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## *"The Team Against the Committee": Fighting Tyranny and Terrorism Without Losing Our Liberal Soul*

Bertrand de Jouvenel is an original thinker. More than any twentieth-century political philosopher that I know of, he has thought through the important and timely question of how a liberal democracy can deal with the challenges of tyranny and terrorism and still maintain its liberal or constitutional soul. Very few of the major figures within the "canon" of political philosophy can make such a claim.

According to Jouvenel, all but a few authors "hide" the "dangerous texture" of politics from their readers. Machiavelli and Hobbes are striking exceptions, but both of them belong to the "pre-history" of liberalism. Machiavelli's *Prince* and Hobbes' *Leviathan*, to be sure, provide valuable help in addressing the threat posed by terrorism—which is a modern variant, in some respects, of what Machiavelli called "pious cruelty"—but they stand outside of the world of fully developed liberal principles and constitutional forms. Their worldview can be reduced to a word: "necessity." For both great thinkers, necessity is a far better teacher and check on political excesses than either morality or law. If the "vainglorious" and piously cruel terrorists and tyrants do not want to play by the rules, then it is necessary to subjugate them. There are no laws, outside the demands of necessity, which ought to limit the sovereign's actions. Guided by this view of the world, the FBI and CIA would not be trapped in a labyrinth of rules and regulations. Their very purpose would justify their means. At this point, the demands of necessity transgress the limits of both decency and constitutional governance.

It is not the case that liberal theory and practice are ignorant of this dangerous texture of politics, or that liberalism does not have

internal resources for acting energetically against its enemies. Locke certainly faced up to these realities, as his teaching on executive power makes clear. But while Locke "constitutionalized" necessity, he gives little practical advice on how the liberal "Prince" is to fulfill his function. He gives his executive the freedom to act, the so-called "prerogative"-but without clear guidance on how his actions might affect the very regime that gives him his freedom of action. Locke is more or less silent on the specific ends that ought to guide his constitutional prince in using this essential freedom. In case of "extreme situations," is he supposed to take his bearings from the "necessity" of Machiavelli and Hobbes? They certainly offer a political science for "effective action." But the danger is that an inordinate emphasis on the demands of necessity will transform liberalism into something other than itself. This is the fundamental problem confronting a liberalism that wishes to remain true to the moral purposes that ought to inform a liberal society. Fortunately, this problem was at the heart of Jouvenel's reflection. He provides his readers with a morally serious political science, one attuned to the threats confronting liberal democracy that nonetheless does not make necessity its only "star and compass."

Thus, a re-examination of the thought of Bertrand de Jouvenel is particularly timely after 9/11/01. The events of that date have no doubt reawakened the American instinct for political survival. However, that salutary instinct needs to be informed by true political wisdom. Jouvenel provides precisely what we need: a humane *and* tough-minded political science that can instruct our struggle for liberal self-preservation.

### The Trilogy

Jouvenel published over forty books in his lifetime-which spanned what another great French political thinker, Raymond Aron, called "the century of total war." Three of his works, *On Power* (1945), *Sovereignty* (1957), and *The Pure Theory of Politics* (1963), compose a trilogy that provides a coherent reflection on the fundamental nature of politics and the distinctive features of politics in the modern age. Because my essay will concentrate on the third work of

this trilogy, *The Pure Theory of Politics*, I will begin by surveying in broadest outline the main contours of Jouvenel's intellectual project.

What does each installment of the trilogy contribute to the whole? To begin with, *On Power* provides a lucid political history of Europe and the West that accounts for the "nature" and "growth" of Political Authority: "Power." Jouvenel explains how Power's prodigious growth over time is tied to *a nature*, and that this nature—because it is a nature—is stronger than the ideas that attempt to subdue it. In particular, Jouvenel describes the exponential growth of state power, "the Minotaur" as he calls it, in the second millennium of the Christian era: from medieval monarchs to captains at the helm of social protectorates or war machines. *Sovereignty* argues—against the combined authority of Aristotle, Hobbes, and Rousseau—that large, dynamic, and heterogeneous political groupings (i.e., modern polities) are still capable of articulating a shared understanding of the common good. And, finally, *Pure Theory* offers to a "science of politics" the elemental "building blocks" of all politics, a grammar of politics which is not only capable of shedding light on how "man moves man" at the "micro" level but is also the essence of any thinking about complex or "organic" political and social systems.

