

against history against leviathan

Against History, Against Leviathan: A Critical Examination

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Introduction:

The phrase "against history, against Leviathan" encapsulates a potent critique of traditional political philosophy and its historical narratives. This essay delves into the multifaceted implications of this concept, exploring its challenges and opportunities for understanding power dynamics in contemporary society. It examines the ways in which established historical accounts and the Leviathan-esque concept of sovereign power, often presented as monolithic and inevitable, fail to adequately address the complexities of social realities. The phrase itself suggests a dual rebellion: against the grand narratives of history that often legitimize existing power structures, and against the concept of the Leviathan – the all-powerful state – as the ultimate arbiter of legitimacy and order. "Against history, against Leviathan" calls for a deeper engagement with the intricate play of power relations, acknowledging the multiplicity of actors and the fluid nature of power itself.

Challenging the Grand Narratives of History:

The notion of "against history" within this framework rejects the idea of a singular, teleological historical narrative. Traditional historical accounts often present a linear progression, culminating in the present state of affairs, often implicitly legitimizing the existing power structures. "Against history, against Leviathan" advocates for a deconstruction of these grand narratives, exposing their inherent biases and limitations. This approach aligns with post-structuralist thought, which emphasizes the constructed nature of knowledge and power. By questioning the objectivity and neutrality of historical accounts, we can gain a more nuanced understanding of how power operates to shape historical interpretations. The "against history" aspect of the phrase encourages a critical examination of the archives themselves, recognizing the selective preservation and interpretation of historical documents. The focus shifts from a search for a singular truth to an exploration of multiple perspectives and contested meanings.

Deconstructing the Leviathan:

The concept of the Leviathan, as articulated by Thomas Hobbes, represents a powerful, centralized state holding absolute authority. "Against history, against Leviathan" challenges this model, arguing that the reality of power is far more dispersed and fragmented. While acknowledging the existence of powerful institutions and states, this perspective focuses on the intricate networks of power that operate beyond the confines of the state. It highlights the importance of micro-politics, examining how power is exercised in everyday interactions and social practices. This approach resonates with the works of Michel Foucault, who analyzed the diffuse nature of power and its operation through various institutions and discourses. The critique extends beyond merely challenging the state's absolute authority; it questions the very notion of a unified, coherent sovereign power.

Opportunities for Rethinking Power:

The challenge posed by "against history, against Leviathan" opens up exciting opportunities for rethinking power and its operation. By rejecting the simplistic notions of centralized power and teleological historical narratives, we can develop a more sophisticated understanding of how power functions in complex societies. This includes:

Emphasis on Multiplicity: Recognizing the multifaceted nature of power allows for a more nuanced analysis of resistance and agency. The concept acknowledges that power is not simply a top-down phenomenon, but is also negotiated, contested, and resisted at multiple levels.

Focus on Micro-Politics: Analyzing micro-political processes provides a detailed understanding of how power is exercised and reproduced in everyday life. This approach moves beyond grand narratives to examine the subtle mechanisms of power that shape our experiences and behaviors.

Rethinking Agency: By challenging the deterministic aspects of traditional historical accounts and the all-encompassing power of the Leviathan, we can better appreciate the role of human agency in shaping social and political realities. Individuals and groups are not simply passive recipients of power, but actively participate in its production and contestation.

Against History, Against Leviathan in Contemporary Context:

The relevance of "against history, against Leviathan" in the contemporary world is undeniable. The rise of globalization, the increasing power of multinational corporations, and the complexity of contemporary political systems all underscore the limitations of traditional understandings of power. The phrase serves as a powerful tool for critically analyzing contemporary phenomena such as surveillance, social media manipulation, and the erosion of democratic institutions.

Conclusion:

The phrase "against history, against Leviathan" represents a significant challenge to conventional understandings of power and historical narrative. By rejecting simplistic models of sovereignty and linear

historical progression, it opens up new avenues for exploring the complexities of power dynamics in modern society. It calls for a more nuanced and critical engagement with historical accounts, acknowledging the multiplicity of actors and the fluid nature of power. The ongoing relevance of this critique in a world characterized by increasing complexity and interconnectedness is undeniable, making its continued study crucial for understanding the present and shaping the future.

