

Radosław Małek

Individualism and the Social Contract as Expressions of the Critical Genesis of the State in light of the Views of N. Machiavelli and Th. Hobbes

Abstract: The article discusses modern theories of individualism as the basis of the social contract and hence as the source of the modern state. The author analyses N. Machiavelli's and Th. Hobbes' concepts of the state, which emerged as a response to a situation where scholastic visions of the state and the human being had lost their appeal. He also draws attention to the fact that the study of human nature and the ways to control it is the goal of modern political philosophies and that passion as the driving force of human actions first appeared in political philosophical thought thanks to Machiavelli, later to be taken up and developed by Hobbes. According to Machiavelli, individualism is based in a specific self seeking fulfillment, which can attain set goals thanks to two driving forces: virtue and fortune. Machiavelli's individual treats others as objects; the goal of their actions is the desire for profit. Machiavelli's thought—a prince establishes the state and devotes himself entirely to it (which is also good for the others as it takes them out of the state of war)—is taken up by Hobbes. A human being is guided by the senses—men have wants and desires. The life's goal is self-fulfillment; the highest good, self-preservation. As in Machiavelli, the pursuit of self-realization (striving for peace, that is avoiding war for fear of death) leads to the social contract. The social contract is not the common will of the society but a consensus reached by the parties regarding giving up some of the individual rights, that is a consensus reached by all individuals. Hence, by realizing the self, people realize peace, that is the highest good for individuals (of course, both the state of war and the state of peace are only hypothetical—constructs which justify the State, not empirical facts). In both views the prince is one (for himself), everybody can be the prince, and it is impossible not to want to be the prince (quitting the pursuit means death). The pursuit of the fulfillment of the ego is the only course of action for the prince, and at the same time a course of action good for all other princes by virtue of the social contract. This is the meaning of the state—a contract between princes: always together and always apart.

Keywords: individualism, social contract, N. Machiavelli, T. Hobbes

The criticism of the Renaissance era found expression in political philosophy in—among other things—the rejection of the conception of the state as a certain being necessary due to nature or the will of God,

as a natural environment for human life. In answer to the dominant scholastic conceptions of the state, “new” models of the state of nature and attempts at ending it arose. In the past several centuries, viewpoints regarding the social contract have taken on various forms, both in terms of the subjective, as well as objective side of the contract.¹ One condition of entering into the contract remains unchanged, however. That condition is individualism.

The pioneer who took on a typical modern way of perceiving the state is Niccolò Machiavelli.² Leo Strauss describes the so-called Machiavellian breakthrough thusly:

[...] the founder of modern political philosophy is Machiavelli. He attempted—with success—to break with the entire tradition of political philosophy. He compared his achievement with the achievements of people like Columbus. He asserted that he had discovered a new moral continent. This assertion is well-grounded; his political teachings are “completely new.” The only question concerns whether the continent discovered by Machiavelli is inhabitable by man.³

Machiavelli builds his conception on the basis of an analysis of the surrounding world and a synthesis of historical events. Valeriu Marcu characterizes the world of the de Medici’s, Florence, Rome,

¹ See Z. Rau and M. Chmieliński, “Wprowadzenie,” in: *Umowa społeczna i jej krytycy w myśli politycznej i prawnej*, Z. Rau i M. Chmieliński, eds. (Warszawa: Scholar, 2010), pp. 7–34.

² See P. Manent, *Intelektualna historia liberalizmu*, trans. M. Miszański. (Kraków: Znak, 1994), pp. 13–37. In *The Originality of Machiavelli*, I. Berlin comments on this breakthrough thusly: “There is, therefore, something extraordinary in the fact that he completely ignores the concepts and categories—the routine paraphernalia—in terms of which the best-known thinkers and scholars of his day were accustomed to express themselves. [...] Only Marsilio before him had dared to do this: and [...] it is a dramatic break with the past. The absence of Christian psychology and theology—sin, grace, redemption, salvation—need cause less surprise: few contemporary humanists speak in such terms. The medieval heritage has grown very thin. But, and this is more noteworthy, there is no trace of Platonic or Aristotelian teleology, no reference to any ideal order, to any doctrine of man’s place in nature in the great chain of being [...] There is nothing here of what Popper has called ‘essentialism,’ a prior certainty directly revealed to reason or intuition about the unalterable development of men or social groups in certain directions, in pursuit of goals implanted in them by God or by nature. The method and the tone are empirical. Even Machiavelli’s theory of historical cycles is not metaphysically guaranteed. As for religion, it is for him not much more than a socially indispensable instrument, so much utilitarian cement: the criterion of the worth of a religion is its role as a promoter of solidarity and cohesion.” <http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/published_works/ac/machiavelli.pdf> (01.05.2015).

