixed feelings about the book, praising Jouvenel’s ‘relevant diagnosis’ of the totalitarianism present within modern masses-oriented democracy while criticising his partiality and ‘backward-looking romantic artistocratism which follows in the footsteps of Bonald, de Maistre, de Tocqueville, and Taine’. All in all, Morgenthau’s impression was ‘not unlike Spengler’s: irritation over much that is obviously one-sided and false and admiration for a political thinker of the first order who has something important to say’.

The American and British success of Jouvenel’s magnum opus marked an important step in Jouvenel’s career. It opened doors for him at ‘Anglo-Saxon’ universities, starting with Manchester and Cambridge’s Corpus Christi College, where he lectured on socialism and income redistribution during the autumn of 1949. This was soon followed by stints at Yale and Berkeley. The Cambridge lectures, in which he criticised socialism’s ‘disastrous’ fall into ‘enlightened despotism’, were published in 1952. In the preface, Jouvenel thanked Ely Devons, Willmoore Kendall and Milton Friedman

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for proofreading and helping eliminate the ‘economic barbarisms’ from the
text – a striking illustration of his degree of integration into an international
community of mostly conservative economic scholars.59 In an exchange of
letters from the time, Friedman reprimanded Jouvenel for several ‘erroneous
statements’ about national income and welfare economics. He told Jouvenel
that even if his ‘heart’ was with him, his ‘instinct of workmanship in this
instance’ was not.60

The overseas fame of Jouvenel’s book soon combined with his chance
presence in Switzerland to make him one of the key personalities in the
international network of early post-war neoliberalism. This is remarkable
given that, despite neoliberalism’s important French roots, Jouvenel had
almost no connections with this milieu until 1944. At the unofficial birth
hour of neoliberalism – the Colloque Walter Lippmann held in Paris in
August 1938 – Jouvenel was a prominent member of the PPF and seemingly
far removed from the small community of academics, industrialists and
journalists who wanted to revitalise a liberalism that they cherished but
deemed unadapted to modern challenges. The colloquium met at the initia-
tive of Louis Rougier, a philosophy professor at the University of Besançon
who advocated an eclectic mixture of logical positivism, anti-rationalism,
anti-Bergsonism and anti-democratic elitism borrowed from Vilfredo Pareto
and Gustave Le Bon. The only French member of the Vienna Circle, Rougier
differed from most other logical positivists in his political convictions,
which were markedly on the right. In a critique of ‘the democratic mystique’
published in 1929, he attacked the democratic ideal’s egalitarian messian-
ism, which he blamed for paving the way for Marxism and Bolshevism.61
Rougier firmly believed in the fundamental distinction between the elite
and the masses, denouncing the latter as ‘ignorant and self-important’ and
their reign as ‘synonymous with commonness, vulgarity and boredom’.
According to Rougier, liberal societies ultimately faced the choice between
the rights of the citizen and the principle of popular sovereignty, and he
urged them to choose the former.62

As equally hostile to the planning agenda of the French left as to the
right’s admiration of fascist state intervention, Rougier was convinced by the
coming to power of the Popular Front that he needed to mobilise his consid-
erable international academic network and lead ‘an international crusade in

59 Jouvenel, The Ethics of Redistribution, ix, 47.
60 Milton Friedman to Jouvenel (15 April 1952), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (300).
61 Denord, Néolibéralisme Version Française, 96, 97.
favour of constructive liberalism’. In 1938, he seized the opportunity of a Paris visit of the American journalist Walter Lippmann, author of *The Good Society*, to organise a colloquium to discuss the book with the author and like-minded intellectuals. Lippmann was reluctant at first, especially after hearing that Rougier was planning to also invite Paul Baudouin and Marcel Bourgeois, who had both financed the PPF and other fascist movements in France, but the presence of Hayek and Ludwig von Mises finally convinced him to agree to a ‘restricted and closed conference’ to discuss his book’s ‘main thesis’. Meeting in the last days of August amidst high international tensions, the colloquium was attended by French economists, businessmen, academics and higher state officials (Louis Baudin, Ernest Mercier, Auguste Detoeuf, Louis Marlio, Jacques Rueff, Raymond Aron, Robert Marjolin) and what in retrospect was a very prestigious community of foreign academics and intellectuals: Hayek, Röpke, Mises, Alexander Rüstow, Michael Polanyi, Stefan Possony and Alfred Schütz. Politicians were the only group explicitly excluded from this almost ecumenical meeting.

Notwithstanding the diversity of ideas expressed at the colloquium and its often lengthy and inconclusive discussions during which Lippmann drew sketches to amuse himself, the meeting did lead to lasting results. Firstly, a name for the new creed was intensively discussed. Out of all the different names suggested – including ‘individualism’ (Baudin), ‘positive liberalism’ (Rougier) or even ‘left-wing liberalism’ (Rueff) – Rüstow’s proposal of ‘neoliberalism’ gradually established itself in the wake of the colloquium. Despite its potentially troubling association with neosocialism, the term has proven its staying power up to the present day, possibly also because very few people are familiar with Déat’s search for an anti-Marxist and national kind of socialism. Secondly, a manifesto was unanimously accepted that established several principles that went beyond classical liberalism. This ‘Agenda of Liberalism’, taken directly from Lippmann’s presentation at the colloquium, gave the state the duty to determine the legal framework for the national economy and asserted that the state should not only bear responsibility for internal security and national defence but also for social insurances, social services, education and scientific research.

