Fear and Freedom: On 'Cold War Liberalism'

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The intellectual light of the mid-twentieth century

is clear, cold and hard. If it requires those who

undertake to answer questions about politics to

do so without being entitled to call themselves

political philosophers, we must answer them

nonetheless.

Peter Laslett, 1956

Abstract: *This essay identifies a distinct strand of twentieth-century liberal thought that was exemplified by Isaiah Berlin, Raymond Aron and, to a lesser extent, Karl Popper. I offer a stylized account of their common ideas and shared political sensibility, and argue that their primarily* negative *liberalism was a variety of what Judith Shklar called the 'liberalism of fear' – which put the imperative to avoid cruelty and atrocity first. All three founded their liberalism on a 'politics of knowledge' that was directed primarily against Marxist philosophies of history and less against the idea of bureaucratic planning, as, in contrast, was the case with Friedrich von Hayek's thought. Moreover, all three subscribed to more or less explicit versions of value pluralism, and claimed that in the circumstances of modernity, Weber's 'clash of values' was exacerbated and required a particularly prudential approach to politics; this prudential management of value conflicts in turn was best entrusted to cultivated bureaucratic elites. All shared an image of a tolerant and humane society – essentially an idealized version of Britain – but said perhaps too little on the question how societies without the appropriate traditions of moderation and compromise were to be liberalized.*

In response to the rise of Islamicist transnational terror, politicians and thinkers on both sides of the Atlantic have attempted to formulate a 'combative' form of liberalism, or liberalism as a new 'fighting faith'. Some have envisaged an antitotalitarian Left, comparable to the antitotalitarian Left that formed in 1970s France; others have modelled the new conflict along the lines of the anticommunism of the 1950s, and have drawn explicit parallels with the Cold War.[1] All sides in this debate appear to have embarked on a search for historical models and analogies. And as with all analogical reasoning, this search has been about many things simultaneously: it's been about mobilizing followers by stirring passions and invoking memories; it has been about seeking political knowledge concerning the present through the past; and, not least, it has been about gaining a sense of security, as even what appears at first sight as unprecedented is in fact not without precedent after all.

Political knowledge is not the same as historical knowledge; but especially since the search for analogies is so much part of political argument, more historical knowledge can at least sometimes prevent political misjudgement. Yet this process is less straightforward than is often assumed; if anything, James Bryce was right when he claimed that 'the chief practical use of history is to deliver us from plausible historical analogies'. One of my purposes in this essay is to make us think harder about historical analogies; but its overall point is *not* that certain strands of liberalism in the past cannot speak to us at all. However, to make the voices of the thinkers I examine in these pages heard properly – and understand what they might tell us -- we also need a much better sense of what they actually said and what they stood for.

Raymond Aron, Isaiah Berlin and Karl Popper -- these names are often subsumed under the rubric 'Cold War liberalism', a rubric that's a term of abuse more often than not.[2] Paradoxically, however, it is in fact the outcome of the Cold War that

has vindicated them – and at the same time contributed to a systematic forgetting of what they actually said and meant. In the same vein, these thinkers have often been labelled 'conservative liberals'; yet this label itself explains little, unless we specify in some way where liberalism ends and where conservatism begins. Lately, one of them – Berlin – has even been placed in the tradition of anti-rationalist Counter-Enlightenment thought.[3] Clearly, the meaning of their legacy is far from settled.[4]

A Liberalism of Fear: Between Sentiments and Ideas

> We fear a society of fearful people.
>
> *Judith Shklar*

There is a an apparent paradox in the intellectual history of the mid-twentieth-century: on the one hand, the supposed heyday of 'Cold War liberalism', the 1950s, saw an intense struggle over ideas – today one might be inclined to say 'a war of ideas'. As Lionel Trilling put it in 1950, 'what gods were to the ancients at war, ideas are to us'.[5] And yet the period is often seen as a fallow time for political philosophy proper – thereby strengthening the impression that the liberals under consideration here might have been morally right, but philosophically inconsequential: what Popper famously called his 'war effort' (namely his book *The Open Society and Its Enemies*) might have won the war – but it didn't survive it. After all, according to an almost universally accepted narrative about political theory in the Anglo-American (but not just the Anglo-American) world, nothing of much importance happened between, let's say, the 1930s and the rebirth of political philosophy with John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*. Peter Laslett famously summed up the general sense of theoretical dearth

when he claimed in 1956 that 'for the moment, anyway, political philosophy is dead',

or, less dramatically, 'the winter has set in for the political philosopher'.[6] Spring,

according to this story, had to wait until 1971, when Rawls published his *magnum*

opus.

It is also notable that none of the thinkers in question here would have

identified himself primarily as a *political theorist.* Berlin, when pressed on his

'vocation', would call himself a historian of ideas, or even just an 'intellectual', that

is, a man 'who wants ideas to be as interesting as possible' – thus strengthening the

impression that he might have been nothing more than a sort of liberal *animateur* of

antiliberal ideologies, a performance artist for the exposition of political ideas, or, as

Michael Oakeshott put it, woundingly: 'a Paganini of the platform'. Aron was a

polymath, ranging across disciplines from international relations to economics, but

ultimately was most often classified as a sociologist. And Popper was, of course, in

the first place a philosopher of science. But they all, in their own way, recognized

that in the circumstances of the European mid-twentieth century, a primacy of politics

had been imposed on those devoted to the life of the mind, whether they liked it or

not. Or, as Judith Shklar, who like Berlin had been born in Riga and escaped from the

Nazis to the West, was to claim about her youth: 'politics completely dominated our

lives'.

