

Paper Name : Western Political Thought

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Unit 2 Machiavelli

- Machiavelli is an Italian political thinker
- He authored the book **The Prince**.
- He was called a Child of Renaissance.
- He is described as the last medieval thinker and the first modern political thinker
- He favored Republican form of government

Human Nature

- Machiavelli painted an extremely negative portrayal of human nature
- But above all he must refrain from seizing the property of others, because **a man is quicker to forget the death of his father than the loss of his patrimony.**
- Man is embodiment of crookedness, selfishness, greed, treachery and narrow mindedness

Main Features of Thought

- There should be complete separation of politics from religion and politics must have supremacy over religion. He supported secularism. He strongly believed that no divine authority existed over the political might of the kings
 - Morality and politics are two entirely different entities. The ruler has his own moral standards and tenets that quintessentially sustain his hold over power. The moral universe of the people does not apply to the actions of the ruler. He was against any ethical system
- = for him ends justify the means and not the other way around

- He visualized politics only as a system of acquisition, consolidation and preservation of power without having any links to freedom, rights and justice
- He was among the earliest thinkers who visualized the birth and future of the sovereignty
- He was a pioneer in comprehending the advent of the modern territorial nation state system
- **The ruler must be both a king and a fox.** He must demonstrate the royal qualities of lion like bravery towards his rivals. He must be cunning and shrewd like the fox to defeat the conspiracies of the traitors
- The ruler should enforce law among the people. He is not bound by the law he promulgates. He is above the concept of Rule of Law.
- His single minded concentration was on the preservation of the state and the ruler

Critical Evaluation

Machiavelli is a practical thinker. He looked at politics as statecraft devoid of any ethical or moral dimension. He lends his name to the selfish attitude of political class as we describe their actions as Machiavellian. But the modern political system and international politics has many prominent features that were visualized and articulated by Machiavelli many centuries back.

Comment on the Following

1. *"He who wishes to be obeyed must know how to command."*
2. *"Politics have no relation to morals"*
3. *. It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both*

For Further Reading

1. *Prince by Machiavelli*
2. *Discourses on Livy*
3. *History of Political Theory by Holland Sabine*

4. *Western Political Thought by C.L.Wayper*
5. *Western Political Thought by Bookhives Publications*