FAQs:

1. What is the significance of the "against history" aspect? It emphasizes the deconstruction of grand historical narratives that often legitimize existing power structures, highlighting the subjective and constructed nature of historical accounts.
1. How does the critique of the Leviathan differ from other critiques of the state? It goes beyond simply criticizing state power; it questions the very concept of a unified, coherent sovereign power, highlighting the fragmented and dispersed nature of power relations.
1. What are the key intellectual influences on this perspective? Post-structuralist thinkers like Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari are key influences, along with critical theorists who challenge traditional historical narratives.
1. How can this approach be applied to contemporary political issues? It can be used to analyze the power dynamics in issues such as globalization, surveillance, social media manipulation, and the erosion of democratic institutions.
1. What are the limitations of this perspective? Critics argue it may downplay the importance of structural factors and the real impact of state power, potentially leading to a relativistic view of power.
1. How does this perspective relate to other critical theories of power? It shares affinities with post-

colonial theory, feminist theory, and critical race theory in its focus on power relations and marginalized voices.

1. What are the practical implications of this approach? It encourages critical engagement with historical narratives and promotes a more nuanced understanding of power, informing activism and resistance strategies.
1. Can this perspective be applied to non-political contexts? Yes, the principles of deconstructing dominant narratives and analyzing power dynamics can be applied to various social contexts, including education, media, and culture.
1. What are some examples of scholars working within this framework? Beyond the author, scholars working in post-structuralism and critical theory often engage with similar themes and methodologies.

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against history against leviathan: Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America Eric Jay Dolin, 2008-07-17 A Los Angeles Times Best Non-Fiction Book of 2007 A Boston Globe Best Non-Fiction Book of 2007 Amazon.com Editors pick as one of the 10 best history books of 2007 Winner of the 2007 John Lyman Award for U. S. Maritime History, given by the North American Society for Oceanic History The best history of American whaling to come along in a generation. —Nathaniel Philbrick The epic history of the iron men in wooden boats who built an industrial empire through the pursuit of whales. To produce a mighty book, you must choose a mighty theme, Herman Melville proclaimed, and this absorbing history demonstrates that few things can capture the sheer danger and desperation of men on the deep sea as dramatically as whaling. Eric Jay Dolin begins his vivid narrative with Captain John Smith's botched whaling expedition to the New World in 1614. He then chronicles the rise of a burgeoning industry—from its brutal struggles during the Revolutionary period to its golden age in the mid-1800s when a fleet of more than 700 ships hunted the seas and American whale oil lit the world, to its decline as the twentieth century dawned. This sweeping social and economic history provides rich and often fantastic accounts of the men themselves, who mutinied, murdered, rioted, deserted, drank, scrimshawed, and recorded their experiences in journals and memoirs. Containing a wealth of naturalistic detail on whales, *Leviathan* is the most original and stirring history of American whaling in many decades.

against history against leviathan: *Trying Leviathan* D. Graham Burnett, 2010-01-04 In *Moby-Dick*, Ishmael declares, Be it known that, waiving all argument, I take the good old fashioned ground that a whale is a fish, and call upon holy Jonah to back me. Few readers today know just how much argument Ishmael is waiving aside. In fact, Melville's antihero here takes sides in one of the great controversies of the early nineteenth century—one that ultimately had to be resolved in the

courts of New York City. In *Trying Leviathan*, D. Graham Burnett recovers the strange story of *Maurice v. Judd*, an 1818 trial that pitted the new sciences of taxonomy against the then-popular--and biblically sanctioned--view that the whale was a fish. The immediate dispute was mundane: whether whale oil was fish oil and therefore subject to state inspection. But the trial fueled a sensational public debate in which nothing less than the order of nature--and how we know it--was at stake. Burnett vividly recreates the trial, during which a parade of experts--pea-coated whalers, pompous philosophers, Jacobin lawyers--took the witness stand, brandishing books, drawings, and anatomical reports, and telling tall tales from whaling voyages. Falling in the middle of the century between Linnaeus and Darwin, the trial dramatized a revolutionary period that saw radical transformations in the understanding of the natural world. Out went comfortable biblical categories, and in came new sorting methods based on the minutiae of interior anatomy--and louché details about the sexual behaviors of God's creatures. When Leviathan breached in New York in 1818, this strange beast churned both the natural and social orders--and not everyone would survive.