Some eventually turned away from political thought for good. Popper, for

instance, concentrated almost exclusively on the philosophy of science; at any rate, he

always claimed that he 'was neither by inclination nor by training a student of society

or politics'.[7] He still commented on day-to-day politics occasionally, often in ways

that even sympathetic observers perceived as increasingly eccentric; but clearly

politics did not hold his interest. Ralf Dahrendorf reports in his autobiography that

Popper, upon receiving one of Dahrendorf's tracts on politics, claimed: 'If I were writing about political topics, then I would be writing just like you. But you will understand: I have so many things to do that are more important'.[8]

None of the thinkers under consideration here ever put forward anything resembling a compact, coherent liberal political theory. It is not as if they had not often been pressed to do so; Berlin, for instance, was frequently asked to make his scattered philosophical remarks fit together. But there is no single coherent, theoretical statement of anything called 'Cold War liberalism'; and there remains the suspicion that, while the post-war Western world might have seen a comprehensive 'liberalization', this was a process of liberalization without liberal thinkers.[9]

However, as even the most casual observer might concede, the importance of the thinkers in question does in any case not just lie in more or less abstract theory: 'Cold War liberalism' was also a matter of a particular sensibility. Theory and temperament could not be separated; with some, like Isaiah Berlin, there's been a temptation to claim that temperament was almost everything. The particular sensibility these thinkers shared is best summed up by the well-known expression coined by Judith Shklar: it was a 'liberalism of fear' -- a sceptical liberalism concerned primarily with avoiding the worst, rather than achieving the best.[10] It was concerned with fear in two senses: it was a minimal or negative liberalism, or, as others have put it, a 'liberalism without illusions' that was fearful of ambitious programmes advanced by those who felt absolutely certain in their convictions and sure about their political prescriptions.[11] But it also was based on the insight that many political evils and pathologies ultimately originated in fear itself: Popper, for instance, spoke of the typical 'fear of admitting to ourselves that the responsibility for our ethical decisions is entirely ours and cannot be shifted to anybody else'.[12] This

kind of fear was then said to be crucial in motivating the plunge into totalitarian ideology.

The faculty of mind which Shklar's liberalism of fear relied on mostly was historical memory, and in particular the memory of past humiliation, past cruelty and exile. This theory, it seems, is unthinkable without the memories of the theorists, and it is striking that their life stories all contained an apparently crucial moment of being confronted with open displays of political violence**:** Popper's experience when six demonstrators were killed in the Hörlgasse, after a demonstration that his Communist comrades had called in Vienna; Berlin's memory of a revolutionary Russian mob that chased (and then presumably killed) a Tsarist policeman; and, finally, Aron's experience of the burning of the books in 1933 Berlin and also his subsequent horror of the idea of civil war.[13]

It's also notable that all the figures under consideration here were exiles at least at one point in their lives; moreover, even at the height of their intellectual success, they could feel like outsiders in the national contexts in which they worked. What Berlin said about his successor in the Chichele Chair in Political Theory in Oxford, John Plamenatz, namely that he 'remained in exile all his life', was true of them, too. They were hardly political or social outsiders – after all, statesmen claimed them as influences, they had the ear of politicians and civil servants at the highest levels. But they often felt like outsiders, and sometimes were treated as such. At the same time this particular status as being simultaneously insiders and outsiders also afforded them particularly perceptive views of the national styles of intellectual debates to which they did and did not belong.

And yet this kind of liberalism was not simply a matter of trauma, or bad memories, or bad feelings. Rather it was a liberalism that asked two of the famous

Kantian questions -- *Was kann ich wissen? Was soll ich tun?* – and changed the phrasing of the third: *Was muss ich fürchten?* Put differently, this liberalism began with what one might call an epistemological foundation, or, if you like, a 'politics of knowledge' – the question about the bases and limits of political knowledge; it then sought to advance a conception of political action that was informed by the knowledge about the limits of political knowledge; and, finally, it concentrated on future dangers to be feared, and on avoidance, rather than positive projects. They all shared what Shklar called a 'preoccupation with political evil'; their concern was to avoid a *summum malum*, not the realization of any *summum bonum.*

What I want to offer in this essay is a highly *stylized* and schematic account that identifies a number of common themes and ideas.[14] I initially contrast Cold War liberalism as conceived here with two other important movements of ideas in the particular political constellation after 1945, namely the search for secure knowledge through the social sciences on the one hand, and the advocacy of 'classical political science' by Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin on the other; I then explore Berlin's, Popper's and Aron's 'politics of knowledge', before moving on to their accounts of value pluralism and the bases and constraints of political action in the circumstances of modernity – which could be summed up as complexity, contingency, and, above all, ideological conflict. I then briefly examine some of the remedies they proposed, in particular the idea that a liberal society should be carefully managed by traditional, humane and cultivated elites who had honed their judgment in the study of the past and of moral psychology. Before concluding, I raise a number of more or less inevitable questions about Cold War liberalism: was it simply conservatism by another name? What, if anything, made it different from 'neoliberalism' or *Ordoliberalismus* – that is, the strand of liberal thought associated with the Mont

Pèlerin Society, and the German 'Freiburg School'? Was its stress on fear, on the

perils of political action, not in fact a variety of the 'rhetoric of reaction'? And,

finally, does it hold lessons of any sort for the present?

The Double Quest for Certainty and the Limits of Political Knowledge

> We do not need certainty.
>
> *Karl Popper*

Large generalizations about the time during and after the Second World War and the

Holocaust are often facile. What appear to us as events of incomparable moral

import, with clear-cut political and moral lessons, did not necessarily seem so to

contemporaries; and while we can broadly say that political thinking probably

changed profoundly as a result of such events, which thoughts in particular changed,

and in what sequence, is often impossible to ascertain.[15] Generalization can easily

become glib here, and not because of any quasi-sacred status of war and genocide.

Yet, if one wants to draw analogies, it's at least plausible to say that in the late

1940s, Europe appeared to come to the end of another 'Thirty Years' War', and that

such a war would have led to what might be called another 'quest for certainty'.[16]

Just as the original Thirty Years' War had resulted in an upsurge in philosophical

rationalism in response to protracted religious battles, a plausible response to the 'Age

of Extremes' might have been a renewed attempt to find certainty beyond quasi-

religious ideological conflict, a kind of neutral area, or secure, depoliticized bases for

knowledge and argument. The entire question of what constitutes political knowledge

in the first place was thus re-opened.

And, indeed, the period after 1945 saw what one might call a *double* quest for certainty, or, rather, two quests which led in entirely different directions. Putting it – admittedly -- very crudely: on the one hand, there was positivism, behaviourism and, in general, a great deal of optimism about the social sciences; on the other hand, a return to natural law and the rationalism of 'classical political science'.[17] The former was focused on the search for empirical, testable knowledge about politics, and, ultimately, the discovery of 'laws' that would allow the prediction of political action; the latter was concerned with supposedly true and timeless principles of political order and political action.

