

THOMAS HOBBS IN A WORLD—SYSTEM—VIEW
Some comments on the modern and the conservative aspects of
Hobbes's political thoughts

Ronald Commers

1. Introduction

In the present paper I do not intend to add some further exegesis to the already existing one concerning Hobbes's *De Cive* and *Leviathan*. I shall try to give a fresh look on some of Hobbes's major political and philosophical themes, making use of Wallerstein's much debated book on the Modern World System¹. We need a closer examination of what we shall call 'the world system view'. This will be the first chapter of our paper. In the second chapter I shall enter the discussion of 'Leviathanistic Absolutism' with its problems and inconsistencies, which I then intend to leave as they appear rather than to endeavour to solve them as has been done in a considerable amount of publications on Hobbes'. The reason for this is that I doubt the utility of this kind of political philosophy. To endeavour to understand the work of Hobbes, pointing out the core of his doctrines, demonstrating some of the striking inconsistencies, reckoning with the historical background, appears to me as a more fertile approach of a philosophical system, than to seek after consistent making arguments. Why save Hobbes's political doctrines?

I shall not enter much longer on this controversy leaving it to the reader to judge my approach in this issue of *Philosophica*. The discussion of Leviathanistic Absolutism led me to the consideration of 'contract' and 'State', conservatism's first phase, that means the specific relationships between 'natural' and 'civil laws' stipulated by Th. Hobbes, and to the problem of 'statism' and 'development'. My paper will end with an appraisal of the significance of Thomas Hobbes's political philosophy.

2. *The World System View : a new approach for social sciences ?*

I. Wallerstein published his work *The Modern World System* in 1974. Soon afterwards his contribution to the socio-economic history of Western-Europe and the Western World turned out to be not only fruitful in the limited historical domain. As the author explained in some interviews, his aim was to give a total new approach of the problems of the development of modern world : industry, formation of natio-states, the explication of world conceptions and ideologies which appeared to be of great political influence, and last but not least the contradictions between centrum and periphery.

In fact Wallerstein started with contemporary problems of growth. The underdevelopment induced by the introduction of new techniques, by the urgent need of new institutions and by totally different world-conceptions, with which non-Western societies are confronted, led Wallerstein to his reformulation of a great many historical treatments of Western growth. Contemporary economic, institutional and ideological contractions made useful as phenomena for a fresh approach of an economic, institutional and ideological history of the Western world. It is indeed one of the striking features of Wallerstein's work that the usual distinction between economic, institutional and ideological history is given up. His work stands in the tradition of Karl Marx and Max Weber. Though one has to admit that his contribution treats majorly with second-hand information and that no original research was presented by the author, the outcome is a strong theoretical one. Talking in the Kuhnian way one could say that Wallerstein offered a new formulation of old themes. to yield a different and globalizing insight in historical material known for a long time already. He kept the words but changed the syntax and thereby induced a shift in the meaning of the words. Wallerstein has been conscious of this because he explained that such was his major aim. The modern world system will be the outcome of a long-wave world transformation-process, started in the sixteenth century after the withering away of the economic and demographical crises of the 14th and 15th centuries. We are but at the beginning of a process — in fact, we are right in the middle of it. We have to abandon too pronounced a view proceeding from the center of this transformation process : namely, the Western world. In a way Wallerstein has changed the theoretical scene on this point too, which shows its consequences even for marxist approach of development and change.

Let us take a closer look at Wallerstein's first contribution to the history of the Modern World System.

2.1. Wallerstein I: the first of the four major epochs, 1450—1640.

Wallerstein distinguishes the following epochs in the transformation of the modern world system : (a) epoch 1, 1450—1640; (b) epoch 2, 1640—1815; (c) epoch 3, 1915—1917; (d) epoch 4, 1917—1977. The first epoch contains the origin and early development of the world-system : it is a European epoch because at that moment the system is the European world-system. One can easily see how Thomas Hobbes's work in political philosophy lies on the edge of two epochs. We shall see that we can conclude that Hobbes was a man of two worlds, a man of a vanishing epoch before the development of a new one. I will comment on this later on. Now we must concentrate on the features of the first epoch.

The latter question obliges to a further consideration of Wallerstein's rereading of history. He sees four elements in the first-epoch-transformation : (a) a new European (and afterwards a world-wide) division of labour; (b) the creation of powerful nation-states throughout Europe, a phenomenon linked with the economic changes of the Western world; (c) the creation of homogeneous culture — in fact the predominance of the cultural factor in the formation of homogeneous population; and finally (d) the formation of classes linked with the generalization of international trade.

In the epoch 1450—1640 during which a capitalist world-economy was created and subsequent to the contractions of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries new modes of control of labor appeared². The point is that without the juxtaposition of these different modes of production and consequently the different flows of surplus, capitalist economy could not come into existence. One should accentuate this statement : without the maintenance of different modes of control of labour, capitalist economy could not continue its existence. The history of capitalist economy gives ample evidence of the necessity of the juxtaposition of modes of labor control. It is Wallerstein's merit to have drawn particular attention to this phenomenon and to have turned it in a major theoretical element in his treatment of capitalist economy. Moreover, from it proceeded, a different view on contemporary processes of the development of world economy.

In the first epoch at least five modes of labor were functioning in different parts of an expanding world system : (a) slave-labor (f.e. Indians in the Western hemisphere); (b) serfdom in Eastern Europe; (c) tenant-labor in agriculture in Western and Southern Europe; (d) wage-labor in Western Europe; (e) second serfdom, f.e. the later *encomienda* system in Latin America, to be distinguished from medieval serfdom.

These modes of labor control were established both in agriculture and industry. In fact, a specific relationship between modes of labor on one side, and process of production on the other, determined the dominance of some modes of labor. Industrial labor, as established in the Western Europe, became wage-labor for it gave optimal opportunities to develop industry.

Wallerstein's explicit view was that the '*relations of production that define a system are the relations of production of the whole system*'. The point he wished to make, I guess, is that it is impossible to analyze capitalist world-economy, supposing right from the start, that only one mode of production and one relationship of production came into existence. The first epoch, as well as the later epochs, of the modern world-system, must be characterized by the relations of production of the whole system. The relations of production of the whole system are bound in a system of juxtaposed modes of labor. Without the juxtaposition of the different modes of organization of labor-force, and a fortiori without different modes of surplus-production, there could not exist certainty about the kind of flow of surplus-production, which enables the capitalist transformation of distribution and production in the world.

In the West-European part of the world, labour-force was no more in constant need of control and coercion; constantly coerced and controlled labour disappeared progressively. It was replaced by 'free labour'. The direct control of labour-force was substituted by an indirect control. The means to this were the market *mechanisms*. The whole creation-process of free labour started in the late middle ages with the arrival of free men in and around the important urban centres. It is important to grasp that this process has not reached its end yet. The creation of free labour and the working of market mechanisms, not only in the distribution of products of direct or indirect consumption, but also of labour-force, was only starting. Although the Western world is nowadays predominantly characterized by this mode of control of labour-force, it is not the character-

istic of the whole world-system. The growth, after the disruptive coming in existence of this mode, is a very slow one, seen from a world-angle. Even for highly developed capitalist countries it is not at all sure that other modes of labour-force-control disappeared once and for all. Set-backs are always possible, when market mechanisms won't do. Forced-labour is not an unknown phenomenon for a developed capitalist production, as second world-war demonstrated with the spreading of forced labour in work-camps under Nazist rule. Ernest Mandel was referring to the same phenomenon in his book, *Der Spätkapitalismus*, when he wrote :

Ursprüngliche Akkumulation des Kapitals und Akkumulation des Kapitals durch Mehrwertproduktion sind nämlich nicht nur *aufeinander folgende* Phasen der Wirtschaftsgeschichte, sondern auch *gleichzeitige* Wirtschaftsprozesse. In der ganzen Geschichte des Kapitals bis zum heutigen Tag spielen sich laufend Prozesse der ursprünglichen Kapitalsakkumulation ab — neben der vorherrschenden Kapitalakkumulation durch Wertschöpfung im Produktionsprozess³.

We are touching one of the development-features, which Ernst Bloch treated under the heading of the phenomenon of polyrhythmic development and of contemporaneity and untemporaneity (Gleichzeitigkeit — Ungleichzeitigkeit) of the world evolution. In this work⁴ this had to be understood as a philosophical (ontological) characteristic of the world. In Wallerstein's and Mandel's works it is implicitly and explicitly mentioned in relationship with socio-economic and historical development. The global trend in the modern world system was as follows : specialization of production by means of 'free labour' and through variety in the Western world; specialization of production by means of mono-culture in the Eastern parts of Europe. 'Free labour' was the form of labour-force used for skilled work (specialization through variety of production); coerced labour was (and is) used for less skilled work (specialization through mono-culture). The first refers to labour in the core countries; the latter to labour in the peripheral areas. But again the former goes hand in hand with the latter and they are closely linked throughout the further development of the world-system : uneven and combined development is the major characteristic not only now but right from the start. This confronts us with a second element of the first epoch-transformation, namely the creation of powerful nation-states.

The above mentioned epoch-making *transformation of production and labour organization could not have been possible*, Wallerstein argued, *within an imperial framework*. Any imperium would have blocked that transformation within its limits, such as has been done effectively in the Chinese imperium for the period 1450–1640. A more diversified political system was necessary. A system which could guarantee the diversified development of modes of labour control and of an interrelated, diversified evolution of class-formation. In the Western hemisphere the necessary conditions were gathered for it.

Evidently, if one is to untangle the picture, one has to look “to the political side, the ways in which various groups sought to use the state structures to protect and advance their interests”. *That’s where Campanella, Bodin, Althaus and Hobbes, among others, enter.*

A preliminary question must be asked : what was cause and what consequence ? Was the modern economic system giving birth to a political system, which was well adapted to it, or was it the political system which was based on powerful nation-states with similar though different political institutions, that facilitated and induced the socio-economic changes ? The answer is easy, if one avoids the trap of monocausality in historical explanation. That is what Wallerstein does, when he states that the nation-states were above all the central economic actors in the European world economy⁵. He stresses the importance of the developing bureaucracies and intervening state structures, dissimilar in form among themselves, but similar in their role and function towards the expansion of the economic activities in a capitalist way. I understood the final part of that proposition as : in a way to guarantee capital accumulation in the core of the world system.

As the diversification of modes of labour force-control became a reality, state structures had to answer to the specific needs of the particular and predominating mode of labour-force-control in their region. To consolidate the undelivered existence of one of the modes of labour-force-control, adapted to the total dynamic of the world transformation-process and its diversification in core and peripheral areas, strong and powerful nation-states were necessary. One political system for the whole of the different regions, and for the whole of the different modes of labor-force-control, necessary to secure the flow of surplus and capital accumulation, would have provoked too many contradictions. Charles V had to make up his choice

between the Northern (Flemish and German) regions and the Southern (Italian and Spanish) regions. Already at his lifetime the whole of his imperium was cracking and soon afterwards desintegrated. The Habsburg imperium could not hold together the very different regional realities, and was not able to secure the political link between too different socio-economic developments. But in spite of rejection of the imperium, capitalist development required *and* facilitated the process of increased centralization and internal control⁶, and Habsburg reign was responding to this in Spain.