³ L. Strauss, *Sokratejskie pytania*, trans. P. Maciejko. (Warszawa: Aletheia, 1998), p. 91.

that great breakthrough of the Renaissance, and the bidding farewell to of the old world this way:

Heaven seemed empty to them, and the earth full of possibilities for the sly, for the ruthless. A mixture of courage, venality, and adroitness decided about their way of life and relationship to others. It became fashionable to loudly praise things that were usually done only in secret, it did not damage their dignity to live without an ideal appearance beyond honesty, beyond family, beyond love, beyond church, beyond courage. They thought they could live without the curtain that always has to someone cover all things and feelings, and did not shudder at looking at the hearts of their own and others. Politics is cleansed of all moral ideas. Such a world, without any heavenly idea, with any fantasy, against any assumption that is not obvious, without any illusions, constituted the political realism of the Florentines.⁴

This political realism is captured in the story about Cesena told by the author of the *Prince*.

Once the duke had taken over Romagna, he found it had been commanded by Impotent lords who had been readier to despoil their subjects than to correct them, and had given their subjects matter for disunion, not for union. Since that province was quite full of robberies, quarrels, and every other kind of insolence, he judged It necessary to give it good government, if he wanted to reduce It to peace and obedience to a kingly arm. So he put there Messer Remirro de Orco, a cruel and ready man, to whom he gave the fullest power. In a short time Remirro reduced it to peace and unity, with the very greatest reputation for himself. Then the duke judged that such excessive authority was not necessary, because he feared that it might become hateful; and he set up a civil court in the middle of the province, with a most excellent, where each city had its advocate. And because he knew that past rigors had generated some hatred for Remirro, to purge the spirits of that people and to gain them entirely to himself, he wished to show that if any cruelty had been committed, this had not come from him but from the harsh nature of his minister. And having seized this opportunity, he had him placed one morning in the piazza at Cesena in two pieces, with a piece of wood and a bloody knife beside him. The ferocity of this spectacle left the people at once satisfied and stupefied.⁵

⁴ V. Marcu, *Machiavelli. Szkoła władzy*, trans. M. Tarnowski. (Warszawa: Powszechna Spółka Wydawnicza "Płomień", 1938), p. 44.

⁵ N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. and introduction by H.C. Mansfield, 2nd edition (Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 29–30.

The above story raises many questions in terms of how interpretation, but one thing is for certain: even a loyal servant can be killed if his death will bring about peace in the state, which is the highest good. His peculiar pacifism is based on the technical utilization of human passion and on the Prince's strength. The Prince is the omnipotent Self, which, detached from values, or treating them technically,⁶ fulfills itself through conquest, but also through peace for his subjects.

Machiavelli reveals the monstrosity of a man, an individual Self, who wants to fulfill himself:

[...] men are happy while they are in accord, and as they come into discord, unhappy. I judge this indeed, that it is better to be impetuous than cautious, because fortune is a woman; and it is necessary, if one wants to hold her down, to beat her and strike her down. And one sees that she lets herself be won more by the impetuous than by those who proceed coldly. And so always, like a woman, she is the friend of the young, because they are less cautious, more ferocious, and command her with more audacity.⁷ [...] truly it is a very natural and ordinary thing to desire to acquire, and always, when men do it who can, they will be praised or not blamed [...].⁸

Machiavelli distinguishes two causal forces of our actions: *virtu* and fortune. It is not the case that man is subject only to fortune and cannot influence his own fate:⁹

⁶ "High values esteemed by the classical tradition, such as justice and magnanimity, are considered by Machiavelli unrealistic, impossible to realize. Thus, they are made elements of rhetoric to be directed at the people, whose 'enlightenment' the Florentine considers unlikely. However, the ruling classes may be 'enlightened,' as their 'humor' and great ambitions or greed predispose them to dominate others. The enlightenment, especially of the young who aspire to rule, should consist in freeing them of moral inhibitions. Then, on making progress in 'knowledge of the world,' whose practical consequences boil down to a utilitarian treatment of religious faith and the most sacred convictions of the people." R. Piekarski, *Koncepcja cnót politycznych Machiavellego na tle elementów klasycznej etyki cnót* (Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, 2007), p. 458.