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Thirdly, the colloquium led to the foundation of an international organisation to support the new ideology. Both a study centre and a propaganda organisation, the Centre International d’Études pour la Rénovation du Libéralisme (CIRL) organised several meetings in the Paris Musée Social during 1939 and published a journal of which only one edition ended up seeing the light of the day, which contained the minutes of the colloquium. By June 1940, a second edition was in preparation featuring an article by Hayek that was a first sketch of what would become *The Road to Serfdom*. Presided by Rougier, the CIRL was based in Paris, while chapters were planned in the United States, England and Switzerland, headed by Lippmann, Hayek and Röpke respectively. Although the outbreak of war soon brought an end to the activities of the CIRL, its framework allowed the neoliberal network to survive through its designated national representatives, who acted as gatekeepers determining who was to be part of the movement. Thus, despite its short life, the CIRL provided the layout for a neoliberal International that could easily be revived once the war was over.67

In 1938, to be a ‘neoliberal’ meant to recognise the insufficiency of laissez-faire and the need for the state to develop an economic policy.68 In a metaphor by Rougier that Hayek borrowed in his *Road to Serfdom*, to be a neoliberal ‘does not mean to be a “Manchesterist” who leaves the cars circulating in all directions, if such is their will, which can only result in traffic jams and incessant accidents; it does not mean to be a “Planist” who gives every car its exit time and its route; it means to impose a highway code’.69 This statement was vague enough to act as the greatest common denominator of the neoliberal movement, finding the support of its different currents. From those convinced of the need for social security (Rougier, Lippmann) to those who saw these views as dangerous and for whom neoliberalism often came close to classical liberalism (Mises, Hayek), from future supporters of the Chicago School to architects of the post-war German ‘social market economy’ (Röpke, Rüstow): all had their own interpretations of what shape this ‘highway code’ ought to take.70

Both within and outside France, the Second World War led to a political split and a reconfiguration of the fledgling neoliberal movement. While a minority of French neoliberals joined De Gaulle or the Resistance (Raymond

68 Ibid., 120.
69 Cited in Denord, ‘French Neoliberalism and its Divisions’, 49. See also Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom*, 74.
Aron, Marjolin), most either supported Vichy (Joseph Barthélemy), chose not to commit (Charles Rist) or left the country (Marlio). Rougier played a shady role. Exploiting his connections with Vichy and the London School of Economics, he convinced Pétain to send him on a secret mission to London in October 1940 with the aim of negotiating a ‘gentlemen’s agreement’ between him and Churchill. This episode later gave rise to a bitter feud between Rougier and the British government, which denied that any such agreement had ever existed. Two months later, Rougier left for New York where he joined the New School for Social Research with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation. His Vichy activities as well as his refusal to recognise the legitimacy of the Free French discredited him in the eyes of his French colleagues, however, and ultimately even led to him losing his teaching position. Concluding that Rougier had proven to be ‘a rather malleable type’, Hayek and Röpke became increasingly reluctant to maintain relations with him. Lippmann, whose prominence as a neoliberal diminished due to his own shift in attention to other concerns, grew frustrated with Rougier’s many activities in New York, while he had advised him to remain quiet.

With Rougier discredited and Lippmann less interested, Hayek and Röpke were left as the central figures of the neoliberal movement. At the end of the war, both launched new initiatives for an international organisation, and both involved Jouvenel in their plans. While Röpke’s plans for a trilingual (English, French, German) periodical catering to a cosmopolitan intellectual elite fell through due to a conflict with investors, Hayek’s took longer to ferment but were more successful. After initially being distracted by obligations in the United States, where the success of *The Road to Serfdom* prompted him to tour the country and make countless public appearances in front of enthusiastic conservative crowds, Hayek was able to organise a new international gathering of neoliberals in early 1947. Convening on 1 April 1947 in a hotel on the slopes of the Mont Pèlerin, a low mountain bordering Lake Geneva and Vevey, the conference was attended by journalists, businessmen and academics – roughly the same sort of community that had met in Paris nine years earlier, albeit with a stronger American contingent. Of the thirty-nine men and one woman (the British historian Veronica Wedgwood) present, fifteen (including Raymond Aron, Baudin,
Hayek, Mises, Polanyi, Röpke and Rüstow) had taken part in the Walter Lippmann colloquium. Amongst the new faces were Karl Popper, Walter Eucken, Frank Knight, Fritz Machlup, William Rappard and Milton Friedman. The conference programme provided for ten days of discussions, meals and excursions into the Swiss countryside. It marked the establishment of the Mont Pèlerin Society (MPS), the reincarnation of the CIRL.74

By complete chance, Jouvenel’s house in nearby Saint Saphorin was practically a stone’s throw away from the conference venue. His presence at the foundational meeting of the MPS marked his consecration as a neoliberal intellectual, and thanks to his English skills he was the most active French participant in the discussions. While Rougier had been excluded for his connections with Vichy and was only allowed to join the MPS in the 1950s, Jouvenel’s acceptance was seemingly fluid, although there were limits placed on this acceptance. For example, there was no question of appointing someone with Jouvenel’s political past as head of the French section of the society, as was discussed for a moment. As William Rappard told André

Siegfried, whom he wanted to take that position: ‘everyone realised – and he himself the most, I believe – that for reasons you will surely understand, it would not be appropriate to ask him to represent your country at the council.’ Jouvenel’s successful integration into the MPS can be traced back to some prior steps he had taken. After the war, Jouvenel had been quick to establish contacts with Jacques Rueff, whose work he praised. He profited from his first post-war English journey to meet Hayek, probably in late 1945, and the two maintained a regular correspondence starting in the late 1940s. Hayek was keen on inviting Jouvenel to the Mont Pèlerin gathering, and Jouvenel subsequently became his preferred counsellor on all matters French. In return, Jouvenel retained an abiding gratitude to the MPS, and especially to Hayek, for including him. In 1951, when Hayek asked if he would be present at the Society’s next meeting in Beauvallon in southern France, Jouvenel replied: ‘Seriously, as long as I am on my legs I won’t miss your gatherings to which I am in every way indebted.’