There is a further problem : how did kings strengthened themselves ? Wallerstein sees four mechanisms : bureaucratization, monopolization of force, creation of legitimacy and homogenization of the subject-population⁷. The reader of *Leviathan* can easily see on which points Hobbes responded to the four mechanisms. We will comment this further in 2.

A state-bureaucracy was given birth to progressively, although comparisons with modern state-bureaucracies might suggest that they were not that important in Hobbes's time. Wallerstein emphasized the comparison with the medieval circumstances : a difference in size and in structure can be observed. Complexity of institutions kept amounting.

In order to construct and to develop a state bureaucracy, it is necessary to dispose of money. 'Officials' had to be bought and the subject-population had to pay for this. That was one of the early origins of national debt, which grew to a national debt-system without which capitalist economy could not have been established. A coercive power cannot exist without the money of the subject-population; but a still more powerful coercive system was needed⁸.

The second feature in building nation-states is monopolization of force. Standing armies were formed making use of the 'lumpen-proletariat' and 'proletariat'. Both social groups grew as a consequence of the excess of population and the concentration of the population in and around the urban centres. Incorporating elements of the 'populace' into the standing armies served in multiple ways : it provided for employment of some of these elements and it made possible the submission of the others. So banditism was an opposition within the framework of the modern State. Wallenstein tries to explain why this happened, considering it a serious error to conceive of banditry as a feudal opposition to state-authority. Banditry

was powerful where the state was weak. Banditry was a phenomenon of dislocation caused by the great economic and political transformations of the modern world system. As such it was a call for a stronger state to get rid of the contradictions of the transformations in a political way to annihilate local rebellion and power. Where local rebellion and power was strong central authority was contested. Banditry in this way was a consequence of the *inadequate growth* of state-authority⁹.

A third feature, namely legitimation of power, is linked with the growth of state authority. Wallerstein has rather clear opinions about it. I cannot but sympathize with his starting-point : legitimacy does not consist in the relationship between authority and the subject-population, on the contrary it consists in *the relation between authority and the cadres*. Legitimacy concerns state-authority and state-machinery. It are not the masses which are considering government as legitime, but the intermediate classes that provide for the officials. The managers of the state-machinery and the larger group of central-staff and regional potentates had to be convinced. Consensus towards the cadres goes with constraint towards the masses.

This may be a fresh starting-point for a renewed treatment of ideological phenomena; much of the earlier obscurity of the subject can be avoided. We should seek for a new start in grasping the role of intellectuals, ideology-makers, contestants and rivaling ideology. The end of ideology (a twentieth century ideology) has been proclaimed too soon for only shifts in ideology-making were taking place. A further historical reconsideration might provide us with the evidence of the middle-class-origin of nearly all ideological movements. The point is to give a closer look at this middle-class phenomenon.

Wallerstein points out three elements : (a) managers of the state machinery in relation with cadres and regional bosses; (b) a regime formed and functioning on consensual values, people believe to exist; (c) the believe it is in the interests of cadres, that the regime continues to function without major disturbances.

Absolutism is an ideology conceived of to make the increasing power of central-state-machinery acceptable to the cadres. Absolutist state should not be considered as an 'unlimited' state¹⁰. Evidently in an absolutist state coercion and force took a much greater part than in later kinds of central authority :

In most ways, the power of the king was far less than that of the executive of a twentieth-century liberal democracy, despite the institutional and moral constraints on the latter. For one thing, the state apparatus of the twentieth century has a degree of organizational capacity behind it that more than compensates for the increased constraints¹¹.

What was gained in organization and in involvement of people in societal and state-machinery, could be dropped in coercion and force. This statement of Wallerstein suggests that in the development of nation-state within capitalist world-economy, a shift occurred in legitimation. Absolutism is *one of the many different legitimation-systems in the development of nation-state with in capitalism*. Moreover, one is obliged to understand the "absolute" power of the monarch (or the authority taking the monarch's place) in the context of the political realities of the time and the place :

A monarch was absolute to the extent that he had a reasonable probability of prevailing against forces within the state when policy confrontations occurred.

Wallerstein adds in a footnote to this the definition Erik Molnar gave of absolutism :

Absolutism is a political regime in which the power of the State is exercised essentially and effectively, by the sovereign over the whole of the territory, with the assistance of the military-bureaucratic organization which he has under his control. This definition includes as an essential criterion effective power which usually, when contested, prevails against adverse aspirations, as for example those formulated by a parliament or by a hereditary bureaucracy. "Les fondements économiques et sociaux de l'absolutisme", in XII^e Congrès Internationale des Sciences Historiques : Rapports, IV : Méthodologie et Histoire contemporaine (Wien : Verlag Ferdinand Berger & Sohne, 1965), 155.

And he continues :

But even the strongest states in the sixteenth century were hard pressed to demonstrate clear predominance within their frontiers of the means of force, or command over the sources of wealth, not to speak of primacy of the loyalty of their subjects¹².

So, absolutism is the legitimation-system appearing within the original endeavours to create a nation-state, in which the restriction of the concurrence between rivaling forces of power and the coercion of the masses to be mobilized by the multiple local and regional powers, must be accentuated.

Another feature of the early development of nation-states has to be mentioned. First came absolute state and afterwards 'nation'. One of the things a state has to succeed in is the transformation of an otherwise loosely bound-up community of different regions and populations; a community of different, and very often contradictions, customs, of different languages and dialects, of different cultures. One big viable whole had to be formed out of this variety of manners and thoughts. This was the greatest task set for absolute power. Must one conclude that power had to be absolute to arrive at such an end? Where cultural means did not exist, and where a national feeling had still to be generated, was not force and coercion the only means to account for the often contradicting manners, customs, local institutions etc?¹³.

With nationalism Wallerstein is referring to the way members of a state accept the socio-economic and political reality of the national character of their political entity. Such became possible after the state had been constructed and developed. Nationalism, as a specific ideological component, is the outgrowth of the state-reality and witnesses the mass-sentiment towards a relatively homogeneous system which is the result of the former linked local communities. Nationalism is a mass sentiment for it provides for the requirements of a collective solidarity towards a broad community, a commonwealth, unexisting in earlier times, even when a development within states-boundaries was taking place already.

The state is about all a new form of political authority, which steadily gives birth to a nation. Political philosophy, in Hobbes's time, kept on talking about the princes, the monarchs instead of the nation and the nation-authority. Wallerstein recalls what Georges de Lagarde said on this subject :

We should note the fact that the jurists and the ideologists who progressively elaborated the idea of the State in the 16th century spoke much more often of the *Prince* (in the usage of Machiavelli) than of the people, of *authority* more than of *collectively*...¹⁴.

It only happened in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that nationalism was fused with the interests of the bourgeoisie. During the development of the strong nation-states in the core of the system (the Western world), the bourgeoisie was much more interested in open, than in closed economies. And as we know, mercantilism and nationalism go together. Nationalism, at the beginning of state-formation under the powerful "sovereign", remained full of risks: a too narrow national sentiment (regionalism) could break down or hinder the state-formation. So, first came state, sovereign power, and central authority and only afterwards nation, national sentiment. Too early a accentuation of national character would have impeded the construction of the state, which could be only at the expense of a good functioning central authority, monarchical or not.

We entered already upon the subject of the homogenization of a population, otherwise diversified, split up in smaller communities with their own institutions, customs, jurisdiction and so on. To guarantee state-authority a cultural unity had to be conceived of very soon. More than once this went at the expense of the cultural and linguistic identity of population-groups. In order to decrease state-coercion and the total costs of the utilization of force, it was of capital importance to succeed in the cultural homogeneity of the population under sovereign-rule. One had to transform the population into a homogeneous cultural group. This was the work of the cultural cadres of the system, who throughout the whole history of capitalist development remained an indispensable group. Wallerstein stresses that it was once again less the masses than "the cadres in the broadest sense" which were involved. He includes in the latter, the king, his bureaucracy, courtiers, rural landowners, the merchants. What he is trying to say is this: homogeneity first came among these strata, and next among the masses.

This cultural transformation in one way or another was much debated among historians and sociologists. We may recall the debates concerning the role of Jewish merchants and financiers, the role of protestantism and catholicism. Moreover, one should recall that it was less the content of protestantism, which facilitated capitalist development in the Western world, than the way it undermined the institutional inertia of catholicism as a belief-system. I shall not enter this subject any further. It is clear that Wallerstein disagrees with Weber in discussing the role of protestantism for capitalism. What is important for us to retain, is that absolutism (Wallerstein calls

it "statism") was but the first ideological phase with importance for the formation of nation-states in the core of the world system. While the development of state-formation, the formulation of absolutism, and the homogeneization of the population was taking place in the core-area, peripheral areas were moving quite in the opposite direction.

There remains but one subject to discuss : the formation of classes, a phenomenon closely linked with the spreading and generalization of international trade. It concerns the social differentiation in the core of the world-system, which provoked social contradictions and antagonism within and over the boundaries of the newly created states.

The relevance of this subject should be clear : different modes of surplus „drainage" are linked with specific occupations. Capitalist development means transforming feudal economy in capitalist agriculture. The latter means elimination of feudal tenure and appropriation of land in the hands of newly developed classes of merchants with agricultural activities. It also means elimination of peasant farmers and of small land-ownership, for peasant activities may hinder capitalist surplus-appropriation and hence capital-accumulation. This is one of the major reasons Marx was concentrating on land rent and the capitalist transformation of agriculture in England in his work *Das Kapital*¹⁵.

A further point of relevance concerns the intermediate position of the sovereign in this process of class-formation, and class-antagonism. The sovereign appeared as the force guaranteeing the continuance of the social system,, such went at the expense of the other parties in the transformation-process. Either the king was securing the assistance of the commercial bourgeoisie, who supplied him with financial means to uphold his state-machinery, and who gave him some political support against the contradictory power of the old nobility, competing with the king over the central power, or the king was supported by the nobility to strengthen the system of traditional social status and to stand against the corrosion of the socio-economic system as a consequence of capitalist development.

Again it can be observed that the masses, numerical larger than any other group, do not enter the picture. As a consequence of the capitalist transformation of agriculture in the core of the world-system, migration, the growing of town-centres and other popula-

tion-effects, linked with the increasing and penetrating capitalist activities, a large class of vagabonds, 'lumpenproletariat' and proletariat was formed. Although this class made its social and economic appearance already, it did not make its cultural and political appearance yet. Towards this class state-authority was of another kind : military oppression of discontent, social welfare to reclaim the social misery caused, by economic change and to contain rebellious outburst. Among other things it gave birth to a system of poor laws, especially in England (started under Tudor-reign). Wallerstein comments them as follows :

These laws do however throw light on the role the state machinery was playing. First, let us note that "social welfare" legislation, previously unknown in Europe, appears on the scene in *many* places in this time. Furthermore, it is not even a matter of simultaneous invention, but of conscious cultural diffusion. Second, the relationship of such legislation to economic transformation is ambiguous. It was to be sure a response to a social crisis brought on by economic change, a means of averting political rebellion.¹⁶

The actual political appearance of the newly formed proletarian masses belongs to another epoch.

