Introduction

On 17 October 1983 the French philosopher, sociologist, and political commentator Raymond Aron died of a heart attack as he was leaving a Parisian courthouse. Among the many tributes to appear in the next day's newspapers, one stood out. News of the death, accompanied by a large photograph of Aron, dominated the front page of the left-wing daily *Libération*. 'France', the headline announced, '*perd son prof*'.[1] With its first seven pages entirely devoted to Aron, *Libération*'s coverage was among the most extensive to appear in the French press. What made this remarkable was that the paper had been founded ten years earlier by a group of Maoists whose formative political experience had been the events of May–June 1968. Back then, when Aron was the bête noir of the student movement, he had been proclaimed unworthy of the title of professor by the most famous of *Libération*'s founding editors.[2] The paper's headline on the occasion of Aron's death has thus been interpreted as a sign of its recent conversion from revolutionary leftism to antitotalitarian liberalism.[3] In fact, the intended irony of this headline lay elsewhere. According to *Libération*'s editor, Serge July, Aron had indeed been *'la premier prof de France',* but only in the sense of having been 'the educator of the ruling classes'.[4] Yet while seeking to maintain a certain ironic distance from the more celebratory coverage of Aron's life elsewhere in the press, *Libération* acknowledged that Aron had indeed undergone something of a reputational transformation as part of a wider renewal of liberal thought then

[1] 'La France perd son prof', *Libération*, 18 October 1983. A further six pages were given over to discussing Aron's life and legacy inside the paper. The headline translates roughly as 'France loses its teacher'.
[2] Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Les bastilles de Raymond Aron' in Sartre, *Situations VIII: Autour de 68* (Paris, 1972), 175–92. The article originally appeared in *Le Nouvel observateur* on 19 June 1968.
[3] Jacqueline Rémy, *Nous sommes irrésistibles: (auto)critique d'une génération abusive* (Paris, 1990), 140–1; Guy Hocquenghem, *Lettre ouverte à ceux qui sont passes du col Mao au Rotary* (Paris, 1986), 83–6.
[4] Serge July, 'Le premier prof de France', *Libération*, 18 October 1983.

underway in France.[5] Indeed, many commentators at the time and ever since have seen the widespread admiration of Aron at the end of his life as emblematic of an underlying transformation in France's political culture.[6] This is because the canonisation of Raymond Aron occurred during an ideological sea-change in Parisian intellectual life that has come to be known as an 'antitotalitarian moment' or 'French liberal revival'.[7]

Scholarship on this subject has oscillated between accounts of intellectual betrayal and redemption. For authors such as Perry Anderson, Daniel Lindenberg, and Kristin Ross, this period marks Paris's transition from a beacon of revolutionary intellectual politics to the 'capital of European intellectual reaction'.[8] Conversely, historians such as Mark Lilla and Tony Judt have welcomed the French intelligentsia's supposed embrace of a new ethic of responsibility in these years.[9] This evaluative divide is bridged, however, by an overarching narrative consensus. For historians on both sides of this debate, the 1970s witnessed a collapse in the intellectual credibility of revolutionary politics inspired by Marxist theory and communist practice with the result that, by the middle of the 1980s, liberalism had displaced Marxism as the unsurpassable horizon of most French political and economic thought. Since the mid-2000s, a new generation of intellectual historians has begun to adopt a more nuanced, less obviously partisan approach to this period,[10] but this has had only a limited impact on scholarship about Aron, which, aside from a few notable exceptions,[11] continues to exhibit a strong promotional and sometimes celebratory

[5] Robert Maggiori, 'Raymond Aron: lucide mais hors-jeu', *Libération*, 18 October 1983.

[6] Philippe Raynaud, 'La mort de Raymond Aron', *Esprit,* 84 (December 1983), 123–4; George Ross, 'Where have all the Sartres gone? The French intelligentsia born again' in James F. Hollifield and George Ross (eds.), *Searching for a New France* (London, 1991), 221–49, 235; Emile Chabal, *A Divided Republic: Nation, State and Citizenship in Contemporary France* (Cambridge, 2015), 135–57.

