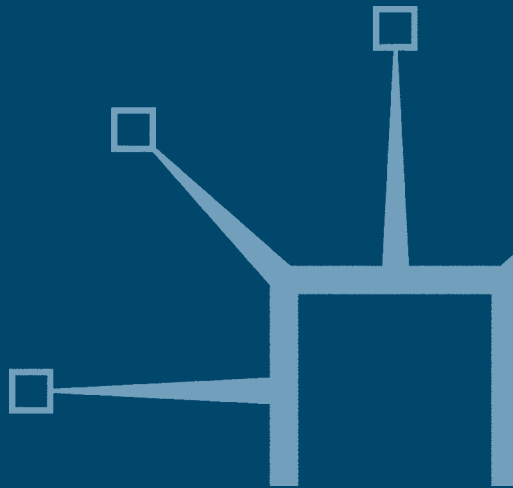


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Political Thought from Machiavelli to Stalin

Revolutionary Machiavellism

E.A. Rees



Political Thought from Machiavelli to Stalin

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Introduction

The influence of the ideas of Niccolò Machiavelli in Russia has attracted comparatively little attention amongst scholars. However, there are notable exceptions. The study by the Italian scholar Giuseppe Prezzolini *Machiavelli* contained a valuable section on the reception of Machiavelli's ideas in Russia.¹ A major breakthrough in this field was the work of the Polish scholar Jan Malarczyk. Malarczyk defended his dissertation on the subject of Machiavelli's political thought at Leningrad State University in 1958.² The main findings were published in 1959 and 1960.³ Malarczyk's work, however, concentrates on the scholarly debate on Machiavelli and pays less regard to the political impact of his ideas. His findings were published in Italian and taken up by Italian scholars.⁴

M. A. Yusim's *Machiavelli v Rossii*, published in 1998, provides the best examination of the influence of Machiavelli's views in Russia from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. It provides a very comprehensive bibliography of sources, particularly of early archive sources, and it provides excellent coverage of the works published in Russia since Stalin's death.⁵ Yusim's book, like Malarczyk's work, inclines towards an overly schematic summary of works, which overlooks some of the crucial aspects of the impact of these ideas as they relate to the policies and practices of political movements and regimes.

The influence of Machiavelli's ideas in Russia and the Soviet Union is a big subject. At the outset, it is necessary to dispel some misconceptions. Machiavelli is primarily thought of as the theorist who advances the proposition that the end justifies the means. And, indeed, Machiavelli does just this. But Machiavelli is much more than this. His work is concerned with the problem of political order, of what kinds of political system are viable and effective. He addresses also the question of the nature of political change, the role of the state and the relationship of the state to its subjects. Indeed, his work is extraordinarily rich in this regard. This is where the strength of his appeal lies.

However, vision without power is a chimera. From Marx and Engels they had much to learn about the nature of power. But other sources also contributed to their thinking. And this was true for the Bolshevik leaders in general. What is astonishing is the failure to examine the influence of these other sources of ideas on the thinking of these figures. For political leaders in a newly established state, forged in the upheaval

of revolution and civil war, the question of order and stability was central. For a political leadership who saw itself engaged in the construction of a new order, one which would supersede the capitalist order, and which would endure for generations, the question of appropriate models of political organization were vital.

For such leaders, there were to hand examples of institutions which had survived for centuries and had played a formative role in shaping the history of mankind. One of these was the Roman Republic and Empire, from which Machiavelli sought to derive fundamental lessons about the nature of political order. The second was the Roman Catholic Church, in the preservation of which the order of the Jesuits, founded by Ignatius Loyola, played a major part. The Jesuits played a major role in the intellectual attack on Machiavelli from the sixteenth century onwards. The central basis of this attack was Machiavelli's criticism of the papacy and the priesthood, his scathing criticisms of the corruption of contemporary Christianity, and his apparent atheism. Despite this sustained attack on Machiavelli, commentators from the outset noted the very close affinity between the ideas of Machiavelli and the methods and practices of the Jesuits.⁶

In this study we explore the various strands of Machiavellian thought that influenced the revolutionary movement in nineteenth-century Russia. We also analyse how far Bolshevism had an affinity to the Machiavellian problematic, and how Machiavelli's ideas were used. We also explore, as a subsidiary issue, the surprising interest shown by Russian revolutionaries in the ideas and organizational methods of the Jesuits.

Machiavelli had always been considered a dangerous, subversive thinker. In the sixteenth century his works were placed on the Index of the Catholic Church, he was vilified and denounced. In the eighteenth century his works were widely proscribed. Frederick the Great of Prussia, assisted by Voltaire, wrote his famous *Anti-Machiavel*. In this climate, Machiavelli also came to occupy a place of high regard amongst many intellectuals, for the boldness of his thinking, his uncompromising endeavour to describe the world of politics as it was, for his independence of thought, and his willingness to challenge the pretensions of the Catholic Church. Amongst leading intellectuals, from Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza to Rousseau his contribution to human enlightenment and learning was applauded.

Hannah Arendt, in *On Revolution*, ascribes a central place to Machiavelli as a thinker on revolution ('the spiritual father of revolution'), and on the more complex task of establishing a lasting new authority, which emerges from this upheaval, with the opening of opportunities

to newcomers, to 'Cicero's *homines novi*, to Machiavelli's *condottiere*'. Machiavelli was especially significant in separating politics from ethics, in his enthusiasm for reviving the spirit and institutions of Roman antiquity, and his recognition of the role of violence in politics. He exercised considerable influence in this regard in the eighteenth century and on the French revolution.⁷ Machiavelli has been widely viewed as a revolutionary in terms of his thinking on politics.⁸

Machiavelli's influence during the Enlightenment and the French revolution remains unclear and a matter of controversy. Not surprisingly, when we turn to the October Revolution of 1917, the influence of Machiavelli seems even more remote. The question might be posed as to what contribution a sixteenth-century Florentine might have made to the ideas which guided the first proletarian socialist revolution.

