

All power to the soviets

Marx meets Hobbes

Lars T. Lih

‘[M]en have no pleasure, but on the contrary a great deal of grief, in keeping company, where there is no power to over-awe them all.’

Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*¹

The way we think about revolution is deeply involved with the great traditions of political theory, and conversely, our understanding of these traditions is strongly influenced by what we think we know about the great revolutions. The Russian Revolution of 1917–21 is an exemplary case in point. Beginning with the Revolution itself and continuing to our day, the Russian Revolution has been viewed primarily through the lens of two fundamental political theories. One can be called the Lockean tradition: revolutions are about the consent of the governed. The other is the Marxist tradition that focuses on the world-historical mission of a class – bourgeoisie or proletariat – to take political power and remake society.

A third fundamental theory, associated with the name of Thomas Hobbes, focuses on the presence or absence of a generally acknowledged sovereign authority, or what Hobbes termed the Leviathan. This political tradition plays a much smaller role in current evaluations of the Russian Revolution. And yet, as we shall see, a tacitly Hobbesian framework was adopted by many people who were directly caught up in events, including top Bolshevik leaders. An inquiry into this confluence of political theory and history illuminates both.

From the point of view of theory, the Russian case demonstrates with particular force that Hobbes’ theory is not just an abstract account of an imaginary state of nature, but can help clarify the fundamental issues that animate a historical drama. Hobbes wrote

in the context of the English Revolution and civil war, of course, but his theory usefully brings out some features of the Russian Revolution and civil war as well. Our discussion will also help make Hobbes’ theory more concrete by thinking through *how* a new Leviathan might actually be created to take the place of one that has abdicated.

From the point of view of history, reference to Hobbes helps to highlight a perspective that was meaningful to many participants because it addressed crucial features of the situation that we ignore at our peril. I will give particular attention to arguments around the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly in early January 1918, because from that day to this, the episode of the Constituent Assembly remains a critical point of reference for each of the competing interpretations based on the traditions of Locke, Marx and, as I shall show, Hobbes.

Popular theorising

The Hobbesian perspective concentrates on the presence or absence of a country’s *sovereign political authority*. The Russian word for this sovereign authority is *vlast* – a more useful item of vocabulary for exploring the Hobbesian perspective than any one English word. Russian observers and participants in the Revolution and civil war often employed the word with obsessive insistence. For these reasons, I have kept the Russian word *vlast* untranslated in what follows. *Vlast* has a more specific reference than the English word ‘power,’ and evokes more the sovereign authority in a particular country: in order to have the *vlast*, one has to have the right of making a final decision or command, to be capable of making the decisions and of seeing that they are carried out. ‘So-

viet power' or *sovetskaia vlast* points then to a *vlast* based on the soviets, their principles and social constituency.

All three political traditions were in play during the Revolution as ordinary people, trying to make sense of events, argued among themselves. In the novel *V tupike* [Dead End], for instance, published in Soviet Russia in 1922, Vikenty Veresaev gives us a nice example of popular theorizing in a way that accurately reflects the way people really talked. The following dialogue from the novel takes place in the Crimea in 1920, as the civil war is winding down. The speakers are Ivan Ilych Sartanov, a liberal reformer arrested under both the tsars and the soviets, his daughter Katya who defends an orthodox socialist outlook, and some young Bolshevik soldiers of worker origin.

[Katya asked:] – Then you are yourselves Bolsheviks?

The soldier looked at Katya with surprise.

– Well, yes, of course!

Ivan Ilych asked:

– And what is Bolshevism?

The soldier was ready with his explanation:

– Bolshevism means that you are *for* a worker *vlast*, that the whole *vlast* should come from the workers and peasants, and that we build a just system that's based on labour.

– You say the peasants as well should have the *vlast*? Then why are you against the Constituent Assembly? In Russia, the peasants and workers are an ocean and the bourgeoisie just a handful. What difference would it make to anybody if there were a dozen or so representatives from the bourgeoisie in the Constituent Assembly? And in that case, everybody would see that it represented the will of the people [*narod*] as a whole, and each and all would bow with respect toward it.

The soldier smiled.

– I'll explain all that to you right away with complete properness. The peasant [*muzhik*] is unlearned ['dark'], he's led astray by any priest or any kulak. And we, the working class, will not let him be pushed around, we won't allow him to be duped.

– You're off base if you think our peasant is such a fool. And you're also off base if you think he doesn't have his own interests that are distinct from the interests of the working class ...

The soldier asked Katya with curiosity:

– And who do you stand for?

– I stand for socialism, for ending utterly the exploitation of the toilers by capital. But I simply don't believe that right now in Russia the workers are capable of taking the *vlast* into their hands. For that, they are too unprepared, and in economic terms Russia itself is completely unready for socialism. Marx proved that socialism is possible only in a country with a large-scale, developed, capitalist industrial base.

The soldiers looked at her in bewilderment, and their expressions became more and more guarded. And more and more even Katya felt that, for them, right now, under the given circumstances, everything her words implied was even more lifeless than the utopian socialism that she had been talking about.

The one with the white moustache raised his brows, thought a bit and said:

– You say, you're for the workers? So what about right now? I mean to say, we took the *vlast* – but now we should give it back to the bourgeois [*burzhui*], so that they'll develop this industry you talked about?

– Give it back, don't give it back, but all the same they'll grab the *vlast* for themselves – or Russia will completely fall to pieces.

Another Red Army man – yellowish pale, with a black beard asked sharply:

– So, tell me, this little dacha – is it yours, do you own it?

– Well ... well, yes, it's ours! But how does that change anything?

He stood up, took his rifle from the corner and answered carelessly:

– Nothing. Thanks for the snack.

They left the kitchen. Katya accompanied them to the fence gate. The one with the black beard said:

– Well, Alexa old pal, here's the way things are, eh? What do you say we go into town, hunt up some bourgeois – it could be that there's still some of them around. We'll give our rifles to them and say: we're so sorry, your graduaty, please, take the *vlast* back!²

The older intellectual Ivan Ilych focuses on institutional procedures that provide a vehicle for consent of the governed, and so the Constituent Assembly – the product of universal suffrage and contested elections – assumes a central place for him. He is convinced that these procedures will ensure a *vlast* to which all will bow with respect. On the surface,

Katya and the Bolshevik soldiers situate themselves within the Marxist framework of class mission, and so they argue about the preconditions and the current prospects of using state power to build socialism.