[7] Michael Scott Christofferson, *French Intellectuals Against the Left: The Antitotalitarian Moment of the 1970s* (New York, 2004); Sudhir Hazareesingh, *How the French Think: An Affectionate Portrait of an Intellectual People* (London, 2015), 241–5; Chabal, *A Divided Republic*, 135–57; Iain Stewart, 'France's anti-68 liberal revival' in Emile Chabal (ed.), *France Since the 1970s: History, Politics and Memory in an Age of Uncertainty* (London, 2014), 199–223.

[8] Perry Anderson, *In the Tracks of Historical Materialism* (London, 1983), 32; Daniel Lindenberg, *Le rappel à l'ordre: enquête sur les nouveaux réactionnaires* (Paris, 2002); Kristin Ross, *May '68 and its Afterlives* (Chicago, 2002).

[9] Mark Lilla, 'The other velvet revolution: continental liberalism and its discontents', *Daedalus*, 123 (Spring 1994),129–57; Tony Judt, *The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron and the French Twentieth Century* (Chicago, 1998), 137.

[10] On this 'new historiographical and generational sensibility' see Julian Bourg, 'Introduction' in Julian Bourg (ed.), *After the Deluge: New Perspectives on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Postwar France* (Oxford, 2004), 1–18, 2.

[11] See e.g. Serge Audier, *Raymond Aron: la démocratie conflictuelle* (Paris, 2004); Gwendal Châton, *Introduction à Raymond Aron* (Paris, 2017); Christian Malis, *Raymond Aron et le débat stratégique français, 1930–1966* (Paris, 2005). Daniel Steinmetz-Jenkins, 'Why did Raymond Aron write that

tendency, especially where his liberalism is concerned. A recent edited volume on Aron, which opens with the claim that he is '*the* greatest figure in French liberalism of the twentieth century' is a case in point.[12] From the perspective of most of this scholarship, France's late twentieth-century antitotalitarian and liberal turns were to be welcomed as Aron's vindication against his irresponsible intellectual peers or even celebrated as the crowning achievement of his own life's work.[13]

To be sure, there is substantial evidence to suggest that Aron played an important role in shaping the ideological reorientation of French intellectual life in these years. And the extent of this transformation should not be understated, for there was more to France's antitotalitarian turn than its anti-communism. During the mid-to-late 1970s, many French intellectuals came to see totalitarianism not as something opposite and external to democracy but rather as a permanent possibility within the project of democratic modernity itself. Late twentieth-century French reflection on the problem of totalitarianism was thus not just a rhetorical strategy aimed at discrediting an apparently resurgent communist party; much of it represented a serious attempt to rethink the theory and practice of modern democracy.[14] Consequently the antitotalitarian moment was accompanied by a rediscovery of 'the political' (*le politique*) across much of the humanities and social sciences, a significant shift given the prior hegemony of various forms and combinations of Marxism and structuralism within the French academy.[15] And it was partly because of this antitotalitarian preoccupation with the political that the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a significant broadening of interest in France's nineteenth-century liberal tradition of political thought.[16] Whether the intellectual reorientation of

Carl Schmitt was not a Nazi? An alternative genealogy of French liberalism', *Modern Intellectual History*, 11 (November 2014), 549–74.

[12] Nicolas Baverez, 'Life and works: Raymond Aron, philosopher and freedom fighter' in José Colen and Élisabeth Dutartre-Michaut (eds.), *The Companion to Raymond Aron* (New York, 2015), 3–14, 3. Italics in original.

[13] Judt, *Burden of Responsibility*, 137; Brian C. Anderson, 'The Aronian Renewal', *First Things*, 51 (March 1995), 61–4; Daniel J. Mahoney, *The Liberal Political Science of Raymond Aron: A Critical Introduction* (Lanham, 1992), 80–1.