Historians of Soviet Russia, with a few notable exceptions, simply ignore it. We shall approach the question by examining the way in which Machiavelli's ideas were received, presented and used in Russia. In exploring this theme we shall be concerned with examining various kinds of relations between ideas and practices. First, we shall examine the evidence of the direct influence of Machiavelli's thought on political actors, the evidence that they had read his work and derived lessons from it, which they applied in practice. The direct influences are the most difficult to substantiate and the easiest to conceal. Second, we shall examine the evidence of indirect influence, the way in which political actors were influenced at second-hand by the thoughts and ideas of individuals and movements that had been directly influenced by Machiavelli's thought. Third, we shall be looking at affinities between both the thoughts and actions of political actors and the advice offered by Machiavelli. Strong affinities may exist quite independently of direct or indirect influences from the thoughts of Machiavelli, and may be simply part of the everyday currency of 'Machiavellism' in politics. But strong affinities, which we shall argue exist in the cases of V. I. Lenin and I. V. Stalin, require us to be open to the idea that there may also be strong direct and indirect influences which as yet have remained undetected.

The question of influence, direct and indirect, cannot be posed in a unilinear way. The political ideas of Machiavelli have to be addressed in their complexity, taking the tensions and ambiguities in his thinking into account; the defender of dictatorship and the sworn enemy of tyranny; the democrat who despairs of democratic means; the humanist who advocates inhumane methods. Thus, a fourth aspect of our approach is to determine how far the political discourse of particular movements and parties reflect these tensions, and how far their inter-

nal debates revolve around the ambiguities and tensions that were integral to the thinking of Machiavelli himself.

A wide diversity of different intellectual influences went into the shaping of the Stalinist system, some of which were directly connected to Marxism, others with a more remote connection which were gradually fused with it. Isaac Deutscher described the growing influence of the Asiatic elements in Russian culture in the Stalin era. Here, it will be argued that Stalinism drew on a wide range of intellectual European influences, particularly the darker, more authoritarian strands in European thought from classical antiquity, through the Renaissance to the twentieth century. In this, the history of Stalinism cannot be understood in isolation from the wider history of Europe in the twentieth century, and the rise of the other authoritarian trends of Nazism and fascism. The study revolves around the question of the influence of Machiavelli's thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the rise of Machiavellism in modern politics.

An important aspect of this study revolves around the relationship between politics and ethics. Machiavelli was and remains an extremely controversial figure. Leo Strauss unambiguously describes *The Prince* as a revolutionary work and his teaching as 'evil' and 'diabolical'.⁹ Carl J. Friedrich analysed the exaggerated Machiavellism in politics as an aspect of political pathology.¹⁰ Here we explore the relationship between Marxism and ethics, and the problem of revolutionary movements, revolution as a political act, and the problem of revolutionary governments.

One school of thought presents Machiavelli as one who develops a 'scientific' approach to the question of political power, and one who offered this advice to leaders who pursued worthy and laudable aims (the rescuing of the state and society from decadence through a rediscovery of *virtú*, who sought to cleanse the state of the corrupt accretions of feudal and clerical power, who sought the unification of Italy and the expulsion of the invading powers). At the outset, it should be stated that Machiavelli's approach to politics was not 'scientific' in the sense of a dispassionate, disinterested quest for truth, but rather that it stemmed from very powerful convictions about the nature of political power, based on his understanding and admiration of the ancient Romans.

In approaching this study, it is important to distinguish between the influence of Machiavelli, and what might be termed 'Machiavellianism' or 'Machiavellism', which may or may not be related to Machiavelli's thought. 'Machiavellism', in so far as it involves a detached and even cynical approach to the exercise of political power, it might be said is a

universal phenomenon, not bound by time or by culture. It might be said that there are situations, war, civil war, insurgency, revolution, where politics by its nature is 'Machiavellian'. It might also be said that many statesmen and politicians approach politics instinctively in a 'Machiavellian' manner. Given the great diversity of situations, and the great differences in statesmen and politicians this raises the question of whether it is possible to identify a common approach to politics which might be termed 'Machiavellism', be it intellectual, situational or personal.

The question of the influence of Machiavelli's ideas in Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries involves an analysis of the way these ideas were received and interpreted; the way these ideas were put to very different purposes, as a means of defending autocratic rule, but also as a means of exposing the nature of autocratic rule and as a critique of tyranny. The interest in Machiavelli and 'Machiavellism' thus can be used to shed light on the nature of the problem of governance as refracted through the study of ideas on dictatorship, from Machiavelli, through Jacobinism, to the Proletarian Dictatorship.¹¹ Within the Marxist tradition, there is a strong affinity with Machiavelli's thought, reflected in the works of Antonio Gramsci, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Louis Althusser.¹²

In considering Machiavellism in politics, we are concerned with examining a particular problematic, a way of perceiving politics, which relates to certain circumstances. These circumstances change over time and vary from place to place. In some period and some countries, the problematic appears wholly irrelevant. In others it appears central and intrinsic to all political preoccupations. In examining the Russian case, we are seeking to understand this problematic and to relate it to the specific conditions of Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and to set this in comparison with the experience of other countries.

The question of the relationship between Machiavelli's thought, Machiavellism and the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century was already broached in the early 1940s in a famous exchange between two leading French intellectuals Jacques Maritain and Raymond Aron.¹³ We shall briefly review this debate. Maritain took the position that within Machiavelli's thought there was a strong element of Machiavellianism, whereby politics was separated from all ethical consideration, and based purely on calculations of expediency. His position is summarized by Aron as follows: 'From Machiavelli's Machiavellianism, to vulgar Machiavellianism, and then from the latter to total Machiavellianism, there is an irresistible movement.'¹⁴ As an ardent Christian, Maritain argued

the necessity for politics to be subordinated to moral values. He argued that, notwithstanding the initial successes of Machiavellianism, it served in the end to corrupt both leaders and subject, and brought with it misery to all mankind.