⁷ N. Machiavelli, *The Prince...*, p. 101.

⁸ N. Machiavelli, *The Prince...*, p. 14.

⁹ I. Berlin characterizes the situation thusly: "The assumption is that the blessings of the classical age can be restored (if fortune is not too unpropitious) by enough knowledge and will, by virtue on the part of a leader, and by appropriately trained and bravely and skillfully led citizens. There are no intimations of an irrevocably determined flow of events; neither fortuna nor necessitas dominate the whole of existence; there are no absolute values which men ignore or deny to their inevitable doom." *The Originality...* <http://berlin.wolf.ox.ac.uk/published_works/ac/machiavelli.pdf> (01.05.2015).

Therefore, these princes of ours who have been in their principalities for many years may not accuse fortune when they have lost them afterwards, but their own indolence; for, never having thought that quiet times could change (which is a common defect of men, not to take account of the storm during the calm), when later the times became adverse, they thought of fleeing and not of defending themselves. And they hoped that their peoples, disgusted with the insolence of the victors, would call them back. This course is good when others are lacking; but it is indeed bad to have put aside other remedies for this one. For one should never fall in the belief you can find someone to pick you up. Whether it does not happen or happens, it is not security for you, because that defense was base and did not depend on you. And those defenses alone are good, are certain, and are lasting, that depend on you yourself and on your virtue.¹⁰

The individual can do a lot, and fortune also means a lot. The aware Self should reconcile these opposites. A good prince knows how to find agreement (he is a fox), i.e. he knows when to act to change fate, and when to read the surrounding reality with stoic calm. A good prince is an effective prince.

The prince would like his people to be governed by good laws and to live in peace, but from his survey of the surrounding Italian republics, a completely different condition of man emerges. It is that of the individual treating others as the objects of his actions and acting according to a desire for profit.

And men have less hesitation to offend one who makes himself loved than one who makes himself feared; for love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because men are wicked, is broken at every opportunity for their own utility, but fear is held by a dread of punishment that never sakes you. The prince should nonetheless make himself feared in such a mode that if he does not acquire love, he escapes hatred, because being feared and not being hated can go to get her very well. This he will always do if he abstains from the property of his citizens and his subjects, and from their women; and if he also needs to proceed against someone's life, he must do it when there is suitable justification and manifest cause for it. But above all, he must abstain from the property of others, because men forget the death of father more quickly than the loss of a patrimony.¹¹

¹⁰ N. Machiavelli, *The Prince...*, p. 97.

¹¹ N. Machiavelli, *The Prince...*, pp. 66–67.

In this world, the Prince (with a capital “p”) is the starting point and endpoint. He understands fortune and in him *virtu* is concentrated. The Prince-Self may be a tyrant and republican, but he and only he has the power to decide about the state. The created state is his only life. Wojciech Kaute comments on this situation thusly: “Machiavelli rids Europe of illusions. The world broke into two parts; more precisely: only the second part is left: the prince, nobles, and people. There is no goal. The image of man which the author of the *Prince* presents is neither optimistic, nor pessimistic.”¹² Man is what he is. Neither good, nor evil. It is the passions.¹³ This is the type of individual that emerges from Machiavelli’s worldview.

The continuator of Machiavelli’s thought in the context of his conception of man was Thomas Hobbes. “Of course, there are essential differences between Machiavelli and Hobbes [...]. However, the emphasis on rivalry, external values, and the search for safety and profit creates a significant connection between them.”¹⁴

Some are helped by philosophy, others lack it. Thus, the cause of all of these benefits is philosophy. The usefulness of moral and social philosophy should be evaluated not so much on the basis of those benefits that cognition bestows on it, as on the basis of that misfortune that touches us when we lack it. All misfortunes that can be avoided by human effort have their source in war, especially civil war; from it come murders, loneliness, and a deficiency in all things. The cause of all of this is not that people want these things, since they only want what seems good to them; and it is not the case that people do not know that these things are evil; for, is there a man who would not understand that murder and poverty are evil and disagreeable for him? The cause of civil war is that people do not know the causes of war and peace and that there are few people who have discovered their duties, thanks to which peace arises and endures, that means: so few know the true principle of how to live. The cognizance of this principle is moral philosophy.¹⁵

¹² W. Kaute, *W poszukiwaniu dobrego życia. U filozoficznych podstaw głównych orientacji politycznego myślenia* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2011), p. 50.

