

QUESTION

Is it correct to say that Machiavelli was an apostle of Power Politics?

ANSWER

Introduction

Machiavelli was an apostle of Power Politics. He gave emphasis on utilisation of force and coercion to consolidate one's rule. He expressed the desire for the use of religion as a tool towards enhancing goal and objectives of state. He advocated establishment of strong and efficient military, based on citizens. He favoured the realisation of authoritarian rule. Moreover, he expected of the ruler

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to earn respect and fear of the masses. Besides, he wanted ruler to use any means, even breaking on the promises made by him, to advance national interest. Accordingly, in terms of outer relations, the ruler should not remain neutral in case of war between two neighbours surrounding him. Most importantly, he advised the ruler to not take into consideration any sense of ethics, morality, and altruism, when pursuing the goals of the state.

The Idea and Concept of Power Politics

Power politics refers to a phenomenon when the ruler enhances his power by utilising and exploiting every means available

at his disposal. In so doing, the ruler does not give thought to the following of ethics and morality, while accomplishing the objectives of the state. In such way, the ruler maximises his power.

Machiavelli was An Apostle of Power Politics

Machiavelli was an apostle of power politics. This assertion stands true when one looks at the thought he has presented, especially in 'The Prince' and 'The Discourses'.

- 1. He favoured the use of force and coercion to advance state's interest

Machiavelli was of the view that force form an indispensable part

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power accumulation and consolidation.

In Discourses, he favours the use of force to crush any kind of opposition or rebellion that the ruler may face. In

The Prince, he advises the ruler to use ruthless force to defeat and crush down the opposition.

Thus, he advocated the use of force in pursuing state's objectives.

b. Good Religion is one that helps state consolidate power

According to Machiavelli, the ruler should exploit religion to advance the interests of the state. Although he advocated secular politics, still he could not deny the role of religion. Most importantly in bringing cohesion, uniformity and sense of oneness among people. In this way,

He advocate the exploitation of religion for the objectives of state.

c. Efficient and strong military should be established

Being a realist, and cognisant of role of military in defence, he advocated establishment of strong military. In place of mercenaries, he wanted the military based on citizens. He opined that citizens have strong sense of nationality; therefore, they would fight better. Thus, he favoured formation of strong military, comprising mainly of citizens.

d. Authoritarian Rule should be established

Machiavelli was more in favour of authoritarian rule than Republic.

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He believed that Republic ^{could not} ~~cannot~~ have tranquility and peace as might be established in authoritarianism. Moreover, in authoritarian setup, people do not want freedom much; instead, their focus is more on security. Thus, authoritarian regime is more favourable than Republic.

e. Ruler must Earn Respect and Fear of the masses

Machiavelli was of the opinion that ruler should focus on earning respect and fear of the people. He should not emphasise on affection and love gaining from people. Similarly, he should remain cautious to not get hated by people a lot. In contrast, he should focus on

gaining respect and fear, for the former two ensure that people follow him. They would not revolt against him. Thus, he prefer respect and fear of people for ruler, compared to affection and love.

f. Ruler may Back on Promises made in favour of State's interest

Machiavelli advocated for the ruler to be deceptor. However, he did not want ruler to openly break his promises. He advised the ruler to break promises when he finds suitable pretext to do so. So he favoured backing of from promises in favour of state interest.

g. Ruler should not Remain Neutral in Case of War Among Neighbours

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In case of war between two neighbours, the ruler is advised to take one side. More likely would be the role of balance of power by standing on the side of the weak neighbour.

Being neutral in war can be fatal. As the victorious would become even more powerful after defeating the weaker opponent, he would come after the neutral ruler. Thus, neutrality is discouraged by Machiavelli in case of war between two neighbours.

h. Ethics, Morality, and Altruism should not Bar the Ruler From Taking Action

Machiavelli was against the notion of morality, ethics and altruism in politics. According to him, "politics has no morality". Therefore,

He favoured subjecting means to ends. For him, ends mattered and valued more than means. In this sense, any means can be carried out to achieve certain ends. Thus, rulers should not give much regard to morality and ethics.

Conclusion

The Political Philosophy of Niccolò Machiavelli corroborates the assertion that he was an apostle of power politics. He was a realist and pragmatist in approach. He considered state and its interests above all other interests. Therefore, in order to achieve those interests, he advocated use of any means, regardless of any worry for ethics and morality.