Aron acknowledged the force of the argument regarding the self-destructive potential of unrestrained Machiavellianism. At the same time, he argued that Maritain's desire to base politics on firm moral principles was untenable. The power of Machiavelli's thought was that it related to the reality of politics and the nature of states, societies and individuals. In a sense, Machiavelli addresses an eternal problem about the nature of politics and one which has ultimately no solution:

Maritain attempts to mark the way of a politics simultaneously moral and realistic, somewhere between an abstract hypermoralism which, by proposing an unrealizable ideal, inclines men to cynicism and a Machiavellianism which resolutely occupies wickedness and evil. I fear, however, that he has not given sufficient recognition to the imperfection, the inertia, and the materiality of human and social nature. Or at least I fear that without denying it, he leaves in the shadows the part that art and technique play in politics. And conflicts arise when the techniques of the seizure, conservation, and organization of power require the use of force and fraud, and especially, more generally, an amoral management of men. Maritain, moreover, it seems to me, simplifies somewhat the antinomies of existence while laying down the formulation 'Machiavellianism does not succeed' and placing on the level of immediate successes all the victories of violence which spring up during the course of history and which so many times have engendered lasting works.¹⁵

The only attempt which Aron offers to the dilemma was the counsel of prudence; that statesmen in international and domestic affairs cannot be constrained by the same moral imperatives as lone individuals, and should not be judged by the same criteria. At the same time, the protection of the common good, of the interests of the state and of the citizen, require the exercise of prudence and discretion, to avoid the danger of resorting to the use of medicines that are more deadly than the disease they seek to cure.

Aron intended to write his own study of the relationship between Machiavelli, Machiavellism and the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century, whose ideologies he depicted as new 'secular religions'.¹⁶ But Aron did not attempt to explore how far this Machiavellism might

be traced back to Machiavelli himself. This work attempts to explore some of these themes anew.

To undertake such a study of the development of ideas and influences over such a long period of time runs counter to the strong trend in the study of political thought to contextualize and to relate ideas to immediate concerns and the accepted assumptions of the time. Such a study must, of necessity, be more conjectural. The dangers of such an approach in constructing lineages of thought, which in reality might not exist, are obvious. But without such studies we have political ideas that lack a dynamic dimension that cannot address the way in which similar dilemmas are a recurrent feature of political life through the ages.

E. A. REES

1

Machiavelli's Ideas on Politics

In this chapter we shall outline some of the principal features of Machiavelli's conception of politics based primarily on his two main works *The Prince* and *The Discourses*. We shall also consider some of his thoughts on revolution as outlined in his *Florentine Histories*. Machiavelli's thought has generated an immense amount of controversy. Here, we can only briefly allude to the various strands of thought that have emerged concerning his basic ideas. The interpretation and significance of his ideas has changed significantly from one historical epoch to the next. In the concluding part of the chapter, we shall turn our attention to the influence which Machiavelli had at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, to see how he was interpreted by the French revolutionaries, and the way the ideas of Machiavelli and the ideas of the Jacobins were taken up by leading German intellectuals.

Forms of government

Machiavelli's two main works on politics *The Prince* and *The Discourses* represent the essential ambiguity at the heart of his view of politics. In *The Discourses* he speaks of his preference for republican forms of government, whereas in *The Prince* he deals with the nature of autocratic rule. Although republican rule is preferred, it is not always possible or feasible. Republican rule can function, Machiavelli argues, where the populace is blessed with *virtù* and where the political actions of the citizenry are well regulated by law. Within a republic from time to time power may have to be temporarily granted to a dictator, but this need not undermine the republic itself.

Prudent men are wont to say . . . and this not rashly or without good ground . . . that he who would foresee what has to be, should reflect on what has been, for everything that happens in the world at any time has a genuine resemblance to what happened in ancient times.¹

A central danger for all states is that of degeneration, decadence – the loss of *virtù* – by which society becomes effete, corrupt and loses the ability or the will to preserve the state. In this situation, autocratic rulers may emerge – the prince. Machiavelli dedicated *The Prince* to Lorenzo de Medici; it is a treatise on the art of government for the autocrat. Central to Machiavelli's intention was that the prince would use these arts to rid Italy of foreign rule and to unify the country.

Machiavelli, in most of his writings, takes a consistent line that the best form of government is a mixed one, combining elements of aristocratic, oligarchic and democratic power, which reflect the interests of the nobles, the middle classes and the common people. The constitution introduced by Lycurgus in Sparta was based on this principle and led to a system which lasted for 800 years, bringing with it order and tranquillity.² If any one of these elements becomes too strong, the system becomes unbalanced. He lamented the destruction of the nobility in Florence in that it led to a loss of valour. He preferred a republic to a monarchy, on the grounds that it produced better leaders, and that those who failed could be removed.