The protagonists of the latter quest for certainty were, above all, Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin.[18] Strauss and Voegelin were deeply sceptical of the post-war faith in social science; in their eyes, positivism, like historicism, was in fact a form of relativism. They reserved their fiercest polemics for the man who, in their view, had done most to advance the – in their view false – distinction between facts and values, and thereby promoted relativism, historicism – and even nihilism. It is no accident that both Strauss and Voegelin again and again returned to Max Weber as the protagonist of what they perceived as a fatal turn in modern social and political thought, or, as Voegelin put it, 'the sinking of historical and political sciences into a morass of relativism'.[19]

Yet, at least nominally, both the social scientists and the advocates of classical political knowledge were searching for something they called 'rationalism'.[20] For the social scientists, 'reason' was primarily instrumental reason; it was concerned with means-ends relationships, not with the proper ends of politics. This very fact led the advocates of classical political knowledge to charge them with relativism. Social science – or so at least the promise of post-war social science suggested -- gave one

certainty about how to achieve a particular end; it did not give you any reason to choose one end over another. True, in the United States democracy appeared as the only conceivable political end; its desirability was a given. But thinkers like Strauss and Voegelin, scarred by their European experience, the end of Weimar in particular, would take nothing for granted. Certainty in political knowledge could not be had simply through a country's inherited political traditions – the US might have been fortunate in its heritage, but such traditions could easily give way under stress. Historicism – in the sense of relativism -- and positivism paved the way for such a collapse, as they only left subjective 'value-judgements' as the basis of pro-democratic attitudes. As Voegelin put it, 'when the *episteme* is ruined, men do not stop talking about politics; but they now must express themselves in the mode of *doxa*'.[21]

Consequently, the advocates of classical political knowledge sought a 'rebirth of classical rationalism'. That classical rationalism – or the proper source of political knowledge – was to be found before the fall of modern politics. In Strauss's thought, that fall had occurred with the turn away from a concentration on virtue as the precondition of the good polity; instead of pursuing virtue, the moderns had followed Hobbes' attempt to ground a commonwealth in individual self-interest. For Voegelin, on the other hand, the fall was caused by the triumph in the modern world of what he called 'Gnosticism' – the comprehensive 're-divinization' of society and the quest for 'eschatological fulfilment' in a terrestrial paradise, which came to characterize a variety of modern intellectual movements and, eventually, 'modernity' as a whole.

In the end, both Strauss and Voegelin were moral cognitivists, Strauss's apparently *zetetic* approach notwithstanding. Truth existed and it could be known; the moderns had not only lost such knowledge, they had even lost the capacity to pose the

right questions about it. In other words, recovering a proper politics was a matter of recovering the right questions, and, ultimately, the right knowledge – in principle *episteme politiké* was attainable. This call for a return to certainty based on firm reason or even revelation was sounded numerous times in the immediate post-war period. Waldemar Gurian, for instance, another German exile, argued in 1952 that

> the pseudo-certainty of totalitarianism which establishes by terror and
> a refined system of pressure a closed pseudo-real world can be
> opposed only by the true certainty based upon belief in true revelation
> and by the realization that man is infinitely more than an instrument for
> life and society in this world, that there are rights and duties of the
> human person which cannot be sacrificed to a doctrine about political
> and social development.[22]

The liberals, no less than the searchers for certainty, engaged in what one might call a 'politics of knowledge'; in fact they based their conception of political action directly on epistemological claims. Yet, neither had they faith in positivism, nor did they hope to achieve secure political knowledge by returning to an unsullied classical past, where the most important questions could be posed afresh – and least of all did they think that revelation could serve as a ground for moral and political certainty.

Rather, many of their arguments in favour of liberalism were based on what one might call, broadly speaking, social and historical epistemology, as well as philosophies of science. Raymond Aron's first major work presented an argument about the limits of historical objectivity; in fact, Aron's entire intellectual trajectory was informed by the moment he described movingly in his lectures on the philosophy

of history and then again in his autobiography: wandering along the Rhine in 1932, apparently in a moment of existential anguish, he asked himself how understanding the historical moment one was living through was possible at all.[23] Popper first elaborated a view of all human knowledge as fallible, which then had direct consequences for his political thought;   Berlin, finally, taking inspiration not least from the romantic liberals of the nineteenth century, insisted that history had 'no libretto', and that values could not be chosen against the background of some absolute moral or historical certainty; they could also not claim universality.[24]

One might say then that, paradoxically, the liberals sought a kind of certainty about uncertainty, or perhaps a certainty about unpredictability – Manès Sperber, describing Aron's thought, once spoke of a '*certitude des incertitudes*'.[25] In that sense, they provided a quasi-scientific, but not an in any way 'rationalist' foundation for liberal politics. Ends and means could never be perfectly matched, and neither was there a depository of unchanging moral truth about politics. In other words, they rejected both the 'instrumental rationality' as well as the behaviourism of the social scientists, and the 'classical rationalism' of Strauss and Voegelin. Political knowledge was not unobtainable, but it could never have the kind of certainty that the social scientific and the philosophical rationalists were hoping for it. There was no sure form of inductive knowledge that might be gained from observing the apparent regularities of the social and political world; and neither could the best regime be deduced from an unchanging 'human nature', as the proponents of classical political knowledge would have had it. There was only certainty about uncertainty.

Not all the liberals had an equal distrust of the social sciences. Berlin was probably the most critical of any claims about predicting events in the social world; Popper on the other hand in fact kept insisting on the basic unity of natural and social

sciences (with both subsumed under fallibilism). But all at least thought that proper understanding required *Verstehen*, an empathetic feeling-one's-way-inside historical and political actors, as much as observation from the outside. 'Interests' would not infallibly guide political action, as some of the social scientists suggested. Rather, as Aron put it famously, the twentieth century taught precisely that human beings would *not* sacrifice their passions to their interests. Passions and feelings could neither be 'quantified', nor were they the unchanging parts of a permanent moral psychology that informed human beings' political action. Passions, as much as thought, evolved historically, and had to be placed in their proper historical and cultural contexts.

Clearly, the insistence on certainty about uncertainty had, in its time, anti-Marxist implications, above all; Berlin, for instance, was quite frank that even what might have looked like disinterested conceptual analysis was 'anti-marxist, quite deliberately'.[26] It was, in the first place, Marxists who claimed certainty about the direction of history; and it was of course no accident that Berlin, Popper and Aron in particular all felt compelled to work through Marx's writings (not always in unsympathetic ways, in fact) and publish their commentary on them. All took Marx seriously in a way that often comes as a surprise to those who simply see 'Cold War liberals' as rabid anti-Marxists in philosophy and in political practice; for all of them Marxism became really just an exemplar of a larger category (or, rather, a larger problem): for Berlin, Marxism was a prime example of monism and determinism; for Aron, Marxism was both a type of secularized religion and, above all, a 'philosophy for intellectuals'; and for Popper, Marxism was yet another mistaken theory in response to the 'terror of change' which was behind so many political pathologies.[27]

Value Pluralism and Political Action, or: Kantianism faute de mieux

> You choose. You plump.
>
> *Isaiah Berlin*

Against the background of a certainty about uncertainty, what were to be the bases for

actual political action? What were its limits? All 'Cold War liberals' as conceived

here took certain elements of the Weberian diagnosis of modernity as their starting

point and formulated what could be seen as variations on the ethics of

responsibility.[28] In particular, they all one way or another accepted the idea of value

pluralism – and sometimes even indulged in the existentialist pathos that is often

associated with value pluralism. This was most obvious in Berlin's case, whose entire

intellectual universe turned on his insight into value pluralism (which he sometimes

believed he had been the first to discover).