2.2. *A comment on the World System approach of development and rereading of history.*

The epoch 1450—1640 was the epoch of the early conditions of the modern world system : setting the stage. The development of a centrum-world and a peripheral-world which were both answers to the same evolution on a world-scene. A monumental mondial stage, which facilitated the undelivered capital accumulation by means of international trade, from the centre towards a periphery.

Wallerstein's view on history is a linear one, but such that a new look is possible on a worldwide scale : one of the striking features both for the beginning and the contemporary epoch is the unevenness of the development. Once again *uneven development* — growth for the centrum, and under or undevelopment for the periphery — is the focus-point. *A multiplication of uneven developments which are combined one with the other.* A repetition also of uneven developments within nation-states spreading from the centre to the periphery. Above, I mentioned Bloch's '*Gleichzeitigkeit*' and '*Un-*

gleichzeitigkeit' as characteristics of a world-development, to be called *polyrythmical*. What has been separated in space, may have contemporaneous features. What is located in the same space can be unctemporary. But the whole develops in a polyrythmical way.

I guess, Wallerstein is rereading history in this way ; contemporary period serves as the means for the perception of older epochs. But the contrary is also true : he can interpret the contemporary world through the perception of earlier epochs of the European world-system. Not only now development and undevelopment are linked, for the linkage is the central feature of the growing world-system. That this enables us to reconsider development problems (in which political, ideological and economic aspects are merged) has been demonstrated recently. The world-system view has been used in a work published in the Sage Publications-series under the title *Social Change in the Capitalist World Economy*¹⁷. In it Wallerstein's approach is made useful for the understanding of contemporary dislocations and problems of the world economy. In a way Wallerstein inspired other researchers to utilize his work in anticipation, which shows the stimulating and inspiring aspects of his first book. For example, recent evolution of states in the core of the world-system may suggest political transformations of a new type recalling a more powerful executive based on force and coercion. Wallerstein intended to investigate in the fourth of his studies of the modern world-system, the "revolutionary" tensions in the system of a consolidated capitalist world economy.

It is tempting to compare Wallerstein's work with Marx' *Capital* and Mandel's *Der Spätkapitalismus*¹⁸. Particular to Wallerstein is the idea of the construction of a capitalist world-economy within *multiple national institutional boundaries*. As has been said earlier, an imperium is badly prepared to such a task : diversification of institutions and of ideology, differentiation of modes of labor-force-control, asked for a complex executive power and necessitated a strong central authority. It is the core of Wallersteins research programme¹⁹.

Contemporary world-system confronts us with the development of the periphery in a way, which is inducing tensions within the centre, the periphery and between the centre and the periphery. One has to reckon with the particular political evolution in the periphery. Can one speak of a uniform evolution on the political level? In any way, central authority, monopolization of force,

creation of state-machinery and bureaucracies to control economic, social and cultural transformation, seem to reappear wherever persistent development is sought for. The transformation of Russia into the Soviet-Union first, of China into the People's Republic next, gives us ample evidence of the process and its uniform features. Quite recently we are confronted with the experiences of the constructions of nation-states in Africa and with the example of what was not thought possible some years ago, namely the birth of a 'theocratic' system in Iran of which it remains doubtful whether it has the political and economical means to control the totality of the population and the territory of the former 'Pahlavi-dynasty'.

In much of the aforementioned states the contractions of industrial transformation have not yet started. And even for the Soviet Union it has been doubted whether the political body of the party could hold the system together²⁰. At the same time students of the Western world suggested that we are faced with a "Desintegrating West"²¹. So, the conclusion might be, that stronger and stronger central authorities will be necessary everywhere to hold on. But it is not at all certain that economic, social and ideological resources are available for doing so.

I thought that it could be of much interest to look back to older political philosophy for two reasons. One : we are confronted with the tendency of progressively stronger states in the Western world. Ideological legitimation is still lacking but that can be rapidly changed. We should investigate in what way this ideological legitimation remains linked with earlier ones. Two : older political philosophy, for example Hobbes's "*Leviathanistic Absolutism*", confronts us with ideological machinery on one side, and insights in investigation of the social system on the other side. In a way, political thought should use Wallerstein's approach. 'Contemporaneusness' and 'uncontemporaneusness' could be made useful in the political domain. The first task I set myself is to disentangle Hobbes's political thought in view of the picture Wallerstein gave me of the period 1450-1640. Above I said that Hobbes' work is placed on the edge of two epochs. For the larger part, it can be argued, Hobbes had to reckon with the problems of justification of central authority in an age of regional, social and religious conflicts of the period 1450-1640. So he was confronted with the contractions of development of one of the most powerful centres of the modern world-system; he was confronted with the contractions which proceeded of the uneven development in England and

in the Western hemisphere. Without doubt Hobbes's major interest laid in the British commonwealth. But it remained to be asked, which side Hobbes was on, in the construction of this commonwealth. What I am suggesting is that *we should gain from the study of the Hobbesian legitimation of the absolute state for the comprehension of political legitimation as such, even if I shall leave the latter problem untouched in this paper.*

One of the question we should ask is : in which way Hobbes's "Leviathanistic Absolutism" responded to the above mentioned features of the formation of nation-states and of strong central authority ? It may be useful to recall these features in a nutshell before starting to investigate Hobbes's political thought. We can use Wallerstein's book a bit further, for a major part of it contains the discussion of English and French growth. The following features of the state-formation and the rising of central authority under sovereign power were mentioned : (a) legitimation towards the cadres; (b) effective and succesful solution of the internal conflicts and antagonisms : solution of banditism and forms of counter-power; (c) the "drainage" of financial means using a nation-wide tax-system; (d) the construction of a state as a central economic agent : the 'solution' of the problem of vagabondage by means of a 'welfare-policy'; (e) the state-intervention in class-formation impeding corrosive tendencies; (f) the standing armies and the efficiency to reckon with international conflicts; (g) the transformation of a community of communities into a commonwealth, a sovereign state ready to become a nation : customs, language, local institutions, religion. In the next chapter we shall draw on further in the context of Hobbes' political philosophy.

3. The age of Hobbes : capitalistic agriculture, the origins of the European world-economy and Leviathanistic Absolutism.

In the third book of Marx' *Das Kapital*, edited by his friend Engels, one of the subject-matters is the transformation of surplus-profit in landrent. Marx explains the general features of the mechanism of capitalist agriculture. He considered the property of land as a particular historical phenomenon : under the influence of capital and later on of the capitalist mode of production, the specific historical form of land-ownership changed. This means the destruction of feudal, and of small peasant land-ownership.

Das Grundeigentum setzt das Monopol gewisser Personen voraus, über bestimmte Portionen des Erdkörpers als ausschliessliche Sphären ihres Privatwillens mit Ausschluss aller andern zu verfügen. Dies vorausgesetzt, handelt es sich darum, den ökonomischen Wert, d.h. die Verwertung dieses Monopols auf Basis der kapitalistischen Produktion zu entwickeln. Mit der juristischen Macht dieser Personen, Portionen des Erdballs zu brauchen und zu missbrauchen, ist nichts abgemacht. Der Gebrauch derselben hängt ganz und gar von ökonomischen Bedingungen ab, die von ihrem Willen unabhängig sind. Die juristische Vorstellung selbst heisst weiter nichts, als dass der Grundeigentümer mit dem Boden verfahren kann, wie jeder Warenbesitzer mit seiner Ware; und diese Vorstellung — die juristische Vorstellung des freien Privateigentums — tritt in der alten Welt nur ein zur Zeit der *Auflösung der organischen Gesellschaftsordnung*, und in der modernen Welt nur mit der Entwicklung der kapitalistischen Produktion.²²

The pre-existing form of land ownership with which capital is confronted, does not correlate with the developing capitalist mode of production. The correlative form *has to be created, which demanded the adaptation of agriculture to the process of capital*. How different the juridical forms of land-ownership may have been, the outcome was the progressive destruction of feudal land-ownership, clan-land-ownership, and small peasant land-ownership. Simultaneously with this destruction event the destruction of the older juridical forms.

When we said that the destruction occurred in a progressive way, we implied that the old hierarchical relationships and the old labour-conditions disappeared at the end of a long historical process. Land-owner and land became separated. This economical process changed the social world and created new classes :

Die Voraussetzung bei der kapitalistischen Produktionsweise ist also diese : die wirklichen Ackerbauer sind Lohnarbeiter, beschäftigt von einem Kapitalisten, dem Pächter, der die Landwirtschaft nur als ein besonderes Exploitationsfeld des Kapitals, als Anlage seines Kapitals in einer besondern Produktionssphäre betreibt. Dieser Pächter-Kapitalist zahlt dem Grundeigentümer, dem Eigentümer des von ihm exploitierten Bodens, in bestimmten Terminen, z.B. jährlich, eine kontraktlich festgesetzte Geldsumme (...) für die Erlaubnis, sein Kapital in die-

sem besonders Produktionsfeld anzuwenden...

...

Wir haben ferner hier alle drei Klassen, welche den Rahmen der modernen Gesellschaft konstituieren, zusammen und einander gegenüber — Lohnarbeiter, industrieller Kapitalist, Grundeigentümer²³.

Marx dealt with the genesis of the capitalistic form of landrent in chapter 47. Wallerstein was referring to this chapter of *Capital* III in which Marx correlates the transformation of agriculture under capitalist pressure and the coming in existence of new classes and new social antagonisms. Moreover Marx, as Wallerstein tries to make more explicit, emphasized the international, commercial preconditions of the internal economic and social transformations. This is clearly demonstrated by the passus Wallerstein quotes :

...Sobald die Rente die Form der Geldrente und damit des Verhältnis zwischen Rente zahlendem Bauer und Grundeigentümer die eines kontraktlichen Verhältnisses annimmt — eine Verwandlung, die überhaupt nur bei schon gegebener relativer Entwicklungshöhe des Weltmarkts, des Handelns und der Manufaktur möglich ist —, tritt notwendig auch Verpachtung des Bodens an Kapitalisten ein, welche bisher ausserhalb der ländlichen Schranken standen und welche nun städtisch erworbenes Kapital und die in den Städten bereits entwickelte kapitalistische Betriebsweise, die Herstellung des Produkts als blosser Ware und als blosses Mittels zur Aneignung von Mehrwert, auf das Land und die Landwirtschaft übertragen. *Allgemeine Regel kann diese Form nur in den Ländern werden, die beim Übergang aus der feudalen in die kapitalistische Produktionsweise den Weltmarkt beherrschen*²⁴.