against history against leviathan: *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* Steven Shapin, Simon Schaffer, 2011-08-15 *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* examines the conflicts over the value and propriety of experimental methods between two major seventeenth-century thinkers: Thomas Hobbes, author of the political treatise *Leviathan* and vehement critic of systematic experimentation in natural philosophy, and Robert Boyle, mechanical philosopher and owner of the newly invented air-pump. The issues at stake in their disputes ranged from the physical integrity of the air-pump to the intellectual integrity of the knowledge it might yield. Both Boyle and Hobbes were looking for ways of establishing knowledge that did not decay into *ad hominem* attacks and political division. Boyle proposed the experiment as cure. He argued that facts should be manufactured by machines like the air-pump so that gentlemen could witness the experiments and produce knowledge that everyone agreed on. Hobbes, by contrast, looked for natural law and viewed experiments as the artificial, unreliable products of an exclusive guild. The new approaches taken in *Leviathan and the Air-Pump* have been enormously influential on historical studies of science. Shapin and Schaffer found a moment of scientific revolution and showed how key scientific givens--facts, interpretations, experiment, truth--were fundamental to a new political order. Shapin and Schaffer were also innovative in their ethnographic approach. Attempting to understand the work habits, rituals, and social structures of a remote, unfamiliar group, they argued that politics were tied up in what scientists did, rather than what they said. Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer use the confrontation between Hobbes and Boyle as a way of understanding what was at stake in the early history of scientific experimentation. They describe the protagonists' divergent views of natural knowledge, and situate the Hobbes-Boyle disputes within contemporary debates over the role of intellectuals in public life and the problems of social order and assent in Restoration England. In a new introduction, the authors describe how science and its social context were understood when this book was first published, and how the study of the history of science has changed since then.

against history against leviathan: *Slaying Leviathan* Glenn S. Sunshine, 2021 Christians first expressed these political truths under Caesars, kings, popes, and emperors. We need them in the age of presidents. Leviathan is rising again, and the first weapon we must recover is the longstanding Christian tradition of resisting governmental overreach. Our bloated bureaucratic state would have been unrecognizable to the Founders, and our acquiescence to its encroachments on liberty would have infuriated them. But here is the point: our Leviathan would not have surprised them. They were well acquainted with the tendency of governments to turn tyrannical: Eternal vigilance is the price we pay for liberty. In *Slaying Leviathan*, historian Glenn S. Sunshine surveys some of the stories and key elements of Christian political thought from Augustine to the Declaration of Independence. Specifically, the book introduces theories of limited government that were synthesized into a coherent political philosophy by John Locke. Locke, of course, influenced the American founders and was, like us, fighting against the spirit of Leviathan in his day. But his is only one of the many stories in this book--

against history against leviathan: Liberal Leviathan G. John Ikenberry, 2012-08-26 In the second half of the twentieth century, the United States engaged in the most ambitious and far-reaching liberal order building the world had yet seen. This liberal international order has been one of the most successful in providing security and prosperity to more people, but in the last decade the American-led order has been troubled. Some argue that the Bush administration undermined it. Others argue that we are witnessing the end of the American era. In *Liberal Leviathan* G. John Ikenberry argues that the crisis that besets the American-led order is a crisis of authority. The forces that have triggered this crisis have resulted from the successful functioning and expansion of the postwar liberal order, not its breakdown.

against history against leviathan: Leviathan on a Leash Sean Fleming, 2020-11-24 The first suggests that states can be held responsible because they are 'moral agents' like human beings, with similar capacities for deliberation and intentional action. A state is responsible in the same way in which an individual is responsible. The second that states can be held responsible because they are legal persons that act vicariously through their officials; states are 'principals' rather than agents, and the model for state responsibility is a case of vicarious liability, such as when an employer is held financially liable for the actions of her employee. Sam Fleming reconstructs and develops a forgotten understanding of state responsibility from Thomas Hobbes' political thought. Like proponents of the two theories of state responsibility, Hobbes considered states to be 'persons', meaning that actions, rights, and responsibilities can be attributed to them. States can be said to wage war, possess sovereignty, and owe money.

against history against leviathan: American Leviathan Patrick Griffin, 2008-04 The dark and bloody ground of the frontier during the years of the American Revolution created much that we associate with the idea of America. Between 1763 and 1795, westerners not only participated in a war of independence but also engaged in a revolution that ushered in fundamental changes in the relationship between individuals and society. In the West, the process was stripped down to its essence: uncertainty, competition, disorder, and frenzied and contradictory attempts to reestablish order. The violent nature of the contest to reconstitute sovereignty produced a revolutionary settlement, riddled with what we would regard as paradox, in which new notions of race went hand in hand with new definitions of citizenship. In the almost Hobbesian state of nature that the West had become, westerners created a liberating yet frightening vision of what society was to be. In vivid detail, Patrick Griffin recaptures a chaotic world of settlers, Indians, speculators, British regulars, and American and state officials vying with one another to remake the American West during its most formative period.