But it was also true of Popper and Aron. Popper believed that one would

always live in an imperfect society, because 'there always exist irresolvable clashes of

values: there are many moral problems which are insoluble because moral principles

may conflict' – and in fact Popper at one point claimed intellectual copyright for

value pluralism as well.[29] He also argued emphatically that 'whoever adopts the

rationalist attitude does so because without reasoning he has adopted some decision,

or belief, or habit, or behaviour, which therefore in its turn must be called

"irrational"'. Popper here advocated what might best be described as an *irrational*

commitment to a sort of second-order rationalism. He insisted, above all, that one

had to face up to these choices – what he called 'monism' was so dangerous precisely

because it promised men and women to relieve them of the necessity to choose and to

assume the responsibility for these choices.[30]

Aron in turn had already been deeply influenced by Weber during his stay in Germany in the early 1930s. He accepted as a basic truth the idea of value pluralism and its consequence, namely interminable conflict; but he also insisted that nobody could actually live a full Weberian vision of a *guerre des dieux* in which everybody had to assume that there were no good reasons for choosing one god over another.[31] The tendency to stress antinomies, without existentialist pathos, and instead holding out the hope for compromise and moderation became a kind of trademark of his later liberalism.

All three thinkers tempered the idea of interminable conflicts among values with what might best be called a Kantian *Vernunftglaube*, a basic faith that reasonableness and humanity might win out against cruelty and inhumanity. None of them described such a *Vernunftglaube* or what one might call a sort of weak universalism with any precision: Berlin talked vaguely about a 'human horizon' that he also used to counter the argument that his value pluralism necessarily would make him a relativist; Aron claimed that he had simply had to place a 'bet on humanity', but that there were no guarantees that things would turn out well in any sense. As best as they could, all three tried to defend Kantian boundaries to what political action could do with and against human beings.[32] Put differently: while their primary allegiance was with the party of memory, they also sought to encourage whenever possible the party of hope. Edward Shils probably put it best when he called Aron an '*optimiste triste*'.[33]

Moreover, this vision was not simply a subjective one or a matter of wishful thinking: there was an inner logic to how value pluralism, political ethics and the defense of 'the open society' hung together. Arguably, the problems of value pluralism were exacerbated under the circumstances of modernity which was

characterized by complexity, contingency and, above all, conflict. This fact made it advisable that a society remained as open and liberal in the sense of tolerant as possible to allow a wide variety of values and *Weltanschauungen* to be realized. Clearly, such a view did not demonstrate the 'truth' of liberalism, in a way that Strauss or Voegelin might have demanded, but simply reasserted the idea of dividing modern society into different cultural 'value spheres' that could – hopefully – live with and accommodate each other. It was nothing more than a reasonable bet.

The fact that conflicts were likely to be more frequent and more violent in the circumstances of modernity also required a prudential, carefully experimental approach to politics: ultimately, Berlin, Aron and Popper put their trust in educated elites imbued with an ethics of responsibility. Theirs was, in the end, a philosophy for the higher echelons of the civil service, the *höhere Beamten* and *les hauts fonctionnaires*. Aron had made it the test of political seriousness to answer the question what he would do if he found himself in the place of a leading politician or bureaucrat; and Berlin of course was himself to excel in the role of an *éminence grise* for a transatlantic elite of cultivated gentlemen steering the political course of the West. Good bureaucrats, in this vision, needed *Bildung*, and a liberal education in moral psychology to come to terms with and understand the modern age as one of interminable value conflict, complexity and contingency. Put even more briefly: civil servants ought to read novels, and know their traditions.[34]

In this context it was also important that the open society actually had a name, which was simply: 'Britain' (and England in particular). More than once, the three thinkers under consideration let it be known that an ideal liberal world would be a concatenation of English-ish societies: politically sober; animated by gentle traditions; tolerant, with much room for eccentricity, but not in any way prone to political

extremes; governed by established elites animated in turn by a genuine ethos of public service and a professional ethics of responsibility.[35] For Aron, England was more or less the only example of a country where intellectuals and politics had been reconciled, without intellectuals losing their critical function; the English, in his view, also managed to translate what elsewhere appeared as deep ideological conflicts into technical problems subject to empirical testing. Aron always held up this ideal of an 'integrated intelligentsia' to his fellow Frenchmen.[36] A similarly positive view was taken by Popper, who would have been happy to entrust 'social engineering' to elites such as the British civil service. Berlin in turn always underlined that liberalism had been invented in England. As he put it to Steven Lukes: 'I think liberalism is essentially the belief of people who have lived on the same soil for a long time in comparative peace with each other. An English invention'.[37] But already from the other shore of the Baltic Sea, according to Berlin, 'England and Holland' had appeared as, above all, the 'noble liberal countries' – countries that were characterized not least by a marked 'absence of cruelty'.[38]

With this broad trust in elites came a marked tendency to collapse the concepts of democracy and liberalism. Popper, for instance, argued that 'the theory of democracy is not based upon the principle that the majority should rule; rather, the various equalitarian methods of democratic control, such as general elections and representative government, are to be considered as no more than well-tried and, in the presence of a wide-spread tradition of distrust of tyranny, reasonably effective institutional safeguards against tyranny'. In general, however -- with the partial of exception of Aron who in depth explored the character and preconditions of 'constitutional-pluralist regimes' under the circumstances of twentieth-century politics -- Cold War liberals were not in the business of specifying institutional

arrangements, or to have 'worked-out theories of the state and its powers and purposes'.[39] What mattered, above all, was that democracy, as Aron once put it, wrote history in prose, and not in verse – it was the sober, least violent option, to be chosen by those who had learnt not to look to history for poetry of any sort.[40]

The Distinctiveness of Cold War Liberalism: Welfare and Freedom

> I have nothing against socialism.
>
> *Isaiah Berlin*

Was 'Cold War liberalism' just a synonym for conservatism? Are the three thinkers under consideration here in fact best understood as 'conservative liberals', a hybrid category that is often used and rarely explained? Or are they actually fellow-travellers of libertarianism – a thought suggested not least by Popper's close association with Friedrich von Hayek and Aron's with Jacques Rueff, Louis Rougier, Bertrand de Jouvenel and other supposed intellectual fathers of 'neoliberalism'?