Above and beyond this official and well-worn rhetoric, however, there are overtones of another way of defining the Revolution. This conversation takes place in 1920 in the Crimea. The question of the *vlast* in the Crimea was not settled by electoral procedures nor by an assessment of the proper conditions for socialism. The White Volunteer Army had held the *vlast* in this locality until recently, when it was forced out by a brutal clash between mass armies. Even Katya feels that there is something irrelevant and lifeless in her discourse as she speaks to these Bolshevik worker-soldiers who have just survived a fight to the death.

The workers are not as sophisticated as Katya and her father, but they put their finger on the nub of the matter. What is crucial for them is the existence of a *vlast* based on the popular classes – neither proper consent of the governed nor socialist transformation is of any real concern for them. After much travail, this new *vlast* has emerged victorious and is no longer contested. The soldiers feel that in some basic way, it is *their vlast*. Furthermore, they instinctively feel that to hand over the *vlast* to other social forces is simply an absurdity. What! – plunge the country into the horrors of another civil war?

A more detached perspective on the same problem comes from an earlier episode in the novel in which a peasant gives Katya a ride home and recounts a story about the lawless and brutal requisition of bread – or, rather, official looting – carried out by the White Volunteer Army. Katya remarks that the Bolsheviks are no better. The peasant answers: ‘Who knows? It’s all the same to us. Let it be the tsar, let it be Lenin – only let there be order, and peace and quiet. Just trying to live is becoming intolerable.’³ For this peasant, there is nothing worse than a war of all against all in which life is nasty, brutish and short. He therefore believes that any *vlast* will do, as long as it is uncontested and imposes order.

The Hobbesian perspective

Hobbes brings out precisely those features of the situation that are left out by Locke and Marx, but central to those caught up in the Revolution, whether workers, peasants or party leaders. Let us quickly review some familiar themes of the Hobbesian approach to politics. First, Hobbes’s theories are a reaction to extreme situations: civil war, breakdown, times when the routines of everyday life mean nothing and sheer existence is at stake. Hobbes zeroes in on precisely the situation most relevant to the people in Veresaev’s novel, one in which there is no generally accepted and uncontested *vlast*, so that the creation of such a sovereign power becomes an overwhelming imperative.

Second, Hobbes sketches out the dynamics created by the absence of a *vlast*, summed up as ‘the condition of a War of every man against every man.’ Without reliable coordinating institutions in society at large, no one can really trust anyone else. The war of all against all is in this situation an objective necessity, regardless of human psychology. Hobbes argues that this is the worst possible state of affairs. Indeed, his most celebrated flight of rhetoric sounds like a drily factual description of the Russian civil war: ‘no place for Industry ... no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation ... no Arts; no Letters, no Society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death.’⁴

Third, a functioning sovereign authority must be unequivocally supreme, a Leviathan: it cannot tolerate rivals, it must ‘overawe them all.’ Hobbes thought that a state *vlast* had to be a ‘Mortal God’ in order to carry out its proper function; he gave this Mortal God the name of Leviathan because of a verse from the Book of Job that proclaims that Leviathan ‘is made so as not to be afraid.’ What might be called the Leviathan requirement does not necessarily imply a dictatorial or authoritarian state. If the existence of the Leviathan is not threatened, it too stands to benefit if it allows a great degree of freedom, decentralisation and citizen participation in decision-making. Nevertheless, the Leviathan can only remain unthreatened if everybody realises that no one

can mess around with it.

Finally, the logic of the Hobbesian argument implies that there is a *moral* duty to support a functioning *vlast* and thus avoid the total disaster of the war of all against all. But this moral duty rests on Leviathan's ability *actually* to carry out its duty, namely, to overawe them all. When an existing *vlast* collapses or totters on the brink, when there are duelling rivals for sovereignty, individuals (we can no longer say citizens) are free, first, to look out for themselves, and second, to choose which Leviathan candidate to support – in fact, they are forced to make this choice. If 'the Commonwealth is dissolved', then 'every man is at liberty to protect himself by such courses as his own discretion shall suggest unto him.'⁵ At some point in the choosing process, hard to define but real, one and only one plausible sovereign authority is left standing, and the normal moral duty of support imposes itself once again. In the conversations from the Veresaev novel, we see these individual choices playing out in real time.

If a revolution is defined as the establishment of democracy (consent of the governed) or as 'the conquest of power' by a new social group or class (class mission), then it is clear that the term 'revolution' does not really fit the Hobbesian paradigm of breakdown and reconstitution. The Russians have a good term for this paradigm: 'time of troubles' [*smutnoe vremia*]. The term was originally applied to the decade between 1603 (the death of Boris Godunov) and 1613 (the coronation of the first Romanov), during which Russia experienced civil war, invasion, widespread brigandage and famine. Many Russians have applied the term to the period from 1914 to 1921, and latterly to the 1990s.

The Hobbesian perspective allows us to confront and begin to answer some central questions about the Revolution. Why was it the Bolsheviks who successfully took power in October and held it against all comers in the civil war that followed? This was an astonishing outcome, one that few in 1917 ever even considered. I argue that the Bolsheviks were *preadapted* by their prewar outlook to respond effectively to the central challenge facing Russia after the February Revolution and the fall of the tsar: to create a new 'tough-minded *vlast*' [*tverdaia vlast*, a ral-

lying cry across the political spectrum], to build up adequate state institutions from scratch, and to ensure that a new Leviathan 'overawed them all'.

The hegemony scenario: the Bolsheviks preadapt

In 1910, one of Lenin's top lieutenants, Lev Kamelev, asserted that the proletariat will always 'raise all issues and all struggles to the level of a struggle for the *vlast* The Russian Revolution – as opposed to liberalism – strives for its full completion: the transfer of the *vlast* into the hands of the revolutionary classes.'⁶ This focus on the *vlast* reveals that the Bolsheviks were preadapted to respond effectively to the unexpected challenges of 1917.

'Preadaptation' is a concept taken from evolutionary biology. Sometimes a characteristic that evolved to meet a challenge in one environment turns out to be unexpectedly useful in another environment with different challenges. Feathers that evolved to regulate a dinosaur's body temperature later enable a bird to fly. The concept helps explain why it was the Bolsheviks and no other who could respond to the Hobbesian challenges of 1917 – even though these challenges were as novel and unprecedented for the Bolsheviks as they were for everyone else.