This then was the stage-setting for the destruction of the old and the construction of a new society. It gives another support to the thesis that Hobbes is both a man of the old and of the new world-order; a man of tradition and of provoking novelty in social and political philosophy. The period he was living in, the 'Age of Hobbes', was a period of tragic change. Any philosopher living in such an age would have been obliged to consider 'change' (such as is clear with some other examples of the period : Spinoza, Althusius). The way Hobbes fulfilled the job continues to strike the student of this crucial period in European social and political thought. To show this more clearly let us sum up some of the major

social disruptions in England. We can do this relying on Wallerstein's account of the differences between two of the most powerful core-states in Europe : England and France.

We said already above that the 'age of Hobbes' created the problem of legitimacy. And we remarked that such was the problem of the monarch, the nobility and the bourgeoisie. We spoke of legitimation towards the cadres implying as was argued by Wallerstein, that only rarely legitimation took place towards the masses. But what were the problems between monarch, nobility and the new class of marchants and entrepreneurs, in the context of the creation of the state-machinery and bureaucracy ? And was there a unique development-pattern ? The latter question can be answered in the negative. The development of class-relationships throughout the formation of state and bureaucracy under a sovereign monarch, was different in France compared with England. The later dominance of these two nation-states on the European world-scene was related to it. And as one knows Thomas Hobbes lived both in England *and* France. In the latter country he remained in total for some twenty years during which he became acquainted with continental thought and circumstances²⁵.

Wallerstein sums it up as follows. In England the aristocracy lost in the short run, only to win in the long run transforming herself into bourgeois-capitalists. In France aristocracy won in the short run, only to loose in the long run while obliging bourgeois-capitalists to abandon their positions. Meanwhile centralization equally progressed in both countries and central authority constantly enforced itself. In England the afore-mentioned classes could not but win in getting a central authority, but the state and the sovereign power remained weak. In France important regional tendencies existed and central authority became very strong.

Such as has been demonstrated already by Henri Pirenne²⁶, the developing state-machineries were neither coherent, nor strictly independent all the time. It was the central locus where two tendencies were constantly antagonizing. The first consisted of the individuals with a high traditional status, bound up with former modes of production and land-ownership, who were only partially adapted to the new economic conditions. The second consisted of individuals, whatever their traditional descendance, status and relative wealth, who were aiming at a quick and full commercialization of economic life. Both endeavoured to use state-power for their

interests. And both refused too strong a centralization of authority in the hands of a sovereign power. Both sides feared the other side would dominate the state. This characteristic is rather typical for England where the central state guaranteed commercialization within the boundaries of a developing world-economy. But central state wasn't itself getting strong and independent, although the 'social welfare' we mentioned earlier developed to a considerable extent. Sovereign authority was able to play its balancing power between two tendencies and could present itself as central locus where interests were merged to a commonwealth.

This is the principal difference with French conditions. The monarchs were ambivalent in maximizing national commercial interests. In France central authority was more interfering in commercial life and bourgeois-activities. Moreover the tax-position of nobility laid a heavier burden on the bourgeoisie and the masses.

Hobbes experienced as a young man the disappearance of the Tudor-monarchy. He was a witness of the Stuart-period and the tragic disruption caused by Stuart-reign, in which the major territorial, class-antagonistic and religious problems led to tension, upheaval and civil war. Meanwhile the economic process, which transformed old-time agriculture into capitalist agriculture and which gave rise to the future commercial capital of Europe (London), was going on. Again, in quoting Wallerstein, we can give the following summary :

It seems that the sixteenth century, particularly the period between 1540—1640, is a period of class *formation*, a capitalist agricultural class (whose wealthier members are called "gentry" and whose lesser members are called "yeoman"). The social process of land consolidation in England at this time is one of increasing income to this class as a whole including to the lesser members of it, while it involves the beginning of the creation of a proletariat²⁷.

During the Tudor-period England was isolated from the European scene. Both Spain and France were more powerful, more rapidly had professional armies and possessed a population which was twice or more the population of England. And in England this resulted in a fundamental change of the nobility. The nobility demilitarized, and thereby changed their land-owning role and function in economic life. The conversion to commercial activities was

facilitated, something unthinkable on the continent. And although foreign danger continued, English nobility was relatively protected from warfare. The English landowning class in the age of Tudor-absolutism and afterwards²⁸, was unusually civilian in background commercial in occupation and commoner in rank. And the correlate of those social conditions was a State that needed but a small bureaucracy, a limited fiscality, and no permanent army. This needs not contradict Wallerstein's analysis of absolutism, which is more impressing in accentuating the general tendencies of the nation-state evolution. It gives us the particularities of the English evolution, in contrast with the French and the Spanish evolution.

One of the most important features is that the capitalist transformation could go on progressively, where Tudor-reign was relying on the gentry and yeomanry. All that, was disturbed at the beginning of Stuart reign. The Stuart dynasty was Scottish — and socio-political conditions were very different in Scotland compared with England. The Stuart dynasty pursued an Absolutism of the continental type, neglecting the idiosyncrasies of the English land-owing class and the role of the English political institutions already existing. They failed to see that parliament worked as the central locus of noble power²⁹. Moreover they wanted to change the religious status-quo accomplished under Tudor-reign. Resistance against Stuart reaction, in an age of class-formation and deepening economic transformation of the countryside, progressively grew and led to the downfall of Charles I. The Stuart reign failed in providing for the *political consolidation* of social and economic developments towards a new world-order. Revolution came in time and the reaction of an already distanced political group never succeeded :

... by the end of the reign, the political position of the Stuart monarchy was dangerously isolated in its central kingdom. For the *underlying social structure of England was sliding away from beneath it, as it sought to pursue institutional goals that were nearly everywhere being successfully accomplished on the continent.*³⁰

Anderson's conclusion fits in with Wallerstein's rereading history and with the world-system picture :

English Absolutism was brought to crisis by aristocratic particularism and clannic desperation on its *periphery* : forces that lay historically behind it. But it was felled at the *centre* by a

commercialized gentry, a capitalist city, a commoner artisanate and yeomanry : forces pushing beyond it. Before it could reach the age of maturity, English Absolutism was cut off by a bourgeois revolution.³¹

Hobbes's political work started with the *Elements of Law Natural and politic*, a book written in 1640. It was the beginning of the period of instability that led to the revolution. Hobbes who was linked with nobility as a tutor of the son of the Cavendish (Earl of Devonshire) flee to France during the period of civil war. In that period he wrote his most important works : 1642, *De Cive* (Paris), enlarged 1647 (Amsterdam), and *Leviathan* in 1651, the year in which political amnesty permitted Hobbes's return to England under the Republic.

Soon afterwards monarchy was re-established and the older Hobbes could profit from the relative stable period under the reign of his former "pupil" Charles II. In the period of the republic, under the leadership of Olivier Cromwell, he published his major contributions to his "scientific philosophy" : 1655, *De Corpore* and 1658, *De Homine*. Hobbes kept silent as a philosopher in his old age, but continued his work of translation with which his intellectual and political career began³².

Hobbes witnessed socio-economic transformations, political tensions leading to civil war and finally political and social consolidation. Which side he was on ? This question confronts us with (a) Hobbes's political answer and (b) the interpretation of this answer. The latter part obliges us to reconsider the debates concerning the "bourgeois"-character of Hobbes's political philosophy. I shall conclude my present paper with the reconsideration of the debate in a world-system-view, supporting the Strauss-Macpherson position of interpretation³³.

3.1. *Contract and State, or the spectre of mutual fear and the consolidation of unquestioned authority.*

We will recall, in brief, the main points of Hobbes's contract-theory. As one knows, this was but one of the contract-theories being formulated at the beginning of modern period. We will not enter the subject of another and very dissimilar contract-theory, presented by Johannes Althusius in 1603 under the title *Politica Methodice Digesta*.

Hobbes had the intention to apply his 'geometrical method' and his 'mechanistic metaphysics' to political problems. As has been demonstrated by Strauss however, the main themes of his political philosophy were formed a long time before Hobbes started to be a defender of the "scientific philosophy". However this may be, it seems sufficiently clear Hobbes dropped his geometrical method and his mechanistic metaphysics when he conceived of the arguments used in the *De Cive* and the *Leviathan*. Instead he was relying heavily on a kind of "ideal type"-construction, which had a common sense and an introspective basis. This remains a remarkable particularity of Hobbes' philosophy, which one will be able to trace in later social and political philosophy, which owed its themes and programme to Hobbes.

Hobbes took as his starting point a "natural situation", in which men are all equal. They are equal in potentialities, both of body and mind and whatever the specific differences of body and mind. All share an equal hope for the accomplishment of their life-plan, and all are motivated by the pride and vanity to accomplish their wishes relying on their potentialities. So, their life-expectations and endeavours to make the most of it, to succeed and to gain power, wealth and esteem, brings them in a situation of equal hostility one against the other. They can but strive for power, for power ascertains the possible accomplishment of their life-plans. And they are all separated in the continual and never ending realization of their life-plans. Perhaps I am already exaggerating the picture in search of an easy support of the Strauss-Macpherson-view. But any reader of the *Leviathan* can account for this picture : utilizing what Hobbes said one cannot but stress the remarkable features of his individual man, highly similar to the features of individual man in our century. To strife for power, wealth, esteem, influence, such is not the gaiety of life. It is the doom of life. It is the mark of modern times.

Men are equally captured by fear, as a consequence of their equal strive for power, wealth, esteem and influence. A multiple fear, penetrating all aspects of ordinary life : fear for death to begin with, fear for fellow-man, fear for the power, esteem, wealth and influence of the other, fear for their own possibilities, fear for the loss of potency. This gives us a nearly 'mercantilistic' picture of ideal and original mankind.

Hobbes's arguments for the status-quo, to make a society (considered as a "commonwealth") of this primeval community,

are based on the initial equality and the natural right to make use of one's position. It is a mercantile and pirate-construction of community, for men are living in an ideal situation of scarcity of means and equality of potentialities. They can but strive for the same of which there is too little. The outcome will be certainly death or awful submission. And nobody can wish either death or awful submission. So it seems reasonable for all, to seek for a happy end : the total submission to one of them.

It must be stressed that in Hobbes's picture of mankind the disposition to fight is more important than the reality of the struggle. Once again we must draw the attention to the fact, the "natural condition of mankind" is neither a historical one, nor a condition arrived at by logical means (whatever that may be !). Hobbes mentioned but mercantile-pirate reasons for it :

But though there had never been any time wherein particular men were in a condition of war one against another; yet in all times, kings, and persons of sovereign authority, because of their independency, are in continual jealousies, and in the State and posture of gladiators; having their weapons pointing, and their eyes fixed on one another;...

But because they uphold thereby, the industry of their subjects; there does not follow from it, that misery, which accompanies the liberty of particular men³⁴.