There is little doubt that Berlin, Aron and Popper all considered themselves engaged in an anti-Marxist 'war of ideas'. Even when they spoke out against totalitarianism, it was clear that Stalinism had been the original template for their models of totalitarianism, rather than Nazism (this is unarguably the case with Berlin, perhaps less so with Aron who, after all, witnessed the rise of Hitler personally and worked out his theory of modern tyranny and totalitarianism more or less in parallel to the development of the Third Reich).[41]

Yet, all three thinkers also professed sympathy for the welfare state, and took a critical view of Friedrich von Hayek and the libertarian movement that Hayek more

or less single-handedly brought into existence in the period after the Second World War. Berlin said explicitly that he was in favour of a welfare state and even called himself an advocate of a 'mild form of socialism'[42]. Malachi Haim Hacohen's research has shown conclusively that Popper, even after his radical break with the Communism of his youth, continued to regard himself as a Social Democrat.[43] While Popper was present at the founding of the Mont Pèlerin Society – and, no doubt, always perceived himself as sharing much with Hayek – it is telling that he wanted the Society initially to be a broad coalition of liberals and socialists. In fact, Berlin himself described Popper's *Open Society* – which he claims had a 'considerable influence' on him -- as 'anti-totalitarian and anti-authoritarian and, indeed, anti-conservative'. Aron, finally, voiced sometimes 'regrets' about a liberalism that might have ensured more economic freedoms than the mid-twentieth century Keynesian welfare state, but in the end he thought that realism, if nothing else, mandated a welfare state as appropriate for the industrial society which he kept analyzing tirelessly.[44]

Of course, personal professions are one thing – the inner logic of political ideas propounded quite another. Here the conceptions of freedom advocated by the three Cold War liberals are most telling: Berlin's negative liberty was, as he himself said, 'deliberately anti-marxist' – but the point had been to save a notion of personal freedom from the dangers of political oppression in the name of a positive, if not altogether specious notion of freedom. Late in life Berlin kept insisting that genuine positive liberty was also an important – albeit contending – value; and that, in general, his 'idea of liberty' had always been 'the possibility of the richest imaginable life'.[45] Aron in turn explicitly criticized Hayek's notion of liberty for being one-dimensional and a-historical, and argued that the advanced industrial societies of the West had

managed to find a *synthèse démocratico-libérale* which had absorbed the socialist critique of a purely negative understanding of liberty.[46]

This leaves the possibility that the advocacy of the welfare state was a pragmatic and not a principled one: perhaps under different conditions, without the threat and competition of communism, their ideal society would have looked quite different. What speaks against such an interpretation is that all three stressed the (ultimately psychological) need for security alongside the value of freedom. After all, while, like Hayek, they stressed uncertainty and ignorance as insuperable facts of economic and political life, they also had a deep understanding of human frailty, the 'strain' under which human beings suffered in the face of rapid, complex and conflict-ridden change; and the fears which made monism and all kinds of intellectual opiates so tempting.

Of course, many libertarians – Hayek and the representatives of the Freiburg School – also did not simply celebrate the strength of the capitalist entrepreneur, or saw the market as an unmixed blessing: there remains a world of difference between Hayek's followers and, let's say, Ayn Rand's Nietzschean, if not outright Social Darwinist pro-capitalist dogma. Hayek, Wilhelm Röpke and Alexander Rüstow looked to Christianity and cultural traditions to compensate for the moral damage the market may inflict; and the very notion of *ordo* betrayed the Catholic roots of the Freiburg School and some of Hayek's disciples in the US.[47] Berlin, Aron and Popper, on the other hand, never advocated such forms of compensation; their advocacy of liberty was not accompanied by a *basso continuo* of cultural pessimism, or a longing for the certainties of revelation or some supposedly incontestable philosophical anthropology.[48] In many ways, they had more trust in individual human beings, and

were more ready to place a bet on humanity, than the libertarians who drew on Hayek's and Röpke's teachings.

This leaves, finally, the question whether the seemingly dystopian, explicitly fearful nature of their thought (and sensibility) does not constitute a break with classical, that is, nineteenth-century, liberalism – given that liberalism had in the past assigned a central role to the idea of progress. Was not the emphasis on unintended consequences, the always tragic, and perhaps futile, nature of fundamental choices simply another example of the 'rhetoric of reaction'?[49]

It seems to me that, while the liberals under consideration – with the exception of Popper – did not stress progress in a major way, they also did not tell stories of decline (in the way Strauss and Voegelin did); what mattered, rather, was to resist all large-scale accounts of 'meaning in history', and, for sure, any form of determinism. Small-scale and large-scale improvements were perfectly possible, and, where they occurred, should be acknowledged as such – Aron no less than Popper always spoke out against what he regarded as a facile cultural and political pessimism that remained as much a temptation in the face of the horrors of the twentieth century as promises of inner-worldly salvation.[50] Thus, none of the liberals under consideration had a deep-seated suspicion rooted in philosophical anthropology that is, in my view, characteristic of a substantial, *philosophical* conservatism oriented towards substantive values; if anything, they stressed the need for a certain *procedural* conservatism, that is, the need carefully to manage change, and to pay attention to context and circumstances, to larger political constellations and to individual psychological dispositions.[51]

Conclusion

…moderation is not a virtue of thought…

Leo Strauss

Cold War liberalism was what Judith Shklar once called 'barebones liberalism': it put fear first, and conceived of liberalism primarily as a disposition, a certain psychological state, or even a 'large tendency' (Trilling), rather than as a theory of laws and institutions. Liberalism, as Aron put it, was ultimately existential; and even Berlin once claimed: 'In a sense I am an existentialist'.[52] What could (and should) be hoped for was more a commitment to the right 'constellations of certain values' (Berlin), and a gradual liberalization of attitudes, as opposed to drawing up plans for ideal institutional set-ups.

