

The Philosophical Wisdom Behind the Thought of “Attaching Importance to People” in “the Prince”

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Abstract: Machiavelli's book “The Prince” reflects the idea of “attaching importance to people”, which is his political philosophy. “The Prince” is a theory of monarchical autocracy and the art of domination, and it is a strong doctrine of political purpose, which is regarded as one of the most influential works in the West, along with the Bible and Capitalism, etc. By emphasizing that “The Prince” should learn to hide his animalistic side, the Monarchist Theory embodies the purpose of political doctrine of realistic and utilitarian values, and the viewpoint of “attaching importance to people” has become one of the foundations of the Monarchist Theory, which has been used by many Western politicians, showing its irresistible seductive power. It shows a new philosophical wisdom of Machiavelli.

Keywords: People-oriented; Machiavelli; Political philosophy

1. Theoretical Study of the Ideology of “attaching importance to People”

1.1 The theoretical basis of the thought of "attaching importance to people"

On the one hand, “The Prince” Theory emphasizes that whether the people support the monarch or not can directly influence the fate of the monarch, but on the other hand, the fundamental purpose of "attaching importance to people" is still the tool and means to maintain the rule. Machiavelli pointed out that people are ungrateful, changeable, hypocrites, impostors, risk-averse and profit-seekers. In “The Prince”, which is a thinking building of "ruling by the monarch" built by Machiavelli on the assumption that human nature is inherently evil, and contains his special thought of "attaching importance to people", which is the embodiment of Machiavelli's political philosophy wisdom.

1.2 The Theoretical Embodiment of Ideology of "attaching importance to people"

In the fourth chapter from “The Prince”, “Why the Kingdom of Darius conquered by Alexander the Great did not betray its successors after his death”, it is elaborated and analyzed that ever since the history, monarchies have adopted two different methods of rule: one is like Turkish-style monarchy, and the other is Franco-style monarchy. The former is not easy to attack but easy to rule, while the latter is easy to attack but not easy to rule. And conclude that the nature of Darius' regime was the same as that of the Turkish king's kingdom, where the subjects were easy to rule. From there, it continues in later chapters, with additional types of essays focusing on the governance of monarchies. When danger comes, the king who is loved by the people will never be able to get the people to turn their backs on him; and if the king makes the people discontented, the people will never be able to make the king's life peaceful.^[1] This leads to the conclusion that the ruler should treat the nobles in a way that does not cause him to be disliked by the people.

2. Methodological study of the thought of "attaching importance to People"

2.1 The thought of "attaching importance to people" ideology as a tool for domination

In chapter fifth, “How to rule cities or monarchies that lived under their own laws before the occupation”, Machiavelli talks about three ways: 1) to destroy them; 2) to stay there in person; and 3) to allow them to live under their former laws while installing a puppet government in that country. Thus, in the Treatise on “The Prince”, the purpose of “attaching importance to people” is to serve the ruler and to maintain his dominance.

“Machiavelli believed that a king should rely on the people and that a regime lacking popular support would not be stable, he believed that a man who became a king with popular support should remain in touch with the people, and that a great king must know how to win the favor of the people or else he would not be helped by popular support in times of adversity.”^[2] In Chapter tenth, “How the Strength of All Monarchies and All Monarchies Should Be Measured, ” Machiavelli states that, after considering the situation in its entirety, a wise monarch, when assured of sufficient food and defenses, and when surrounded and attacked by the enemy, the people will always have faith in the monarch and a firm will. Machiavelli believed people should maintain good relations, the studies such as "praise and censure", "generosity and

stinginess", "love and reverence".

2.2 The thought of "attaching importance to people" as a realistic perspective

Machiavelli says that a monarch, especially a new monarch who comes to power, should not be held in check by anyone, that a monarch should learn to measure the situation and be prepared for a rainy day. Must have the ability to look ahead. And he thought that it was best for a prince not to betray the good way, but to learn how to embark on the path of evil if necessary. "The Prince" on the Monarch discusses the necessity of the idea of "attaching importance to people"^[3]. From a realistic perspective, it discusses the importance of "attaching importance to people" and its practical implementation from three aspects: First, before the establishment of a country, the people support the monarch and its sovereign status is easier to maintain; Second, after the establishment of a state, the people support it as a monarch, the monarch should maintain a friendly relationship with the people, to avoid causing hatred or contempt of the subjects, so as to be able to maintain a stable seat of power. Third, in times of national danger, the monarch must beware of reactionary forces at home and abroad. These are all things that require the monarch to have a good interaction with the people and have a solid foundation of the people.