The Beauvallon meeting resulted in a book edited by Hayek, *Capitalism and the Historians*, containing an article by Jouvenel in which he castigated ‘continental’ intellectuals for their increasingly critical attitude to capitalism, whereas the ‘business community’ had been ‘strikingly bettering the conditions of the masses, improving its own working ethics, and growing in civic consciousness’. Jouvenel agreed with Hayek’s analysis, expressed in the same volume, that historians had falsified history by creating ‘the legend of the deterioration of the position of the working classes in consequence of the rise of “capitalism”’, while a ‘more careful examination of the facts’ proved that the exact opposite had been the case. Jouvenel concluded by suggesting that the problem lay not with capitalism but with the ‘intellectual class’ itself. In modern society, intellectuals had lost their old primacy to an ‘executive class’ of producers who gave the consumers the ‘goods’ they desired most – an attitude that intellectuals eschewed almost by definition. Thus, jealousy mixed with an inferiority complex resulted in the intelligentsia pitting itself against capitalism with unjustified anger. In an earlier letter to Hayek, Jouvenel explained that the aim

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76 Dard, *Bertrand de Jouvenel*, 274.
77 Jouvenel to Friedrich Hayek (June/July 1951), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (301). See also Jouvenel, *Problèmes de l’Angleterre Socialiste*, 97; idem, *L’Amérique en Europe*, II.
of his contribution was to analyse ‘the moral condemnation of Capitalisme [sic]’ by various intellectuals:

As I see it, the success of Capitalism is linked to the admission of certain traits of man, those which were strongly and exclusively stressed by Hobbes (and Locke). Critics of Capitalism are those which [sic] either are unsympathetic to those traits (the Christian and Carlylean strains of criticism) or who do not accept the unfolding of the logic of favouring these traits.80

With these kinds of statements, Jouvenel aligned himself with a general critique of intellectuals that was developed by a larger group of academics affiliated with neoliberalism. Writers like Hayek, Raymond Aron and Joseph Schumpeter, convinced that they were engaged in an ideological combat in which the overwhelming majority of intellectuals had picked the side of Marxism, wrote influential works in which they attacked the role of intellectuals in society as such. While Aron famously described icons like Marxism as ‘the opium of intellectuals’ in search of a ‘secular religion’, Hayek notably denounced intellectuals as ‘second-hand dealers in ideas’ whose ‘all-pervasive’ influence had paved the way for ‘socialist totalitarianism’ in the entire Western world.81

Schumpeter saw the subversive behaviour of intellectuals as a function of the capitalist system itself. In his popular tract Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, he complained that ‘capitalism inevitably and by virtue of the very logic of its civilization creates, educates and subsidizes a vested interest in social unrest’. While under earlier systems of rule, intellectuals had been constrained by a menacing state power, the capitalist order was neither willing nor able ‘to control the intellectual sector effectively’.82 Despite sharing many positions with the neoliberal movement, Schumpeter never joined the MPS, and some of its members had reservations about his ideas. In a letter to Jouvenel, Röpke called his work a ‘disgusting book’, but Jouvenel read it with interest and discussed it in several articles.83 Although he seemed to struggle with Schumpeter’s assertion that a socialist system could function in reality, Jouvenel concluded that it could never be reconciled with individual liberty:

80 Jouvenel to Friedrich Hayek (June/July 1951) and other parts of their correspondence from 1951 and 1952, Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (301).
82 Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, 146, 151.
83 Wilhelm Röpke to Jouvenel (3 July 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
'We are moving towards socialism. But there is little reason to believe that it will signify the advent of the civilisation the socialists dream of. It is more probable that it will bear fascist traits.'

His MPS connections and the success of *On Power* provided Jouvenel with important ties to intellectual milieus of the American right. Directly following the conference at Mont Pèlerin, the American journalist and fellow MPS founding member Felix Morley involved him with *Human Events*, a conservative weekly he had founded together with Frank Hanighen and Henry Regnery. Between June 1947 and the end of 1951, Jouvenel wrote twenty-eight contributions for *Human Events*, first in the form of long articles and later as a monthly ‘European Supplement’. In one of his early articles, he criticised both state intervention and laissez-faire, essentially repeating his arguments from *Du Pouvoir*. Since the assumption ‘that the collective interest would also be served by the pursuit of the various personal interests’ was proven wrong, the ‘vigilant wisdom of a statesman’ was necessary to make ‘modes of conduct which are disadvantageous to Society also disadvantageous to the individual’ and vice versa.