All the representatives of this kind of liberalism felt compelled to investigate the history of ideas to understand when and where the evils of the twentieth century had originated; but even their intellectual histories were animated more by a desire for psychological *Verstehen* and even *Einfühlung* than by a plan to map out the structural changes that had made the rise of totalitarianism possible. As Shklar put it at one point: 'I do not in any way underestimate the value of interpreting the canonical writings of the past nor of the philosophical analysis of political concepts – far from it. But we can and ought to do more, to tell stories about how ideas are incarnated in experience'. And stories they did tell – stories, that is, about psychological pitfalls and temptations, as in Berlin's essays on Counter-Enlightenment thinkers, Popper's *Open Society*, and Aron's *Opium of the Intellectuals*. All were, if you like, radical in these investigations; they followed, if you like, Strauss's injunction to be immoderate

– even if the result was more nuanced re-assertion of moderate liberalism. All in their own way faced up to what Lionel Trilling once described as one of the paradoxes of liberalism: 'liberalism is concerned with the emotions above all else, as proof of which the word happiness stands at the very center of its thought, but in its efforts to establish the emotions, or certain among them, in some sort of freedom, liberalism somehow tends to deny them in their full possibility'.[53]

Here they differed markedly from the social scientists of their time, but also from a thinker like Hayek who kept up a quest for new institutional designs to maintain 'the constitution of liberty'. The 'liberals of fear' were political epistemologists and moral psychologists first; they were 'great *Versteher*', as Avishai Margalit once described Berlin; and their politics was to be grounded primarily in the limits of political knowledge, and the frailties of the human psyche.

None of the thinkers in question here left a systematic work of political theory. Their thought was, as Aron put it, 'impure' – meaning: historical, shaped by circumstances and by particular challenges.[54] They tended to respond most strongly to the political passions of others, rebutting, reworking or reorienting the positions of antiliberals, rather than remaining faithful to an already established legacy of liberal thought. Their thinking, in any case, was more occupied with liberal*ization* than with liberal*ism*.[55] And their call for moderation resonated in a world dominated by political passions; they did not speak against the background of a fully worked-out philosophy of moderation. *Pas trop de zèle* was a question of attitude, rather than any kind of analytical philosophical 'demonstration' – which no doubt explained why some of those who grew up in the middle of the spring and summer of Rawlsian liberalism found it not obviously worthwhile to engage them.

Conflict was the starting point of their political thought; and pluralism was both a problem and a condition to be preserved.[56] But, ultimately, dealing with conflict also required a certain attitude, and, above all, a disposition to compromise; there were no institutional panaceas for containing conflict; and while the positions advocated by Berlin, Aron and Popper could be translated into a defence of constitutionalism, none of them offered a real constitutional theory. Consequently, unlike with Rawls, there are also no clear-cut criteria for how to judge (and then improve) political and social arrangements -- judgments were more about general notions of decency, common-sense assessment of what constituted cruelty to human beings, and what limited liberty.

One might be tempted to conclude that in the end 'Cold War liberalism' was, above all, a form of moral-political psychologising (meant here in an entirely non-pejorative way). It recommended certain attitudes, and, in retrospect one could also be tempted to claim that the three thinkers exemplified what they preached with their moral character: Aron's famed sobriety (and lucidity), Berlin's tolerance and humaneness and… well, Popper's character, as is well known, was difficult, to say the least, but he also strove to provide a model of how to live with the 'strain of civilization'. All of this was not a 'simple reassertion of liberal modernism' or a 'reaffirmation of an unrevised Enlightenment' – it was chastened liberalism after the end of the 'Age of Security' (Stefan Zweig).[57] Its stress on the moral, the cultural, and, above all, the psychological, however, also left something to be desired by way of answering the question: what is to be done? What is to be done by – or perhaps even *to* – those who are unlucky enough not to be British? Those seemingly unable to afford moderation in circumstances of extremism and politically motivated cruelty? It is here that Berlin and Aron, and Popper most noticeably, probably didn't say enough.

Pointing to an ideal version of England – and so presuming a 'people who have lived on the same soil for a long time in comparative peace with each other' – clearly would not be enough.

In the end, Berlin, Aron and Popper didn't tell us what to think, but rather what to think *about*; they also told us what to bear in mind: above all, 'variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty', to use Trilling's famous expression.[58] In short, they sought to sharpen a sensibility, rather than provide a full-fledged theory. Perhaps this is less, perhaps this is much more than present-day defenders of an anti-totalitarian liberalism could possibly have hoped to find in the past.

[1] See for instance Paul Berman, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York: Norton, 2003) and Peter Beinart, 'An Argument for a New Liberalism: A Fighting Faith', in: *The New Republic*, 13th December 2004.

[2] I shall not engage in this essay with what is often referred to as the 'cultural Cold War' -- above all the role of the Congress for Cultural Freedom – and the moral choices, possible betrayals, etc. associated with it. On these questions, see Frances Stonor Saunders, *Who Paid the Piper? The CIA and the Cultural Cold War* (London: Granta, 1999) and Pierre Grémion, *Intelligence de l'anticommunisme: Le Congrès pour la liberté de la culture à Paris (1950-1975)* (Paris: Fayard, 1995).

[3] Zeev Sternhell, *Les anti-Lumières: Du XVIIIe siècle à la guerre froide* (Paris: Fayard, 2006).

[4] Recently, Ralf Dahrendorf has offered a moving portrait of his three 'fatherly friends' Berlin, Aron and Popper, from which I have learnt much – even if I am less convinced that a study of what Dahrendorf sees as three *Unversuchbare* can yield anything like a general *Tugendlehre der Freiheit* – a doctrine about the virtues required for liberty. See Ralf Dahrendorf, *Die Versuchungen der Unfreiheit: Die Intellektuellen in Zeiten der Prüfung* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2006).

[5] Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York: Viking, 1950), p. 193. It's important to underline that Trilling made the remark to criticize the, in his view, exaggerated belief in ideas and the autonomy of ideas in particular, during his time. As he put it: 'We have come to believe that some ideas can betray us, others save us. The educated classes are learning to blame ideas for our

troubles, rather than blaming what is a very different thing – our own bad thinking. This is the great vice of academicism, that it is concerned with ideas rather than with thinking, and nowadays the errors of academicism do not stay in the academy; they make their way into the world, and what begins as a failure of perception among intellectual specialists finds its fulfilment in policy and action'. *Ibid.*, p. 192.

[6] Peter Laslett, 'Introduction', in: Peter Laslett (ed.), *Philosophy, Politics and Society*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1956), vii-xv; here vii and ix. It's remarkable that Laslett drew attention to the omission of Karl Popper from his collection – calling him 'perhaps the most influential of contemporary philosophers who have addressed themselves to politics'. *Ibid.*, xii. Shklar also spoke of the recent 'disappearance' of political philosophy in her 1957 *After Utopia*, while observing that 'liberalism has become unsure of its moral basis, as well as increasingly defensive and conservative. Certainly it has not presented an answer to a social despair that it fundamentally shares'. Judith N. Shklar, *After Utopia: The Decline of Political Faith* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957), p. vii and p. viii.

