

## HOBBS

views were shallow but delightfully presented. There is a more than a hint here of the contempt of the academic for the outsider, and heterodox though Hirst's views were at this time, they were far from shallow. Like F.A. HAYEK, he has been consistently presented as being far more right-wing than he really was; in fact, he was nothing more or less than one of the last nineteenth-century free trade liberals.

His shunning by the Cambridge school did not appear to bother Hirst, and he continued to write and work very actively. As well as his books, he produced newspaper articles and a stream of caustic letters to *The Times*, and served as a governor of the London School of Economics. He was a regular visitor to the USA, where his sister was professor of classics at Columbia University; unsurprisingly, his views found much more popular acceptance than in Britain. There he caused a mild furore by referring to the welfare state as 'the Beveridge hoax' (in *Principles of Prosperity*, 1944) and predicting that it would lead to high taxes and industrial decline. He had stood unsuccessfully for parliament on a liberal ticket in 1919, but from 1930 on withdrew into a kind of intellectual isolation, apparently quite happy to challenge any and all economic and political orthodoxies. Despite this he remained a warm and sociable man with many friends, even among his intellectual enemies.

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## HOBBS, Thomas (1588–1679)

Hobbes was born at Westport (now a part of Malmesbury), Wiltshire on 5 April 1588. He died 4 December 1679 at Hardwick, Derbyshire. He was brought up by his uncle Francis, a prosperous glover, and educated at Magdalen Hall, Oxford (BA 1607). He then took a position as a tutor in the service of the Earl of Cavendish. He later said that the next years, spent with the young earl, were the happiest part of his life. He travelled in France in 1610–13, and met Francis BACON in 1621, handling the translation into Latin of the latter's *Essays*. In 1628 he became tutor to the son of Sir G. Clifton, and returned to Paris in 1629, where he studied physics, mathematics and Euclid's *Elements*. His third tour to the continent (1634–37), in company with his pupil, gave him the chance to meet Mersenne, who in turn introduced him to Gassendi and Descartes. Hobbes was admitted to this circle, to which he remained attached the rest of his life. He also got to know Huygens, and visited Galileo at Florence.

Back in England in 1640, Hobbes published the first draft of his *Elements of Law, Natural*

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*and Politic*. The same year the Long Parliament met, and Hobbes saw himself in danger and left for France. In Paris, he taught mathematics to the Prince of Wales, later Charles II. There also, he published *De Cive* (1642) and his great book *Leviathan* (1651), a theory of the society and the State. The criticism he received from the future Charles II, the French clergy and the Anglican ministers, hurt badly. Later (1651), the book was printed in London. Taking advantage of Cromwell's amnesty, Hobbes returned to England in 1653, and published, between 1655 and 1658, *De corpore* and *De homine*. The Restoration (1660) coincided with the end of his public life; Hobbes spent the rest of his life reading and writing his autobiography.

Hobbes starts from the positivist logic dominant in the intellectual atmosphere of the seventeenth century, which considers man as a being who always moves in the environment of means and excluded from consideration the existence of a final cause in actions. The method he uses is rationalist, deduced from certain initial premises. The human being is the inventor of the word, his most precious gift and the touchstone of his rationality. Rationalism situates us before one of Hobbes's central problems: the limits of reason in its approach to reality.

The primary human impulse is to preserve one's own life and to avoid death. Passions are movement. Reason understands means only as the instruments by which each person may obtain a comfortable life. This leads him to remain always in a naturalistic plane. It is a formulation of optimistic rationalism: 'reason itself cannot err'. This is the nucleus of his rationalist platform: 'reason it selfe is always Right Reason', what is reasonable must be true. His thesis is that all problems can be resolved by means of 'right Reason constituted by Nature'.

In Hobbes's thought we encounter the essential elements of the so-called bourgeois mentality, linked by birth and later evolution to capitalist ideology. Such a manner of under-

standing society is termed 'chrematistic'. Hobbes's *Leviathan* contains an idea of human beings which contains elements of the model of 'economic man' (particularly individualist) and Hobbes was the first author to elaborate this conception.