In the Hobbes fiction of the natural condition, men are disposed of the constant threat of warfare because of their fear : the fear for death combined with their longing for those things, ascertaining a quiet and agreeable lifetime of hard work and economy. It is as if Hobbes asked himself how to make a good bourgeois out of pirate, for he is relying for his picture on three cardinal bourgeois virtues. A quiet and agreeable life, hard work, and economy. The 'ratio naturalis' (fear of death) is the result of a bourgeois ratio.

The first law of nature is based on this situation : it is a general law of reason not to seek for war implying death or the annihilation of expected benefits. This corresponds with the motivation to seek for personal advantage. The first law of nature expresses a disposition; a disposition to agree with a contract. With the first law is linked a second one : "quod tibi fieri non vis, alteri ne feceris". A christian rule implying duty and obligation.

In order to function as a duty, a *contract* is necessary. In the contract the renouncement of the natural right is recorded. Such is the end of a situation of *reciprocity*, in which an *exchange* of advantages is realised. Hobbes said :

Whensoever a man transferreth his right, or renounceth it; it is either in consideration of some right reciprocally transferreth to himself; or for some other good he hoped for thereby³⁵.

Reciprocity is a necessary condition, for if the situation does not imply reciprocal advantage one of the parties must neglect his natural right-position. But this can only be considered as a kind of madness. We shall not explain the differences between a *contract*, a *covenant* and a *gift*. Hobbes deals with it in chap. 14 emphasizing the covenant. The ways he distinguished the three is noteworthy, for he was dealing with the obliging character of the contract-situations, anticipating the necessity of the *civil* state and the *commonwealth*. Further questions about possible forms of community (a community of gift, a community of contract, a community of exchange, etc.) Hobbes never did ask. He was not at all investigating the empirical forms of communities.

Only a civil state and a central authority can guarantee the respect of the contract and the implied obligations. Without it no civil society and no end to war; without it no end to fear and to the threatening relationships whatever the promises being made. Not performing the covenants made, means injustice, and what is not injustice is justice. But the important point is one cannot conceive of justice and injustice without an obliging, punishing and coercive authority, guaranteeing the performance of the covenants made. And in that way a coercive authority gives rise to a commonwealth. There is no doubt about it, Hobbes correlated propriety with the existence of a central authority.

...therefore where there is no *own*, that is no propriety, there is no injustice; and where there is no coercive power erected, that is, where there is no commonwealth, there is no propriety...³⁶.

From that source all other natural laws spring :

...the laws of nature, dictating peace, for a means of the con-

servation of men in multitudes; and which only concern the doctrine of civil society³⁷.

Only peace, hence civil society and state, can guarantee the conservation and respect of the natural laws (or moral virtues). The latter are implied in the former, for no moral virtue can be entitled as such without the guarantee of peace and the existence of civil society and state. There is but war, capable to destroy this; but war is to nobody's *profit*. The *science* of the 19 cardinal virtues (or natural laws) is called moral philosophy.

From this Thomas Hobbes elaborated an impressive justifying construction of a modern institutionalized society :

A commonwealth is said to be instituted, when a multitude of men do agree, and covenant, every one with every one, that to whatsoever man, or assembly of men, shall be given by the major part, the right to present the person of them all, that is to say, to be their representative; every one, as well he that voted for it, as he that voted against it, shall authorize all the actions and judgments, of that man, or assembly of men...³⁸

A state-formed society or a commonwealth is necessary to guarantee the functioning of the moral virtues against men's nature : against his passions, partiality, pride, revenge, vanity etc. Security can but exist if a commonwealth exists, because covenants without "the sword, are but words".

Leviathan, the mortal God, is born of the mutual abandonment of governing oneself. That this is but one way in authorizing Leviathan to reign over his subjects, can be shown in referring to the difference Hobbes made between the origin of the State, by voluntary institution of the association of subjects, and the origin of the state by acquisition. Hence one can speak of justice, for the state is the origin of justice and injustice. Without sovereign authority, either one person or an assembly (Hobbes preferred the first and pleaded for a monarch), justice and injustice could not be conceived of. What is been ordered by the sovereign authority is justice; what is done against sovereign authority is injustice. Moreover, Hobbes learned that the rights of sovereign authority are indivisible.

This great authority being indivisible, and inseparably annexed to the sovereignty, there is little ground for the opinion of

them, that say of sovereign kings, though they be *singulis majores*, of greater power than every one of their subjects, yet they be *universis minores*, of less power than them all together. For if by *all together* they mean not the collective body as one person, they *all together*, and *every one*, signify the same; and the speech is absurd. But if by *all together*, they understand them as one person, which person the sovereign bears, then the power of all together, is the same with the sovereign's power; and so again the speech is absurd... the power of sovereignty is the same in whomsoever it be placed³⁹.

Let us keep it there for the moment, for this is Hobbes's picture of the spectre of mutual fear and the consolation of unquestioned central authority. In which way does it conform to the historical features we sketched in the first part of our paper. It shall be clear Hobbes had only the individual in mind. Mutual fear is fear among individuals. Probably we already touched the ideological content of his political philosophy. Indeed the time Hobbes was living in, asked for a political solution of central authority not towards individuals, but towards loosely bound communities of different regions, towards new born social classes and towards regional political cadres.

Hobbes's age was an age of fear: of new classes whose economic and political importance kept increasing and on whom political authority had to rely in order to keep in touch with the transformation process Western Europe was going through. The contrary is also true: the new classes had to rely on a strong central authority being able to guarantee the constant flow of surplus. If fear there was, it certainly did not exist in a concrete form among individuals, but among gentry and nobles, among yeomen and nobles, among commercializing fractions of the populations and the steady growing populace in the towns. As we tried to show a political consolidation was being sought for, which could be considered as trustworthy and reliable.

The way Hobbes stressed the importance of a central authority in his 'Leviathanistic Absolutism', conforms with the need of an effective power, prevailing against adverse aspirations, against banditry and all other forms of counter-power in the different regions. It proceeded from the constant need for authoritative mediation between rivaling classes. Moreover Hobbes's Leviathan could provide for the draining off financial means as a consequence of the organization of the tax-system. Some other features, we listed above,

fit in with his picture of the central authority.

One can trace them in his Leviathan, meanwhile concentrating on the question of the unlimited character of Hobbian absolute authority. In order to avoid constant disruption of civil society and disturbance of the economic and social transformation process, an unquestioned driver had to provide for security and stability. The ideological character of Hobbes's political philosophy can be demonstrated, observing the fact that he *generalized* the picture and *made it abstract*. He was not considering social reality as it was; in fact he could not see this, for he was too much occupied in the ideological reproduction of one of the major contributions to political history of the period, namely, the nation state. The gentry, yeomen, nobles, political bureaucracies, marchants, bankers, etc., all were involved in the processes transforming economic and social life in the 16th, and 17th centuries. And so was Hobbes. Instead of picturing this, he said :

...men from their childhood have gotten a habit, under a false show of liberty, of favouring tumults, and of licentious controlling the actions of their sovereigns, and again of controlling those controllers...⁴⁰.

Does it imply that Hobbes stops for an unlimited authority of the monarch to cope with these "habits"? This is a more difficult question to answer. Hobbes was not an enemy of liberty, on the contrary he defended the liberty of trade, the liberty to have children and to raise a family, the liberty to seek for good and profitable financial and economic organization. There was but one reserve : these liberties had to be consistent with the absolute sovereignty of authority. This means liberties had to be made consistent with the absolute sovereignty, for only in that case central authority could provide for the actual functioning of them.

This seems to me the meaning of the 'commonwealth' : an organized community of communities, in which contracts and the implied obligations are guaranteed, and without the insecurity of and fear for the non-performance of contracts. An organized community, hence a civil society, capable to provide for the growth of wealth, and the control of the populace, which had not yet entered the historical scene. A society, for it could guarantee the wealth of the new born classes under stable securing political institutions.

This can be made evident referring to Hobbes's thoughts on the different systems of political power in the state. Leviathan isn't that 'unlimited' in power as is suggested at the onset by the author. The power of the bodies politic — the representative political organisations within the state — remains subordinate to the central authority, but nevertheless their importance is being stressed. Leviathan is an instituted society; it is the locus of the central organisation of an instituted society. In Part II, 22 of *Leviathan*, Hobbes is commenting the necessary political institutions. So he grasped the historical relevance of a nation-wide state-bureaucracy and it seems easy to suggest that he delivered a legitimation towards these central-organized political institutions (and against whatever forms of counter-power throughout the country which could but disrupt the construction of a modern state, fitted to provide for direction in the social and economic transformations linked with capitalism). Political institutions were not allowed to become nuclei of future counter-powers. Moreover it becomes possible to make use of Wallerstein's world-system view to interpret Hobbes's political advices. In the so-called undeveloped countries in the 20th century, which are establishing a strong central authority, after colonial (or neocolonial) rule has been demolished, one of the problems is the legitimation of central authority against local political institutions, and against ascending political cadres of the periphery. The reading of our present history can be made useful, we said above, for the comprehension of old time political philosophy.

The same can be made evident referring to Hobbes's opinions about the good organization of 'foreign traffic'. In the passus concerning the body politic of foreign traffic, in chap. 22 of Part II of the *Leviathan*, Hobbes treats of a form of *representative* organism for the organization of foreign trade, 'bodies politic for ordering of Trade' or social organisms of economic importance besides 'bodies politic for government of a province, colony, or town'. Hobbes again is not an enemy of liberty and not a defender of an 'unlimited' power of the central authority, in such a way that no other organisms of power are allowed parallel to the central authority.

In a body politic, for the well ordering of foreign traffic, the most commodious representative is an assembly of all the members; that is to say, such a one, as every one that adventureth his money, may be present at all the deliberations, and resolutions of the body, if they will themselves. For roof whereof, we are to consider the end, for which men that are merchants,

and may buy and sell, export, and import their merchandize, according to their own discretions, do nevertheless bind themselves up in one corporation⁴¹.

In the case of bodies politic of economic importance and having a common benefit for the whole corporation and for the commonwealth as motive, a representative assembly exists and is needed. Hobbes distinguishes between organisms with and organisms without a common assembly and a representative power for the members. In the former case a common representative organism can oblige the members to certain rules of behaviour, in the latter one this is not possible. What is important here is that Hobbes distinguishes explicitly the theory of representative power (f. ex. bodies politic in trade) from is "ideal-type"-theory of sovereign power. Chap. 22 contains the rudiments of a theory of concrete forms of organization in the political and economic domain. It is not a theory of *the mechanism* of society but a theory of *the organism* of society.

Central authority is the balancing power serving as a guide and controller of an unfolding social and economic transformation-process. Some forms of organisms are left free, for they do not provoke disturbance in the commonwealth — this means, for the common wealth of the ascending classes that can accord with the protection of the wealth of the descending classes, the populace left out of this 'calculus' — and because they do not endanger the construction of the protective civil society. Other forms of organisms, incorporating representative power in local or particular institutions or incorporating representative power for private economic action, are left with an equal subordinate freedom of action. This is not the case with the forms of counter-power, f. ex. banditism.