Jouvenel also published an attack against Soviet communism and everybody in the West who was indulgent towards it – including Churchill, ‘who raised Tito from bandit status’, and De Gaulle, who ‘acquitted Communism’ of ‘sabotage’ during the first year of the war and allowed ‘Thorez, the war deserter’ to sit at the government table. For Jouvenel, recent history showed how dangerous this indulgence of communism really was, especially when combined with the financial ruin of the middle classes:

When these people have been despoiled, when it is understood that private property is not to be respected but that whatever faction gains the upper hand can alter the distribution of the national income to suit its partisans, when politics fall to the level of a tug of war between vote-getting machines. Extremists on both sides then resort to violence. The Communist army marches violently to the complete destruction of


society, and some Fuehrer or other always arises to rally those who seek the restoration of order.87

In spite of these depressing perspectives, Jouvenel saw hopeful signs as more and more people were finally becoming aware of the danger of the ‘savage imperialism’ of the communist block: ‘only last spring, when a little group of true liberals assembled from various countries at the Mont Pèlerin Conference in Switzerland, it still seemed as though we could not break through the curtain of haze, however much we tried. But now, with 1948, the break-through has come.’88

Even more radically anti-Marxist than Jouvenel, the editors of Human Events occasionally summarised his conclusions for the American reader. In December 1951, at the end of a long article in which Jouvenel explained the lasting influence of Labour in England, even after losing the elections to the Conservatives, the editors concluded that socialism was ‘a disease that penetrates the very marrow of the nation that tries it’. They reminded their readers that there could be ‘no compromise with Socialism. It must be fought at every step.’89 In the early 1950s, possibly via Raymond Aron, Jouvenel became involved with the periodical Confluence, founded and headed by the Harvard PhD candidate Henry Kissinger, who was at the time working on his dissertation on Metternich and Castlereagh. Kissinger, who counted on Jouvenel, Aron and Gabriel Marcel to provide his periodical with regular contributions from France, met Jouvenel in Paris in January 1953. The two established a long-lasting friendship that would lead Kissinger to testify in favour of Jouvenel during his lawsuit against Sternhell in 1983.90

During these years, Fabre-Luce lacked the international neoliberal connections of Jouvenel. He was in regular contact with neither Hayek nor Röpke, and he never joined the MPS – let alone that he would have been allowed to.91 Nevertheless, his public and private writings show striking commonalities with Jouvenel’s ideas and aspirations of the time. Fabre-Luce attentively read Du Pouvoir, and his reading notes show a propensity to focus on its political conclusions. From Jouvenel’s praise of the English aristocracy,

88 Jouvenel, ‘The Curtain of Haze’.
89 Bertrand de Jouvenel, ‘European Supplement’, Human Events (December 1951).
90 Henry Kissinger to Jouvenel (13 November 1952); Jouvenel to Kissinger (17 November 1952) and their subsequent correspondence included in Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (302).
91 While there is no correspondence with Hayek, a single letter by Röpke from 1951 complimenting Fabre-Luce on an article in the Écrits de Paris suggests that the two did not know each other prior to this date. Wilhelm Röpke to Fabre-Luce (11 March 1951), Fonds AFL, 472 AP 8.
Fabre-Luce concluded that ‘the system of liberty was a class system’, and he saw the Épuration as the logical consequence of the abandonment of divine law: ‘in 1944, we left the shelter of the constitution that still linked us to our ancestors’.92 Fabre-Luce also read Schumpeter’s *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* and he discussed Hayek, Rueff and the Colloque Walter Lippmann in one of his first post-war books. He praised *The Road to Serfdom* for demonstrating that a regime of perfect social security would eliminate the Darwinian mechanism of ‘the selection of the best’ and that a system of rationing always led to censorship. Fabre-Luce was critical, however, of Hayek’s tendency to simply describe any appeal for state intervention as an intellectual mistake. ‘One can expect the people to suffer certain automatic adaptations, not to starve without reacting with demands of intervention’.93

At the national level, Fabre-Luce took the first steps leading to his gradual reintegration into the French right-wing mainstream. The most striking episode in this process was his passionate correspondence with Raymond Aron, which started as an icy exchange of letters about Pétain, De Gaulle and their own positions during the war, gradually becoming more cordial as the two intellectuals discovered their joint agenda for the post-war period and their agreement on the necessity of a united Europe against communism.94 By 1951, their relations had improved to the point that they met for a beer in a Paris brasserie, enjoying the quality of their intellectual exchange.95 Fabre-Luce also renewed his contacts with Hubert Beuve-Méry, chief editor of *Le Monde*, whom he possibly knew from *Notre Temps* and surely from his visit during the occupation to the Vichy elite school at Uriage, where Beuve-Méry was the assistant of director Pierre-Dominique Dunoyer de Segonzac. Despite their strong political disagreement, Beuve-Méry allowed Fabre-Luce to publish several articles in *Le Monde* during 1952 and 1953, appearing under the ‘libres opinions’ heading that explicitly did not represent the newspaper’s own political convictions.96

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94 See the letters (1938-1954) between Fabre-Luce and Raymond Aron included in Fonds AFL, 472 AP 2 and Fonds AFL, 472 AP 3. A selection of their letters was published in Aron’s own *Commentaire*, any scholar’s blessing considering the utter illegibility of Aron’s handwriting: Casanova, ed., ‘Correspondance entre Raymond Aron et Alfred Fabre-Luce’, 593-617.
95 Fabre-Luce, *Journal 1951*, 175.
This General Feeling of Open Conspiracy97