What do these installments add up to? Leo Strauss famously remarked that modern political science "fiddled while Rome burned," and that the mainstream of the political science profession made matters worse by not knowing that it was fiddling or that Rome was burning. Jouvenel not only knew that the world was on fire—he started this trilogy in Switzerland after fleeing his homeland when the Gestapo got wind of his involvement with the resistance—but he developed an architectonic political science to comprehend, and to mitigate, the tragedy that has always haunted politics but which has occurred with even greater consequence under the conditions of late modernity.

Jouvenel's trilogy articulates a political science that accounts for the expansive nature of "Power" and which seeks to moralize and yoke it to good ends. But it is a political science that is self-conscious about the Sisyphean nature of all things human. The trajectory of

human things is not automatically progressive; political degeneracy is an ever-present possibility. The circumstances that political science deals with are never totally predictable and the dangers confronting free communities are real enough and can never be wholly eradicated. Yet Jouvenel is finally not a political pessimist. He shows that political science is a natural science-rigorous and representative-that deals with moral agents.<sup>1</sup> Human beings, even in "individualistic" modern circumstances, cannot escape the demands of social friendship and the common good. At the heart of Jouvenel's political science is his insight that dynamic liberal societies need to cultivate a conception of the common good appropriate to a community of free men. Unfortunately, theoretical modernity's attempt to ostracize the good from politics because of religious conflicts over the nature of the good life is a Pyrrhic victory, which over the long-term has created the conditions for new and more virulent forms of totalitarian and despotic "pious cruelty." This is the fire that forever threatens Rome.

Jouvenel shows that a realistic liberal ethic needs a political science that is truly attentive to the threats that continue to confront free societies. Political science needs to confront the expansionist tendency of the state and the dangerous tendency and texture of history, both of which are threats to liberty and true progress. However, to do so requires puncturing certain "progressive" myths and illusions. Jouvenel shows that "established positions of authority" are "shells" that are "generated, captured, extended, destroyed and replaced by the play of political enterprise. History is a museum of broken shells and a workshop on new forms"<sup>2</sup> Accepting this pessimistic view of history is precondition for mitigating it.

In particular, Jouvenel provides a political science that presumes to keep the political regime intact by focusing on the attitudes and actions of those who are motivated by a passion to overturn liberal politics. It is a regime science that is focused on the sub-political "clouds no bigger than a man's hand from which the tempest will come." Hitler was originally such a fist-sized cloud, and he ended up setting the tone-even in his colossal failure-for an entire century. Osama Bin Laden certainly desires to give rise to

another such tempest. Like Hitler, he aims to change the course of history, even if he does so from under the rubble. Jouvenel's political science provides liberal democracy with the means of tracking and averting such storms-anticipating and responding to these sub-political rumblings on the horizon-while making every effort to shore up liberal procedures and mores against those political storms which will always threaten to overtake them.

#### The Liberal Dilemma: "The Team Against the Committee"

For Jouvenel, liberalism is defined first and foremost by its freedom of "instigation." As James Madison so eloquently argued in *Federalist* #10, to attack the freedom to form a group and pressure the government because of the threat that "faction" poses to public order is a "solution" that is worse than the disease it aims to cure. This, in a nutshell, is the problem confronting liberal politics, for liberal democracy is thus at a fundamental disadvantage in dealing with its enemies. Jouvenel points to the principal source of its vulnerability: our apparent weakness and complacency in dealing with the enemies of freedom is inseparable from the strengths of free political communities. It is very difficult for liberal regimes, which proclaim that the building of a group and the pressuring of the government are essential freedoms, to act against any group-even those animated by what Jouvenel calls "bellicose intent."

The hesitancy on the part of supporters of liberal democracy to restrict the independence of groups is perfectly understandable. Who is to determine what groups are allowed and which ones should be outlawed or restricted? The government? It is not difficult to see how groups that pressure government-an important source of health and vitality in liberal democratic regimes-might see the interest of all pressure groups standing or falling together. While Jouvenel's position is not that of extreme civil libertarians, he shares the civil libertarians' concern that this essential freedom not be undermined in the effort to confront those that would use liberal freedoms to undermine the very regime that exists to protect them. Jouvenel's contribution to political science generally, and to the study of terrorism specifically, is that he has thought through the

complexity surrounding the challenge of terrorism to liberal theory and practice, and he has arrived at a position that allows liberal political communities to defend themselves without undermining the essential human freedom, the freedom to form a group.