¹³ “If Machiavelli had been right, this world be a valley of tears, a blood bath, a villainous fraud, the vanity of vanities, an indecent story, an incomprehensible joke, while the political community would be, above all, a great, incomprehensible animal of Plato’s.” R. Piekarski, *Koncepcja...*, p. 468.

¹⁴ R. Piekarski, *Koncepcja...*, p. 463.

¹⁵ R. Piekarski, *Koncepcja...*, p. 18.

Therefore, cognizing the nature of man and finding a way to temper his desires is the task of political philosophy. Hobbes searches for a solution through connecting the attributes (passions) of man with a geometric method¹⁶ and determinism¹⁷ that stem from a certain variety of deism.¹⁸

[“Thought” is the] “presentation or image of some quality or other feature of a body outside ourselves, which is usually called an object. This object acts on the ears, eyes, and other parts of the human body, and acting variously, elicits various images. The prototype of all of them is what we call a sensory impression. (For, there is no idea in the human mind that would not have initially, completely or partially, been born in the sensory organs). Everything else derives from this prototype.¹⁹

The basis of all thought is empirical cognition. The senses are first, which does not mean they are certain. Man cognizes, but he also desires and lusts. But first he cognizes, experiences. He may lust later. “We can only lust for what is known to us.”²⁰

Reason suggests a solution to this dilemma. We must emphasize right away that reason plays a rather peculiar role in the author of *Leviathan*'s vision. It is not the high-

¹⁶ See W. Tyburski, A. Wachowiak, R. Wiśniewski, *Historia filozofii i etyki do współczesności* (Toruń: Dom Organizatora, 2002), p. 311.

¹⁷ “Philosophical determinism, which Hobbes represents, solely develops a thought that is well-known to theologians of the old church, who also dealt with practical wisdom, namely, that all things and all matters remain linked to one another. This thought can be expressed in two ways; both expressions often diverge from one another, but always end up connected once more: 1) That the world itself is logical [...], 2) That being and thought have nothing to do with one another, and that mechanical and physical consequences are the only reality [...].” F. Tönnies, *Thomas Hobbes. Życie jego i nauka*, trans. L. Karpińska (Warszawa: skład główny w Księgarni Gebethnera i Wolffa, 1903) p. 197.

¹⁸ See Z. Łubieński, *Religia i Kościół Kościół systemie filozoficznym Hobbessa* (Lwów: Książnica-Atlas, 1924), p. 6.

¹⁹ F. Tönnies, *Thomas Hobbes. Życie...*, p. 197.

²⁰ In his *Znaczenie pojęcia umowy w systemie filozoficznym Hobbessa* (Lwów: Książnica-Atlas, 1931), p. 4, Z. Łubieński makes the following comments on sensory cognition: “Man’s actions are, in essence, the result of the influences of his surroundings. Man does what causes him pleasure, pleasure avoids disagreeable sensations. This matter is complicated by the fact that by virtue of image and memory association, our present and past sensations mix with one another, while the present feeling is increased or decreased with the thought of the benefit or harm that the given thing may bring in the future. This being the case, is not only temporary pleasure of any sort that is decisive in eliciting a given action, but the fullest, most enduring, and most intense possible satisfaction of the entire being. This justification of this satisfaction is, again, only in the fact that it constitutes a sign of the enhancement of vital motion. The enhancement of life is, then, the proper end to which everyone aspires, whether they want to or not.”

est faculty of man, to which all other faculties are subject, but [is—R. M.] something instrumental—a refined tool in the service of the will to power.²¹

Man thinks only of one thing—how to satisfy his will to power. This fulfillment is the only good. Hobbes' epistemology leads to the conclusion that the greatest good is self-preservation. "In one word, we can describe Hobbes' position in ethics as ruthless pure utilitarianism."²² Analyzing the concepts of good and evil, Hobbes emphasized their substantial, utilitarian *raison d'être*. "Every man, for his own part, calleth that which pleaseth, and is delightful to himself GOOD; and that EVIL which displeaseth him [...]."²³ Hobbes avoided endowing the ideas of good and evil with a metaphysical sense; rather, he treated them as psychological categories.²⁴

An expression of this desire of "good" is a permanent lust for power.