Hobbes is the father of mainstream English thought, displaying a series of features which all later authors of the school would share: a philosophical nominalism based on linguistic logic; opposition to abstract metaphysics; an evolutionary materialism; a pragmatic and utilitarian mentality in questions of ethics and politics; agnosticism and religious indifference; moral philosophy based on sentiment; an individualism of freedom as basic vital attitude; an inclination towards liberalism; and a fascination for the scientific method. Hobbes based his entire speculative edifice on four empirical principles: fear, security, selfishness and domination or property. It is difficult to resist seeing in these presuppositions the principal pieces of the capitalist puzzle: fear and the desire to assure the peaceful possession of acquired property lead to a selfish (individualistic) attitude. It suffices to add that by acting in this manner, the welfare of society is achieved, and we arrive at the Smithian invisible hand.

Hobbes finds inadequate the motives of traditional society (reason that guides man to virtue) for a realist platform which includes economic criteria. He proposes an alternative theory based in what is most radical and strongest in man, his passions and interest. Gain is the main motive in men's actions. The value of a man is his price, what is offered for the use of his power. From that point are deduced the characteristics of this new man who will be the object of study by economic science: the person is levelled to the set of things which enter the transactions of the market; his value is that which is paid to use what he has; the demand for his services conditions his price; the buyer is the one with the power in the transaction. Hobbes finds no other moral base for establishing the value of

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things. Man's work is merchandise; the market sets its value. The equality of things' value is proven by the very fact of exchange. Notably, Hobbes was in favour of taxing consumption rather than income, arguing that any tax should be put on the value of goods consumed rather than labour supplied. Fair taxation should take note of our propensity to consume, while the frugal labourer who spent little should be rewarded for his efforts.

Hobbes had a bourgeois mentality, and used a model which corresponds to a mercantile capitalist society. Work is considered as merchandise. The traditional concept of justice is abandoned. For economic man, it is not so much political rights as security in the market that matters; capitalist liberalism inherits from Hobbes its individualistic base and its bourgeois financial platform.

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**HOBSON, John Atkinson** (1858–1940)

Hobson was born in Derby on 6 July 1858, and died in London on 1 April 1940. His ashes were dispersed in the Garden of Remembrance, Golders Green Crematorium. He was second of four children to Josephine (née Atkinson) and

Thomas Hobbes was born in Westport, adjoining Malmesbury, England, on April 5, 1588. His father was the disgraced vicar of a local parish, and in the wake of the precipitating scandal (caused by brawling in front of his own church), he disappeared, abandoning his three children to the care of his brother. An uncle of Hobbes', a tradesman and alderman, provided for Hobbes' education. Already an excellent student of classical languages, at age 14, Hobbes went to Magdalen Hall in Oxford to study. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), whose current reputation rests largely on his political philosophy, was a thinker with wide-ranging interests. In philosophy, he defended a range of materialist, nominalist, and empiricist views against Cartesian and Aristotelian alternatives. In physics, his work was influential on Leibniz, and led him into disputes with Boyle and the experimentalists of the early Royal Society. In history, he translated Thucydides's *History... Next* (Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet). Thomas Hobbes (April 5, 1588–December 4, 1679) was an English philosopher, whose famous 1651 book *Leviathan* set the agenda for much of subsequent Western political philosophy. Michael Oakeshott famously described it as "the greatest, perhaps the sole, masterpiece of political philosophy written in the English language". Hobbes also contributed to a diverse array of fields, including history, geometry, ethics, law, psychology general philosophy and what would now be... The English philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) is best known for his political thought, and deservedly so. His vision of the world is strikingly original and still relevant to contemporary politics. His main concern is the problem of social and political order: how human beings can live together in peace and avoid the danger and fear of civil conflict. He poses stark alternatives: we should give our obedience to an unaccountable sovereign (a person or group empowered to decide every social and political issue). Thomas Hobbes (/hɛˈbz/ HOBZ; sometimes known as Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury; 5 April 1588 – 4 December 1679) was an English philosopher, considered to be one of the founders of modern political philosophy. Hobbes is best known for his 1651 book *Leviathan*, in which he expounds an influential formulation of social contract theory. In addition to political philosophy, Hobbes contributed to a diverse array of other fields, including history, jurisprudence, geometry, the physics of gases, theology, and...