Jouvenel takes the meaning of words seriously. A political *science* worthy of its name must be "rigorous" and "representative": it must be able to account for the full range of political phenomena. From time to time, therefore, political science needs to correct or supplement old masters. Publius was correct not to look to traditional republican means, such as smallness of size, homogeneity of beliefs, and resistance to foreign ways, to deal with the principal threat to the integrity of republican government-the problem of faction. Publius' political science is certainly true as far as it goes-the extended orbit does mitigate the threat of factions by diluting them. But factions-by which we mean those banded together with bellicose intent-have proven themselves able under extreme circumstances to get around such institutional safeguards. The Founders' solution to the problem is therefore not an exhaustive prescription, especially in an ideological age. As Jouvenel shows in a chapter of *Pure Theory* aptly titled "The Team Against the Committee," this fundamental liberal safeguard is circumvented and at times subverted by those it seeks to exclude. Jouvenel's chapter not only takes the core liberal concern as its starting point, but it also shows the benefit of thinking about the complex in terms of its essential or pure components.'

Jouvenel examines the threat posed by those who are dissatisfied with the decision of a "Committee"-(Jouvenel's term for a group of political decision-makers). He discusses how a "team," which he defines as a group that "shares an intention" that it looks to a committee to actualize,<sup>4</sup> exerts pressure on a committee. According to Jouvenel, there are three basic ways-present under any regime, ancient or modern-to approach an established authority with the goal of getting a team's intention heard and acted upon. The first is to make one's case directly to a committee. The second, indirect route is to focus on getting your intention heard by acting on the members of the committee individually (in a word, lobbying).

Jouvenel introduces the third, the establishment of an outside pressure group, within the context of the first two. An outside pressure group becomes necessary when the effort to "persuade directly" or to "mildly nag" fails to move those in authority.

While the third approach appears to be a source of friction, Jouvenel is quick to remind us of the legitimacy of such action in a liberal order: "This is a current procedure in a regime of liberty: indeed its being held legitimate defines political liberty."<sup>5</sup>

To eliminate the ability to generate a pressure group after Authority has spoken would be to strike at the heart of the regime of modern liberty. Also, to put a case in front of a committee—directly or indirectly—presupposes the existence of an outside pressure group. That such teams exist everywhere that there is free politics is not disputed. The political question is: what are the appropriate procedures and attitudes of "established Authority" toward such a group, once it has decided not to act positively on a request and the group continues to promote its instigation? How does one balance what constitutes the liberty of "instigation" with the stability of the political order? To provide a real alternative to Hobbes, Jouvenel must show how this basic liberty to form (and continue) a pressure group after the public Authority has issued a command is rooted in a right outside of the decision of the Authority to tolerate it. He must also show that this right is limited, and that when instigation threatens the stability of the established Authority, a decent political order has every right to defend itself.

It should be noted that a pressure group that does not accept the legitimacy of decisions made by established authorities calls into question the very notion of legitimate authority. This is why this third option is not to be found everywhere. It is universal to the extent that pressure groups of this kind are natural to politics; what is not universal is the public Authorities' recognition of them. The best short answer to why regimes do not recognize the rights of teams is that this often strikes at the heart of political command and calls into question the legitimacy of established Authority. At a certain point, debate must end. There must be a legitimate source of political command announcing that the debate is over. In Jouvenel's view,

issuing and enforcing a command is the very nature of Authority. Without the right of command there would be no public Authority, only a ceaseless war of rival instigations, with no means to resolve their conflicting claims. There would be nothing but civil war by other means.