The focus on the *vlast* was an integral part of Bolshevism's *hegemony scenario*, that is, their map of the dynamic forces and the ultimate prospects of the upcoming Russian Revolution. This was the basis of their political strategy after assimilating the experience of the 1905 Revolution. I have described the hegemony scenario in detail elsewhere; here we need only a review of its basic Marxist logic.⁷

According to Marxism, the fundamental world-historical mission of the proletariat was to use state power to build socialism. The paradigmatic case of a class taking state power in order to remake society in its own image was the bourgeoisie in the French Revolution of 1789 and in other 'bourgeois revolutions'. Marx and Engels always considered the destruction of absolutism and the achievement of political freedom as an essential step in the emancipation of the proletariat, and in their first writings they were



more than willing to hand over this task to the bourgeoisie. But the major development in Marxist thinking between 1848 and the early years of the twentieth century was the realisation that the bourgeoisie was growing less and less capable of carrying out proper 'bourgeois revolutions' in countries like Germany and Russia, while the proletariat was growing more and more capable. As Engels claimed in 1892: 'If the German bourgeoisie have shown themselves lamentably deficient in political capacity, discipline, energy and perseverance, the German working class have given ample proof of all these qualities.'⁸ Thus the historical mission of the bourgeoisie – replacing absolutism with democracy and full political freedom – was more and more assigned to the proletariat.

As Kamenev stated in the quotation above, the proletariat strived to 'transfer the *vlast* into the hands of the revolutionary classes.' The proletariat was to be the *hegemon* or leader in this process. The question then arises: lead whom? In Russia, the Bolshevik answer was clear: the peasants, who remained the great majority of the population. The class interest of the peasants (need for land, eco-

nomic dependence on the landowners, inferior legal status) made them a potential ally in the complete democratisation of society, even though they required a better awareness of their interests as well as political leadership during revolutionary struggles. The Bolshevik strategy appointed the Russian proletariat and its party to play the role of leader. Thus the hegemony strategy as applied to Russia can be summed up as follows: in order to carry out a full democratisation of society and to clear the path to socialism of potentially fatal obstacles, the socialist party must strive to create a worker-peasant *vlast*, even if a temporary one. In 1917, this strategy was easily translated into the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets!'⁹

The hegemony strategy was thoroughly Marxist. Its orthodoxy is attested to by the overlooked but crucial fact that Karl Kautsky, the acknowledged spokesman of 'revolutionary Social Democracy' (the left wing of the Second International), penned a classic exposition of this strategy in his seminal article of 1906, 'Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian Revolution.' Both Lenin and Trotsky enthusiastically endorsed this article as an authoritative state-

ment of their own political views.¹⁰ Yet with hindsight, we can see that this strategy could also be retrofitted to meet the Hobbesian challenge of creating a new *vlast* ex nihilo. The Bolsheviks were strongly attuned to thinking about the *vlast* and psychologically prepared to take responsibility for its actions. The wager of the 'revolutionary classes' gave them a potential social base for a new Leviathan. The programmatic goal of 'carrying the democratic revolution to the end' implied meeting the non-socialist challenges of national life, whatever they turned out to be.

The prewar Bolsheviks were focused on 'conquering the *vlast*,' but they certainly never contemplated a situation where there was no *vlast* to conquer. They did not foresee that building state institutions from scratch would become their primary programme. They would have been shocked to learn that their greatest achievement after the Revolution was the creation of the Red Army. They were indeed preadapted to meet these challenges – but there was no guarantee they would be able to turn preadaptation to effective adaptation in an unprecedented and merciless political environment.

1917: The 'historic *vlast*' disappears

In February 1917, a dynasty that had recently celebrated its three-hundredth anniversary disappeared. Along with it disappeared any generally accepted principle of legitimacy. Hobbes seems to be talking about the February Revolution when he observes 'if a Monarch shall relinquish the Sovereignty, both for himself and his heirs; His Subjects return to the absolute Liberty of Nature.' In an instant, a whole new set of challenges arose, but the full scope of these challenges took some time to make itself manifest.

As Minister of Food Supply in the Provisional Government, Alexei Peshekhonov was in a good position to observe and reflect on these challenges. Food supply became a focal point for the tensions that more and more rapidly tore apart the economic, administrative and social fabric. A few years later he recalled 'how things were' in 1917, and we can hardly do better than quote his description extensively.

'On 27 February 1917', Peshekhonov re-

membered, 'the old state *vlast* was overthrown. The Provisional Government that replaced it was not a state *vlast* in the genuine sense of the word: it was only the symbol of *vlast*, the carrier of the idea of *vlast*, or at best its embryo.' The mechanism that supported the tsarist government also began to crumble. 'The machinery of state administration was thrown immediately out of kilter; those parts which were most vital from the point of view of the existence of a state *vlast* were completely destroyed. Courts, police, and other organs of state coercion were swept away without trace This process of destruction quickly spread to all local organs, down to the lowest, and to the army, in the rear and in the front.' New organs of local administration were tardy and ineffective. 'If any state order at all continued to maintain itself, this was for the most part by inertia. The forces needed to support it with compulsion were simply not there.'¹¹

The full awareness of the absence of any effective *vlast* took a while to percolate to the population as a whole. According to Peshekhonov, the peasant population only grasped the new situation in May, while the ill-starred June offensive soon laid bare the ineffective combination of newly-elected soldier committees and an officer corps inherited from the past. Vladimir Stankevich, an assistant to Kerensky who was close to the Social Revolutionaries [SRs], reported from first-hand experience that military units pillaged the population, while the command staff felt unable to stop it because the military police were just as unreliable and often joined in.¹² In a recently published book, Tsuyoshi Hasegawa details how the dissolution of the much-hated yet efficient civilian police force and its replacement with a new municipal police led rapidly to the breakdown of order and an explosion of violent crime. The pushback came first from mob justice and then from the highly repressive and extra-legal actions of the Cheka.¹³

By Peshekhonov's reckoning, the culmination or rather nadir of the collapse of the *vlast* came in the months following the October Revolution. 'With their takeover, the Bolsheviks so to speak finished off any effective Russian state *vlast*: they decisively destroyed the army and swept off the face of the earth even those rudiments of a new state apparatus that

the Provisional Government had tried to create. The country was thrown literally into anarchy.' During these months, very few people were afraid of ruthless Bolshevik tyranny – rather, they were afraid of a quick collapse into the sort of chaos that might lead directly to the triumph of counterrevolution. Peshekhonov recounts an anecdote that sums up the situation in the early months of the new revolutionary regime.