[14] This more positive reading of left-wing French antitotalitarianism is offered in e.g. Dick Howard, *The Specter of Democracy* (New York, 2002), 63–82, 99–136. For an account that focuses on antitotalitarianism as a response to the Common Programme see Christofferson, *French Intellectuals against the Left.*

[15] For an account of how 'the political' has been used in postwar French intellectual history see Samuel Moyn, 'Concepts of the political in twentieth-century European thought' in Jens Meierhenrich and Oliver Simons (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt* (Oxford, 2014), 291–311.

[16] Stephen W. Sawyer and Iain Stewart, 'Introduction: new perspectives on France's liberal moment' in Stephen W. Sawyer and Iain Stewart (eds.), *In Search of the Liberal Moment: Democracy, Antitotalitarianism and Intellectual Politics in France since 1950* (New York, 2016), 1–16.

these decades is viewed as an antitotalitarian moment, a 'French liberal revival', or a return of 'the political', its history cannot be written without reference to Aron, whose pioneering work on these themes first posed many of the questions that preoccupied French intellectuals in this period, even if they did not always agree with Aron's answers.

That Raymond Aron was a major point of reference within France's late twentieth-century liberal and antitotalitarian turns is hardly surprising considering that he had been among the earliest European theorists of totalitarianism in the 1930s and France's preeminent anti-communist intellectual since the late 1940s. As such, he made a significant contribution to the formulation of what historians have since begun to call 'Cold War liberalism' prior to becoming a totemic figure in France's late twentieth–century antitotalitarian turn. Aron is also widely recognised for his role in helping to bring about a broadening of interest in France's liberal tradition of political thought among French intellectuals in the 1970s and 1980s. For Tony Judt, it is not Aron's antitotalitarianism but 'this inheritance from an earlier, lost tradition of French political reasoning' that 'distinguishes Aron and establishes his claim upon the attention of posterity'.[17] Aron had begun tentatively to engage with the works of authors like Ernest Renan, Hippolyte Taine, and Benjamin Constant during the Second World War; however, it was only in the mid-1950s that he began to promote French liberalism more systematically. Because of these efforts, Aron has often been credited with reintroducing the political thought of Alexis de Tocqueville to France, thereby helping to inspire a wider 'liberal revival' during the 1970s and 1980s.[18] Indeed, so closely did Aron come to be associated with this expansion of interest in nineteenth-century French liberalism that much of the most influential work in this area was carried out under the auspices of a research centre named after him, the Institut Raymond Aron. It is for these reasons that a recent history of late twentieth-century French political and intellectual life has claimed that 'French liberalism of the 1980s was built in [Aron's] shadow.'[19] Yet it is for the same reasons that Aron's importance within the intellectual history of liberalism has often been taken for granted. Remarkably, no historical monograph has ever been published

[17] Judt, *Burden of Responsibility*, 182.
[18] Among many possible examples, see, e.g., François Furet, 'Aron, ré-introducteur de Tocqueville' in Jean-Claude Chamboredon (ed.), *Raymond Aron, la philosophie de l'histoire et les sciences sociales* (Paris, 2005), 25–37; Marc Viellard, *Contre Tocqueville* (Pantin, 2006), 107–27.
[19] Chabal, *A Divided Republic*, 157. An account of the Institut Raymond Aron may be found on pages 145–49 of the same book, but see also Christophe Prochasson, *François Furet. Les chemins de la mélancholie* (Paris, 2013), 296–303.

on this topic. It is almost as if Aron's significance in the history of liberal thought were so obvious as to require no explanation.