This is one reason why Hobbes defined the power of Leviathan to be in principle unlimited. Outside of Public Authority, there are no rights, only "a war of all against all." Therefore, when the debate is over and a decision is made, the pressuring must stop and obedience rendered or exacted. Jouvenel believes that the primacy of political authority is rooted in its ability to compel obedience and to enforce its decisions. But he does not advocate command for its own sake or even for the preservation of civil peace in the manner of Hobbes. Jouvenel describes the "attentive statesman" as the caretaker of a communication system. For true communication to exist, rules once pronounced must be obeyed, or the system collapses and Authority dissolves. The right of command is rooted in this natural social necessity. Public Authority can regulate the pressure it allows to be exerted by others not because it is absolute but rather because it is limited. When push comes to shove, the integrity of the political whole takes precedence. It is worth remembering that Jouvenel shares with Hobbes a concern for giving Authority the resources it needs to deal with the challenges of emergent authority"-those teams that will continue to pressure public Authorities even after the political decision has been made. However, Jouvenel thinks that what is needed is a stricter definition of legitimate and illegitimate instigation. The stability and legitimacy of a liberal order ultimately depends upon such a distinction.

Jouvenel distinguishes between two types of pressure groups: those focusing on changing the committee's decision by "converting the people" and those intent upon "subverting the committee." The former is the distinguishing characteristic of the sort appropriate to a liberal regime. Jouvenel's factual description captures the natural dignity of this "converting" team: "The team is confident that it can muster ever-increasing support, expects that such backing will in time become overwhelming, and is content to wait for the reaching



of this situation."<sup>6</sup> There are "intensive" groups that work to generate "extensive" support in order to apply greater pressure on the decisions of the committee. Jouvenel distinguished three types of forces that exist outside of the public Authority and that must not only be included in a liberal political science but even made central in its reflection: extra-governmental (i.e. a union); new force (i.e. a political party); and revolutionary forces dedicated to the overthrow and transformation of an existing order.<sup>7</sup> All but the third can be understood based on this positive use of liberty. However, it should be noted that what qualifies these forces as positive examples is the spirit that motivates these pressure groups; they pressure Authority without causing any direct breach of peace or initiating any fundamental challenge to the legitimacy of the regime.

Jouvenel describes the second type of pressure group, the subversive team, as lacking both the patience and the extensive base of the former:

The team regards it as unlikely that it can over a period of time mobilize adequate support to carry the wanted decision by sheer weight of numbers, or is unwilling to accept the implied delay, either because the critical date is too distant, or too uncertain, for its patience, or because the decision called for would be stultified by the passage of time.... In such a position, the team avails itself of its dedicated supporters to generate nuisances for the committee. Nuisance policies are the natural resort of a team, which relies on intensive rather than extensive support. Its efforts are addressed to subverting the committee rather than converting the people. The word "nuisance" is used here relative to the committee: it is not implied that the actions so denominated are themselves "wrong." They are meant to badger the committee. There exists a vast range of nuisance tactics. Ethically speaking, going on a hunger strike and throwing a bomb are poles apart: yet both are demonstrations of an intense feeling, meant to break the will of the committee.<sup>8</sup>

What is striking in this description is Jouvenel's approach to the ethical dimension. The act of badgering a committee is not pre-

sented as necessarily something "wrong." In the abstract, at least, "badgering" is an ethically neutral act. However, *how* one proceeds or *what* one does is not ethically neutral. Jouvenel presents a range of extreme actions, from a hunger strike to bomb throwing. While one could come up with examples where both these examples could be "ethical," the throwing of the bomb at a committee would certainly justify a response. But would a hunger strike? Not necessarily. Certainly, some of those who have gone *on* hunger strikes while in prison found themselves in prison because they threw bombs. But this is not the case with every hunger-striker. And what can an Authority do to those who choose this avenue of defiance?

While these examples are extreme, they clearly point to the limit of a team's right to the guarantee of political liberty. To further muddy the waters, Jouvenel discusses "milder forms" of nuisance politics such as marching, picketing, and demonstrating. Jouvenel did not distinguish "converting the people" and "subverting the committee" in order to neatly separate legitimate and illegitimate pressure groups. Marching, picketing, and demonstrating are presented as legitimate, "nuisance"-style expressions of political liberty. In fact, these are widely accepted and widely legitimate means to pressure a committee. What is the purpose, then, of such a distinction? It seems that Jouvenel distinguishes between these two types of pressure groups in order to separate those who ought to be protected in a regime of liberty from those who finally do not deserve such protection.