In March or April 1918, that is, something like six months after the Bolshevik takeover, I happened to meet in Moscow the chauffeur who had driven me when I was a member of the Provisional Government. We greeted each other like old friends.

'Well,' I asked, 'how are you getting along? Once you drove the Tsar around, and now who?'

'There's no way around it,' he said, 'I have to work for the Bolsheviks ... But you know I don't submit to them all that much. Yesterday Comrade (and he named one of the People's Commissars) sent for an automobile, and I, as the secretary of our organisation, answered him in writing: there's a *vlast* up there, but there's also a *vlast* down here – we won't give you an automobile!'

When the *vlast* at the bottom is no less strong than the *vlast* at the top, then one can say that there is no *vlast* at all.¹⁴

In Russia the state did not have to be smashed – it simply collapsed. Let us now look at the situation from another angle and ask: what forces in Russian society were ready, able and willing to take on the Hobbesian challenge of creating a new *vlast*? Among the forces that had the minimum qualification of a coherent national structure, we may list the state bureaucracy, the gentry (*dvorianstvo*), the Church, the 'voluntary organisations' recently created to aid in the war effort, the Army and the political parties.

We can quickly eliminate the first four. The state bureaucracy needed an external source of authority to set it running and to coordinate disputes. Without such an outside authority, it was capable only of negative and passive actions such as the widespread refusal to work that greeted the Bolshevik takeover. The gentry had long passed its expiry date as an effective source of either political leadership or even effective support for a national *vlast*. For a variety of

reasons, the Orthodox Church was unable to launch a strong political intervention; in any event, it did not try. The wartime voluntary organisations managed to transfer some early prestige and legitimacy to the Provisional Government, but their lack of roots in the population soon became apparent.

The high command of the Army, with its control over unequalled means of coercion, seemed like a natural source of a new if counterrevolutionary *vlast*. What is striking in 1917 is the Russian Army's inability to play this role, either in February, in August during the Kornilov affair, or even in October. Ultimately the high command had less control over the loyalty of the troops than the soviets did – a striking fact that had its roots in the unpopularity of a war that the soldiers had long equated with meaningless butchery.

We are left, then, with the political parties. Three camps can be discerned: the liberal Kadets (short for Constitutional Democrats), with associated right-wing allies; the 'moderate socialists', that is, the majority factions of the Socialist Revolutionaries (SRs) and the Mensheviks; and the 'internationalists' opposed to any coalition or 'agreementism' with elite politicians. The latter were mainly Bolsheviks, but also including assorted small groups; some of these groups were independent, some were factions within the moderate socialist parties, and some directly joined the Bolsheviks.

We may quickly eliminate the liberal Kadets, who never had much in the way of mass social support. The legitimacy of the Provisional Government in its early days with a majority Kadet cabinet came more from the national and international prestige of the anti-tsarist reformers than from their ability to garner popular loyalty. The Kadets could only hope for power if allied either with the revolution (the moderate socialists) or, preferably, with the counter-revolution (the military). Both alternatives proved to be non-starters.

We can turn to Sergei Lukianov for a hostile but keen-eyed analysis of why neither of the two main rivals of the Bolsheviks were able to construct a new and effective *vlast*. Lukianov was a Russian nationalist who came from the right end of the political spectrum that was bitterly angry at the 'men

of 1917', although very few of his erstwhile comrades went on to praise the Bolsheviks as he did. He summed up the reasoning of the moderate socialists as follows: 'Reforms are indispensable, but they mustn't weaken the economic, financial and military strength of the country, nor destroy cultural and legal values, even if these values are alien to the majority of the *narod* [the people, comprising peasants, workers, and urban "petty bourgeois"].' This reasoning reflected the inescapable double bind gripping the moderate socialists:

This prudence [*ostorozhnost'*] of the political leaders of the first half of 1917 was their principal and unpardonable failure – their crime against the Revolution and, as a consequence, against Russia. [Yet] we cannot demand a prophetic clairvoyance from people, and none of the members of the Provisional Government could have committed themselves in an organic manner on the remaining alternative path: the belief that a worker-peasant *vlast* could be established immediately. More: to install such a *vlast* inevitably implied that one had to plunge for a time into the murkiness of the arbitrary of bloodshed and the destruction of material and cultural values.¹⁵

At this point, we seem to have eliminated all alternatives but one: the Bolsheviks.

All power to the Soviets! The path to a new *vlast*

In her book *Inside the Russian Revolution*, the American socialist, pioneering woman correspondent and fighter for women's rights, Rheta Childe Dorr, described her first impression in Russia:

About the first thing I saw on the morning of my arrival in Petrograd ... was a group of young men, about twenty in number, I should think, marching through the street in front of my hotel, carrying a scarlet banner with an inscription in large white letters.

'What does that banner say?' I asked the hotel commissionaire who stood beside me.

'It says "All the Power to the Soviet",' was the answer.

'What is the soviet?' I asked, and he replied briefly:

'It is the only government we have in Russia now.'¹⁶

Judging from this passage, when did Dorr arrive in Russia? Most of us might naturally assume she arrived after the Bolshevik Revolution in October, since

only then did the soviets overthrow the Provisional Government. But in actuality, Dorr came to Russia in late May 1917 and stayed in Russia only until the end of August. Her book was sent to press *before* the October Revolution and thus gives us an invaluable look at what was happening in 1917, free of hindsight.

Dorr's account brings home an essential fact: 'The soviets, or councils of soldiers' and workmen's delegates, which have spread like wildfire throughout the country, are the nearest thing to a government that Russia has known since the very early days of the revolution Petrograd is not the only city where the Council of Workmen's and Soldiers' Delegates has assumed control of the destinies of the Russian people. Every town has its council, and there is no question, civil or military, which they do not feel capable of settling.'¹⁷ The soviets provided a framework for a viable *vlast*, but this framework could survive only if provided with effective political leadership.