The passions that most of all cause the difference of wit, are principally, the more or less desire of power, of riches, of knowledge, and of honour. All which may be reduced to the first, that is, desire of power. For riches, knowledge, and honour, are but several sorts of power.²⁵

Man is a being that permanently satisfies his power.

So that in the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death. And the cause of this, is not always that a man hopes for a more intensive delight, than he has already attained to; or that he cannot be content with a moderate power: but because he cannot assure the power and means to live well, which he hath present, without the acquisition of more.²⁶

Further, Hobbes asserts that this power cannot be stopped.

²¹ Z. Stawrowski, "Teologia polityczna Thomasa Hobbesa," *Civitas*, nr 8, 2004, p. 124.

²² J. Paygert, *Nauka Tomasza Hobbesa w stosunku do religii i kościoła* (Kraków: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1916), p. 393.

²³ T. Hobbes, "Human Nature," in: *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 44.

²⁴ See R. Tokarczyk, *Hobbes. Zarys żywota i myśli* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 1998), p. 68.

²⁵ Th. Hobbes, "Leviathan, or the Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil," in: *The English Works of Thomas Hobbes*, Vol. III (London: C. Richards, 1839), p. 61.

²⁶ Th. Hobbes, "Leviathan...", pp. 85–86.

And therefore, a man who has no great passion for any of these things; but is, as men term it, indifferent; though he may be so far a good man, as to be free from giving offence; yet he cannot possibly have either a great fancy, or much judgment. For the thoughts are to the desires, as scouts, and spies, to range abroad, and find the way to the things desired; all steadiness of the mind's motion, and all quickness of the same, proceeding from thence: for as to have no desire, is to be dead: so to have weak passions, is dullness [...].²⁷

Man either aspires to increasing his sphere of power, or does not exist. Man immanently fulfills himself. Not fulfilling oneself is equivalent to not existing.

To consider them behind is glory.

To consider them before is humility. [...]

To fall on the sudden is disposition to weep.

To see another fall, disposition to laugh.

To see one out-gone whom we would not is pity.

To see one out-go we would not, is indignation. [...]

And to forsake the course is to die.²⁸

It would be difficult to find a clearer thought concerning the condition of "Self." The "Self" is alone and only it counts. One can be either an object of cognition, or the only subject. "For such is the nature of men, that howsoever they may acknowledge many others to be more witty, or more eloquent, or more learned; yet they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves; for they see their own with at hand, and other men's at a distance"²⁹ It cannot be any other way. Such is man. In the end, he is only a body. And a solitary body, at that. Man is matter in motion, determined and directed. Man is a concrete, live "Self." Lustful and solitary.

Again, men have no pleasure, but on the contrary a great deal of grief, in keeping company, where there is no power able to over-awe them all. For every man looketh that his companion should value him, at the same rate he sets upon himself:

²⁷ Th. Hobbes, "Leviathan...", pp. 61–62.

²⁸ Th. Hobbes, "Human Nature," in: *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 59–60.

²⁹ Th. Hobbes, "Leviathan...", p. 111.

and upon all signs of contempt, or undervaluing, naturally endeavours, as far as he dares, (which amongst them that have no common power to keep them in quiet, is far enough to make them destroy each other), to extort a greater value from his contempters, by damage; and from others, by the example.³⁰

Man does not immanently aspire to life in a community. He is alone. He is solitary and—as Jan Paygert writes—

by nature everyone desires welfare for himself, so the greatest good for each is his own self, self-preservation, and vice versa, the greatest evil for each is death, especially when it is tied with anguish. However, even death may be desired, and so is good, if life has become too much of a burden.³¹