Wilhelm Röpke was one of Jouvenel's earliest acquaintances in the neoliberal milieu, and their very rich correspondence, scarcely studied so far, provides insight into the doubts, pessimism, ambitions and obsessions of early post-war neoliberalism. It also offers an inside view of the practicalities of Jouvenel's integration into the neoliberal community. A cosmopolitan liberal and an outspoken opponent of National Socialism, Röpke was fired from his economics chair at the University of Marburg in April 1933 as one of the few non-Jewish academics targeted by the early phase of the Nazi Gleichschaltung. He subsequently served as a professor in Istanbul, where he had Rüstow as a colleague, before joining the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva in 1937. During the Fall of France, unsure about what would happen to Switzerland, Röpke hesitated about whether to emigrate to the United States, and finally decided against it. The desperate journey of Mises, his colleague at the Graduate Institute, who travelled with his wife through a France in turmoil and only managed to cross the Spanish border after Rougier intervened in Vichy to secure a special visa for him, probably played a role in convincing Röpke to stay in Geneva.98

Caught between his aversion to Nazism and a patriotic attachment to his fatherland, Röpke spent the war years in the relative security of a besieged Switzerland writing books reflecting his concerns. Internationale Ordnung (1945) was an energetic plea for a post-war international economy based on free trade and peaceful brotherhood and a vigorous attack against the ‘absurdity’ of planning. Rather than treating National Socialism as a uniquely German phenomenon, Röpke linked it to a totalitarian ideology that was at work in almost every country. For him, ‘fascism and National Socialism [...] are socialism as much as communism; all are variants of the totalitarian system shaped in its modern form by the Russian Revolution of 1917’.99 In Die Deutsche Frage (1945), Röpke applied this line of thought to the future of Germany. An attempt to convince a non-German audience of the possibility of a different Germany after the defeat of Hitler, his book was an exploration of the ‘historical and psychological roots of National Socialism’ and a sketch of a new Germany based on a de-Prussianised federal structure and a liberal economic system.100 Calling the concentration camps ‘a ques-
tion of system and human type, not of national spirit’, Röpke concluded that the aim for the future should be ‘to put an end to such systems and types, not to the nations in which they find themselves’. He found it ‘bizarre’ that ordinary Germans were now the object of an international outrage that would have been much more effective had it mobilised itself ‘twelve years earlier’. Röpke’s final chapter carried as a motto a Schiller citation: ‘Der bloß niedergeworfene Feind kann wiederaufstehen, aber der versöhnnte ist wahrhaft überwunden’.101

Jouvenel and Röpke met at the beginning of 1944, and the two soon started an intense correspondence, especially during the first years when their letters occasionally crossed each other.102 Writing in French during the first year before shifting to English in September 1945 – almost symbolic of the shift during these years of neoliberalism’s centre of gravity to the ‘Anglo-Saxon’ world – Röpke and Jouvenel discussed the political and economic issues that occupied them, discovering their shared agenda and the possibilities for establishing a community of interests stretching from ideological issues to a very practical level. In addition to their written conversation, the two also met regularly. Röpke stayed several times at the hotel on Mont Pèlerin, using these occasions to pay a lunch visit to the Jouvenels. This is not to say that Röpke initially did not harbour any doubt as to Jouvenel’s past political activities. In 1948, looking back on the growth of their friendship, Röpke stressed that he had always had the greatest respect for him, ‘even at the earliest time of our personal relations when, as you will remember and as you will not have found unnatural, I had to make some efforts to do full justice to you and to get your personality into the right focus’.103

In one of his first letters, Jouvenel praised Röpke’s *Internationale Ordnung*, especially for its analysis of ‘the wrong ideas from which we suffer’. Flattered, Röpke returned the compliment for Jouvenel’s *Du Pouvoir* (or at least the first half that he had finished reading) and announced that he had personally made sure the Geneva correspondent of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* would dedicate an article to the book. Jouvenel then convinced Bourquin to publish a French translation of Röpke’s *Deutsche Frage* at the Cheval Ailé, after which Röpke published an article about *Du Pouvoir* in the *Journal de Genève*. Röpke subsequently suggested that Jouvenel dedicate an article to the German version of Hayek’s *Road to Serfdom*, translated

101 Ibid., 219, 224n.
102 Röpke to Jouvenel (10 March 1944), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
103 Röpke to Jouvenel (6 April 1948), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
by Röpke’s wife Eva. Jouvenel replied that Röpke’s laudatory article was ‘infinitely precious’ to him since it ‘so strongly affirms the convergence of our points of view’. He announced that he was more than happy to write a ‘compte-rendu’ of Hayek’s translated book ‘in which I will try to establish the links connecting The Road to Serfdom to your work. It seems very important to me to affirm in this way the existence of a liberal current of thought.

In the resulting article, Jouvenel treated the French edition of Röpke’s Deutsche Frage at great length. Röpke’s analysis of the historical growth of the Prussian state, ideologically supported by Hegel, Kant and the Lutheran tradition, illustrated how in Germany the state had become ‘an immense depot of material power and moral prestige’ ready to be hijacked by the ‘Hitlerians’ through regular elections. In full agreement with Röpke, Jouvenel stated that rather than blaming the Germans for this escalation, a more general lesson needed to be drawn: ‘certain poisons are capable of a prodigious effect on the modern masses. Vast crowd movements can be caused, not by appealing to reason, but through a stimulation of anger and hope that truly is a demonic art.’ This implied, according to Jouvenel, that those who, ‘motivated by generous intentions’, were busy extending the state apparatus for social means, should ask themselves ‘if they are not preparing a prodigious dungeon for other madmen. Just like M. Hayek [footnote: Hayek, Der Weg zur Knechtschaft, transl. Eva Röpke], professor Röpke stresses how strongly all the ideas currently in vogue come from Germany and belong to a preparatory process that we can call Bismarckian.’