The Bolshevik party attained the *vlast* after it won political leadership of the soviet system, an embryo *vlast* that arose in the course of the February Revolution. The soviet mass constituency – workers and soldiers – accepted Bolshevik leadership when it finally decided that the soviets must have *all* power – or, in Hobbesian terms, when it fully realised that there can exist only *one* *vlast*. The soviet constituency slowly came to believe that the soviets must overawe them all or else retire from the scene – and in the end only the Bolsheviks were prepared, at any cost, to defend the continued existence of the soviets.

From the beginning, there were Hobbesian overtones in the Bolshevik message to the soviet constituency. The heart of this message was precisely 'All power to the soviets!' I emphasise 'all' because here the Bolsheviks were making a quasi-Hobbesian point – or rather, they were responding to a point first made by their opponents. The liberal Kadets complained that there could only be *one* *vlast*, so that 'dual power' [*dvoevlastie*] was equivalent to 'no power' [*bezvlastie*], that is to say, anarchy.¹⁸ They therefore not so politely asked the soviets (at this point still led by the moderate socialists) to butt out. The Bolsheviks enthusiastically agreed with this ba-

sic logic, but inverted the conclusion: there indeed should be, there could be, only one *vlast* – and that *vlast* should be the soviets!

The Bolshevik case for soviet power in 1917 was powered much less by the praise of its democratism familiar to us from Lenin's *State and Revolution* (a book first published in 1918) than by a *negative* critique of 'agreementism' [*soglashatelstvo*], that is, of the insistence on some sort of compromise, deal or coalition with elite parties or politicians. The Bolsheviks presented themselves to the soviet constituency as the party that had the political will to *actually carry out* the programmatic promises of the other parties, without obfuscation, qualification or delay. The elite parties had no intention of carrying out these promises, and the moderate socialists were too afraid of breaking with the elites to push them through. More and more, the Bolsheviks argued, agreementism stood in the way even of accomplishing basic state functions such as national defence. A governmental coalition based on parties with totally different goals and class interests could only get lapse into flailing incoherence.

Agreementism, then, prevented the achievement of the goals of the Revolution. But what *were* these goals? Here we can discern a shift in the Bolshevik message over the course of the year – or rather, various layers were gradually added on to earlier goals. In the beginning, the main revolutionary goals were the traditional 'three whales' inscribed on the pre-war Bolshevik banner: democratic republic, land to the peasants, and the eight-hour day (synecdoche for worker protection legislation) – plus, of course, an end to the imperialist war. As the year proceeded, the current economic crisis came to the fore. Everyone agreed on the need for extensive state regulation of the economy, but a coherent and vigorous programme was made impossible by the conflicting interests that rendered any soviet/elite coalition impotent.

Gradually, a deeper and more urgently existential goal asserted itself: the creation of *any* sort of functional *vlast*. We may illustrate this final layer with comments made by Kamenev in September:

If you want a coalition with the bourgeoisie, then conclude an 'honest coalition' with the Kadets but,

if the Kornilov mutiny taught you what the party of the proletariat has been saying from the very beginning of the revolution, then you will say the following: the only salvation for revolutionary Russia, the only way to restore confidence [*doverie*] between soldiers and officers within the army, the only way to establish confidence on the part of the peasants that they will receive the land, the only way to give the workers the feeling that they live in a republic – the only method to do all this is to take the *vlast* into the hand of the worker, peasant, and soldier organisations themselves.¹⁹

This shift in the Bolshevik message brings us directly to the problem of the Constituent Assembly, an institution that was supposed to solve the problem of the *vlast* once and for all.

The Constituent Assembly: A case in point

The idea of a Constituent Assembly that would crown the Revolution and create a new political system had deep prewar roots in Russian politics. From the February Revolution on, all points on the political spectrum, Bolsheviks included, assumed that a Constituent Assembly should be elected as soon as possible under a system of universal suffrage. Theoretically, all crucial decisions would be made by the Assembly, and indeed the Provisional Government often evaded difficult choices by referring them forward to the coming Assembly. If it seemed necessary, however, Kerensky's government was prepared to anticipate the Assembly, for example, by officially declaring Russia a republic, in the autumn.

Elections to the long-awaited Assembly finally took place over the course of November. In early January 1918, however, the Bolsheviks and the Left SRs abruptly closed down the newly elected Constituent Assembly after a single one-day session. From that day to this, this action has been viewed as the moment when the Revolution lost genuine legitimacy, made civil war inevitable, and revealed the essentially tyrannical nature of the Bolsheviks. As such, it provides an excellent focal point for exploring our broader relationship between Locke, Marx and Hobbes.

The standard evocation of the Constituent Assembly rests precisely on a 'Locke meets Hobbes' approach. The Constituent Assembly was elected in November 1917 on the basis of universal adult suffrage (including women) and as such represented the consent of the governed. This consent gave the Assembly democratic legitimacy, and this legitimacy in turn was the only possible foundation for a stable *vlast* accepted by all (as affirmed by the spokesman for the intelligentsia in the Veresaev novel quoted above). By closing down the Assembly, the Bolsheviks and Lefts SRs thus made civil war inevitable, for everyone now realised that the Bolshevik government could not be removed peaceably.

The only well-known rationale for the Bolshevik action is the one proffered by Lenin at the time, and then given support by the widely-read *State and Revolution*, which appeared soon afterwards. Lenin argued that the soviets represented a *higher form of democracy*, as compared with 'bourgeois parliamentarianism'. This democratism made the soviets an ideal vehicle for 'the dictatorship of the proletariat', that is, the fulfilment of the class mission assigned by history to the proletariat. In the long run, however, the inadequacies of Lenin's argument have merely strengthened the standard anti-Bolshevik account.

The record of the Russian soviets as vehicles either for democratic consent of the governed or for genuine rule by the proletariat as a whole was hardly such as to convince anyone that they were preferable to parliamentary democracy. Furthermore, this argument immediately opened up the Bolsheviks to the charge of blatant hypocrisy. Throughout the year, the Bolsheviks – including Lenin – had vehemently rejected the charge that they were opposed to the Constituent Assembly. On the contrary: they insisted very loudly that only soviet power could guarantee that the Constituent Assembly would indeed be summoned and allowed to hold session.