For all uniting of strength by private men, is, if for evil intent, unjust; if for intent unknown, dangerous to the public, and unjustly concealed⁴².

So, private militia's also must be forbidden, for when commonwealth exists there is no more need of private defense. There exists a 'Lord protector' — either a monarch or a representative of the ascending classes — and a standing army. Again Hobbes was defending the plan of a modern society in which no more room was left for private armies and disrupting feuds between private noble families :

In all commonwealth, if private men entertain more servants, than the government of his estate, and lawful employment he has for them requires, it is faction, and unlawful. For having the protection of the commonwealth, he needeth not the defence of private force. And whereas in nations not thoroughly civilized, several numerous families have lived in continual hostility, and invaded one another with private force; yet it is evident enough, that they have done unjustly, or else they had no commonwealth⁴³.

On the whole this provides for the legitimation of absolute central authority not as an 'unlimited' power, but as a 'balancing' power given unlimited means to consolidate the social and economic transformation from an old into a new world-system.

Hobbes's theory of the organism of civil society is a theory of irregular and regular systems of interpersonal relationships (within the social and political important classes). For such a society of systems, one has to provide for a central power. Regular systems are those systems in which one man or one assembly represents the whole of the members. All other systems are irregular. There is but one system that is regular, absolute and independent: sovereign authority and commonwealth, meaning the same. In the commonwealth there are many regular, relative and dependent systems, those systems, subject to the sovereign power, and left with the free existence according to the laws of sovereign power. But under the circumstances Hobbes leaves more room for freedom of action and liberty of association. Some of the regular systems are politic and some are private. The former originate from the sovereign power of the commonwealth, the latter originate from the free decision among the subjects. Hobbes suggests already a commonwealth of *free or voluntary associations*, although in questions of trade, associations of the sovereign power concern him most of the time. That is the reason why he considers in a rather lengthy way the relationship between the sovereign power and the bodies politic, the regular political systems. He explains the kind of representation in these systems, for it is possible that they decree rules. These rules are different from the civil laws decreed by the central authority; the former are subsidiary to the civil laws, but they may treat of questions on which the sovereign power leaves the freedom to the assemblies of the bodies politic. The same is true for the regular private systems.

Evidently the contrary must be questioned. Are there any actions the central authority is obliged to undertake, because of the lack of any private actions? This question confronts us with some other aspects of the picture we gave of the necessities of a modern nation-state. Hobbes's age is the age of the capitalist transformation of agriculture and of agricultural life. It was an age of poverty, deportation, abandonment of land and communal life. We saw above what Wallerstein said about it. The problems of vagabondry and banditry are linked with these disruptions of agricultural and communal life. Central authority had to succeed in a successful and effective solution of this root of internal conflict and antagonism. It happened in a time modern proletariat (industrial proletariat) was not existing yet. Central authority tried to provide for some occupation and created the poor laws⁴⁴. Once again sovereign power enters the picture as a central economic agent. Hobbes mentions the role of the central authority in chap. 30, II of the *Leviathan* :

And whereas many men, by accident inevitable (!sic!), become unable to maintain themselves by their labour; they ought not to be left to the charity of private persons; but to provided for, as for forth as the necessities of nature require, by the laws of the commonwealth. For as it is uncharitableness in any man, to neglect the impotent; so it is in the sovereign of a commonwealth, to expose them to the hazard of such uncertain charity. But for such as have strong bodies, the case is otherwise : they are to be forced to work; and to avoid the excuse of not finding employment, there ought to be such laws, as many encourage all manner of arts; as navigation, agriculture, fishing, and all manner of manufacture that requires labour. The multitude of poor, and yet strong people still increasing, they are to be transplanted into countries not sufficiently inhabited : where nevertheless, they are not to exterminate those they find there; but constrain them to inhabit closer together, and not to range a great deal of ground, to match what they find; but to court each little plot with art and labour, to give them their sustenance in due season (!sic!). And when all the world is overcharged with inhabitants, then the last remedy of all is war; which provideth for every man, by victory, or death.

This is a remarkable passus because so much is said in such a naive but honest way. One can even seek for Darwinian and Malthusian elements in it. It is moreover strikingly contradictory with the starting-point of Hobbes's construction of the commonwealth :

finally, one may not be able to avoid war, but wasn't that the ratio for the birth of the mortal God, Leviathan? Defending a modern state, giving room to capitalist transformation of the globe, Hobbes's pleaded also for multiple modes of labor-force control. Twice colonial settlement is linked with forced labour: first the forced deportation of the poor, second the enslavement of the original population. So, it is clear that even when contract, representative power, etc. is mentioned, the populace and the proletarians are excluded. Central authority is definitely a question of rivaling classes, who made their historical occurrence at the expense of the millions who were excluded from the political scene. Sovereign power was not a problem to be legitimated towards the latter but towards the former, on the former's behalf, and to set in motion 'the machinery' of "drainage" of surplus labour. This then seems the mark of a Leviathanistic Absolutism.

3.2. Natural and Civil laws : conservatism's first episode.

Some problems of interpretation remain. I argued in favour of an interpretation of Hobbes's absolutism as a modern answer to the problems of steady transformation of social and economic life. But aren't there any conservative moments in Hobbes's 'Leviathanistic Absolutism'? Is this absolutism free from a defence of a reactionary state corresponding to the first moves of Stuart reign? Can it be interpreted as a defence of the French way that entered the Scottish dream of Charles I? For the greater part the answers to these questions were already given in what I demonstrated above. What we reviewed as the political thinking of economic changes seems to indicate that Hobbes, was on the side of the nascent interests, although placing himself on an abstract point of view, namely the central authority. His ideological role was the role of a 'middleclass'-man, which I mean literally, for Hobbes was a tutor, a man provided with money by the court (Charles II), a 'fellow-traveller' giving his observations and rendering good advice. For this reason one should seriously doubt the possibility Hobbes was on the reaction's side. Moreover he was not a very courageous man, for he kept clear of open confrontations, comforting himself with any regime.

The most important challenge however is Hobbes's theory of natural and civil law. One can be convinced of the reactionary character of his political philosophy by this theory. Let us enter the subject.

I explained already the origin of natural law and drew the attention to the fact that natural laws, otherwise called moral virtues, cannot function without a controlling and penalizing central authority to whom all of the subjects are due obedience. A functioning body of natural law implies that the use of subject's natural right comes to an end.

First, note that civil law refers to 'civitas', to commonwealth. The civil laws are the laws that come in existence after the establishment of a commonwealth under a sovereign power, of which they are the expression. Civil laws alongate natural laws, which are the moral virtues or qualities making citizens out of men. Natural laws exist before the establishment of the commonwealth, but are *meaningless* for one cannot rely on them :

For in the differences of private men, to declare, what is equity, what is justice, and what is moral virtue, and to make them binding, there is need of the ordinances of sovereign power, and punishments to be ordained for such as shall break them, which ordinances are therefore part of the civil law⁴⁵.

When we said that the natural laws, as moral virtues, exist before the establishment of the commonwealth, it means that they can be considered antecedent to it, although in Hobbes's mind they are closely linked with the will to establish the commonwealth. In a way, they are the antecedent expression of the will to live in peace, in justice, in equity, etc., hence in commonwealth. As such they limit the passions to live in a state of natural right, in which one is enabled to do, whatever one wishes to do, and they are prolonged after the establishment of the commonwealth by the civil laws.

Hobbes expressed the same idea when he said that the natural laws are eternal laws; which means eternal whatever the establishment of a civil society. They are the guiding principles towards any commonwealth coming into existence. Civil laws cannot have this feature of eternity. They are laws because the sovereign power decided so; they are written down and proclaimed by the legislator, who is subordinate to the sovereign power.

So Hobbes suggested a relationship between moral virtues, eternal and natural laws and the perishing civil laws, and this confronts us with the problem of the contradiction between natural and civil law⁴⁶. If one can say that civil laws perish and natural laws

live forever, does this mean that civil laws can contradict natural laws — or that the sovereign authority of the civil society can contradict natural laws? And if this should be confirmed, can one infer from it that some commonwealths can contradict natural laws? The reader of *De Cive* and *Leviathan* knows Hobbes's answer. Natural laws are implied in the constitution of commonwealths and come active by this constitution. *But after the coming into existence of the constitution a contradiction between natural laws and sovereign power and civil society is no more possible.* Nobody can appeal to the eternal natural laws for the rejection of particular civil laws, or to refuse obedience to civil society. This was profoundly Hobbes's point of view, despite the fact he held the opinion that civil laws have a specific spatio-temporal character. Because of *the necessity of a civil society* (general principle) *this specific civil society can not be rejected* (specific principle).

But what might be answered to someone who rejects the relationship between the general and the specific principle? Hobbes should have provided for a justification of such a relationship. Justice, accepted that a universal meaning has to be allowed for, implies a moral responsibility, before the general principle of civil society, but not before any concrete form of civil society. One knows that Hobbes returned to the justification of his questionable theory when treating of the kingdom of God, hence the relationship between the mortal and the immortal God. I shall enter upon this subject in commenting briefly his opinions about the relationship between the government of civil society and the governments of the regular public or private systems, contained within the civil society. It will provide us with yet another dimension of Hobbes's conservatism; a conservatism⁴⁷ which we have to interpret in the world system view, we used above.

If a person gets the impression that some decrees of the regular system to which he belongs contradict sovereign authority, he is obliged to appeal for that authority. And that is where it all ends: he might get the impression that the decrees of the sovereign power contradict natural laws, *but in such a case no appeal is possible, the only authority being the sovereign power.*

But what remains of his responsibility before the eternal laws, which Hobbes himself linked with God? The problem is how to know the immortal God in order to accept civil society and to obey its laws. The problem is the relationship between Leviathan and

God. Hobbes's opinion concerning religion accords with his political philosophy : religion is the religion of the State — he gives no penetrating solution of the problem of moral responsibility before the eternal laws he accepted. So, one has to conclude, *that he did not seek for the justification of civil society and Leviathan in God, but that he looked after the justification of God in civil society and Leviathan.* A 'triumph of the will', as Ernst Bloch has suggested⁴⁸.

One has to admit that Hobbes raised the problem of ultimate justification. But he could not tolerate the pope above the king and he remained a cynic about the hearing and interpretation of 'the voice of God'. He definitely preferred the "Diesseitigkeit", and left the problem of responsibility unsolved in his own philosophical project. Meanwhile he disregarded the problem of Jewish history : namely the continued struggle between 'Leviathan' and 'God'.