So shortly after the end of the war, not all were ready to welcome Röpke’s German history lessons. When Emmanuel Berl publicly attacked Röpke as a champion of ‘la bonne Allemagne’ who cynically blamed Europe for crimes the Germans committed, Jouvenel tried to appease Röpke by explaining Berl’s perspective. Although Berl’s assertion that ‘you accuse totalitarianism rather than Germany’ was essentially correct, he ought not to have condemned Röpke for it, since ‘the strength of your book lay in the fact that you represented totalitarianism as a malady which had struck Germany first, because that country had been rendered susceptible to it’. Jouvenel too had been ‘made uneasy in my mind by some streaks of German ferocity and sadism that are unimaginable to me’, but he was convinced that ‘visiting those sins on the whole nation [...] leaves little or no hope for Europe’.

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104 Jouvenel to Röpke (26 April 1945); Röpke to Jouvenel (25 May 1945); Röpke to Jouvenel (5 July 1945); Röpke to Jouvenel (20 July 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
105 Jouvenel to Röpke (23 July 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
106 XXX [BdJ], ‘Penchons-Nous sur le Chaudron Allemand’.
Furthermore, Berl’s harsh words on Röpke may have been motivated by his ethno-religious background. Whereas some of Jouvenel’s friends had been ‘killed or tortured’ by the Germans ‘for having actively resisted German domination’, Berl ‘has had friends and parents turned into soap not for having fought Germany but because they were Jews. These unheard-of crimes are apt to give one a bad opinion of the whole nation which condoned them.’ Disagreeing with Berl, Jouvenel found Röpke to have sufficiently recognised German responsibility for these horrors.\(^{107}\)

Jouvenel and Röpke indeed agreed on many things. In an earlier letter to Röpke, Jouvenel stated his ‘profound conviction: in order to save Europe, Germany has to be saved’. Since ‘all Western powers had their share of responsibility for the despair that finally drove Germany into the arms of Hitler’, an international solution had to be found.\(^ {108}\) Röpke thanked Jouvenel for his article on *Internationale Ordnung*, especially since he found the Allied occupation authorities to be ‘so terribly blundering in Germany’ and hoped his book would help ‘spread some reason’. He admitted feeling ‘more depressed than I can say’ about the future of Germany, especially when thinking about ‘the Poles and the Russians who are making of Eastern Germany a super-Buchenwald’. For a moment, Röpke nourished the hope that, ‘as non-signatory of the ill-starred Potsdam agreements’, France would ‘appear to be the real saviour of Germany by insisting on a federal solution’. Instead, De Gaulle and Georges Bidault had found ‘nothing better than the old separatist stuff’, leaving Röpke disappointed.\(^ {109}\)

In late 1946, a short trip to Freiburg (the first time he visited Germany since 1933) confirmed the worst of Röpke’s fears: ‘what the Allied quack doctors are doing at the German sick-bed is nightmarish. It couldn’t have been done worse.’ He was especially angry with the British ‘Labour ideologues’ for refusing him entry into the British occupation zone because they considered him ‘a dangerous sort of Neo-Nazi. It simply does not get into their little skulls that somebody who is a non-Socialist and anti-Communist can have been at the same time one of the most uncompromising and militant anti-Nazis. That is our world!’\(^ {110}\) To comfort Röpke, Jouvenel reminded him of his personal achievements and the long-term perspective of their common cause: ‘it seems to me you have every reason to be pleased of the influence that you exert single-handed [sic]. You have become an adjective: “this is a

\(^ {107}\) Jouvenel to Röpke (28 August 1946?), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).

\(^ {108}\) Jouvenel to Röpke (30 May 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).

\(^ {109}\) Röpke to Jouvenel (20 September 1945, 16 December 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).

\(^ {110}\) Röpke to Jouvenel (21 November 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
Röpkian outlook" is a not infrequent phrase.' Besides, ‘we have got a long way to go intellectually before we shake liberalism free from Ricardianism, and it may be a good thing that the full flare of public attention is not turned upon the Third Way before the old structure it is meant to replace has been entirely swept away. This is the time to sow and not the time to reap.'

By using the concept of the ‘third way’ in his letter to Röpke, Jouvenel was referring to an idea that played an important role in the specifically German school of early post-war neoliberalism. Röpke, Rüstow, Eucken and other representatives of German ‘ordoliberalism’ (named after the periodical Ordo that acted as their platform of discussion) developed a variant of neoliberalism that diverged from Hayek and Mises’ Austrian School in its emphasis on a strong state. Röpke’s view of a third way between Keynesianism and laissez-faire was based on a combination of Spenglerian cultural pessimism, fear of the mass society and anti-modernism closely resembling Jouvenel’s ideas. It bore the traits of an elitism that was deeply suspicious of capitalism and democracy. Ordoliberals exerted considerable influence on the ‘social market economy’ policy that was adopted by the German Federal Republic under Konrad Adenauer and his long-time minister of economy Ludwig Erhard.