[7] See also Ralf Dahrendorf, 'Popper und die "offene Gesellschaft"', in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 27th July 2002.

[8] Ralf Dahrendorf, *Über Grenzen: Lebenserinnerungen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2002), p. 164.

[9] See Mark Lilla's seminal essay 'The Other Velvet Revolution: Continental Liberalism and its Discontents', in: *Daedalus*, Vol. 123, No. 2 (1994), pp. 129-57.

[10] Judith Shklar, 'The Liberalism of Fear', in: Nancy L. Rosenblum (ed.), *Liberalism and the Moral Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989). See also the excellent essay by Jonathan Allen, 'The Place of Negative Morality in Political Theory', in: *Political Theory*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (2001), pp. 337-363. Shklar herself is

not included here, because her thinking underwent a shift from the dissatisfaction with 'Cold War liberalism' in the 50s, to an advocacy of a 'survivalist' political theory with the 'liberalism of fear'. Paul Magnette has now written an excellent short introduction to Shklar, but her thought still awaits a more comprehensive treatment that does justice to the trajectory from *After Utopia* to the late essays on citizenship.

[11] Bernard Yack (ed.), *Liberalism without Illusions: Essays on Liberal Theory and the Political Vision of Judith N. Shklar* (Chicago: University pf Chicago Press, 1996)

[12] Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Vol. 1, (Princeton, Princeton UP, 1966), p. 73.

[13] Raymond Aron, *Le Spectateur Engagé: Entretiens avec Jean-Louis Missika et Dominique Wolton* (Paris: Julliard, 1981), p. 74. Note also Aron's statement: 'Le libéralisme – ou, du moins, mon libéralisme – craint les ruptures violentes, les éternelles illusions de rebâtir à neuf les vieux édifices des Constitutions ou des ordres sociaux.' See Aron, 'Un Libéral dans la Presse', in: *Liberalismus – nach wie vor*, p. 318.

[14] The main stylization is, arguably, a tendency to 'Berlinize' Aron and Popper in particular. I think a good case can be made that Aron stood not just in the tradition of the 'Anglo-Saxon school' of political and social thought in France, as has often been remarked, but was also a descendant of the French moralists (and therefore a certain kind of sceptic and a psychologist); Popper, on the other hand, was much closer to a confidence in social science and even technocracy that was profoundly alien to Berlin. I should also say that of course the three protagonists of my story knew each to varying degrees -- but for the most part, they did not see each other as particularly close allies, even if they would have recognized as engaged in the same 'war of ideas'. Also, they did not see each other as engaged in the same kind of intellectual,

or, if you like, disciplinary pursuits. Berlin, for instance, thought Aron merely 'a very

brilliant publicist', and some of his remarks on Popper seem to suggest that he

thought the philosopher of science lacked some the characteristics Berlin prized most:

empathy and a rich moral imagination. For Berlin on Aron and Popper, see 'Isaiah

Berlin in conversation with Steven Lukes', in: *Salmagundi*, No. 120 (Fall 1998), pp.

52-134; here p. 96; for Berlin on Popper, see Isaiah Berlin and Beata Polanowska-

Sygulska, *Unfinished Dialogue* (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 2006), pp. 128-124.

[15] In this context, see the brilliant study by Ira Katznelson, *Desolation and*

Enlightenment: Political Knowledge after Total War, Totalitarianism, and the

Holocaust (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

[16] See also Stephen Toulmin*, Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity*

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

[17] I won't say much about the former here. For a fuller account, see John G. Gunnell,

The Descent of Political Theory: The Genealogy of an American Vocation (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 1993).

[18] My presentation of Strauss and Voegelin, I hasten to admit, is of course rather

crude and reductionist. It serves as a contrast to the 'liberalism of fear' as another

possible response to the cataclysms of the twentieth century; in no way does it justice

to the complexity and subtlety of these thinkers – which even their most severe critics

have to acknowledge. In particular, I largely leave out the *zetetic* dimension of

Strauss's thought, his attempt to regain the very possibility of philosophizing; and I

drastically simplify Voegelin's epic historical diagnosis of modernity – which, one

might argue, in certain respects runs parallel to some of the narratives and

psychological diagnoses offered by the liberals: After all, for Voegelin, Gnosticism

also originated in a 'drive for certainty' as a response to the 'anxiety' induced by

Christianity. Moreover, Strauss's and Voegelin's quest for certainty is in many ways intertwined with the post-war attempt to formulate a liberalism firmly relying on some form of transcendence, 'objective reason', natural law or other forms of certainty – the very opposite, in short, of a liberalism concerned with interminable conflict, uncertainty and value pluralism; but, practically, Voegelin and Strauss in particular were of course also explicit advocates of moderation. In this context, see in particular John Hallowell, *The decline of liberalism as an ideology with particular reference to German politico-legal thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943) and the general discussion in Michael Freeden, *Liberal Languages: Ideological Imaginations and Twentieth-Century Progressive Thought* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005), pp. 19-37. For interesting discussions of the complexity of Strauss's zetetic approach and its relationship to any kind of quest for certainty, or *echtes Wissen vom Ganzen*, see Robert B. Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 209-61; Harald Bluhm, *Die Ordnung der Ordnung: Das politische Philosophieren von Leo Strauss* (Berlin: Akademie, 2002) and Daniel Tanguy, *Leo Strauss: Une biographie intellectuelle* (Paris: Grasset, 2003)

[19] Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 13. See also John Gunnell, 'Reading Max Weber: Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin', in: *European Journal of Political Theory*, Vol. 3 (2004), pp. 151-161.

[20] See also Nasser Behnegar, *Leo Strauss, Max Weber, and the Scientic Study of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003)

[21] Voegelin, *The New Science*, p. 12.

[22] Waldemar Gurian, 'Totalitarian Religions', in: *Review of Politics*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (1952), pp. 3-14; here p. 14.

[23] Raymond Aron, *Mémoires: 50 ans de réflexion politique* (1983; Paris: Julliard, 1993), p. 53.

[24] See Isaiah Berlin, *Historical Inevitability* (London: Oxford UP, 1954).

[25] Manès Sperber, 'Raymond Aron', in: *Mélanges Raymond Aron* (1979), pp. 543-549; here p. 546.

