

and regulatory principle for the central issues of the day - issues of war and peace, of religion and politics, of power and wealth, of ethics, and of systemic order.

Above all of order. Order was the prerequisite for the more 'liberal' states as they sought the optimum conditions for trade within Europe and increasingly in the new worlds beyond European borders. More immediately order was the primary concern of those seeking to make systemic sense of a fragmenting European continent in the wake of years of religious and geo-political enmity. Predictably in this new age the order question was asked most directly and profoundly in relation to the modern individual - modern rational man. But the question was asked within a decidedly pre-modern context - of man and god - or, more precisely, of man released from the strictures of god and mediaeval religion.

In this context most major 17th century voices were raised in favour of the freedom of religion, but with an extremely brutal war of religion still firmly in mind the question of individual freedom became intrinsically linked to the question of the implications of freedom for broader social order. Accordingly, familiar tensions emerged on issues of human rationality and its limits and questions of the democratic art of the possible. More precisely it was the question of the threat to social order of *too much freedom* that focused the minds of thinkers such as Spinoza and Hobbes who now confronted another question of immediate familiarity to contemporary analysts - the question of sovereignty and democracy.

For Spinoza, for example, this relationship was one underscored by Augustinian perspectives on the inner-struggle of fallen man to balance an inherent capacity for rationality with the tendency toward passion and egoistic behaviour. The paradox of the modern age for Spinoza was that the more freedom humans enjoyed, the more their behaviour tended toward self-aggrandising egoism and the extreme sovereignty of the 'state of nature'. Recognising this the more enlightened of modern peoples support the rule of law and defend order of the state and its rulers. The resulting order does not fundamentally alter the self-interested nature of citizens within a state but it connects reason to passion in a particular way - a way which naturalises self-interested egoism and locates it as the foundational regulatory principle of the modern sovereign state and its hierarchical structure. In this sense an order based on the modern sovereign state corresponds with the rational desire to follow individual self-interest while restricting the egoistic excesses of those whose passions might otherwise destroy that order.

In the emerging inter-state arena there was no such sanction upon these excesses. Thus, for Spinoza, as for others of similar inclination in this period, the inter-state