

Name: _____ Date: _____

Leviathan

by Thomas Hobbes

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) was an English philosopher who is best known for his book Leviathan in which he expressed his political views on society and government and his ideas of social contract. Leviathan, first published in 1651, argued that people are by nature selfish and brutish and therefore the goal of individuals in society is self-preservation. He further argued that people are willing to give up their rights to an absolute leader in order to be protected and to live in an orderly society.

Primary Source:

NATURE hath made men so equal in the faculties of body and mind as that, though there be found one man sometimes manifestly stronger in body or of quicker mind than another, yet when all is reckoned together the difference between man and man is not so considerable as that one man can thereupon claim to himself any benefit to which another may not pretend as well as he.

Hereby it is manifest 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.

The only way to erect...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,... is to **confer** all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, unto one Will...and therein to submit their Wills... and their Judgements, to his Judgement. This is ... made by **Covenant** ...and he that carryeth this Person, is called SOVERAIGNE [Monarch] ... and therefore, they that are subjects to a Monarch [soveraigne], cannot without his leave cast off Monarchy, and return to the confusion of a disunited **Multitude**...

Glossary:

confer: grant; bestow

Covenant: agreement

Multitude: a large number