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peacetime economy after the victorious end of the war. Part II focuses on the Cold War, particularly on the links between Congress and defense procurement, the level of profits made by defense contractors, and the role of public opinion and not ideological rhetoric in the maintenance of defense expenditures over time. This new book extends and refines ideas of the earlier book with new interpretations, evidence, and statistical analysis. This book will reach a similar audience of students, researchers, and educated lay people in political economy and economic history in particular, and in the social sciences in general.

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against history against leviathan: Leviathan 2.0 Charles S. Maier, 2014-04-21 Thomas Hobbes laid the theoretical groundwork of the nation-state in *Leviathan*, his tough-minded treatise of 1651. *Leviathan 2.0* updates this classic account to explain how modern statehood took shape between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, before it unraveled into the political uncertainty that persists today. Modern states were far from immune to the modernizing forces of war, technology, and ideology. From 1845 to 1880, the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Argentina were all reconstituted through territorial violence. Europe witnessed the unification of Germany and Italy, while Asian nations such as Japan tried to mitigate foreign incursions through state-building reforms. A global wave of revolution at the turn of the century pushed the modernization process further in China, Russia, Iran, and Ottoman Turkey. By the late 1930s, with the rise of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, the momentum of history seemed to shift toward war-glorifying totalitarian states. But several variants of the modern state survived World War II: the welfare states of Western democracies; single-party socialist governments; and governments dominated by the military, especially prevalent in Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East. Toward the end of the twentieth century, all of these forms stood in growing tension with the transformative influences of globalized capitalism. Modern statehood recreated itself in many ways, Charles S. Maier concludes, but finally had to adopt a precarious equilibrium with ever more powerful economic forces.

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against history against leviathan: Law and Leviathan Cass R. Sunstein, Adrian Vermeule, 2020-09-15 Winner of the Scribes Book Award "As brilliantly imaginative as it is urgently timely." —Richard H. Fallon, Jr., Harvard Law School "At no time more than the present, a defense of expertise-based governance and administration is sorely needed, and this book provides it with gusto." —Frederick Schauer, author of *The Proof* A highly original framework for restoring confidence in a government bureaucracy increasingly derided as "the deep state." Is the modern administrative state illegitimate? Unconstitutional? Unaccountable? Dangerous? America has long been divided over these questions, but the debate has recently taken on more urgency and spilled into the streets. Cass Sunstein and Adrian Vermeule argue that the administrative state can be redeemed so long as public officials are constrained by morality and guided by stable rules. Officials should make clear rules, ensure transparency, and never abuse retroactivity, so that current guidelines are not under constant threat of change. They should make rules that are understandable and avoid issuing contradictory ones. These principles may seem simple, but they have a great deal of power. Already, they limit the activities of administrative agencies every day. In more robust form, they could address some of the concerns of critics who decry the "deep state" and yearn for its downfall. "Has something to offer both critics and supporters...a valuable contribution to the ongoing debate over the constitutionality of the modern state." —Review of Politics "The authors freely admit that the administrative state is not perfect. But, they contend, it is far better than its critics allow." —Wall Street Journal

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dimension of tax policy and calls for a fundamental tax reform

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against history against leviathan: In Pursuit of Leviathan Lance E. Davis, Robert E. Gallman, Karin Gleiter, 2007-12-01 In Pursuit of Leviathan traces the American whaling industry from its rise in the 1840s to its precipitous fall at the end of the nineteenth century. Using detailed and comprehensive data that describe more than four thousand whaling voyages from New Bedford, Massachusetts, the leading nineteenth-century whaling port, the authors explore the market for whale products, crew quality and labor contracts, and whale biology and distribution, and assess the productivity of the American fleet. They then examine new whaling techniques developed at the end of the nineteenth century, such as modified clippers and harpoons, and the introduction of darting guns. Despite the common belief that the whaling industry declined due to a fall in whale stocks, the authors argue that the industry's collapse was related to changes in technology and market conditions. Providing a wealth of historical information, In Pursuit of Leviathan is a classic industry study that will provide intriguing reading for anyone interested in the history of whaling.