Rulers, in deciding what form of rule they wish to institute, must take account of the kind of subjects with which they have to deal, 'for it is just as difficult and dangerous to try to free a people that wants to remain servile as it is to enslave a people that wants to remain free'.³ People unaccustomed to liberty, having once gained it, can easily fall again into servitude: it is like a wild animal, which, having been released to rove the countryside at will, is unaccustomed to fend for itself, and becomes prey to 'the first comer who seeks to chain it up again'.⁴

Machiavelli was an advocate of constant political renewal:

The conclusion we reach then, is that there is nothing more necessary to a community, whether it be a religious establishment, a kingdom, or a republic, than to restore to it the prestige it had at the outset, and to take care that either good institutions or good men shall bring this about, rather than external force should give rise to it.⁵

The young should be promoted in good time, to make use of their vigour of mind and action.⁶

Let then a republic be constituted where there exists or can be brought into being notable equality; and regime of the opposite type, i.e. a principality, where there is notable inequality. Otherwise what is done will lack proportion and will be of short duration.⁷

Human nature

Machiavelli's view of human nature is deeply pessimistic, and accords with the notion of 'universal egoism'.⁸ Human society is pervaded by conflict for wealth, honour, status and power. Human appetites are insatiable, with the result that 'the human mind is perpetually discontented, and of its few possessions is apt to grow weary'.⁹ Men never do good unless driven to it by necessity, but when they are free to choose and do as they please, confusion and disorder become everywhere rampant:¹⁰

One can make this generalisation about men: they are ungrateful, fickle, liars and deceivers, they shun danger and are greedy for profit; while you treat them well, they are yours. They would shed their blood for you, risk their property, their lives, their children, so long, as I said above, as danger is remote; but when you are in danger they turn against you.¹¹

For a ruler, it is good that he should have the love and regard of his people, but it is best to be feared rather than loved.¹² Men 'are by nature both ambitious and suspicious, and know not how to use moderation where their fortunes are concerned'.¹³ But they are also short-sighted and naïve:

For men, as king Ferdinand use to say, resemble certain little birds of prey in whom so strong is the desire to catch the prey which nature incites them to pursue that they do not notice another and greater bird of prey which hovers over them ready to pounce and kill.¹⁴

The moral qualities of the people are no worse than those of princes, and thus a republic constitutes the best form of government, but has to be guarded against corruption:

for should there be masses regulated by laws in the same way as they [princes] are, there will be found in them the same goodness as we find in kings and it will be seen that they neither 'arrogantly domi-

nate nor servilely obey'. Such was the Roman populace which, so long as the republic remained uncorrupted, was never servilely obsequious, nor did it ever dominate with arrogance; on the contrary, it had its own institutions and magistrates and honourably kept its own place.¹⁵

He notes with regard to the affair of the Decemviri how easily men are corrupted and in nature become transformed.

Machiavelli also had a very elitist conception of the relative intellectual capacities of groups in society:

There are three kinds of intelligence: one kind understands things for itself, the other appreciates what others can understand, the third understands neither for itself nor through others. This first kind is excellent, the second good, and the third kind useless.¹⁶

This did not preclude the emergence of leaders of ability from the ranks of the lower classes. The great majority, who could not be taught, who were driven by feelings, might be manipulated and directed.

Dictatorship and tyranny

In establishing or fundamentally reforming republics or kingdoms it is best that one person undertake the task. The founder or reformer of the state may well have to undertake some 'extraordinary action'. For this he should not be reproached, for

while the action accuses him, the result excuses him; and when the result is good, as it was with Romulus, it will always excuse him; for one should reproach a man who is violent in order to destroy, not one who is violent in order to mend things.¹⁷

... first, that is, the armed prince, who alone can do the work of reformation: then popular government, which is, if possible, to be the permanent form of the state.¹⁸

Here we have Machiavelli's conception not of the 'end justifying the means' but rather 'the end excusing (*scusare*) the means'. Actions are not right or wrong in an absolute sense, but must be judged according to their consequences. Here is the core of what is described as Machiavelli's 'consequentialism'.

Although a defender of temporary dictatorship, Machiavelli was a stern critic of tyranny, which, he argued, always led to impoverishment, regression and decline.¹⁹ He defended tyrannicide: 'Against a bad ruler, there is no remedy but the sword.'²⁰ The founders of new states should resist turning themselves into tyrants, for instead of winning fame, glory, security, tranquillity and peace of mind, they gain instead only infamy, scorn, abhorrence, danger and disquiet.²¹ The wise ruler recognizes the importance of prudence and self-restraint, 'Yet, it cannot be called prowess to kill fellow citizens, to betray friends, to be treacherous, pitiless, irreligious. These ways can win a prince power but not glory.'²² A wise ruler will abstain from taking advantage of the wives of his subjects, and especially their property: 'because men sooner forget the death of their father than the loss of their patrimony'.²³

Class

Machiavelli placed great emphasis on the importance of the clash of interest in society between contending parties and classes as a way of guaranteeing liberty. In this, he differed from the absolutist model of Hobbes:

Nor do they realise that in every republic there are two different dispositions, that of the populace and that of the upper class, and that all legislation favourable to liberty is brought about by the clash between the two.²⁴

... so great is the ambition of the great that unless in a city they are kept down by various ways and means, that city will soon be brought to ruin.²⁵

Tyranny frequently arises as the result of the conflict of class interests, because of 'the excessive demand of the people for freedom and to the excessive demand to dominate on the part of the nobles' with one or other of the parties lending support to a particular person.²⁶

In a situation of intense conflict between an arrogant upper class and a 'raving' population fearful of losing its freedom, Clearchus of Heraclea resolved the problem at a stroke, freeing himself from the influence of the leading men and winning over the populace and satisfying their lust for vengeance by 'cutting to pieces' all the nobles,²⁷ from which Machiavelli derived the conclusion 'a prince must always live with the same people, but he can well do without the nobles, since he

can make and unmake them every day, increasing and lowering their standing at will'.²⁸ Machiavelli also warns of the dangers of excess:

When the populace has thrown off all restraint, it is not the mad things it does that are terrifying, nor is it of present evils that one is afraid but of what may come of them, for amidst such confusion there may come to be a tyrant.²⁹

Numerically the masses are potentially very powerful. But this strength needs to be organized, for without leadership they will be overcome by indecision and in conflict are likely to scatter. Machiavelli argued that an excited crowd that wishes to avoid these dangers needs to appoint of itself a leader. 'The plebs united is strong, but divided is weak.' In this, he cited the actions of the Roman plebs, as described by Livy, who, following the death of Virginia, to secure their own safety, appointed twenty of their members as tribunes.³⁰

Religion and custom

Machiavelli recognized the important role of religion in instilling civic virtues in the people. In the absence of religion, the fear of God had to be replaced by the fear of the prince.³¹ But Christianity, by glorifying the 'humble and contemplative man rather than the man of action', lauding humility, abnegation and contempt for mundane things, could not develop the virile, manly qualities which he admired and which he thought essential for developing military valour and civic virtue.³² In this sense the pre-Christian, pagan religions had been better.