At first glance, Jouvenel's distinctions are somewhat frustrating. He has identified a problem with instigation but this problem appears to be inextricably woven into the fabric of the goods that we associate with free politics. How are we to separate the wheat from the chaff? By making such distinctions within the nuisance category, Jouvenel shows that the dangerous texture of politics is in reality localized within an extreme using an extreme form of nuisance politics. For Jouvenel, a pressure group loses its legitimate standing when it opts for *violence*. The public Authority or committee needs to be able to identify and exclude those with violent intentions. The

civility of "the city" must be defended against those who choose bellicose means and ends.

### The Sanctification of Violence

Jouvenel isolates this extreme for special consideration. He finds within the camp of extreme instigation both a "terrorist strategy" and a terrorist morality. The latter is a distinctive and bitter fruit of late modern politics. Such a morality combines the "manners of gangsters with the moral benefits of martyrdom." Jouvenel is very careful to distinguish between the natural inclination toward violence and the distinctively modern manifestation of the phenomena. However, before we separate the two types of violence, we first need to explore why conflict is so natural to politics. In "The Manner of Politics" Jouvenel writes,

The common good is indeed a powerful notion, but of indefinite content: its uncertainty, together with a variety of personal wants and wills, give rise to a number of disagreements. Who should fill this position? What should be the decision on that occasion? Such is the daily stuff of Politics, inflamed from time to time by disagreements regarding the very structure of institutions.'

So much is expressed here! Jouvenel captures in these few sentences what is behind the "daily stuff of Politics." Political thinkers as diverse as Aristotle and Hobbes would not disagree with this description of what gives politics its dynamism and texture. Conflict and violence are constituent parts of political life, an unfortunate but necessary byproduct of humans living together. They stem paradoxically from the natural human desire to articulate a "common good."

While it is natural that violence erupts in politics from time to time, it is equally natural for human beings to abhor this fact. According to Jouvenel, man has a "natural sense" that killing is wrong. That men kill each other is an established fact. What is also a fact is that they have to get themselves worked up to do so:

If a team feels very strongly about an issue and communicates this strength of feeling toward others, there is always some risk that

someone of these others will commit an act of violence. If this occurs, those who have inspired the feeling should now experience a sense of guilt: that is an ancient and natural pattern.<sup>11</sup>

Jouvenel singles out the French anarchist theorist Georges Sorel (the author of the 1908 revolutionary classic, *Reflections on Violence*) as the herald of a new terrorist morality, one that defined itself in opposition to this "natural" "moral sense." No longer are those who inspire violence supposed to feel a sense of shame but rather a kind of revolutionary pride. Under this new Sorelian ethic, the blood of Duncan no longer haunts Macbeth. In fact, his willingness to spill Duncan's blood is precisely what allows him to rise above the rest. In "The Manner of Politics," Jouvenel returns to this point:

The new "sublime of extreme actions" has been immortally illustrated by Stendhal in the micro-portrait, the medallion of Julien Sorel. What characterizes the hero is that in a succession of small incidents, Julien overcomes both his timidity and decency, which he satanically confuses, to do the bold thing."

From where does this nihilistic attitude derive? What justifies this election and worship of violence? Jouvenel answers that, as such, "This evil attitude is far more harmful than any false ideas and it is not fostered by intellectual error but aesthetic suggestions....' Does that mean that the mind has nothing to do with this evil attitude? Not in the least. Jouvenel's distinction between intellectual error and aesthetic suggestions refers to how such an evil attitude is spread or fostered. It does not mean that an intellectual error, such as Georges Sorel's, might not lurk behind this virulent delivery system.

This new morality seems to make a good retrospective case for the Hobbesian position. The Leviathan cannot be criticized for lacking the stomach for dealing with the threats posed by these "sacred battalions."<sup>14</sup> In fact Leviathan can respond to this morality and strategy blow by blow. But Jouvenel suggests elsewhere that the soullessness of the Hobbesian "Babylon" actually inspires the moral

inversion which is the revolutionary "Icaria." It gives rise to the moralistic abolition of the moral sense.'