against history against leviathan: Hobbes on Resistance Susanne Sreedhar, 2010-09-02 Hobbes's political theory has traditionally been taken to be an endorsement of state power and a prescription for unconditional obedience to the sovereign's will. In this book, Susanne Sreedhar develops a novel interpretation of Hobbes's theory of political obligation and explores important cases where Hobbes claims that subjects have a right to disobey and resist state power, even when their lives are not directly threatened. Drawing attention to this broader set of rights, her comprehensive analysis of Hobbes's account of political disobedience reveals a unified and coherent theory of resistance that has previously gone unnoticed and undefended. Her book will appeal to all who are interested in the nature and limits of political authority, the right of self-defense, the right of revolution, and the modern origins of these issues.

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against history against leviathan: Climate Leviathan Joel Wainwright, Geoff Mann, 2018-02-13 ****Winner of the 2019 Sussex International Theory Prize**** -- How climate change will affect our political theory - for better and worse Despite the science and the summits, leading capitalist states have not achieved anything close to an adequate level of carbon mitigation. There is now simply no way to prevent the planet breaching the threshold of two degrees Celsius set by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. What are the likely political and economic outcomes of

this? Where is the overheating world heading? To further the struggle for climate justice, we need to have some idea how the existing global order is likely to adjust to a rapidly changing environment. Climate Leviathan provides a radical way of thinking about the intensifying challenges to the global order. Drawing on a wide range of political thought, Joel Wainwright and Geoff Mann argue that rapid climate change will transform the world's political economy and the fundamental political arrangements most people take for granted. The result will be a capitalist planetary sovereignty, a terrifying eventuality that makes the construction of viable, radical alternatives truly imperative.

against history against leviathan: Leviathan, Or, The Whale Philip Hoare, 2009 All his life, Philip Hoare has been obsessed by whales, from the gigantic skeletons in London's Natural History Museum to adult encounters with the wild animals themselves. Whales have a mythical quality - they seem to elide with dark fantasies of sea-serpents and antediluvian monsters that swim in our collective unconscious. This book is an investigation into what we know little about -- dark, shadowy creatures who swim below the depths, only to surface in a spray of spume. More than the story of the whale, it is also the story of our own obsessions.

against history against leviathan: Murder on the Leviathan Boris Akunin, 2004-04-27 Paris, 1878: Eccentric antiquarian Lord Littleby and his ten servants are found murdered in Littleby's mansion on the rue de Grenelle, and a priceless Indian shawl is missing. Police commissioner "Papa" Gauche recovers only one piece of evidence from the crime scene: a golden key shaped like a whale. Gauche soon deduces that the key is in fact a ticket of passage for the Leviathan, a gigantic steamship soon to depart Southampton on its maiden voyage to Calcutta. The murderer must be among its passengers. In Cairo, the ship is boarded by a young Russian diplomat with a shock of white hair—none other than Erast Fandorin, the celebrated detective of Boris Akunin's The Winter Queen. The sleuth joins forces with Gauche to determine which of ten unticketed passengers on the Leviathan is the rue de Grenelle killer. Tipping his hat to Agatha Christie, Akunin assembles a colorful cast of suspects—including a secretive Japanese doctor, a professor who specializes in rare Indian artifacts, a pregnant Swiss woman, and an English aristocrat with an appetite for collecting Asian treasures—all of whom are con?ned together until the crime is solved. As the Leviathan steams toward Calcutta, will Fandorin be able to out-investigate Gauche and discover who the killer is, even as the ship's passengers are murdered, one by one? Already an international sensation, Boris Akunin's latest page-turner transports the reader back to the glamorous, dangerous past in a richly atmospheric tale of suspense on the high seas.

