

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The Western World is desintegrating. The Soviet World is exploding. And 1984 is approaching. In the "newworlds", in Asia, Africa, new states grow and stumble. This is a time to reconsider the origins of political philosophy in the Western hemisphere. And so we are obliged to reconsider the roots of our Western World. 300 years ago Thomas Hobbes died. He was one of the first philosophers to produce a philosophy of man and society on a new basis : science and state were two of his most-favourite items. Thomas Hobbes is a philosophical case to open. This is the object of the issue of PHILOSOPHICA. The case Hobbes and its significance for the modern world.

I do not wish to enter the subject of the contemporary significance of Thomas Hobbes's philosophy, for this has been done in the papers in this issue. We were well aware of the "déjà vue"-character of our endeavour to treat with Hobbian philosophy. A trecentenary is always a good occasion to write some articles. But we thought we had some supplementary and less opportunistic reasons to elaborate this issue. In fact, Hobbes has a great significance for our evolving world, for he was one of the leading philosophers who endeavoured to give a systematic ideological synthesis of the new world. If there is some parallelism between this new-born world and the evolution in the third world nowadays, and if there is exemplarily significance of the sixteenth century for our time, it might be useful to investigate Hobbian synthesis.

First let me remark that we deplored the absence of a critical edition of Hobbes's work. Moreover a critical status quaestionis of the secondary works on Thomas Hobbes is still lacking. We could not realize this, but we could start a renewed approach of the work to be done. We were convinced that the work of Hobbes rendered a fundamental for the systematic study of ideology in the Western World. So our aim was to begin with a critical examination, both of the philosophy of Hobbes and its roots in the new-born world in the 16th and 17th centuries.

We are confronted with two trends in the interpretation of Hobbes's philosophical work. We refused the first of them as totally inadequate. The first trend in interpretation consists in the consistent-making of Hobbes's geometrical-mechanical and political thoughts.

The second trend in the Hobbian literature consists in the historical interpretation of Hobbes's work. Two kinds of interpretation are possible. One : the doxographic interpretation in the Jaeger-approach such as is done in the work of Leo Strauss, in order to show the development of thoughts and the inconsistencies in the global work; two : the historiosophic interpretation of Hobbes's work against the background of a reconstructed political and socio-economic situation, such as is done in the work of Macpherson.

I think that the latter one, doxographic and/or historiosophic, has been preferred by two of the authors in this issue. Benoît Angelet is situating Hobbes's political philosophy against the background of the development of what he calls "l'assujettissement à une puissance objective", both in politics and philosophy. Ronald Commers tried to picture Hobbes's political philosophy in what he calls, following Wallerstein, a world system view. Neither for Angelet, nor for Commers the purpose was to get rid of most of the inconsistencies of Thomas Hobbes's philosophical work in order to back Hobbes in his political and social philosophy. On the contrary, their treatments demonstrate the intention to criticize his work in its systematic, deductive consistency-pretensions. Both authors were seeking to infer a diagnostic of our time, basing themselves on the mistakes and ideological content of Hobbes's work.

The content of the issue looks as follows. The first paper treats the origin and background of Hobbes's political philosophy. The author uses the recent work of Immanuel Wallerstein. It is clear that the purpose is to treat Hobbes's work as an ideological case of distinct features in relationship with earlier political philosophy. In the second paper the author pictures Hobbes as founder of modern political thought, between Francis Bacon and R. Descartes. In order to understand Hobbian naturalism and the totalitarianism anticipated in the conceptions concerning the state, it seems necessary to interpret Hobbes's work as a repression of the problem of power through knowledge (the consequence of Bacon's *Novum Organum*) and of the *ἐπιπέδον* of Cartesian *Médiations*. The third paper treats the idea of mechanics which has been formulated in Hobbes's

work. Some suggestions are given to elaborate a full scale historical account of the idea of mechanics in social sciences. The fourth paper treats the famous debate concerning determinism and free-will. It is a modern criticism, sympathetic towards Thomas Hobbes, of what is considered as an old 'metaphysical' discussion.

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