On the other hand, Jouvenel does not deny the attraction of the Hobbesian understanding of man. Relativism cools the minds of most men, and in doing so contributes to an atmosphere of peace. The majority of men are not prone to follow great instigations that go against the peace inherent in the Hobbesian solution to political conflict. The strength of Hobbes' solution is that it calls into question the legitimacy of the instigator by questioning his motives, which hampers his ability to generate more extensive support. The paradox and likely tragedy of Hobbes' solution is that while his metaphysic of power cools the majority of men, it heats up smaller groups.. It stirs up their moral passion against such a society and against morality itself. In the Hobbesian system, Power discredits the vainglorious in the eyes of the people, but provides no grounds for intrinsically limiting the human will. For example, those longing for the psychic wholeness of the past (a longing that modernity's "soullessness" naturally nurtures), those who are disgusted with the trivializing "conviviality" that rules Hobbes' world, can use violence to build a different world on the rubble of Babylon. Or, on the individual level, they may choose a "counter-culture" that "maintains and develops a separateness from the Corrupt.

#### Jouvenel's De-sanctification of Violence

What counsel can a "pure theory" offer to assist the magistrate in keeping violent instigations out of politics? Jouvenel's "pure theory" ends with two suggestions: one for narrowing the definition of faction so that the political magistrate focuses on violence, and the other emphasizing the role of manners or civility in maintaining the liberal order.

Jouvenel's understanding of faction entails a refinement of Madison's understanding of faction in *Federalist*#10. In that famous paper Madison writes, "By faction, I understand a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or a minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion or interest, adverse to the rights of citizens, or the permanent and

aggregate interests of the community." For Jouvenel, Madison's definition is too "equivocal" because the meaning of "adverse" is open to many subjective valuations. As we have discussed, the head of the liberal committee is at a rhetorical disadvantage when trying to explain to teams why they should check their intentions. Jouvenel shows how the very teams that Madison wished to check can use his own words in defense of their subversive positions. The team's rejoinder is so good that it deserves to be quoted in full:

Say that I am a member of a group "united and accentuated by some common impulse...": I shall not grant that our action is directed against the "rights of other citizens" but only against rights abused or usurped, or which, while they may at this moment (under present law) be positive rights, have no basis in equity and should be rightly cut down by a change in the law. In a like manner, I shall not grant our actions are directed against the "permanent and aggregate interests of the community" but only against a caricature of these interests invoked by our opponents. A difference of opinion regarding what rights should be, and what are the aggregate interests, must then produce a difference in the denomination of our movement: a faction to those who disagree with us but not to ourselves."

What is remarkable about this discussion is that Jouvenel introduces this "equivocal" assessment of Madison's definition by citing Robert Dahl's negative assessment and initially agreeing with it. He thus exemplifies how people can agree about a problem yet understand it completely differently. Dahl is critical of Madison's definition of faction because *those in public Authority* could use such a standard too subjectively. An over-reaching public authority is the fundamental problem for Dahl. Jouvenel on the other hand is critical of Madison's definition for giving support to those very "adverse groups that public Authority needs to find a way to limit.

Jouvenel's response to the subjectivity that inheres in Madison's definition is to redefine a faction in terms of groups "joined together in a bellicose spirit." In doing so Jouvenel reaffirms what he calls the "most ancient maxim of Politics," that "War is a condition which may

obtain with foreigners, but peace is the condition which must be obtained between compatriots."<sup>17</sup> Now, the attentive statesman has both a loud voice and a vision to accompany it: he can survey the social field and call all the various social groups by their proper names. Our attentive statesman is no longer tongue-tied when dealing with troublesome instigation. In a loud voice he now says: "Your instigation undermines the spirit of amity and comity that is fundamental to our politics. By speaking and acting violently, you have disqualified yourself from the protection of a free political community. Political liberty is for groups that act with amity toward their compatriots."