From the beginning, Röpke involved Jouvenel in his plans for an international neoliberal journal, which he wanted to call Occident. He asked Jouvenel’s advice on other potential French contributors to ‘our periodical’ and suggested that he write ‘an article on Nationalism (in your beautiful French, of course)’. When Occident failed to materialise, both intellectuals had their doubts about Hayek’s alternative plan for what was to become the MPS. Röpke told Jouvenel:

I am not quite sure whether it would be wise to sail thus under Hayek’s flag. I dare say you are right in your judgement on his book. Would it not be better to march separately, though to strike jointly? Hayek is perhaps too apt to stress the stupidity of the people he really ought to wish to convince and too little inclined to ask what the legitimate grievances of people are. I also would make some reserves before accepting his tendency to lump together Social Democracy and Nazism. “

111 Jouvenel to Röpke (28 November 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
113 Röpke to Jouvenel (20 October 1945); Jouvenel to Röpke (11 November 1945); Röpke to Jouvenel (16 December 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
114 Röpke to Jouvenel (1 March 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
Jouvenel agreed. As ‘admirable’ as *The Road to Serfdom* was ‘as an aggressive weapon’, he found Hayek’s work ‘too partisan, too one-sided, to carry conviction. At least in my mind it leaves as an after-taste the feeling that the other case had not been put, that the motives of the policy denounced are insufficiently understood and sympathised with.’ He called Hayek’s proposal for an international neoliberal conference an ‘excellent development’, as long as the meeting would not become a ‘restatement of the *Way to Serfdom* [sic] but something new. Hayek seemed to me to be brimming with ideas.’ Both Hayek and Mises had spent too much time assailing their socialist opponents and too little time discussing their own positive ideas. According to Jouvenel, this was ‘good tactics’ but an unnecessary distraction from what should be their ultimate goal: the elaboration of a new liberalism.

Like Fabre-Luce, both Röpke and Jouvenel were convinced of the need for reconciliation between former members of the Resistance and collaborators, since the new global confrontation between communism and liberty had made these past quarrels irrelevant. Confirming that he received a paper by Hendrik de Man, probably sent to him by Jouvenel, Röpke praised the exiled Belgian collaborator as ‘an exceptionally gifted man’ and expressed the hope that ‘we shall see here soon a new alignment of fronts in which those old quarrels will cede into the background. Every day, the clash between Bolshevism and everything which is on this side of the ditch is becoming clearer and clearer.’ When Röpke expressed his hesitations about accepting a French invitation to deliver lectures in Freiburg and Tübingen, both situated in the French zone of occupation, Jouvenel drew an analogy to collaboration during the German occupation of France: ‘I am somewhat astonished that my compatriots, who have given to “collaboration” such an extensive sense, cannot put themselves in the place of the now vanquished, of the now occupied, and understand that ever the best things, that especially the best things must not come to the Germans under the colours of a foreign flag.’

Röpke hesitated between what he saw as his duty ‘to establish the contact between those intellectually starved people and the outside world’ and the fear of negative reactions if he made his first public appearance in Germany.

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115 Jouvenel to Röpke (undated, 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
116 Jouvenel to Röpke (28 November 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
117 Röpke to Jouvenel (20 September 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
118 Röpke to Jouvenel (11 November 1945); Jouvenel to Röpke (November 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
since 1933 as the official guest of an occupying power. Jouvenel responded that he faced the same moral dilemma towards his own fatherland. Claiming that he had been asked to resume his activities as an international reporter for the Paris big press, he was unwilling to subject himself to signing a declaration of twenty-four points about his behaviour under the occupation. Although he fulfilled the criteria and the doors were ‘wide open’ to him, Jouvenel did not want ‘to cross a door which is unjustly closed to some. During the occupation I refused a subvention of a scientific character because it would not have been open to a jew or a free-mason. Since there was a discrimination, I didn’t want it. Now can we subscribe to another discrimination? I think not.”119 Three years later, Röpke had fewer scruples accepting an invitation to hold lectures as an official guest of Francoist Spain: ‘Despite everything the “incorruptibles” might say, I really think I ought to go.”120

Both Röpke and Jouvenel were frustrated with what they saw as the weak or overly sympathetic attitude of Western politicians and media towards Soviet communism, which for Jouvenel came down to ‘a policy of appeasement’. At the same time, they shrunk back from the risk of war implied by a firm stance towards ‘the cynical imperialism of the East’, since this would come down to ‘a surgical operation which the ailing and weakened body of the Occident cannot well bear’.121 This dilemma led Jouvenel to draw a parallel with his own activities in favour of rapprochement with Hitler during the 1930s. He wrote to Röpke explaining that a decade earlier his own ‘pacifism’ had made him try to ‘understand’ Germany as others are trying today to ‘understand’ Russia. I was blamed then for this ‘understandingness’ by the very people who practise it with Russia to day. The outcome showed I was wrong and I could not preserve my attitude to the end. Munich was the turning point for me. Now if I was wrong, the people who do the same today must be wrong too.122

One is struck by the general tone of the Jouvenel-Röpke correspondence, in which pessimism about world affairs was mixed with the conviction of representing a tiny elite of reasonable people in a world possessed by madness

119 Röpke to Jouvenel (14 November 1945); Jouvenel to Röpke (10 August 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
120 Röpke to Jouvenel (16 December 1948), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
121 Jouvenel to Röpke (1 October 1945, 22 December 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
122 Jouvenel to Röpke (3 February 1946), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
and fury. Just like Hayek, who regretted that his movement lacked a ‘liberal Utopia’ and harboured a jealous admiration for the courage and dedication of the socialist militant, Jouvenel and Röpke were convinced that their ideas lacked the ‘mystique’ necessary to win the mass appeal and electoral support that the champions of planning and totalitarianism could easily mobilise.123 Nonetheless, mixing fundamental pessimism with delusions of grandeur, they kept telling each other that if their faith was strong, they might prevail in the long run. In December 1945, in a particularly morbid Christmas letter, Jouvenel told Röpke that ‘even though injustice is rife, brutality rampant and imperialism arrogantly assertive, I feel that we may yet triumph over the forces of evil’.124 In a later letter, Jouvenel told Röpke that ‘it is an enormous comfort to feel that we are not alone in our effort’ and that their joint mission to move ‘this mass of untruths’ was beginning to bear fruit. ‘I cannot tell you how much I value our correspondence and meetings and this general feeling of open conspiracy, as my dear [H.G.] Wells would put it.’125