Yet Raymond Aron's relationship with liberalism is not as straightforward as it seems. As Pierre Manent has recently observed, 'Aron's career cannot be defined by an intention to apply a liberal doctrine' and 'liberalism as such, liberalism as a doctrine or even a programme, only rarely provided the theme of his thought.'[20] The difficulty of situating Aron within a typological definition of liberalism, such as the one offered by the political theorist Michael Freeden, reinforces this point. According to Freeden,

> [T]he vast majority of those claiming to be liberals may be identified and analysed on the basis of a common conceptual configuration. The core concepts they employ are liberty, individualism, progress, rationality, the general interest, sociability, and limited and responsible power . . . I know of no recent liberal tradition whose design does not display all those core concepts. Remove one and we are looking at a borderline case. Remove two and it is no longer liberalism.[21]

Judged by this standard, Aron's status as '*the* greatest figure in French liberalism of the twentieth century' appears much less obvious, since his belief in most of Freeden's key tenets of liberalism was equivocal at best. His doctoral thesis, a work that Aron regarded as having established the basis upon which all his subsequent political thought rested, contained a far-reaching critique of the progressive rationalism of his seniors in the world of academic philosophy and sociology. He did not have a theory of the general interest, a concept that is of limited value from the perspective of Aron's epistemology, and the concept of sociability is entirely absent from his work. Nor can Aron be described as an individualist in anything other than basic moral terms.

What this comparison is meant to show is that Raymond Aron's importance in the history of liberal thought should not be taken for granted, that it needs to be explained, not proclaimed, and that this should be a critical exercise and not a laudatory one. It does not mean that Aron cannot meaningfully be situated within one or more liberal traditions. In fact, 'liberalism' is particularly ill-suited to universal typological definition because its meaning has rarely stabilised over time or space, and the relationship between its economic and political precepts has often eluded

[20] Pierre Manent, 'Introduction: La politique come science et comme souci' in Aron, *Liberté et égalité: Cours au Collège de France* (Paris, 2013), 5–26, 12.
[21] Michael Freeden, 'The family of liberalisms: a morphological analysis' in James Meadowcroft (ed.), *The Liberal Political Tradition: Contemporary Reappraisals* (Cheltenham, 1996), 14–39, 16.

consensus.[22] This book is primarily concerned with situating Aron within the interrelated intellectual histories of French political liberalism and Cold War liberalism. A large part of what made the latter brand of liberal thought new was precisely its scepticism about some of the core assumptions of liberalism as defined by Freeden. Although Aron may not fit comfortably into Freeden's typology, some of his teachers conformed quite closely to it. And while Aron departed from many of the political assumptions of his immediate elders, he came to view the earlier political liberalism of authors such as Montesquieu and Tocqueville as taking on a renewed relevance in the light of the totalitarian threat to democracy during the short twentieth century.

Although the history of twentieth-century French liberalism may present itself as a story of crises and revivals,[23] its protagonists were by no means united in their understandings of the liberalism they wished to defend. When the sociologist Célestin Bouglé initiated a debate on 'The crisis of liberalism' in the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* in 1902, all of the contributors identified the main threat to liberalism with the Catholic church and sought to defend the government's anticlerical policies on the basis of liberal principles.[24] Yet the same year France's first liberal political party, Action Libérale Populaire, was established to represent a form of Catholic republicanism opposed to the anticlerical agenda of the governing Radical party.[25] Even further removed from the anticlerical liberalism defended by the circle of intellectuals associated with the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* was the vision outlined in Émile Faguet's book *Le libéralisme*, published in 1903. Here French republicanism was condemned for its radically anti-liberal tendencies, while Faguet identified the home of authentic liberalism on the anti-republican, clerical and nationalist right.[26]

By the interwar period, the terms of this debate were being transformed. If controversy over church–state relations had been in decline since the separation of 1905, the rise of totalitarian political religions, as fascism and communism were coming to be seen in the 1930s by some Catholics and liberals like Aron, signalled both a new, more profound crisis of liberalism