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against history against leviathan: Grassroots Leviathan Ariel Ron, 2020-11-17 How a massive agricultural reform movement led by northern farmers before the Civil War recast Americans' relationships to market forces and the state. Recipient of The Center for Civil War Research's 2021 Wiley-Silver Book Prize, Winner of the Theodore Saloutos Memorial Award by the Agricultural History Society In this sweeping look at rural society from the American Revolution to the Civil War, Ariel Ron argues that agricultural history is central to understanding the nation's formative period. Upending the myth that the Civil War pitted an industrial North against an agrarian South, Grassroots Leviathan traces the rise of a powerful agricultural reform movement spurred by northern farmers. Ron shows that farming dominated the lives of most Americans through almost the entire nineteenth century and traces how middle-class farmers in the Greater Northeast built a movement of semipublic agricultural societies, fairs, and periodicals that fundamentally recast Americans' relationship to market forces and the state.

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use them for everything from clothing to food, while airborne ships hunt them in the white expanse of a cloud sea, the Cloudmere. Lian does his part carving the kyrillian crystals that power the ships through the Cloudmere, but when he makes an enemy of a dangerous man, Lian ships out on the next vessel available as a drachenjager, or dragon hunter. He chooses the wrong ship. A fanatic captain, hunts more than just any dragon. His goal is the Firstborn Gargantuan—and Adaron is prepared to sacrifice everything for revenge. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

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against history against leviathan: Leviathan Philip Hoare, 2009-08-06 This edition does not include illustrations. The story of a man's obsession with whales, which takes him on a personal, historical and biographical journey - from his childhood to his fascination with Moby-Dick and his excursions whale-watching.

against history against leviathan: Birth of the Leviathan Thomas Ertman, 1997-01-13 For many years scholars have sought to explain why the European states which emerged in the period before the French Revolution developed along such different lines. Why did some become absolutist and others constitutionalist? What enabled some to develop bureaucratic administrative systems, while others remained dependent upon patrimonial practices? This book presents a new theory of state-building in medieval and early modern Europe. Ertman argues that two factors - the organisation of local government at the time of state formation and the timing of sustained geo-military competition - can explain most of the variation in political regimes and in state infrastructures found across the continent during the second half of the eighteenth century. Drawing on insights developed in historical sociology, comparative politics, and economic history, this book makes a compelling case for the value of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of political development.

against history against leviathan: Beyond Leviathan István Mészáros, 2022-02-22 A field-defining masterwork, this posthumous publication maps the evolution of the idea of the state from ancient Greece to today István Mészáros was one of the greatest political theorists of the twentieth century. Left unfinished at the time of his death, *Beyond Leviathan* is written on the magisterial scale of his previous book, *Beyond Capital*, and meant to complement that work. It focuses on the transcendence of the state, along with the transcendence of capital and alienated labor, while traversing the history of political theory from Plato to the present. Aristotle, More, Machiavelli, and Vico are only a few of the thinkers discussed in depth. The larger objective of this work is no less than to develop a full-edged critique of the state, in the Marxian tradition, and set against the critique of capital. Not only does it provide, for the first time, an all-embracing Marxian

theory of the state, it gives new political meaning to the notion of “the withering away of the state.” In his definitive, seminal work, Mészáros seeks to illuminate the political preconditions for a society of substantive equality and substantive democracy.

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against history against leviathan: Leviathans Alfred D. Chandler, Bruce Mazlish, 2005-01-24 Publisher Description

against history against leviathan: The Return of the Russian Leviathan Sergei Medvedev, 2019-12-18 Winner of the 2020 Pushkin House Book Prize Russia's relationship with its neighbours and with the West has worsened dramatically in recent years. Under Vladimir Putin's leadership, the country has annexed Crimea, begun a war in Eastern Ukraine, used chemical weapons on the streets of the UK and created an army of Internet trolls to meddle in the US presidential elections. How should we understand this apparent relapse into aggressive imperialism and militarism? In this book, Sergei Medvedev argues that this new wave of Russian nationalism is the result of mentalities that have long been embedded within the Russian psyche. Whereas in the West, the turbulent social changes of the 1960s and a rising awareness of the legacy of colonialism have modernized attitudes, Russia has been stymied by an enduring sense of superiority over its neighbours alongside a painful nostalgia for empire. It is this infantilized and irrational worldview that Putin and others have exploited, as seen most clearly in Russia's recent foreign policy decisions, including the annexation of Crimea. This sharp and insightful book, full of irony and humour, shows how the archaic forces of imperial revanchism have been brought back to life, shaking Russian society and threatening the outside world. It will be of great interest to anyone trying to understand the forces shaping Russian politics and society today. Also available as an audiobook.

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