Hobbes' anthropology is not "pleasant." It is not optimistic. It is "real." Anti-humanitarian in the naïve sense of utopian visions.³² Man is a definite individualist, who, if he needs to form a community with someone, will only form one based on the fulfillment of his own ego.³³ People who fulfill the desire to power fall into a state of war,³⁴ in which "[...] the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short"³⁵ Hobbes find three causes of war that are components of the desire to power. They are rivalry, mistrust, and the desire of fame.³⁶ All of them are fulfilled in the state of nature. The state of nature can be understood as an empirical state—it is a place of war where no state exists that could uphold people, or a certain theoretical state that justifies the state. The first model appears where Hobbes describes civil war,³⁷ the second

³⁰ Th. Hobbes, "Leviathan..." p. 112.

³¹ J. Paygert, *Spór i siła—a państwo i prawo. Filozoficzno-prawna nauka Tomasza Hobbesa w historyczno-krytycznym oświeceniu* (Lwów: Z drukarni Wł. Łozińskiego, 1913), p. 36.

³² R. Piotrowski, *Od materii Świata to materii Państwa. Z filozofii Thomasa Hobbesa* (Kraków: Universitas, 2000), p. 115.

³³ R. Tuck, *Hobbes*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 65.

³⁴ "[...] that during the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man." Th. Hobbes, "Leviathan..." pp. 112–113.

³⁵ Th. Hobbes, "Leviathan..." p. 113.

³⁶ See Th. Hobbes, "Leviathan..." p. 206.

³⁷ See Th. Hobbes, "Leviathan..." pp. 406–419.

is not a model that can be verified empirically, and at the same time, precisely through the example of our daily behavior, can be imagined.³⁸

“What can unite them? The answer is obvious: art.”³⁹ Art, by virtue of which that mortal God arises. King of all children of pride. Leviathan.

The only way to erect such a common power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another, and thereby to secure them in such sort, as that by their own industry, and by the fruits of the earth, they may nourish themselves and live contentedly; is, to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will [...] This is more than consent, or concord; it is a real unity of them all, in one and the same person, made by covenant of every man with every man, in such manner, as if every man should say to every man, I authorize and give up my right of governing myself, to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner. This done, the multitude so united in one person is called a COMMONWEALTH, in Latin CIVITAS. This is the generation of that great LEVIATHAN, or rather, to speak more reverently, of that mortal god, to which we owe under the immortal God, our peace and defence. [...] And he that carrieth this person, is called SOVEREIGN, and said to have sovereign power; and every one besides, his SUBJECT.⁴⁰

So, the Sovereign emerges by virtue of the social contract. Miłowit Kuniński formulates three ways of understanding the theory of the social contract⁴¹—each of these forms is valid and each has its critics, but these three standpoints are connected by one thing—a break with the tradition

³⁸ Hobbes writes thusly about opponents of the concept of a state of war: “Let him therefore consider with himself, when taking a journey, he arms himself, and seek to go well accompanied; when going to sleep, he locks his doors; [...]” Th. Hobbes, “Leviathan...,” p. 208.

³⁹ P. Manent, *Intelektualna historia liberalizmu*, p. 40.

⁴⁰ Th. Hobbes, “Leviathan...,” pp. 157–158.

⁴¹ “1. The standard understanding of Hobbes’ theory of the social contract, where individuals found in the state of nature are not connected with each other by moral and social bonds, and in aspiring to satisfy the needs that serve to uphold their lives, they usurp the means they consider necessary to attain that end; 2. The state of nature as an intermediate state between political states, where a political state is the negation of the state of nature and the way of eliminating its greatest evil—sudden death; 3. The state of nature as a point of departure and transition to a political state, when every man is an enemy to every other man; this transition may be significantly weakened, since it is possible to ally oneself with others for defense purposes and to receive aid from allies.” M. Kuniński, “Problem stanu natury i stanu politycznego w teorii umowy społecznej Tomasza Hobbesa,” in: *Umowa społeczna i jej krytycy w myśli politycznej i prawnej*, Z. Rau and M. Chmieliński, eds. (Warszawa: Scholar, 2010), pp. 118–123.

that viewed the genesis and justification of the state in the will of God or in the conception of man understood as *zoon politikon*.