Religion, like all human institutions, was transient. New religions when they arose sought to extirpate the remnants of the old.³³ In this sense there was nothing eternal about Christianity. He held the church and the papacy responsible for the corruption and disunity of Italy. Machiavelli's work implies a direct repudiation of Christian ethics. There is no universal or eternal morality. Things are not, of themselves, right or wrong, they are to be judged only by their consequences, by their utility. Rulers cannot be judged by the standard of ordinary citizens, but they should be guided by prudence. For society it may be beneficial that ordinary citizens be constrained by moral codes, but above all it was vital that they should exhibit *virtù*.

Religion can serve to temper the relations between rulers and ruled, to create stability. But sometimes, in seeking such transformations, leaders may be wise to preserve some semblance of the past. In order to

make change acceptable it was advisable to 'retain at least the shadow of its ancient customs' on the basis that 'men in general are as much affected by what a thing appears to be as by what it is, indeed they are frequently influenced more by appearances than by the reality'.³⁴

The need to operate on the people

A central precept advanced by Machiavelli was that the prince should operate on the people. This stood in contrast to the conventional wisdom that the people were fickle and unreliable.³⁵ A prince who through qualities of leadership and through the creation of sound institutions, should be able to win the general allegiance of the people, will be able to establish his power on a secure base.³⁶ This was a means of averting the danger of conspiracy; by taking pains so that the nobles did not despair and that the people were content.³⁷ The new prince should not disarm the people, but rather through arming the people, he would arm himself.³⁸ Similarly the prince should not seek security through fortifications to defend himself against the people.

In a famous passage, Machiavelli declares:

all armed prophets have conquered and unarmed prophets have come to grief. Beside what I have said already, the populace is by nature fickle; it is easy to persuade them of something, but difficult to confirm them in that persuasion. Therefore, one must urgently arrange matters so that when they no longer believe they can be made to believe by force.³⁹

The prince should operate on the masses but should not depend on them too much, but should create his own power base. Moral force on its own is never enough, and must be backed up by force.

Machiavelli's conception of the masses was not democratic and involved no element of idealization. Central to Machiavelli's view is the idea of *virtù*, by which he means valour, courage, steadfastness and will-power. It is closely allied to the martial virtues. Even where the masses were imbued with *virtù*, it was *virtù* in terms of their willingness to struggle for their own liberty, and to submit private interests to general interests, in particular, to protect the state and serve its needs. In operating on the masses, the prince had to understand their interests, their resentments, their sentiments, their habits, what impressed and what frightened them, how, in some senses, they were credulous, malleable and capable of being duped. *Virtù* might be strengthened or instilled in a

population by the example of great leaders, by the organization of strong institutions (including religious observance), but Machiavelli insists, as Quentin Skinner notes, that 'the most efficacious means of coercing people into behaving in a *virtuous* fashion is by making them terrified of behaving otherwise'.⁴⁰

Methods of rule

Machiavelli repeatedly emphasizes the need for a ruler to secure his position and remove potential rivals. Whoever does not do this, he warns, his government will be short lived.⁴¹ The prince is always the subject of envy. Rivals for fame and power, when defeated 'will never remain quiet and bear it with patience'. 'To overcome envy of this kind, the only remedy lies in the death of those who are imbued with it.'⁴² A prince can never be secure in his principality whilst those despoiled of it remain alive, these can never be won over; 'old injuries are never cancelled by new benefits, least of all when the benefits are of less importance than the injuries previously inflicted':⁴³

Should anyone become the ruler of a city or of a state, especially if he has no sure footing in it and it is suited neither for the civic life characteristic of a monarchy nor yet that of a republic, the best thing that he can do in order to retain such a principality, given that he be a new prince, is to organise everything in that state afresh: e.g. in its cities to appoint new governors, with new titles and a new authority, the governors themselves being new men; to make the rich poor and the poor rich; as did David when he became king 'who filled the hungry with the good things and the rich sent empty away', as well as to build new cities, to destroy those already built, and to move the inhabitants from one place to another far distant from it; in short, to leave nothing in that province in tact, and nothing in it, neither rank, nor institution, nor form of government, nor wealth, except it be held by such as recognise that it comes from you.⁴⁴

New leaders should not continually inflict punishments on their people, but should do so once and for all, thus removing the fear and suspicion of the population which, if maintained over a long time, may cause the people to turn against their leaders:⁴⁵

Hence, very rarely will there be found a good man ready to use bad methods in order to make himself prince, though with a good end

in view, nor yet a bad man who, having become prince, is ready to do the right thing and to whose mind it will occur to use well that authority, which he has acquired by bad means.⁴⁶

The prince, Machiavelli, advises, should be especially wary of a successful general. In such a situation he should look to his own security and consider 'putting him to death or depriving him of his standing' with the army and the populace.⁴⁷

But in the alternative case in which one has but few friends at home, internal forces do not suffice, and one has to seek outside help. This has to be of three kinds: first, foreign satellites to protect your person; second, the arming of the countryside to do what should be done by the plebs; and third, a defensive alliance with powerful neighbours.⁴⁸