[26] 'Isaiah Berlin in conversation with Steven Lukes', p. 92.

[27] Duncan Kelly, 'The Political Thought of Isaiah Berlin', in: *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Vol. 4, o. 1 (2002), pp. 25-48; here p. 29.

[28] Sometimes, apparently, without having read Weber: see Berlin's embarrassed admission to Steven Lukes. It's telling that in turn the great anti-Weberians of the post-war period reacted so violently against 'Cold War liberals'. Voegelin, for instance, wrote to Strauss on 18th April 1950: 'This Popper has been for years, not exactly a stone against which one stumbles, but a troublesome pebble that I must continually nudge from the path, in that he is constantly pushed upon me by people who insist that his work on the "open society and its enemies" is one of the social science masterpieces of our times…'. See *Faith and Political Philosophy: The Correspondence Between Leo Strauss and Eric Voegelin, 194-1964*, eds. Peter Emberley and Barry Cooper (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), pp. 66-70.

[29] Karl R. Popper, *Unended Quest: An Intellectual Autobiography* (London: Fontana, 1978), p. 116. At another point Popper claimed: 'Eine vollkommene Gesellschaft ist unmöglich, wie man leicht einsehen kann. Zu fast allen Werten, die eine Gesellschaft verwirklichen sollte, gibt es andere Werte, die mit ihnen kollidieren.' See Karl R. Popper, *Auf der Suche nach einer besseren Welt* (Munich: Piper, 1989), p. 129.

[30] Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society*, Vol. 1, p. 73.

[31] As Aron put it: 'La formule de l a "guerre des dieux" est la transposition d'un fait indiscutable – les hommes se sont fait des représentations incompatibles du monde – en une philosophie que personne ne vit ni ne pense parce qu'elle est contradictoire (toutes les représentations sont équivalents, aucune n'étant ni vraie ni fausse)'.

[32] See also Philippe Raynaud, 'Raymond Aron et le jugement politique entre Aristote et Kant', in: *Raymond Aron et la liberté politique: Actes du colloque international organisé par la Fondation Joseph Károlyi et l'Université de Sciences économiques et d'Administration publique de Budapest* (Paris: Fallois, 2002), pp. 123-131.

[33] Edward Shils, 'Raymond Aron, 1905-1983: A Memoir', in: *History, Truth, Liberty: Selected Writings of Raymond Aron*, ed. Franciszek Draus (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 1-19.

[34] Another marked contrast with Voegelin and Strauss in particular, for whom tradition only got in the way of asking genuine philosophical questions, and who pointedly distanced himself from Burke in *Natural Right and History*.

[35] Karl Popper, 'Towards a Rational Theory of Tradition', in: *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (1963;London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 161-182.

[36] See also Irving Louis Horowitz, ,L'Angleterre et les États-Unis vus par Raymond Aron', in: *Commentaire*, Vol. 28 (Winter 2005-2006), pp. 955 – 965.

[37] 'Isaiah Berlin in conversation', p. 121.

[38] *Ibid*., p. 62.

[39] Serge Audier, *Raymond Aron: La démocratie conflictuelle* (Paris: Michalon, 2004); George Kateb, Foreword', in: Judith N. Shklar, *Political Thought and Political Thinkers*, ed. Stanley Hoffmann (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), vii-xix; here p. xi.

[40] Aron, 'Introduction', in: Max Weber, *Le Savant et le politique* (Paris: Plon, 1982), pp. 7-52; here p. 23.

[41] See in particular Raymond Aron, *Machiavel et les Tyrannies Modernes* (Paris: Fallois, 1993).

[42] 'Isaiah Berlin in conversation', p. 76.

[43] Malachi Haim Hacohen, *Karl Popper -- The Formative Years, 1902-1945: Politics and Philosophy in Interwar Vienna* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000).

[44] As he put it in the preface to the *Opium of the Intellectuals*: 'Personellement, keynésien avec quelque regret du libéralisme…'.

[45] Berlin, *Unfinished Dialogue*, p. 122.

[46] Raymond Aron, 'La definition libérale de la liberté', in: *Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1961), pp. 199-218; and, in particular, 'Liberté, libérale ou libertaire?, in: *La liberté et l'ordre social: Textes des conferences et des entretiens organises par les Rencontres Internationales de Genève* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1969), pp. 67-112.

[47] See also Carl Joachim Friedrich, 'The Political Thought of Neo-Liberalism', in: *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (1955), pp. 509-525.

[48] The classic work of neoliberal cultural pessimism was Röpke's *Die Gesellschaftskrise der Gegenwart* (Erlenbach-Zürich: Eugen Rentsch, 1942), in particular the passages about modern 'massification', or what Röpke called, in an absolutely untranslatable phrase, 'einen die Gesellschaftsstruktur zerstörenden Zerbröckelungs- und Verklumpungsprozeß' (p. 23).

[49] Albert Hirschman, *The Rhetoric of Reaction: Perversity, Futility, Jeopardy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1991)

[50] See for instance Raymond Aron, 'Pour le Progrès: Après la chute des idoles', in: *Commentaire*, Vol. 1 (1978), pp. 233-243.

[51] More on analyzing conservatism along these lines can be found in Jan-Werner Müller, 'Comprehending Conservatism: A New Framework for Analysis', in: *Journal of Political Ideologies* (forthcoming).

[52] 'Isaiah Berlin in conversation', p. 101.

[53] Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination*, pp. xii-xiii.

[54] Raymond Aron, 'Histoire et Politique', in Raymond Aron, *Penser la liberté, penser la démocratie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), pp. 524-537; here p. 524.

[55] Raymond Aron, 'De la Libéralisation', in: *Penser dans le Temps: Mélanges offerts à Jeanne Hersch* (Lausanne: Éditions l'Age d'homme, 1977), pp. 189-205

[56] 'Si je me définis par le réfus du parti unique, j'arrive de manière naturelle à la notion de pluralisme, et de la notion de pluralisme à une certaine représentation du libéralisme. Il n'est pas fondé chez moi, à la différence du libéralisme di XIX siècle, sur des principes abstraits. C'est par l'analyse des sociétés que j'essaie de justifier le libéralisme politique et intellectuel . . . Je cherche alors les conditions économiques et sociales qui donnent une chance de survie du pluralisme, c'est-à-dire du libéralisme à la fois politique et intellectuel.' See Aron, *Le Spectateur engagé*, p. 233.

[57] Katznelson, *Desolation and Enlightenment*, p. 1 and p. 28.

[58] Allen, 'The Place of Negative Morality', p. 349; Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination*, p. xv.