Jouvenel's position is the very opposite of the civil libertarian who judge political liberty by the freedom that the public Authority allows to those groups and individuals that are committed to its elimination. For example, the radical Islamist, who uses the liberal hedges of civil liberties and liberal public opinion to actively and openly subvert his host is a perfect example of the "dangerous texture" that continues to surround even liberal politics. In contrast to the ACLU's insistence that the existence of such groups testifies to the strength of liberal societies, Jouvenel insists that it points to liberalism's inherent vulnerability. These are the "clouds, no bigger than a man's hand from which the tempest will come."<sup>18</sup>

Jouvenel understands the practical difficulty of trying to control and eliminate such groups. And one can easily picture—because life affords us with many examples—the public Authority taking action against a faction, only to find itself undermined because the subversive group casts the attack on its bellicose intention as an attack on political liberty itself: "Sure, today it's the Nazis in Stokie or the Branch Davidians in Texas, or the Mullahs in Patterson New Jersey—all of whose values challenge us—but if we say it is legitimate to go after them, what will stop them from one day coming after us." This is the "slippery slope" argument of civil libertarians who always take the permanence of liberal democracy for granted and forget, or never learned, the lessons of Weimar.

For our attentive magistrates to be successful, the citizenry needs to internalize this "ancient maxim" in their manners. For

Jouvenel, the manners associated with political civility are what keep the conflict that naturally surrounds politics within manageable limits.<sup>10</sup> Where civil manners rule the competition for extensive and intensive assent, brutish and loutish language is pushed out. Social friendship thus accompanies and moderates electoral competition and partisan conflict. Certainly there will always be harsh political disagreements and the occasional act of violence, but the conflicts will be civil, and when violence erupts the reaction is appropriately one of shame and condemnation. Certainly the public Authority has an important role to play in fostering an environment conducive to civility, but the shaping of these manners is largely done outside of it. This is one of the responsibilities of a political philosophy that aims to "civilize power, to impress the brute, improve its manners, and harness it to salutary tasks.""

Jouvenel suggests that it was the "subversion of civility in the French Revolution" that was "the true explanation of so violent a reaction as Burke's."<sup>21</sup> That great English Whig was horrified by the "new expressions on faces" and "new tones of voices" that accompanied the French revolutionary subversion of the old European order. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, too many "philosophers" legitimated and even sanctified inhuman violence and ignored the fragility of civilized order. Things were not improved by their harsh words and violent acts.

*The Pure Theory of Politics* is the work of a friend of liberty who has been chastened by his own personal confrontation with "angry bellicose Politics." Jouvenel lived through an age of ideological, totalitarian violence and does not "underestimate" it.<sup>22</sup> His political science is an effort to convey the lessons of an age that witnessed the vulnerability of civilized politics to internal and external subversion. In the 1970s, a decade after the original publication of *Pure Theory*, he wrote that the smell of murderous princes still characterized the world stage, that politics as he had seen it had not receded but rather took greater market share. For this reason Jouvenel remains our informed and instructive contemporary. Jouvenel's work provides a necessary corrective to the illusion that the political problem can be solved once and for all. Free political orders will continue to face



determined and illiberal enemies, and these enemies must be confronted with an "artillery of ideas" and practices that has greater theoretical wellsprings than "necessity." Jouvenel's reflections on the "Team Against the Committee" provide an excellent starting point for confronting the modern "sanctification of violence," and for appreciating the inherent fragility of a civilized political order. This chastened liberal articulated a political science that has the intellectual and moral resources that liberal citizens and statesmen need in order to fight tyranny and terrorism without losing our liberal souls.

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#### NOTES

1. Bertrand de Jouvenel, *Sovereignty: An Inquiry into the Political Good* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1997), 368.

2. *Pure Theory*, 107.

3. The remainder of this essay is largely excerpted from my dissertation, *Guardians of the Body Politic* (Fordham University, 2001).

4. *Pure Theory*, 176.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Pure Theory*, 177.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Pure Theory*, 178.

9. *Pure Theory*, 180.

10. *Pure Theory*, 188.

11. *Pure Theory*, 180.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Pure Theory*, 196.

14. *Pure Theory*, 197.

15. On `Babylon and "Icaria," see *Sovereignty*, 328-333. On the moralistic revolutionary denial of the moral sense, see *Pure Theory*, 180.

16. *Pure Theory*, 182, note 1.
17. *Pure Theory*, 181.
18. *Pure Theory*, 175.
19. *Pure Theory*, "The Manners of Politics," 187-203.
20. *Pure Theory*, 35.
21. *Pure Theory*, 194.
22. *Pure Theory*, 203. On this point, also see Daniel J. Mahoney's "Foreword" to the Liberty Fund edition of *Pure Theory*, *xiii*.