

FREDERICK THE GREAT (1712–1786)

ANTI-MACHIAVEL (1741)

Introduction

As Kings have the Power to do Good or Evil according to their Choice and Inclination, how deplorable is the Condition of that People who have every thing to fear from the Abuse of Majesty, whose Properties are a Prey to the Avarice of their Prince, their Liberty to his Caprice, their Repose to his Ambition, their Safety to his Perfidiousness, and their Lives to his Cruelty? Such would be the tragical Situation of a Country governed by a Prince of Machiavel's forming.

I. The Several Sorts of Principalities and after What Manner Thy Are Acquired

A Sovereign, he should have said, was originally designed for the Good of the People; this is therefore what a Prince ought to prefer to every other Consideration; and Justice alone ought to be the Guide of all his Actions. What becomes then of all those Notions of Self-Interest, Grandeur, Ambition and Despotism; when it appears that the Sovereign, far from being the absolute Master of his People, is nothing more than their chief Servant?

XV. Of the Things for Which Men, and Particularly Princes, are Applauded or Censured

For my part, I affirm, that in order to be safe, it is necessary to be virtuous. Men are commonly neither wholly good, nor wholly bad; but both good and bad; and such as are between the two will unanimously revere a powerful Prince, who is just and virtuous.

XVII. Of Cruelty and Clemency, and Whether It Is Best for a Prince to be Feared or Beloved

The most precious Depositum that is put in the Hands of a Prince, is the Lives of his Subjects: As his Office gives him a Power of condemning to Death, or pardoning Criminals, so it makes him the supreme Arbiter of Justice. Good Princes look upon this Power, which is so much boasted of, as the weightiest Part of their Charge; they know they are Men themselves, as well as those whom they judge; they know that Injustices and Injuries may be compensated in this World, but that Execution of a Sentence of Death too hastily passed, is an Evil that can never be repaired; they are only inclined to Severity, when they find Severity necessary, to prevent greater Evils, which otherwise could not be averted; they are merciful, except in desperate Cases, where Mercy to Particulars would be Cruelty to the Whole; and act like a Man, who having a Leg or an Arm gangrened and incurable, is willing to bear the painful Operation of having it cut off, in order to save the rest of his Body.

XXVI. An Exhortation to Deliver Italy from the Barbarians

I have told Kings, That their true Policy was to excel their Subjects in Virtue, that they might not find themselves obliged to condemn in others what their own Practice authorized. I have observed, that bright and glorious Actions were not alone sufficient to establish their Reputation, and that true and lasting Fame was only to be purchased by such Actions as tend to the Benefit of Mankind.

Princes whose only Aim it is to make their People happy, ought well to consider, before they expose them to every thing that human Nature has most Occasion to dread.

Others who look upon their Subjects as their Slaves, endanger them without Pity, and see them perish without Regret; but those Princes who consider Men as their Equals, and look upon their People as a Body of which they themselves are the Soul, are as sparing of the Blood of their Subjects, as of their own.

To conclude this Work, I would beseech all Sovereigns not to take Offence at the Liberty with which I speak to them: My sole Design is to make them acquainted with Truth, to animate them to Virtue, and to flatter none. The good Opinion I have of the Princes who reign at present in Europe, makes me believe them worthy to hear the Truth

Taken from Frederick the Great, *Anti-Machiavel: or, an Examination of Machiavel's Prince* (London: T. Woodward, 1741), vii–viii, 3, 166, 179–181, 331.

THE MEXICAN CONSTITUTION OF 1917

Article 27

Ownership of the lands and waters within the boundaries of the national territory is vested originally in the Nation, which has had, and has, the right to transmit title thereof to private persons, thereby constituting private property. Private property shall not be expropriated except for reasons of public use and subject to payment of indemnity. The Nation shall at all times have the right to impose on private property such limitations as the public interest may demand, as well as the right to regulate the utilization of natural resources which are susceptible of appropriation, in order to conserve them and to ensure a more equitable distribution of public wealth. With this end in view, necessary measures shall be taken to divide up large landed estates; to develop small landed holdings in operation; to create new agricultural centers, with necessary lands and waters; to encourage agriculture in general and to prevent the destruction of natural resources, and to protect property from damage to the detriment of society. Centers of population which at present either have no lands or water or which do not possess them in sufficient quantities for the needs of their inhabitants, shall be entitled to grants thereof, which shall be taken from adjacent properties, the rights of small landed holdings in operation being respected at all times.

In the Nation is vested the direct ownership of all natural resources of the continental shelf and the submarine shelf of the islands; of all minerals or substances, which in veins, ledges, masses or ore pockets, form deposits of a nature distinct from the components of the earth itself, such as the minerals from which industrial metals and metalloids are extracted; deposits of precious stones, rock-salt and the deposits of salt formed by sea water; products derived from the decomposition of rocks, when subterranean works are required for their extraction; mineral or organic deposits of materials susceptible of utilization as fertilizers; solid mineral fuels; petroleum and all solid, liquid, and gaseous hydrocarbons; and the space above the national territory to the extent and within the terms fixed by international law.

Legal capacity to acquire ownership of lands and waters of the Nation shall be governed by the following provisions:

I. Only Mexicans by birth or naturalization and Mexican companies have the right to acquire ownership of lands, waters, and their appurtenances, or to obtain concessions for the exploitation of mines or of waters. The State may grant the same right to foreigners, provided they agree before the Ministry of Foreign Relations to consider themselves as nationals in respect to such property, and bind themselves not to invoke the protection of their governments in matters relating thereto; under penalty, in case of noncompliance with this agreement, of forfeiture of the property acquired to the Nation . . .

II. Religious institutions known as churches, regardless of creed, may in no case acquire, hold, or administer real property or hold mortgages thereon; such property held at present either directly or through an intermediary shall revert to the Nation, any person

whosoever being authorized to denounce any property so held. Presumptive evidence shall be sufficient to declare the denunciation well founded. Places of public worship are the property of the Nation . . .

XVIII. All contracts and concessions made by former Governments since the year 1876, which have resulted in the monopolization of lands, waters, and natural resources of the Nation, by a single person or company, are declared subject to revision, and the Executive of the Union is empowered to declare them void whenever they involve serious prejudice to the public interest.

Taken from “The Constitution of 1917: Articles 27 and 123,” in *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 398–401.