3. Study on the Value of the Ideology of "attaching importance to people"

3.1 Utilitarian value of the idea of "attaching importance to people"

It is not that morality is not taught in "The Prince", and this is important to note that Machiavelli abandons morality by taking a practical, utilitarian point of view in which the ultimate aim of everything is the rule of the monarch.

In the book, he warns rulers not to trust the people so easily, it is better to trust the power that the monarch can hold in his hands. This is dictated by his position of defending the ruling class.^[4] "The invention of power politics rescues politics from theology, so that politics is no longer the existence of the medieval period shrouded in a veil of mysticism and burdened with a heavy moral yoke, and politics enters the earthly world from the heavenly mansion; the situation oriented ethics advocates the supremacy of effect and advocates that technical means serves the end, and is a kind of secular ethical basis put forward secularized international politics. Ethical basis; situation-oriented international political science ethics, the moral into the specific international political science situation, avoiding the international political science from pragmatism to secular utilitarianism."^[5]This may have something to do with his personal encounter as well as the context of his time, which made his view of human nature become utilitarian.

3.2 Moral value of the thought of "attaching importance to people"

Machiavelli's "realist morality" is not the reality of the present. This "realist morality" is only the product of a particular situation, far from describing the whole of reality, but only the experience of "reality" in a particular, limited, and extreme state. For any conventional politics must mimic the politics of the extreme, of the extraordinary.^[6]"The Prince", social realities are revealed, man becomes an animal by nature, and the dark side of mankind is given a seemingly correct basis for understanding. So that although the writer himself does not reject the meaning of virtue itself, does not advocate and encourage its evil, but involuntarily abets evil, thus causing further deterioration of the political ecology. As for Machiavelli's political realism, some researchers have argued that it is far from being able to explain the whole of political reality, this kind of theory oriented to the development of realism is not a good idea.

3.3 The value of the thought of "attaching importance to people" for contemporary China

Machiavelli's idea of "attaching importance to people" implies that whether or not a government emphasizes the status of the people in any period of time has a direct impact on the stability of the political situation and society. In the present period of rule of law, moral rule should not be neglected, as China has always practiced both rites and laws since ancient times. The use of power cannot be separated from the moral restraints, after the moral bondage can prevent the power, especially the strong power to the edge of the evil. Therefore, to make the people understand the relationship and to make morality penetrate into the hearts of the masses, will better serve the socialist construction of our country. The idea of "attaching importance to people" in the Treatise on Kings is one of Machiavelli's political ideals, that is to say, "attaching importance to people" in politics.

4. Limitations of the thought of "attaching importance to people"

Although the demand to safeguard people's rights has been put forward many times in "The Prince" theory, due to the fact that his political advocacy has always been "to be the master of the people" rather than "to be mastered by the people", democratic politics has always been in a passive and negative situation, and has always been in the position of being ruled. "Therefore, Machiavelli's idea of people's rule of the country is still fundamentally difficult to escape the rule of man's thinking, the king's power more than the rule of law will only result in the society without the people's rights, and ultimately become the consequences of the dictatorship."^[7]This is the limitations of Machiavelli's people-oriented thinking." Machiavelli had a very strict hierarchical conception of the people, which did not include the nobility or the army, but only the common people, unlike the "people" talked about in the modern age, and his conception of the people was not free.

5. Conclusions

"In the book, it is believed that tyranny over the people is rare, because it is only under very special circumstances that the monarch can do so, but only for the purpose of consolidating power." [8] Any philosophical doctrine has its ideological source, we have to learn the positive side of Machiavelli's "The Prince" in the thinking of "attaching importance to people", and according to the historical background of its creation, to have a deeper understanding of his "sex is inherently evil" theory of human nature, and objectively learn and understand his political philosophical wisdom. We need to learn and understand his political philosophical wisdom objectively.

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