

Jaede, Maximilian: *Thomas Hobbes's Conception of Peace. Civil Society and International Order*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2018. ISBN: 978-3-319-76065-0; X, 105 S.

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In 1977, Hedley Bull published *The Anarchical Society* in which he pictures Thomas Hobbes as an early proponent of the realist school in International Relations.¹ In this book, which came to define the direction that subsequent readings of Hobbes's international political thought would take, Bull (mis)uses the English philosopher to demarcate his concept of an anarchical society of states from Hobbes's international state of nature.

In the book at hand, Maximilian Jaede comes to question the common perception of Hobbes as a predecessor of realism. While he is certainly not the first one to do so, his take is an original one. Against the realist notion of a negative Hobbesian peace, Jaede argues compellingly that peace, for Hobbes, entails more than the mere suppression of private violence by a coercive power. In order to prevent its subjects from revolting and civil society from falling back into a state of war, the sovereign must ensure justice in society. Accordingly, the survival of the sovereign and, as such, the endurance of peace, is not only contingent on the absence of a wrong (war), but also on the presence of a good (justice). It is this very distinction between being and well-being, between merely being alive and living, that distinguishes negative from positive peace and that allows Jaede to portray Hobbes as a visionary of the latter.

If there is anything that Jaede can be accused of, than it is not that he is going too far, but that he is not going far enough. He repeatedly claims that Hobbes „envision[s] peace in civil society to be maintained in accordance with procedural justice“, even though the English philosopher „does not argue for more expansive social justice“ (p. 58, 97). While it is true that Hobbes's third and fourth law of nature specify principles of procedural or, in his terminology, commutative justice, he also

lays out principles of social or, in his terminology, distributive justice that not even hard-nosed Marxists could possibly hope for: The eleventh and twelfth laws of nature – the latter of which Jaede only mentions in a footnote (p. 66) – call for an equal distribution and collective usage of goods. Only those goods that can neither be divided nor enjoyed in common, the thirteenth and fourteenth laws of nature dictate, should be adjudged to the first possessor or first born. This shows that Hobbes deemed both procedural and social justice to be conducive to peace. Not without reason did he call his laws of nature „convenient articles of peace“. ² Similar to Immanuel Kant, who believed that perpetual peace requires the implementation of his three definitive articles³, Hobbes thought that a lasting peace can only be guaranteed if individual men transfer their right of nature to a common power (second law of nature) that acts in accordance with procedural (third and fourth law of nature) and social justice (eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth law of nature).

Given that the law of nature and the law of nations are „identical“ (p. 74), we must assume that sovereign states are also bound to submit to a common power. For some not further specified reason, however, Jaede holds that „[u]nlike individuals in a state of nature, sovereigns do not have a duty to make a (second-order) social contract to establish permanent peace“ (p. 75; see also p. 99). While it is true that in the absence of an assurance that others will perform their covenant, men retain their right of nature, that is, the liberty to do whatever they want at any given moment, this holds for individuals in the state of nature and sovereigns in international relations alike. Unless Jaede provides an argument for why the international state of nature is fundamentally different from the domestic one (which, in contrast to some other interpreters

¹ Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 4th edition, Basingstoke 2012 (1st edition 1977).

² Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Edited with an Introduction and Notes by J. C. A. Gaskin, Oxford 1998, p. 86.

³ Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, in: Chris Brown / Terry Nardin / Nicholas Rengger (eds.), *International Relations in Political Thought*, Cambridge 2002, p. 442.

of Hobbes, he does not), we have reason to believe that sovereigns will make a (second-order) social contract, just as Hobbes imagines individuals to make a (first-order) social contract. But then Hobbes would neither be a realist, as Bull has it, nor a rationalist, as Jaede has it (but does not spell out), but a revolutionist, as Kant was it.⁴ Be that as it may, what it clearly demonstrates is that 440 years after his death, Hobbes has not found a resting place in International Relations yet, which is why it needs more thought-provoking books like this.

A general problem with contributions towards International Political Theory, though, is that they are either strong on Political Theory or on International Relations, but rarely on both. This book is no exception. Jaede knows his Hobbes well. He not only engages meticulously with Hobbes's standard work *Leviathan*, but cites frequently from *The Elements of Law* and *De cive*. However, when it comes to International Relations, the book has some blind spots. Hobbes's purported view that „[o]ther states' coercive power does not pose an immediate security threat for as long as other states do not show signs of aggressive intent“ is contrasted to realism (p. 88; see also pp. 101–102), where in fact Stephen Walt's neorealist concept of a balance of threat, according to which states do not balance against power as such but against perceived threat, can account for this.⁵

But Jaede not only neglects the nuances within realist theory; he also fails to go beyond the realist (and liberal) canon of international relations theory. On the last page, he concludes that Hobbes's „views contrast sharply with theories . . . of international relations“ (p. 102), where in fact he has only considered realism and liberal internationalism. A theory that is not mentioned, but that comes conspicuously close to Hobbes's international political thought, is the rationalism of the English School. This brings us back to Bull, the primary representative of this school, who identified five institutions that provide order in an anarchical world, namely, the balance of power, international law, diplomacy, war and great powers. As Jaede argues, Hobbes also put his trust in (internal) balancing (pp. 77–78, 86–88, p. 92, 102), the law of nations

(p. 74, 90, 98, 101), diplomatic relations (p. 75, 77, 98, 100) and occasional wars (pp. 72–74, 76–78, 86–87, 100–101) to provide order in the absence of a world state. Like Bull, he believed in an anarchical society of sovereign states that is neither analogous to his war-like state of nature nor to his pacified civil state. It thus seems that Hobbes's and Bull's account of international relations is essentially the same, without Jaede knowing and Bull acknowledging it.

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⁴ Martin Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, New York 1992.

⁵ Stephen Walt, *The Origins of Alliances*, New York 1987.