Men who have risen from obscurity to the highest office are frequently required to change their views and conduct, in accordance with a fuller understanding of the disorders and dangers which confront the state. Hence, the proverb, 'He is of a different opinion in the market place from what he is in the palace.'⁴⁹

Machiavelli devotes much attention to the question of conspiracies and how to thwart them. The main danger comes not from those who have suffered injury at the prince's hand, for they lack opportunity, but instead from those he has favoured, and who are driven by ambition.⁵⁰ It is easier for him to win the friendship of those who were satisfied with the former government, than to retain the friendship of those who supported him in the struggle against that government.⁵¹ The prince should avoid pride and ostentation, which nurtures resentment.⁵² He should also avoid incurring, as far as possible, the hatred of his subjects.⁵³

Qualities required of a leader

Machiavelli dwells at length on the personal qualities required of a leader. He must be ready to take advantage of the existing state of things; he must be strong enough to sin boldly if his country's welfare depends upon it; he must be shrewd enough to understand human nature, he must overcome evil by evil, play with the passions and impulses of men and use them for his advantage. He must be decisive, foresee problems and take action in advance. Where he is strong he should be resolute,

where weak he should exercise caution. He must depend upon himself and his own forces. He must be dispassionate and unsentimental. He should resort to any means to save his fatherland, even at the cost of his own soul. A new founded state is in special jeopardy when one weak leader follows another.⁵⁴

To maintain his rule, the Prince must learn how not to be virtuous, and to use this according to need.⁵⁵ He should emulate the methods of the beast, combining the ferocity of the lion with the cunning of the fox. In the struggle for the state, the victor is not judged:

Let the prince then aim at conquering and maintaining the state, and the means will always be judged honourable and praised by everyone, for the vulgar is always taken by appearances and the issue of events; and the world consists only of the vulgar, and the few who are not vulgar are isolated when the many have a rallying point in the prince.⁵⁶

He should not flinch from using immoral means (vices) in safeguarding the state, because moral means may lead to his undoing, whereas immoral means may bring security and prosperity.⁵⁷

You must realise this: that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things which give men a reputation for virtue, because in order to maintain his state, he is often forced to act in defiance of good faith, of charity, of kindness, of religion. And so he should have a flexible disposition, varying as fortune and circumstances dictate. As I said above, he should not deviate from what is good, if that is possible, but he should know how to be evil, if that is necessary.⁵⁸

He should not be bound by his word, if it is in the interests of the state. Those abiding by honest principles are likely to be overcome by those who do not.⁵⁹ The prince should be 'a great liar and deceiver', and since men are 'so simple, and so much creatures of circumstances, the deceiver will always find someone to deceive'.⁶⁰

Machiavelli puts into the mouth of Cosimo dei Medici the much-quoted remark that states are not ruled with prayer books:

There is no doubt that a prince's greatness depends on his triumphing over difficulties and oppositions. . . . Many, therefore, believe that when he has the chance an able prince should cunningly foster some

opposition to himself so that by overcoming it he can enhance his own stature.⁶¹

The prince should, whilst retaining the dignity of his position, meet with his subjects, display courtesy and munificence, and entertain the people with shows and festivities.⁶² He should carefully select his ministers; for on the basis of their competence and loyalty, the people judge the prince's own wisdom.⁶³ He should appoint wise men to his government, allowing them to speak truthfully to him on the matters within their competence.⁶⁴ He should delegate to others the enactment of unpopular measures and keep in his own hands the distribution of favours.⁶⁵

A leader's success, Machiavelli believed, also in part depended on fortune, and 'whether their behaviour is in conformity with the times'.⁶⁶ Leaders must therefore be flexible and able to adjust their behaviour and policies in accordance with changing circumstances. But leaders must be able, through boldness and audacity where necessary, to impose their will on *fortuna* itself: 'I hold strongly to this: that it is better to be impetuous than circumspect; because fortune is a woman and if she is to be submissive it is necessary to beat and coerce her.'⁶⁷ In this youth is favoured as well as courage and daring. But leaders should also show constancy; remaining resolute in mind and conduct in order to show others 'that fortune hold no sway over them'.⁶⁸

Political and military skills

Machiavelli's concept of politics and political skill was derived to a considerable extent from his theory of warfare and the art of war. He saw an intimate relationship between civilian and military life, between civic *virtù* and military *virtù*. His admiration of the Romans derived from their understanding of this interconnection:

The main foundation of every state, new states as well as ancient or composite ones, are good laws and good arms; and because you cannot have good laws without good arms, and where there are good arms, good laws inevitably follow.⁶⁹

Thus, 'A Prince, therefore, must have no other object or thought, nor acquire skill in anything, except war, its organisation and its discipline. The art of war is all that is expected of a ruler.'⁷⁰

Machiavelli's advocacy of a civilian-based militia derived not only from his assessment of the inherent weaknesses of mercenary armies, but also from the fact that such an army gave the prince his own independent military force, and that such a force fostered the qualities of *virtù* that were essential for both military and civilian life.