In fact, Lenin's rationale did not reflect wider views among the Bolsheviks or the Left SRs (coalition partners with the Bolsheviks in the first months of the regime), or their constituency, but rather reflected his own personal theories about soviet democracy. In what follows, I will sketch out another rationale found in writings of prominent Bolsheviks at

the time, such as Stalin, Zinoviev and Trotsky. Articles by these leaders contain no hint of the soviets as a higher form of democracy, but rather base their arguments on a more Hobbesian reasoning. Paying attention to this Hobbesian perspective allows us to uncover political arguments that have been hitherto overlooked. Conversely, these on-the-ground arguments allows us to see how the Hobbesian theoretical perspective might work out in practice. As a bonus, we will observe an issue in which Stalin, Zinoviev and Trotsky – usually seen as inveterate foes – are all pretty much on the same page.

No one in Russia had really thought through the coming unprecedented situation in which the Constituent Assembly might somehow coexist with the soviets. Some members of the elite certainly hoped that the soviets would just fold their tents and silently steal away. But even these people didn't think through the ways and means of removing 'the committees' now firmly established in army, factory and city, if by chance they refused to go gently into that good night. And who would fill the gap left by the soviets? The Provisional Government had not succeeded in setting up a structure for local administration to enforce the behests of the central *vlast*. The soviets, on the other hand, were already present everywhere except the villages, which had their own elected committees.

The resulting situation was apparent even before the formal assumption of the *vlast* by the national soviet structure. In articles written for *Pravda* in September 1917, Stalin argued that Russia was witnessing a struggle between the 'official' *vlast* and an 'unacknowledged' *vlast* that was based in 'the revolutionary committees and soviets in the rear and at the front.' This unacknowledged *vlast* was now moving from defence to offense; the task now was to turn the unofficial *vlast* into the official one [*oformlenie*]. If they wanted to avoid political bankruptcy, the agreementists had to choose sides in this life-and-death struggle between the two candidates for the *vlast*.²⁰

The coming clash between the soviets and their possible replacement by the Constituent Assembly was already making itself felt in October, just prior to the Second Congress of Soviets, and surfaced in two popular arguments. First, why bother to even hold

a Second Congress of Soviets, since the Constituent Assembly was almost upon us? Let's just muddle along with an admittedly unsatisfactory Provisional Government until then. Further, on a local level, were not democratically elected city councils now in place, ready to take over from local soviets? Zinoviev addressed these arguments in *Pravda* in early October.²¹

Zinoviev wrote at a time when the Bolsheviks still thought of themselves as the champions rather than the foes of the Constituent Assembly. He therefore insisted that the immediate declaration of soviet power was the only guarantee that the Constituent Assembly would even be summoned. In light of later events, these kinds of arguments sound highly ironic, not to say openly hypocritical. Nevertheless, there is no reason to suspect that Zinoviev was not speaking in good faith when he argued that the success of the Revolution would be manifested by a government that would be a 'combined type of Soviet and Constituent Assembly'. Looking back after the dispersal of the Constituent Assembly, this argument sounds moderate. But the real gravamen of Zinoviev's argument is that *soviets would continue to exist* – and this insistence provides continuity with later Bolshevik actions.

Zinoviev pointed to the wave of revolutionary action sweeping the country: the peasants taking land by their own means, the elemental [*stikhiinoe*] peasant movement, disorders in the cities caused by food shortages, and the lurking counterrevolutionaries left at liberty. Only soviet power could prevent this protest from degenerating into anarchy. The bourgeoisie would no doubt like nothing better than for the workers and peasants to let their strength dribble away in such elemental outbursts, rather than seeing their protests 'receive an organised political expression ... leading the revolutionary classes to the *vlast*' (note the direct echo of Kamenev's words in 1910).

Zinoviev observed that the widespread assertion that the Second Congress of the Soviets was not needed cut both ways. If the voice of the national soviet constituency was unneeded *before* the Constituent Assembly, then presumably it was even more superfluous *after* the Constituent Assembly

was summoned. But was it remotely possible to imagine a successful *vlast* without the soviets? First of all, who would defend a government that was really determined to confiscate gentry land, thus liquidating the existing elite?

Only a 'mystical view' of the Constituent Assembly would credit the mere prestige of electoral legitimacy with the actual ability to overcome determined opposition by an entrenched elite. (This is Zinoviev's answer in advance to Ivan Ilych Sartanov, the fictional representative of the intelligentsia in Veresaev's *V tupike*, who argued that 'all would bow with respect' to an Assembly elected with universal suffrage.) Since when did right-wing or even liberal politicians and generals show such reverence for the will of the *narod* [*narodnaia volia*]? Any new government must have its own apparatus of power to carry out decisions nationally and locally:

The Constituent Assembly will be strong only insofar as the *real correlation of forces* speaks for it. If it does not have an apparatus in the localities, among the workers, among the peasants, you can be sure that the gentry landlords and the capitalists will not only laugh at it, but will openly disband it, as the tsar openly disbanded the first two dumas. And what other apparatus is available to the Constituent Assembly in the localities but the Soviets? The Soviets in the localities must remain the fundamental basis, the revolutionary cells of the *vlast*.

Unlike the existing soviets, newly-elected city councils 'are unable in the near future to carry out this assignment of providing local cells for a national *vlast* ... Compare the significance, for example, of the Moscow City Duma to the Moscow Soviet of Worker and Soldier Deputies as militant revolutionary units, and it will become clearer to you why this is the case.'

Zinoviev's call for a 'combined type' of government envisioned a central authority that decreed the revolutionary programme of the soviets and then relied on the existing soviets to carry it out energetically. There can be little doubt how the person who made these arguments in early October would react if forced later on to make a choice between Constituent Assembly and the soviets.

We can now turn to Trotsky to hear why the Bolsheviks thought that making this choice did in-

deed become inevitable. Trotsky's discussion of the Constituent Assembly is found in one of the first narrative accounts of the Revolution written by a Bolshevik leader, or for that matter by anyone.²² Trotsky's history was written in early 1918, hard on the heels of the Assembly's dispersal in early January. Trotsky reaffirmed that 'when we argued [in October] that the road to the Constituent Assembly lay ... through the seizure of power by the Soviets, we were absolutely sincere.' He is still willing to argue that, in fact, only the declaration of soviet power guaranteed the summoning of the Constituent Assembly.

Why, then, did soviet power also become the Assembly's executioner?