[22] For a recent critique of such approaches see Helena Rosenblatt, *The Lost History of Liberalism from Ancient Rome to the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton, 2018), 1–7.
[23] Michael C. Behrent, 'Justifying capitalism in an age of uncertainty: l'Association pour la liberté économique et le progrès social, 1969–73' in Chabal *France since the 1970s*, 175–98, 177.
[24] Eric Brandom, 'Liberalism and rationalism at the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, 1902–1903', *French Historical Studies*, 39 (October 2016), 749–79.
[25] Kevin Passmore, *The Right in France from the Third Republic to Vichy* (Oxford, 2013), 127–8.
[26] Émile Faguet, *Le Libéralisme* (Paris, 1903), 295–337.

and, ultimately, the possibility of an antitotalitarian reconfiguration of the political field. Yet, initially at least, the effect of the crisis of the 1930s was to repolarise French politics along comparable lines to the last major outbreak of the *guerres franco-françaises* during the Dreyfus Affair at the turn of the century. When the historian Élie Halévy, one of the editors of the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, reminisced about his prewar politics in 1936, he remarked that 'I was a "liberal" in the sense that I was anti-clerical, a democrat, a republican; let us say in a single word that was then heavy with meaning: [I was] a "Dreyfusard".'[27] By this point, the same impulse towards republican defence that had mobilised Halévy and his friends during the Dreyfus Affair rallied many of them to the cause of organised intellectual anti-fascism. Though it originated as a spontaneous grass roots initiative, the expansion and formalisation of the anti-fascist coalition was facilitated by the French Communist Party's abandonment of class warfare and rallying to the defence of democracy, which, crucially, it explained by presenting itself as the inheritor of a patriotic republican tradition. If this made cooperation with communists more palatable to some French liberals, such as Aron's early mentor, the philosopher Alain (Emile Chartier), the rising political influence of the PCF (French Communist Party) in the mid-1930s drove others, like Bertrand de Jouvenel or Alfred Fabre-Luce, towards varying degrees of support for fascism.

Raymond Aron's antitotalitarian liberalism originated from a critique of these alternative liberal trajectories. Although he first articulated this critique on the eve of the Second World War, Aron would not explicitly identify his position with a kind of renovated political liberalism until the start of the Cold War, in a speech on the future of Europe given to a group of German students in Munich.[28] Significantly, in January 1948 this piece was published in the first issue of a new journal cofounded by Aron, *La Table ronde*, one of the rare publications that, under the banner of a defence of intellectual liberty (*liberté d'esprit*), provided a platform for writers formerly blacklisted by the Conseil national des écrivains because of their wartime writings in support of collaboration with Germany.[29] After

[27] Élie Halévy, *L'ère des tyrannies: études sur le socialisme et la guerre* (Paris, 1938), 216.

[28] Aron, 'Discours à des étudiants allemands sur l'avenir de l'Europe', *La Table ronde*, 1 (January 1948), 63–86.

[29] Anon, 'Au lecteur', *La Table ronde*, 1 (January 1948), 3–6, 4. Formerly blacklisted authors published in this journal included Jean Giono, Henry de Montherlant, Louis-Ferdinand Céline, and Marcel Jouhandeau. Although founded as a beacon of intellectual pluralism, by the mid-1950s *La Table ronde* had become the exclusive vehicle of a resurgent intellectual far right. On this see Sarah Shurts, *Resentment and the Right: French Intellectual Identity Reimagined, 1898–2000* (Newark, 2017), 266. According to Robert Colquhoun, Raymond Aron left the editorial board in 1950. See his *Raymond Aron: The Philosopher in History*, 361, n. 26.

explaining how, despite the defeat of National Socialism, the war had created the conditions in which Europe was once more exposed to the threat of totalitarianism, Aron addressed the question of the 'moral reserves' that 'regimes of liberty' could draw upon to ward off this danger.[30] Pointing first towards the spontaneous antitotalitarianism of populations whose recent experience of the police state had fostered scepticism towards 'secular religions',[31] Aron then turned to the 'constructive forces' necessary to protect against the resurgent totalitarian threat:

> Let us not use the facile words of liberalism, socialism, or Christianism. The question is to know what living sentiments stir within these old words. I do not believe that the liberal philosophy, whether political or economic, has regained the ascendancy that it had lost. One can deplore this since, undoubtedly, the planned economy leans easily towards totalitarianism even if it does not inevitably result in it. But it is a fact that freedom of enterprise or exchange arouses enthusiasm nowhere . . . On the other hand, I believe there is a profound, elementary liberalism that has again taken root in western Europe: that which is expressed through a desire for personal security, through the respect of the fundamental rights of individuals. There is without doubt, at least apparently, a certain paradox in speaking of this elementary liberalism – which one could also call by its true name: rights of man – when there have never been so many people demeaned and living outside the law, so many gangsters and traffickers, when the concentration camps are filling up again . . . I am not unaware that shattered societies are hardly favourable to the rights of man, that the habits of war teach contempt for precisely the values that we would like to respect anew. All I am saying is that deep down, beyond the scepticism towards the programmes and slogans of those who propose their recipes for salvation, men are relearning the meaning of fundamental values and eternal truths.[32]

These remarks were not prefatory to a discussion of the institutional framework through which the 'rights of man' might be enshrined in international law, a subject about which Aron was extremely sceptical.[33] Instead, he was concerned with describing a set of basic principles through which to reconfigure postwar politics by facilitating a new antitotalitarian consensus among liberals, socialists, and Christian democrats. The 'elementary liberalism' described by Aron was capacious enough to encompass the 'living sentiments' of contemporary socialism, which he identified not in socialists' residual attachment to Marxism but in their 'desire to organise the economy without sacrificing the rights of persons' and 'conviction that

[30] 'Discours à des étudiants allemands', 69–74, 78. [31] Ibid., 78. [32] Ibid., 79.
[33] On international relations see Raymond Aron, *Paix et guerre entre les nations* (Paris, 1962).

in immense collective distress a sort of sharing or community is necessary'. And the prominent role of Catholic philosophers such as Jacques Maritain in contemporary debates over human rights signalled the potential appeal of this antitotalitarian liberalism among Christian democrats.[34] Indeed, whereas anticlericalism was fundamental to the liberalism of Aron's earliest French political and philosophical mentors, he explicitly identified 'the Christian faith' as one of the 'philosophical bases' of the elementary liberalism that he described in his speech.[35]

That Aron's antitotalitarian liberalism entailed a substantial, though not total, break with liberalism as it was understood by his teachers is apparent in a series of lectures on political philosophy that he gave at the École nationale d'administration in 1952. Drawing on Albert Thibaudet's classic account of the history of modern French political thought, *Les idées politiques de la France,* Aron here identified seven 'spiritual families' in contemporary French politics: the conservative and social Catholics, the Saint-Simonians, the Jacobins, socialists and communists, and the liberals, 'if any still exist'.[36] Yet Aron did not consider the extinction or near extinction of political liberalism to have transformational implications for contemporary French political culture because he viewed the weakness of political liberalism as a structural feature of French politics since the

[34] Jacques Maritain, *Les droits de l'homme et la loi naturelle* (New York, 1942). On this subject more broadly see Samuel Moyn, *Christian Human Rights* (Philadelphia, 2015).