Summarizing the stance regarding individualism, we can say that it grew out of the foundation of early modern philosophy. N. Machiavelli was the first to express such a vivid statement defining man through his passions. We can say that in a certain sense, it was at that time that the scholastic formula defining man as a person, and society as a certain whole instead of a (spontaneous) interest group or rational (contract) association, was exhausted. It was N. Machiavelli who prompted the development of this idea. In my opinion, Th. Hobbes best developed the idea of unrestrained passions as a causal force of human action.

His *desire of power* is the most complete expression of lust. For the author of *Leviathan*, *desire of power* is written into the whole philosophical system as a necessary, but not sole, force. Laws of nature also exist, which command us to aspire to peace. The *Leviathan* is necessary because of the fear of death and laws of nature. It is also strong by our desire for power, from which it is created. But we also give up a piece of our rights to everything with a view to peace, which is the highest good.

Thomas Hobbes' social contract became the inspiration for many later versions of this idea, very differently justified, both through rational choice and spontaneous order (as in the works of Robert Nozick). Setting aside the discussion on the validity of standpoint regarding N. Machiavelli's and Th. Hobbes' conceptions of man, it seems that we are entitled to say that the theses of these thinkers were an answer to the exhaustion of a certain scholastic method of justifying the state and the definition of man. If the view of human nature described above, being the source of authorization for the state created on the basis of the social contract, results from a critical understanding of the sovereign (dogmatically understood by scholastics), then this criticism was very significant for the future of the state, both in the social sphere (concerning, among other things, the sphere of rights and subjectivism of the individual) and legal sphere (concerning the empire of the sovereign, and thus civil rights).

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Radosław Małek

Indywidualizm i umowa społeczna jako wyraz krytycznej genezy państwa w ujęciu N. Machiavellego i T. Hobbesa

Streszczenie: W artykule zostały zanalizowane nowożytne koncepcje indywidualizmu będącego podstawą umowy społecznej, a zatem źródłem nowożytnego państwa. Autor analizuje koncepcje państwa N. Machiavellego i Th. Hobbesa, stanowiące odpowiedź na wyczerpanie się scholastycznych wizji państwa i człowieka. Zwraca także uwagę, iż poznanie natury człowieka i sposobów jej opanowania stanowi cel nowożytnych filozofii polityki. Podkreśla, iż namiętność jako siła sprawcza ludzkich działań pojawia się w filozofii polityki dzięki myśli N. Machiavellego, po czym została rozwinięta w filozofii Th. Hobbesa. Indywidualizm w koncepcji Machiavellego opiera się na konkretnym Ja, realizującym siebie, które może osiągać swoje cele dzięki dwóm siłom sprawczym (*virtu, fortuna*). Jednostka Machiavellego innych traktuje przedmiotowo, a celem jej działania jest chęć zysku. Myśl Machiavellego, wyrażającą się w przekonaniu iż Książę tworzy Państwo i jedynie w Państwie się realizuje (co jednocześnie jest dobre dla innych bo wyprowadza ich ze stanu wojny), kontynuuje Th. Hobbes. Człowiek to istota zmysłowa – pragnąca i pożądająca. Celem jego życia jest spełnienie, a najwyższym dobrem – zachowanie samego siebie. Jak u Machiavellego, realizacja własnego Ja (dążenie do pokoju czyli ucieczka przed wojną ze strachu przed śmiercią) prowadzi do umowy społecznej. Umowa to nie wspólna wola społeczeństwa lecz konsensus stron umowy (dotyczący rezygnacji z części uprawnień do wszystkiego), czyli wszystkich jednostek. Tak więc, realizując Ja, realizujemy pokój, czyli najważniejsze dobro dla jednostek (oczywiście tak stan wojny, jak i pokoju są tylko hipotetyczne, są pewną protezą do uzasadnienia państwa, a nie faktem empirycznym). W obu koncepcjach Książę jest jeden (dla siebie) i każdy może być Księciem – i nie można nie chcieć być Księciem (porzucenie biegu to śmierć). Bieg do realizacji ego to jedyna droga dla Księcia – i jednocześnie droga dobra dla wszystkich innych Książąt mocą umowy społecznej, a to właśnie znaczy państwo (umowa Księcia z Księciem, czyli zawsze razem i zawsze osobno).

Słowa kluczowe: indywidualizm, umowa społeczna, N. Machiavelli, T. Hobbes.