Trotsky does not deny that the Constituent Assembly had real democratic legitimacy and that, all things being equal, this legitimacy should have been respected. (Later on, he and other Bolsheviks would have been much more contemptuous of electoral democracy as such.) Certainly, there is no hint in his account of Lenin's argument that the soviets had intrinsically higher democratic legitimacy. Rather the problem was a straightforwardly political one. The Right SRs (the SR party after the schism with the Left SRs) held the majority in the Assembly and so it was the only candidate for forming a non-Bolshevik government – but it was also inherently barred from relying on the existing local and national soviet apparatus that was crucial for a truly effective *vlast*.

Trotsky makes the point that the votes received by the SR party are extremely hard to read, given that the Left SRs were in the process of splitting from the parent party, a fact not reflected in the party lists. Often the peasants voted for leaders who were openly opposed to policies supported by the peasants. 'The result of it all', Trotsky notes, 'was a most incredible political paradox: one of the two parties which were to dissolve the Constituent Assembly, viz. the Left Socialist Revolutionaries, was actually elected on the same lists as the party which had obtained the majority in the Constituent Assembly.'

The bigger problem remained the disconnect between any Right SR government and the only material apparatus available for an effective *vlast*, namely, the soviets – who, as Trotsky remarked in an

earlier article, represented the majority of the 'population capable of political life.'²³ Thus Trotsky links up with Zinoviev's argument in October about the indispensability of the local soviets.



The Right SRs could have formed a government anytime during 1917 – in fact, up to September, the slogan 'All Power to the Soviets!' implied just such a government. But (Trotsky continued) they were unwilling to do so and instead happily remained a junior member in a hapless coalition with the elites. Whatever the reasons, they were profoundly unwilling to break with elite, educated society and the Allies. This circumstance cast doubt on their willingness or ability to form a non-coalition government now. More importantly, this earlier failure had thoroughly alienated the people who ran the essential soviet apparatus.

The working class, together with the Red Guard, were deeply hostile to the Right Socialist Revolutionaries. The overwhelming majority of the army supported the Bolsheviks. The revolutionary elements in the villages divided their sympathies between the Left Socialist Revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks ... [Thus any government set up by the Constituent Assembly] would have been completely deprived of the material apparatus of power. In the centres of political life, such as Petrograd, such a government would have met at once with an uncompromising resistance.

If not the soviets, on whom could the new government rely? 'It would have had behind it the rich of the villages, the intelligentsia, and the old officialdom, and, from the right, it perhaps would have found support, for the time being, among the bourgeoisie.' (The mists of time have obscured the fact

that industrial elites were on the whole hostile – and with good reason! – to the idea of an assembly elected during severe external and internal crises and then given the task of deciding all the crucial questions of national life, all while a war was raging.) None of these social elements were prepared, for reasons addressed earlier, to become an effective support for a new *vlast*.

Putting all these considerations together, Trotsky made his final plea for historical justification:

If the Soviets had, in accordance with the formal logic of democratic institutions, handed over their power to the party of Kerensky and Chernov, the new government, discredited and impotent, would have only succeeded in temporarily confusing the political life of the country, and would have been overthrown by a new rising within a few weeks. The Soviets decided to reduce this belated historical experiment to a minimum, and dissolved the Constituent Assembly on the very day when it assembled

The material class-contents of the Revolution came into an irreconcilable conflict with its democratic forms. Thereby the fate of the Constituent Assembly was decided in advance. Its dissolution appeared as the only conceivable surgical way out of the contradictory situation which was not of our making, but had been brought about by the preceding course of events.²⁴

It has been asked, by Rosa Luxemburg among others: why didn't the Bolsheviks just hold another election? But they did – within the soviet system itself, whose Third Congress met just a few days after the Constituent Assembly, from 23–31 January 1918 (and whose contested Fourth and Fifth Congresses convened later in the year). The Bolshevik-Left SR government set up in October and based on the Second Congress of Soviets already had more electoral legitimacy than any other government of 1917. The electoral machinery of the soviet system only gradually lost effectiveness; for example, the Fifth Congress of Soviets in May 1918 remained the scene of genuinely fierce debates between socialist parties. Although elections still took place, they lost meaning amid the civil war repression of political life, and the Sixth Congress of Soviets at the end of 1918 contained no real opposition elements. The asphyxiation of political life in Soviet Russia was cer-

tainly a very real process, but very little explanatory power is gained by turning the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly into the fatal crossing of the historical Rubicon.

Conclusions

Hobbes's reasoning receives a strong confirmation by the experience of the Russian Revolution. He accurately outlined the dynamics of a situation in which a previously uncontested *vlast* disappears – uncontested, not in the sense that nobody was violently hostile to it, but in the sense that no one doubted that it *was* indeed the *vlast* and had the ability to see its decrees enforced. After the February Revolution, people immediately put 'the crisis of the *vlast*' at the centre of attention, and there arose what Plekhanov somewhere calls 'a fierce longing [*toska*] for a tough-minded *vlast*.' The Bolsheviks proved unexpectedly, even paradoxically, able to respond to that fierce longing.

Conversely, the Russian Revolution reveals a hidden limitation of the Locke and Marx traditions: although revolution is a central concern for both of them, they unconsciously assume the continued existence of a *vlast* recognised as such by the population (Marxist slogans about smashing the state notwithstanding). Historical class missions and struggles over consent of the governed explain much in non-extreme situations, but in the context of full-blown civil war, these theories begin to seem lifeless and abstract, as the liberal Ivan Ilych and his socialist daughter Katya discovered in the Veresaev novel.

Nevertheless, when we look at the way that the hegemony strategy preadapted the Bolsheviks to respond to a Hobbesian challenge, we recognise that the Marxist tradition does help answer a concrete question that Hobbes's theory leaves open: just *how* does a new Leviathan come to be a Mortal God? The Marxist tradition spoke of large-scale historical missions involving the use of state power in the name of the interests of large sections of the populace. The Bolsheviks – the self-described Russian branch of international 'revolutionary Social Democracy' – came out of this tradition with a confident sense that they *deserved* the *vlast* and also with a sharp idea of where

to find mass support. Once in power they found themselves doing a lot of very unexpected things, but these features of their Marxist upbringing served as a rock-strong base.

