I am not sure that I remember the first time I met Dick Popkin. It must have been in 1987 or 1988, most probably in Leiden, where I think he organized a seminar, but it may be somewhere else for at the time he organized lots of seminars and was travelling more or less permanently. In any case, many meetings followed, in the Netherlands, in the United States, in Italy, in Ireland. Last time I met him he was just recovering from a trip earlier that year to the Netherlands, which I am afraid had done him no good at all. He had been ill before he started on his journey and he became more ill on his arrival. Still, in spite of what turned out to be a pneumonia—not to mention the characteristically bad weather and the unfriendly hotel—he carried on as he will carry on, I am sure, as long as he can breathe at all. I am glad to know him and hope to enjoy his company and his comments for much longer.
SPINOZA ON THEOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

Theo Verbeek

Spinoza’s discussion of theocracy in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1670) is generally interpreted as being directed against Dutch Calvinist ministers. Plausible though it seems, this interpretation is not satisfactory. I argue that Spinoza’s theocracy is in fact a primitive, although perhaps the only viable form of democracy; moreover, that, according to Spinoza, the Jewish state, which is his historic example for a theocracy, collapsed not because it was based on religion but because of the relations between the tribes; and, finally, that, apart from being a reaction to Hobbes, Spinoza’s reconstruction of the history of the Jewish state serves as a metaphor for Dutch political history.

*Section 1*

Spinoza speaks of the creation of the state as the process by which people “arrange” (*efficere*) that “the unrestricted right naturally possessed by each individual should be put into common ownership, and that this right should no longer be determined by the strength and appetite of the individual but by the power and the will of all together.”1 This can be successful only if the same people “bind themselves by the most stringent pledges to be guided in all matters by the dictates of reason.”2 Since on the other hand nobody must

---

1 TTP, Chap. 16, G 3:191 (S 239). Spinoza will be cited from the Gebhardt edition—cited as G and followed by Arabic numerals to designate the volume and page. [See Carl Gebhardt, ed., *Spinoza Opera*, 4 vols. (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1925)]. Translations for the *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (TTP in the notes) are taken from Shirley—cited as S and followed by the page number. [See Spinoza’s *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, Gebhardt ed., trans. Samuel Shirley (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989)]. Translations for the *Tractatus Politicus* (TP in the notes) are taken from Elves—cited as E and followed by the page number. [See Benedict de Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise; A Political Treatise*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1951)]. All translations were checked on the original. The Bible is quoted from the King James version.

2 TTP, Chap. 16, G:191 (S, 239).