This problem is connected with some discussions in the interpretation of Hobbes's political philosophy. Above I drew the attention to the works of Leo Strauss and C.B. Macpherson. The former tried to explain the genesis of Hobbes's political philosophy and distinguished the moral basis from the scientific formulation, which has been chosen for by Hobbes at his return in England and which he used in *De Corpore* and *De Homine*. It had been a tradition to interpret Hobbes's scientific political philosophy within the context of the mechanistic and materialistic program. And evidently his concluding work, *Leviathan*, represents the major example of the whole Hobbian program of scientific, hence mechanistic, philosophy. Leo Strauss distinguished the moral basis from the scientific program, arguing that the latter is not at all a condition to the former, and did not function in the genesis of Hobbes's work as a basis to it. Hobbes's political thoughts were established a long time before he started applying, under influence of Galileo, Mersenne, Descartes, etc., the mechanistic conceptions to these thoughts. So there is no place for the argument that his scientific philosophy is a necessary condition for his political thoughts.

Strauss demonstrated that in his earlier period, Hobbes developed his political thinking from a moral basis of pride; in fact the antithesis between pride and fear, the latter being of great importance in the whole conception of the State and the Commonwealth, was the 'leitmotiv' of his political thoughts. Progressively Hobbes stressed the importance of *fear*, connected with the absence of confidence in fellow men and the loss of other medieval moral

virtues linked with a natural state. Alongside this evolution, Strauss argued, is the development of the conceptions of the artificial state (civil society), in the freedom of the individual, connected with fear, served as a basis for the acceptance of the moral virtues : justice, equity, etc. Only afterwards, Hobbes began to apply his much debated metaphysical epistemological thoughts to this conceptions.

I think that Strauss was right in proving what he did. But where is the problem ? Some of Strauss's readers might have interpret his argument as the evidence that Hobbes was not a man of innovation but of tradition. The problem is : is there so great a contradiction between tradition and innovation ? Hobbes reconciled his modern political intuitions with a modern scientific and theoretical verbiage, in which the relevance of tradition sinks. Even if Hobbian metaphysics and the 'geometrical method' were relevant to his political doctrine, does this imply that the former could not amplify and arrange the latter.

I think this question should be answered in parallelism with the answers to similar questions concerning the old and the new in the work of other philosophers, f. ex. the work of Karl Marx. Early intuitions of particular importance to the whole of the work may be (and are) amplified and arranged in using adult epistemological and metaphysical conceptions. So, Hobbes can be considered as a man of both tradition and innovation, for Strauss demonstrated how fear, individuality, and artificial state came at the centre of it. In stressing the appearance of the particularly modern themes of Hobbian philosophy, Hobbes's defence of a mechanistic metaphysics and a geometrical methodology, Strauss took the traditionalist interpretation⁴⁹ more serious than has been done by earlier authors. He proved that it was less the content than the exposition of his political doctrines that stood under the influence of the continental way of conceiving of philosophy — but he argued that this does not mean that the basis of Hobbian political philosophy was not modern :

The moral attitude which underlies Hobbes's political philosophy is independant of the foundation of modern science, and at least in that sense 'pre-scientific'. *It is at the same time specifically modern.* One is inclined to say that it is the deepest stratum of the modern mind. It found its fullest and sincerest expression in Hobbes's political philosophy. For, from the very beginning, it has been covered over by classical and Christian

tradition, but generally speaking, more completely before Hobbes than after him, and after him particularly by mechanistic psychology, to which Hobbes himself opened the door, and finally by sociology⁵⁰.

Hobbes was indeed a man of two epochs. In the philosophical domain the classical and theological tradition was already shaken, and a tradition of modern science not yet formed and established. Most strikingly Strauss provided for a rather convincing demonstration that Hobbes stood for an absolute central authority relying on a bourgeois morality based on mutual fear (respect) and social justice by means of civil law.

The same result was reached at by Macpherson in his interesting *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism : Hobbes to Locke*, in which the author tried to show that Hobbes's mechanistic atomism (his metaphysics) was an expression of bourgeois individuality. In view of Strauss's demonstration this seems seeking for a much too pronounced and an even unnecessary relationship between the two phenomena. However this may be, both interpretation can be reconciled on the basis I gave above.

In his *Politique et philosophie chez Thomas Hobbes*, R. Polin sought to prove, that Strauss had been wrong in attributing to Hobbes's political thoughts a bourgeois *morality*. I think he was not at all convincing for the greater part of his argument, that concerns the historical problem of the origin and the effective functioning of a bourgeois mentality. I do not see, with Strauss and Macpherson and against Polin, why it would be wrong to talk of a bourgeois mentality already in existence a long time before the establishment of Victorian morality.

Polin neglected the famous contributions to the sociology of morals of both Ferdinand Tönnies and Norbert Elias. The latter indicated that a bourgeois mentality was coming into existence, progressively from the late Middle Ages and Renaissance onwards. Elias investigations undermine Polin's criticism⁵¹. He pointed out the role of individuality and the changes which occurred in the relationship of the individual and society from the early Renaissance onwards. He said :

Man vermag die gedankliche Falle, in der man sich bei dieser statischen Fassung der beiden Begriffe "Individuum" und "Ge-

sellschaft" immer wieder von neuem verfangt, nur dann zu öffnen, wenn man sie, wie es hier geschieht, im Zusammenhang mit empirischen Untersuchungen so weiter entwickelt, dass sich beide Begriffe auf Prozesse beziehen. Aber diese Weiterbildung wird zunächst noch durch die usserordentliche Ueberzeugungskraft blockiert, die, etwa von der Renaissance an, in europäischen Gesellschaftlichen die Selbsterfahrung der Menschen von der eigenen "Innern" gegenüber allem, was "draussen" ist, besitzt. Bei Descartes war die Selbsterfahrung der Vereinzelung des Individuums, das sich als denkendes Ich im Innern seines Kopfes der ganzen Welt gegenüber gestellt findet, noch durch den *Gottesbegriff* etwas abgeschwächt. In der Zeitgenössischen Soziologie findet die gleiche Grunderfahrung ihren theoretischen Ausdruck in dem handelnden Ich, dass sich den Menschen "draussen" als "Andern" gegenübergestellt findet⁵².

Moreover Elias's work can be read against Polin's criticism of the thesis of 'bourgeois morality' in Hobbes's political doctrine, for the role of the dialectic of pride and fear, self-consciousness and identity, is clearly indicated.

It is a remarkable fact that in most of the interpretations of Hobbes's work the name of Tönnies remains absent. It was precisely Ferdinand Tönnies who drew attention to the political philosophy of Thomas Hobbes, not only in editing some of his earlier texts, but also in making it the basis of his famous work on the *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. This seems a forgotten work. In it, Tönnies sketched the two types of social organization and distinguished between the human types corresponding with them. If one recalls the definitions of the "Gemeinschaft" and the "Gesellschaft", one can easily see how Tönnies built on Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* and how he interpreted Hobbes as a philosopher, announcing a new society directed by a necessary artificial state, in which men were individuals fearing one another. The "Gemeinschaft" is a social system in which equilibrated social relations provide for peace and well-being. These relationships are lasting as a consequence of the existence of customs and traditions, family and religion. The "Gesellschaft" is a social system of equilibrated social relationships, peace and well-being, as a consequence of mutual fear and the conventions springing from it. The latter can only exist if a state guarantees the conventions reached at. In this Tönnies implicitly referred to Hobbes. In the "Gemeinschaft" the basis for social life is harmony;

in the 'Gesellschaft' it is contract. As the reader of Tönnies's work can see, the author's opinion was that bourgeois society developed under the influence of capitalism is an example of the 'Gesellschaft'; it is a society that succeeded in a radical interference in and demolition of what remained of the older forms of organizations of the type of the 'Gemeinschaft'. Again bourgeois mentality, calculative behaviour, fear, contract and State were linked. One should give other references to support Strauss and Macpherson in their thesis of the accordance of Hobbes's defence of a bourgeois morality with the defence of an absolute sovereign power. Macpherson referred to J. Burckhardt's analysis of the desire of personal fame as a product of Renaissance society. One could refer as well to Delumeau's recent work on the fear in the Western world, a phenomenon linked with the radical transformation of the social system under the influence of capitalism⁵³. But even then R. Polin could have been right in his interpretation of Hobbes as a 'conservative', as we tried to show in what we said earlier, concerning Hobbes's theory of Natural and Civil law and the problem of the ultimate justification. He was a conservative because of his personal fear and because of his seeking for a balanced social position in times, which were rather difficult to succeed in this purpose. In fact, the curious charme, the striking actuality of the mysterious stage-setting of his political philosophy, must be due to Hobbes's radical reading of his age, even if it remained true that he did not see all of its features.

4. Conclusion : Hobbes's "statism", the uneven development and the function of ideology.

Thomas Hobbes's political philosophy was a successful attempt not in legitimating absolute sovereign power (absolute state), but in legitimating an absolute sovereign power (absolute state), *which could provide for the consolidation of the socio-economic transformations occurring in a modern world-system. His "statism" (in Wallerstein's words) was modern for it was the expression of an insight in his age; it was conservative for it was the expression of the need of consolidation towards the first episode of ascending capitalism.*

Hobbes produced the first fundamental and influential ideological 'reformulation' of the political reality of the modern world. We noticed the limits of this reformulation : a legitimation towards a smaller part of the population, not towards the masses. Hobbes function of ideology.

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Hobbes produced the first fundamental and influential ideological 'reformulation' of the political reality of the modern world. We noticed the limits of this reformulation : a legitimation towards a smaller part of the population, not towards the masses. Hobbes had a great influence in political thinking and in social philosophy, and some of the features of his legitimation can be observed throughout the social doctrines in the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Two features are important : *the myth of the contract*, and *the myth of a scientific treatment of social organization*. The former can be traced back to our time : it is the myth of justice originating from the equilibrium of equals, in a world-system characterized by uneven development and violent social contradictions. So important a philosopher as David Hume, (and as J.J. Rousseau) attempted to correct and to regenerate the myth. The latter one can be traced back to Jeremy Bentham and Karl Marx, among many others. The myth of scientific politics was amplified in a period (20th century) of exaggerated optimism concerning the conquest of modern science and led to some 'totalistic' dreams in social science. In any way, Hobbes's mechanistic phraseology functioned both as a predecessor and as an inspirator to the so-called "scientific" social-philosophical systems and to a so-called "scientific" philosophy itself.

Why are we speaking of a myth, when the social contract among equals is discussed ? Political reality in the age of Hobbes changed and became more complex. New and violent contradictions were born. This reality could only be intellectually mastered in reducing it to an ideal, unreal and mythical contract of equal individuals. Political reality was measured using this myth of natural law, 'contract and authority without considering the antagonisms of interests pro-

ceeded from the capitalist transformation of the world. It conflicts rather sharply with the scientific claims of Hobbes's political philosophy. An idea of social science was postulated in abstracting from the factual investigation of social and political facts and trends. Right from the start the scientific development of social thinking was under the spell of the mythical reformulation of social reality. Again we can say that Hobbes's philosophy was a legitimation of a consolidated reality of transformation of agriculture, social classes and central authority. The way the legitimation was adapted to this task gave it its modern character. This could only take place at the expense of the 'scientific' claims of it.