[35] Aron described the other philosophical basis for his antitotalitarian liberalism as 'the birth of a virile humanism that I would be tempted to call a *pessimistic humanism*'. He was referring here to the philosophical vision outlined in his doctoral thesis, the *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire* (Paris, 1938). Aron described this humanism in the following terms, invoking in the process the existentialism of Heidegger and Sartre: 'As for the virile and pessimistic humanism, it can probably be found more in France than elsewhere. Spengler used to say that man is an animal of prey and that he cannot stop being one without demeaning himself. Virile humanism would respond that man is an animal of prey capable, since he is endowed with conscience and liberty, of reaching a moral order. In other words, this humanism no longer has anything in common with humanitarianism, with a naïve confidence in the goodness of man. It is blind to neither the element of violence that human relations entail, nor to the animal instincts of humanity, but nor does it ignore the spiritual destination of the human being, thrown into the world, alone with himself and free to choose his authentic or inauthentic existence, to abandon himself or to choose [*s'abandonner ou vouloir*]. This humanism undoubtedly remains quite uncertain in its contents and in its ends. On more than one occasion it has leaned dangerously towards totalitarian doctrines, precisely because the doctrine of choice retains … a transcendental and thus undetermined character. But in the current climate it is not out of the question for it to offer non-Christians the inspiration necessary for a reconstruction of European society and culture.' This and Aron's discussion of the Christian basis of antitotalitarian liberalism can be found in 'Discours à des étudiants allemands', 80–1.

[36] Aron, *Introduction à la philosophie politique: démocratie et révolution* (Paris, 1997), 16; Albert Thibaudet, *Les idées politiques de la France* (Paris, 1932).

nineteenth century.[37] This may not seem like a particularly controversial claim given that, as Emile Chabal has observed, 'most historians . . . agree that liberalism in France all but disappeared under the Third Republic.'[38] Yet before the antitotalitarian turn of the mid-1970s, historians tended to regard the Third Republic as having birthed a golden age of liberalism.[39] While the latter view is plausible if 'liberalism' is understood in similar terms to Michael Freeden, or the older generation of intellectuals at the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale*, Aron rejected it on the basis that, in France, 'properly democratic or left-wing thought has always had a certain penchant for Jacobinism'.[40] It was not a coincidence that this view would achieve near hegemonic status during France's antitotalitarian moment.

Aron identified two points on which the political and historical sensibilities of French liberalism and Jacobinism were most radically opposed. The first he summarised by contrasting liberalism's commitment to defend the free expression of its opponents with Saint-Just's injunction, presented as typical of Jacobinism in general, 'no liberty for the enemies of liberty'. The second concerned their divergent interpretations of the French Revolution. Fundamental to the Jacobin sensibility was the notion, most famously expressed by Georges Clemenceau, of the French Revolution as a 'bloc'. At this point, Aron departed from the expositional mode he had adopted so far to insist that 'The idea that the Revolution is a "bloc" makes no sense historically'.[41] To highlight the absurdity of this claim was not a question of purely historical interest because since the mid-1930s it was this aspect of the Jacobin historical sensibility that the French Communist Party had repeatedly exploited to legitimate its patriotic republican credentials and promote the cause of left unity. Although the expulsion of communist ministers from the French government in May 1947 marked

[37] Aron, *Introduction à la philosophie politique*, 17; Aron, *L'opium des intellectuels* (Paris, 1955), 27.
[38] Chabal, *A Divided Republic*, 137. Historians such as Tony Judt and Sunil Khilnani have traced the fundamental anti-liberalism of much of France's post–Second World War political and social thought to the long-term influence of the Manichean political culture that reemerged towards the end of the nineteenth century. The unusually strong attraction of Marxism and moral indulgence towards both Soviet communism and the Parti communiste français among much of the twentieth-century French intelligentsia are here seen to result on the one hand from an inherent poverty of pluralism and civil rights discourse and, on the other, from a reflexive preference for radical revolutionary political solutions, both linked to the eclipse of liberalism by republicanism under the Third Republic. See Judt, *Marxism and the French Left: Studies in Labour and Politics in France, 1830–1981* (Oxford, 1986), 1–4; Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944–1956* (Oxford, 1992), 159, 238–41; Sunil Khilnani, *Arguing Revolution: The Intellectual Left in Postwar France* (London, 1993), 135–6.
[39] Jean-Pierre Machelon, *La république contre les libertés?* (Paris, 1976), 1.
[40] Aron, *Introduction à la philosophie politique*, 17. [41] Ibid., 18, 205.