If the masses were irrational and easily influenced, capitalist propaganda might also have an effect on them. With this aim, Jouvenel inquired into the possibility of spreading Walter Sulzbach’s pamphlet ‘Capitalistic Warmongers’ in a French version. Having already found a publisher interested (probably Bourquin), he stressed the necessity of such activities by referring to ‘the psychological conditions prevailing on this continent, which make it very difficult to oppose the currents of irrational thinking’.126 Just how much Jouvenel and Röpke were in agreement on the dangerous irrationality of the masses is illustrated by another long article in Curieux in which Jouvenel introduced Röpke’s work to a French-speaking audience. Citing Röpke, Jouvenel lamented that the introduction of democracy in the nineteenth century had coincided with the decline of aristocratic individualism and the rise of the hordes. From that moment, it had become useless to ‘reason with individual common sense’ but one had to ‘excite collective fever’ instead. ‘Citizens want laws and magistrates, the masses want myths and heroes: they tend towards totalitarianism with a movement required by their nature as masses. Whoever wants to fight this has to study the phenomenon of swarming [grégarisme].’127

123 Hayek, ‘The Intellectuals and Socialism’, 432.
124 Jouvenel to Röpke (22 December 1945), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
125 Jouvenel to Röpke (undated, 1946/1947), Fonds BdJ, Don 96 01 (305).
126 Jouvenel to unknown (28 February 1946), Don 96 01 (305). See Walter Sulzbach, ‘Capitalistic Warmongers: A Modern Superstition’ (Chicago, 1942).
At first sight, this contempt for the masses and the anti-democratic insistence on the work of a tiny elite seem out of place among liberal intellectuals, but Röpke and Jouvenel did not consider this a paradox. For both of them, liberalism represented the rule of law, free enterprise, individual liberties and the protection of a sharp social hierarchy associated with the ‘natural’ order. They associated democracy with very different things: mob rule, the subjection of the legal system to the tyranny of the majority, irrationality and the ever-looming danger of totalitarianism and war. As Jouvenel wrote in an article destined for Human Events, liberalism and democracy were ‘far apart’. While liberalism started from the ideal of the ‘free agent’, only limited in his freedom by the smallest possible requirements of society, democracy meant ‘the absolute command of a majority’ legitimised by nothing but ‘the formalization of a reign of force’. The democratic system was defenceless against the establishment of a ‘team-will’ that considered itself entitled ‘to lead, drag or force along a willing or unwilling majority. The Führer-prinzip is in fact prevalent in the party spirit.’

Fabre-Luce applied the same distinction between democracy and liberalism. In 1946, using Abraham Lincoln’s definition of democracy as ‘government by the people’, he dismissed it because ‘that government never remains liberal. The crowd, if it rules, is the most absolute and the most basely flattered of all sovereigns. Louis XIV was still moderated by the respect of a tradition. Nothing contains the crowned Caliban. This means I am not a democrat.’ In 1949, Fabre-Luce insisted that ‘liberty remains historically associated with property, with the predominance of the bourgeoisie, much more strongly than with the establishment of universal suffrage or collectivisation. By their own movement, the masses run towards the tyrant.’

The essential characteristics of Jouvenel’s brand of neoliberalism can be summarised as freedom of the enlightened individual, an emphasis on the natural leadership of a small aristocratic elite, a fundamental distrust of democracy and mass society, a strongly hierarchical view of society and pessimism about the future of Western civilisation. While the ideological differences between fascism and liberalism seem almost irreconcilable when understood in their absolute sense, the gap narrows considerably

128 Ptak, ‘Neoliberalism in Germany’, 104.
130 ‘Je ne suis donc pas démocrate’. Fabre-Luce, Hors d’Atteinte, 195.
131 Fabre-Luce, Le Siècle Prend Figure, 15, 16.
if one takes a look at Jouvenel’s specific ideas during the early post-war years. The temporal overlap of his activities in the intellectual milieu of the French extreme right and his neoliberal activities can also serve as an illustration of a larger trend. By the end of the Second World War, like former collaborators and Pétainists, French neoliberals belonged to those excluded (albeit not ostracised) from a governmental leadership set on an agenda of planning and nationalisations. During this period, Jouvenel was not the only French neoliberal who published in the Écrits de Paris, which also featured contributions from Rougier, Jacques Chastenet and Claude-Joseph Gignoux. A joint Cold-War agenda of anti-communism and often also European federalism were other elements that made extensive connections possible between extreme-rightists and neoliberals such as Röpke and Raymond Aron, who contributed several articles to La Fédération. The CNIP opened itself both to extreme-rightists like Isorni and to right-wing neoliberals such as Rueff. Strikingly, the early 1950s marked the return of former Pétainists and collaborators to political positions, the resurgence of a self-confident extreme-right press and the renewed influence of neoliberalism on French politics. Both prime ministers Faure and Pinay took inspiration and advice from neoliberal advisors.

132 Failing to see this factual proximity, Serge Audier bluntly states that Jouvenel’s ideas as expressed in Du Pouvoir have nothing to do with his fascist past. See Audier, Néo-Libéralisme(s), 274.
133 Nord, France’s New Deal, 145.