Looking ahead, we note that twentieth-century Communist regimes, when not imposed from abroad, usually took shape as an authoritarian response to a breakdown of state authority and resulting civil war. This prompts a hard question: does the Hobbesian perspective predict or justify the subsequent excesses of the Stalin era? I think not. Hobbes is relevant for the extreme situation of breakdown and reconstitution of a functioning *vlast*. Outside the dynamics of that situation, he has much less to say about the probable actions of the ruler. Or rather, he would hope and assume that the Leviathan would act rationally, and not endanger its own rule and alienate the population by adventurist, reckless and brutal policies.

Still, the experience of the Russian time of troubles helps explain some of the support or at least tolerance shown to Stalin by both the party and the population at large. The horror of civil war meant that unity of the party and the country was a top priority – an obsession – for almost everybody, coupled with a sense of the fragility of the new Leviathan, no matter how fierce its public face. We may leave the last word to Hobbes, so long as we try to remember that for Russians of the civil war generation (and we should recall that the civil war is not the only time of troubles in Russian history), these would not be mere words on a page but an assertion with deep and existential resonance. ‘The estate of Man can never be without some incommodity or other; the greatest, that in any form of Government can possibly happen to the people in general, is scarce sensible, in respect to the miseries, and horrible calamities, that accompany a Civil War.’²⁵

Lars T. Lih is author of *Bread and Authority in Russia, 1914-1921 (1990) and Lenin Rediscovered (2006)*.

Notes

1. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668), ed. Edwin Curley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), ch. 13, §5.

2. Vikenty V. Veresaev, *V tupike; Sestry* (Moscow: Knizhnaia palata, 1990), my translation. An English edition was published in 1928 under the title *The Deadlock* (New York: Century Co.), trans. Nina Wissotzky and Camilla Coventry, and the passage cited here corresponds to pages 119–120. Although published officially in the Soviet Union, Veresaev’s novel gives an unflinching firsthand look at the abuse of power by all contenders for power during the civil war.

3. Veresaev, *V tupike; Sestry*, 47

4. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 13, §9.

5. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 29, §23.

6. As cited in Lih, ‘The Ironic Triumph of Old Bolshevism: The Debates of April 1917 in Context,’ *Russian History* 38 (2011), 199–242.

7. Lih, ‘The Proletariat and its Ally: The Logic of Bolshevik “Hegemony”’, in John Riddell, *Marxist Essays and Commentary* [blog], 26 April 2017, <https://johnriddell.wordpress.com/2017/04/26/the-proletariat-and-its-ally-the-logic-of-bolshevik-hegemony/>

8. Engels, Introduction to the English edition of *Socialism Utopian and Scientific* (1892), at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/int-hist.htm>.

9. For more on the relation between the hegemony scenario and ‘All Power to the Soviets!’, see my ongoing series posted on John Riddell’s blog, starting with <https://johnriddell.wordpress.com/2017/03/23/all-power-to-the-soviets-part-1-biography-of-a-slogan/> (23 March 2017).

10. Kautsky’s article and the endorsements by Lenin and Trotsky can be found in Richard Day and Daniel Gaido, eds., *Witnesses to Permanent Revolution: The Documentary Record* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

11. Alexei Peshekhonov, ‘The Bolsheviks and Effective State Authority’ [*gosudarstvennost’*], in his *Pochemu ia ne emigriroval [Why I Did Not Emigrate]* (Berlin: Obelisk, 1923), 50–60. For a fuller translation of this chapter of Peshekhonov’s pamphlet, see Lih, ‘Bolshevism’s “Services to the State”: Three Russian Observers,’ *Revolutionary Russia* 28:2 (2015), 120–125.

12. Vladimir B. Stankevich, ‘Oktiabr’skoe vosstanie’ in *Oktiabr’skaia revoliutsiia: memuary [October Revolution: Memoirs]* (Moscow: 1991), 207.

13. Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Crime and Punishment in the Russian Revolution: Mob Justice and Police in Petrograd* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

14. Peshekhonov, *Pochemu*, as cited in Lih, ‘Bolshevism’s “Services to the State”’, 122.

15. Sergei Lukianov, ‘Revoliutsiia i vlast’, in Kliuchnikov, *Smena Vekh [Change of Signposts]* (Prague: Politika, 1921), as cited in Lih, ‘Bolshevism’s “Services to the State”’, 128.

16. Rheta Childe Dorr, *Inside the Russian Revolution* (New York: Macmillan, 1918), 10.

17. Dorr, *Inside the Russian Revolution*, 10, 19.

18. The early period of the Revolution is often labelled the era of ‘dual power’ between Petrograd Soviet and the Provisional Government. In actuality, no one defended the concept of ‘dual power’: the Kadets claimed that ‘dual

power' existed while the moderate socialists claimed that it did not (except perhaps for a few moments of emergency), but both sides agreed that 'dual power' as such was harmful and incoherent. For further discussion, see Lih, 'From February to October,' *Jacobin Magazine* 25 (Spring 2017), <https://jacobinmag.com/2017/05/russian-revolution-power-soviets-bolsheviks-lenin-provisional-government>.

19. G. I. Zlokazov and G. Z. Ioffe, eds. *Iz istorii bor'by za vlast' v 1917 godu* [From the History of the Struggle for the Vlast in 1917] (Moscow: Institut rossisko istorii RAN, 2002), 155.

20. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, 3: 279–85, 289–95; one article is signed (9 September 1917) and the other unsigned (14 September).

21. Unsigned lead articles by Zinoviev on 3 and 4 October 1917 in *Rabochii put'* [Worker's Path] (*Pravda's* temporary title for censorship reasons).

22. Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution to Brest-Litovsk* can be found at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1918/hrr/index.htm>; Nikolai Bukharin also published a narrative account of the Revolution in this same period.

23. A new translation of Trotsky's August 1917 article 'The Character of the Russian Revolution' will be published in a forthcoming entry in my ongoing series 'All Power to the Soviets!' (2017–18).

24. Trotsky's argument is of course self-serving, but so are most arguments about the Constituent Assembly. For an informed argument by a staunchly anti-Bolshevik historian that the Constituent Assembly was inherently unviable, see Oliver Radkey, *The Sickle under the Hammer: The Russian Socialist Revolutionaries in the Early Months of Soviet Rule* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).

25. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ch. 18, §20.



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