The myth of the contract contains a theory of equilibrium with an absolutist ("statist") outcome: because of the mythical equilibrium of all men, a central authority, as a sovereign power, is needed for.

Capitalism needed central authority in order to consolidate its existence and to guarantee the continuation of the process of 'capitalization'. The modern character of Hobbes's political thinking is that this assessment obliged to a theory of equilibrium between mythical individuals: the omnipresent equality, equality in fear for death, evolves a social equilibrium. All future generalizations of market relationships were thus anticipated in the 'myth'. In other words: before the final and definite desintegration and destruction of a community-like system, Hobbes elaborated the 'myth' of the primeval existence of "Gesellschaft". This 'myth' contained the roots of ideology and science at the same time.

We may call this a modern feature for quite another reason too. Civil society with its complex institutions, with its new-born social contradictions, with its 'machinery' of central authority and representation, with its horizontal and vertical 'bodies politic' and organizations could not but be grasped and 'comprehended' by means of an ideological myth with scientific overtones. Ambivalence right at the start of the development of social sciences, for in the myth a-historical and idealizing human relationships were evoked, and in the idea of scientific treatment both content and form of modern science were adapted.

We had already the opportunity to draw the attention to Hobbes's theory of fear. He touched indeed a very modern aspect of social life under capitalist conditions. Fear and terror are everywhere, the

more the individual is separated from customs, traditions, and community-life. Never before the capitalist transformation of the entire world started in the Western hemisphere, fear seems to have had such an important historical and social significance⁵⁴. From Renaissance and Reformation onwards, the history of the new forms of terror linked with the disruptions of traditional communal life started for good. It is evident that it replaced older forms of terror. It is nevertheless important to contradict an ideal-picture of Renaissance and "Aufklärung": capitalist transformation of the world involved individuality and state, and in between the new appearances of terror⁵⁵.

We said earlier that the myth of science and mechanics is linked with the mythical reconstruction of the "Gesellschaft". In fact, mechanics is the science of particular things in equilibrium or disequilibrium. So, it could be used in political doctrines also. In a way, Hobbes could make his contract-state theory acceptable and convincing in moulding it in a mechanistic verbiage, in borrowing from the already established authority of a successful science. He related the fate of his political philosophy and his legitimation of central authority and civil institutions to the fate of mechanics. What has been the success of this programme, we do not have to recall in this paper. From this particular point of interpretation I concluded that Strauss and Macpherson have been right: Strauss in arguing that Hobbes's scientific ideas are independent and posterior to his political beliefs; Macpherson in arguing that Hobbes's mechanical ideas concerning humanity and society are well adapted to an already existing bourgeois-individuality at the time he wrote his books, in which he defended his political philosophy. One should emphasize this thesis in saying: Hobbes could not but realize the mythical, ideological synthesis of bourgeois-reality with the absolute state, two things which are not contradictory as Wallerstein's analysis and theory of the modern world system demonstrates, than in relying on the myth of contract and state at one hand and on the beliefs concerning mechanics at the other hand.

Hobbes proclaimed the triumph of the Mortal God over the Immortal God. Hobbes's Leviathan, the artificial state is a stationary state. This is another reason to call his political beliefs conservative, for in it political consolidation is conceived of as everlasting. So, within the legitimating myth of equality, contract and authority, there is not any future left. Men are not conquering a paradise on earth. There exists no common land of future joy and equal wealth.

Men should not expect a 'Philadelphia'. The myth concerned the origin of the modern state, in a world of states rather than in a State of the world. It was an 'origin' to be repeated 'eternally' in the future of mankind, as has been done in the past. It was Hobbes's conviction, that for as long as mankind exists the Mortal Gods are eternal.

NOTES

¹I am referring to Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System. Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. London, Academic Press, 1974.

²Wallerstein speaks of new 'modes of control of labor'. One should read this as 'modes of control of Labourforce'. So, one can save the difference Marx made between 'labor' and 'labor force'. I see some convenience in conserving this difference.

³*o.c.*, p. 43.

⁴For example *Das Prinzip Hoffnung*.

⁵*o.c.*, p. 133.

⁶Wallerstein, *o.c.*, 136.

⁷Wallerstein, *ibidem*.

⁸Wallerstein : The crown needed money with which to build up its state machinery, and had enough state machinery to obtain the money. The system employed was not yet mercantilism, a policy aimed at strengthening the long run tax base of the State, so much as "fiscalism", ..., a policy aimed at increasing the immediate income of the State. *o.c.*, p. 138. — In fact the history of national debt in capitalism proves the necessity of the state as central economic agent, despite liberal and neo-liberal ideologies.

⁹Wallerstein : the inability of the state to compensate for the dislocations caused by the economic and social turbulence, the unwillingness of the state to ensure some greater equalization of distribution in times of inflation, population growth, and food shortages. Banditry was in this sense created by the state itself, both by depriving some nobles... and some peasants..., and by creating in the state itself a larger concentration of wealth such that it became more tempting to try to seize part of it. *o.c.*, p. 143.

¹⁰We shall argue that Hobbes, for example, was pleading for absolute but not unlimited power of the state. The limits of its absolutism are the natural right of every individual to defend his life-opportunities. It is only after the arriving at a consensus concerning the adequate natural laws, that a commonwealth can come into being. And what comes next is civil law.

¹¹Wallerstein, o.c., p. 144.

¹²Wallerstein, o.c., p. 115.

¹³One should remember the way Platoon and Aristoteles responded in their political philosophy to the problem of variety of polis-like customs and institutions in a time of unrest, war, territorial and economic antagonism in the Greek world. Both continued to stress the importance of the "old world" in a 'reactionary' point of view. They continued to emphasize the importance of the smaller and progressively insufficient political entities of the 'town-nations'. Both were unable to see how a new world had to be constructed capable in transgressing townlike restriction of the agricultural, financial and commercial realities of the Mediteranean world. Platoon's reaction was a monolithic and normative one; Aristoteles' a pluralistic and descriptive one, as one can read in their *The Republic*, *The Laws*, and *Politics*.

¹⁴Wallerstein, o.c., p. 145n.

¹⁵See below, Marx on landrent.

¹⁶Wallerstein, o.c., 254.

¹⁷Ed. by Barbara Hockey kaplan, 1978.

¹⁸The author refers to his forthcoming article on *Wallerstein, Marx and Mandel* in this periodical.

¹⁹Indeed I should suggest the use of Lakatos's view on scientific evolution by means of scientific research programmes, in which a difference is made between the "core" and the "protective belt" of a research programme. I refer to the aforementioned paper on Wallerstein, Marx and Mandel and to Imre Lakatos, *The methodology of scientific research programmes*, Philosophical Papers, Vol. I, Eds. John Worrall and Gregory Currie, Cambridge University Press, 1978.

²⁰H. Carrère d'Encarrose. *L'Empire Eclaté*, 1978.

²¹Mary Kaldor, *The Desintegrated West*, Allen Lane, London, 1978.

²²Marx, *Das Kapital*, III, VI. Abschnitt, 37. Kap., pp. 628–629.

²³Marx, loc. cit., pp. 632–633.

²⁴Marx, *Das Kapital*, chap. 47, p. 807; quoted in English in : Wallerstein, o.c., p. 247; my italics.

²⁵His contacts with Mersenne and other leading personalities.

²⁶See his still inspiring *Histoire Economique de l'Occident Médiéval*, 1951; particularly II. *Le mouvement économique et social au moyen âge du XIe au milieu du XVe siècle*, Chap. VII. *Les Transformations du XIVe et du XVe siècles*, and III. *La fin du moyen âge*.

²⁷Wallerstein, o.c., p. 256.

²⁸P. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, 1974, p. 127.

²⁹Anderson, o.c., p. 137.

³⁰Anderson, o.c., p. 138. (my italics).

³¹Anderson, o.c., p. 112; my italics.

³²See his translation of Thucydides' *Peloponnesian Wars*; the importance of Thucydides's work has been treated in Leo Strauss's penetrating work on Hobbes's political philosophy.

³³Leo Strauss, *The political philosophy of Hobbes. Its basis and its genesis*, 1936; C.B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism : Hobbes to Locke*, 1962; and *Democratic Theory : Essays in Retrieval*, 1973; Essay XIV, *Hobbes's Bourgeois Man*, pp. 238—250.

³⁴Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, chap. 13.

³⁵Hobbes, o.c., Part I, chap. 14.

³⁶Ibidem.

³⁷Ibidem.

³⁸Hobbes, o.c., Part II, chap. 17.

³⁹Hobbes, o.c., Part II, chap. 19.

⁴⁰Leviathan, Part II, 21.

⁴¹Leviathan, II, 22.

⁴²Ibidem.

⁴³Ibidem.

⁴⁴One can consider it as the prefiguration of "welfare policy" and social welfare in later periods of the history of capitalism., and one can trace the theme of "welfare" and "poor laws" — 'laws against the poor' — through the whole of British political and social philosophy; there is much of Hobbes in Bentham for example, for the latter became the champion of "welfare" plans in which central

authority has not to be legitimated again as was necessary in Hobbes's time.

⁴⁵Hobbes, o.c., II, 26.

⁴⁶It became one of the major themes of the work of John Locke in his *Two Treatises of Government*, edition Laslett, 1970; see also for a comparison C.B. Macpherson, 1962; W. von Leyden's edition of Locke's *Essays on the Law of Nature*, Oxford, 1965 (1954); J.W. Gough, *John Locke's Political Philosophy*, eight studies, Oxford, 1964 (1950).

⁴⁷On this point we can agree with R. Polin's point of view — interpreting Hobbes's political philosophy as principally conservative. See his book : *Politique et philosophie chez Thomas Hobbes*, 1967.

⁴⁸Bloch, *Vorlesungen zur Philosophie der Renaissance*, 1972.

⁴⁹Robertson, 1886; Taylor, 1908; Laird, 1934).

⁵⁰Strauss, o.c., p. 5.

⁵¹Elias, *Ueber den Prozess der Zivilisation — Soziogenetische und Psychogenetische Untersuchungen*; see also Agnes Heller's *Renaissance Man*, 1978 (1967), pp. 70—71 and secularization.

⁵²Elias, o.c., Einleitung.

⁵³Delumeau, *La peur en occident*, Fayard, 1979.

⁵⁴Above I referred to the impressive work of Delumeau, *La peur en Occident*, for a closer examination of this phenomenon.

⁵⁵Even in modern sociology the myth of the equal individuals, involved in a 'fair' exchange, has been resuscitated by men such as G.C. Homans and P.M. blau. Sociology and moral philosophy are well provided with the theme of 'fairness'. One should say, the terror of 'fairness'. Anyway, once again the comprehension of social reality seemed only possible by means of a mythical construction.

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