Avoiding half-measures

For Machiavelli the model of antiquity, and of Rome, was central. Politics was an unchanging activity. Human nature was also unchanging. Whether in the form of a republic or rule by a prince, the state was obliged to follow certain precepts to ensure its survival. Men, do 'know not how to be wholly good nor yet wholly bad', and consequently prefer to steer a middle course, which, in the governing of a state, may be most harmful.⁷¹ In this, Machiavelli often counselled resort to extreme measures, the avoidance of half measures. This was summarized in the precept that 'men must either be won over, or destroyed'.⁷² With this, Machiavelli argued the importance of audacity and courage, which elevated brutal actions by the state onto a higher plane, where ordinary moral considerations no longer applied.⁷³

There are various instances where Machiavelli argued for extreme measures. Three in particular stand out: i) how a state deals with a rebellious people; ii) how to deal with internal opposition – a divided city; and iii) how to deal with prisoners of war:

Having heard this proposal, the senate came to a decision which followed the lines the consul had laid down, which was that, after duly considering one by one each town, they should either treat all citizens of importance generously or wipe them out . . . Nor did they ever adopt a middle course as I have said, of importance, towards men, and other rulers should imitate them in this.⁷⁴

Those who are of this opinion see that, whenever men individually or a whole city offends against a state, its ruler has, both as an example to others and for his own security, no alternative but to wipe them out. Honour consists here in being able, and knowing how, to castigate it, not in being able to hold it thereby incurring a thousand risks. For the ruler who does not punish an offender in such a way that he cannot offend again, is deemed either an ignoramus or a coward.⁷⁵

In dealing with a divided city, Machiavelli outlines three options: 'either to kill them [the ringleaders] as the consuls did, or to expel them from the city, or to force them to make peace with one another and to undertake not to attack one another'. On this question, drawing inspiration from the actions of the Roman consuls in reconciling the people of Ardea, Machiavelli concluded, 'The only way to cure it is to kill the ringleaders responsible for the disturbances'. Failure to follow this advice accounted for the fall of the town of Pistoia.

Machiavelli's reasoning here is worth following. For he argues, 'in executions of this kind there is something great and grand, a weak republic cannot do such things'. But he acknowledged that people were horrified by the very idea of emulating the Romans:

so feeble are men today owing to their defective education and to the little knowledge they have of affairs, that they look upon the judgements of their forefathers as inhuman in some cases and in others as impossible.⁷⁶

People should have the courage and wisdom to apply the same principles as the Romans.

In dealing with prisoners of war, Machiavelli writes that the Samnites, having captured the Romans in the Caudine Fork, instead of releasing them immediately or executing them, adopted the middle course 'disarmed them, marched them under the yoke, and then set them free burning with indignation' and paid for this error.⁷⁷ There were only two options in such a situation, he argued, either to let the prisoners go scot-free or to slaughter them all.⁷⁸

These three instances where Machiavelli counsels extreme measures relate to particular circumstances. More generally, in defence of the state, any and every action was justified:

For when the safety of one's country wholly depends on the decision to be taken, no attention should be paid either to justice or injustice, to kindness or cruelty, or to its being praiseworthy or ignominious. On the contrary, every other consideration being set aside, this alternative should be whole heartedly adopted which will save the life and preserve the freedom of one's country.⁷⁹

The problem, not addressed by Machiavelli, was who defined what constituted a threat to the state.

Machiavelli found justification of this line of reasoning in the actions and behaviour of the Roman state:

As we have remarked several times, in every large city there inevitably occur unfortunate incidents which call for the physician.

Thus, Rome did not hesitate to pronounce judicial sentence of death on a whole legion at a time, or on a city; not yet to banish eight to ten thousand men and to impose on them extraordinary conditions which had to be observed not by one man alone but by so many.⁸⁰

'Physician' here is clearly a joking euphemism for executioner. The prince in command of a large army should not fear acquiring a reputation for cruelty, 'because without such a reputation no army was ever kept united or disciplined'.⁸¹ This included that 'most terrible' method of enforcing discipline in the Roman army, of decimation, of which practice Machiavelli gives a full account in *The Discourses*.⁸² Machiavelli clearly thought such methods acceptable and necessary.

Machiavelli offers other examples of avoiding the middle course. Hiero of Syracuse, having decided that mercenaries were useless, and, that it was impossible either to keep them or disband them, had them all 'cut to pieces' (*tagliare a pezzi*).⁸³ There is also the case of Clearchus, cited above, who to appease the masses, resolved to 'cut to pieces all the nobles'.⁸⁴ 'Cutting to pieces' was a phrase Machiavelli often used, reflecting an almost gleeful delight in such exploits, an expression that stands out against his usual cold, detached prose.

Machiavelli describes how the cruel and licentious Giovampagolo Baglioni meekly surrendered to the pope, when he could very easily have taken and executed him. Had he done so, people would have admired his courage. It would have won him 'immortal fame', demonstrating how little men regarded a corrupt and grasping clergy. This would have obliterated any infamy or danger that the act might provoke. Baglioni's failure of nerve demonstrated that he was a petty tyrant, who was incapable of such an act, for 'evil deeds have a certain grandeur and are open-handed in their way'.⁸⁵

Machiavelli also recounts Cesare Borgia's ordering of the murder of Remirro de Orco (The Ogre) who had ruled Romagna on his behalf. His cruelty provoked widespread hatred, but he had brought the region from chaos to order. Borgia had him butchered, with his mutilated body left for public display in Imola. According to Machiavelli: 'The brutal-

ity of this spectacle kept the people of the Romagna for a time appeased and stupefied.⁸⁶ From this, Machiavelli drew the conclusion:

So a prince must not worry if he incurs reproach for his cruelty so long as he keeps his subjects united and loyal . . . A new prince, of all rulers, finds it impossible to avoid a reputation for cruelty, because of the abundant dangers inherent in a newly won state.⁸⁷

Revolution

Machiavelli did not approve or advocate popular revolution. However, in his *Florentine Histories*, he presents a vivid account of the rising of the *ciompi* in Florence. He places in the mouth of one of the insurgents advice on the way they should proceed. After the initial rising, the insurgents deliberated as to whether it was best to yield and temporize in order to quell the anger of the propertied classes. Their spokesman insisted that having embarked on the insurrectionary course they should continue that course until the propertied classes were compelled to negotiate with them on their terms:

It is to our advantage, therefore, as it appears to me, if we wish that our errors be forgiven, to make new ones, redoubling the evils, multiplying the arson and robbery – and to contrive to have many companions in this, because when many err, no one is punished, and though small faults are punished, great and grave ones are rewarded; and when many suffer, few seek for revenge, because universal injuries are borne with greater patience than particular ones. Thus, in multiplying evils, we will gain pardon more easily and will open the way for us to have the things we desire to have for our freedom. And it appears to me that we are on the way to a sure acquisition, because those who could hinder us are disunited and rich; their disunion will therefore give us victory, and their riches, when they have become ours, will maintain it for us.⁸⁸

For those overcome by conscience by what they had done, and who wished to abstain from further deeds, he advised that such considerations should not intrude ‘for neither conscience nor infamy should dismay you, because those who win, in whatever mode they win, never receive shame from it’. The rich had acquired their wealth through either force or fraud, but had attached to their gains the title of earnings. Those who shunned such methods ‘always suffocate in servitude

and poverty'. 'For faithful servants are always servants and good men are always poor; nor do they ever rise out of servitude unless they are unfaithful and bold, nor out of poverty unless they are rapacious and fraudulent.'⁸⁹

They had to be resolute and united, and had to strike while the propertied classes were still disunited, they had to seize the moment pursuing a high-risk strategy so that they could dictate terms and compel their enemies to sue for peace:

As a result, either we shall be left princes of all the city, or we shall have so large a part of it that not only will our past errors be pardoned but we shall have authority enabling us to threaten them with new injuries.⁹⁰

These words, Machiavelli said, inflamed spirits that were 'already hot for evil'. The insurgents resolved again to take up arms after they had secured more companions, and swore an oath to stick together if the magistrates took any one of them. The spokesman for the insurgent insists that these actions were determined not by moral consideration, but by 'necessity' – 'if no one else teaches us, necessity will', 'when necessity presses, boldness is judged prudence'.⁹¹

The last chapter of *The Prince*, which is addressed directly to Lorenzo de Medici, as an exhortation to liberate Italy from the rule of the barbarians, was to have a remarkable impact on subsequent generations of nationalist and revolutionary leaders in Italy and elsewhere. It depicted Italy as 'leaderless, lawless, crushed, despoiled, torn, overrun', having 'endured every kind of desolation', and represented an appeal for a political leader capable of eradicating these evils, unifying the country and creating a powerful state.

Machiavelli's conception of the political

Machiavelli's views on politics drew heavily on the works of the great classical writers. Polybius has been identified as one major source. Another is Cicero, particularly where Machiavelli speaks of avoiding the middle course and the need for extreme measures with defeated armies or rebellious subjects.⁹² Cicero also argued in favour of exterminating the state's enemies in order to safeguard its existence for generations to come. In his work 'On the Laws', he outlined the role of the two magistrates (praetors) within the Roman state. They were to be accorded supreme military and civil powers, adding 'they shall be subject to no

one: the safety of the people shall be their highest law' (*olis salus populi suprema lex esto*).⁹³

From the outset, Machiavelli's works attracted very strong reactions. In England, Cardinal Pole, in his work *The Defence of the Unity of the Church*, expressed three views of Machiavelli which flourished in the sixteenth century: i) that *The Prince* was a useful handbook of political science, that described the reality of how political power is wielded; ii) that it was an immoral or amoral work, which deserved strong moral censure; and iii) that it was a political satire written in a spirit of bitter irony.⁹⁴ This was a perceptive appreciation of the different standpoints from which Machiavelli can be read. In succeeding centuries, the same approaches recur time and time again.

The Machiavellian problematic relates to the politics of crisis, the politics of state formation or of the fundamental reform of the state. Machiavelli's conception of politics can be reduced to a number of basic propositions that are all closely interconnected with one another:

1. His view of politics is elitist, but it is a qualified elitism. Those who wield power suffer from the same human foibles as the rest. Machiavelli emphasizes an activist view of politics, where courage, audacity and will power are of central importance.
2. It is based on a pessimistic view of human nature, and of the incompetence of the masses. The masses constitute a major political force; they cannot be ignored, and they have a capacity to organize in pursuit of their own interests.
3. It recognizes the necessity of dictatorship for the construction or for the radical reform of states. It highlights the central role of violence and force in politics; force is the basis of all states and all law.
4. Man, Machiavelli argues, knows not how to be absolutely good or absolutely evil. In matters of politics, he argues, the statesman should, on occasions, avoid the middle course.
5. It sets as its ideal a republican form of government, where the interests of conflicting social groups are held in tension.
6. The conflict between classes and parties is an essential part of politics, and this conflict, although it can be destructive, can also be creative, and can serve to guarantee the freedom and vitality of the republic.
7. It places great emphasis on the cultivation of civic *virtù*, which is akin to military *virtù*, and on the need to educate and lead the masses.

8. It highlights the importance of liberty in a healthy state, allied to the notion of *virtù*. *Virtù* can best be developed with a republican system, where social inequalities are not too pronounced.
9. Politics and human nature are unchanging, and thus politics operates according to laws that are independent of the individual. These laws constitute 'necessity' which the individual must obey or face the consequences. Man has free will but is constrained by 'necessity'.
10. Machiavelli fundamentally rejects Christian ethics, but advocates religious practices that strengthen civic *virtù*. The laws that govern politics and human destiny require a capacity to calculate consequences and to act on the basis of these calculations without any fixed conception of right or wrong.
11. Politics is subject to clinical analysis. Machiavelli, therefore, demystifies political and social processes.

Machiavelli is famous for his view of politics as based on the calculation of contending forces, objectives determined by needs of the state, based on cold detachment, without any moral or sentimental judgement impinging. Machiavelli never used the term *raison d'état*, but is one of the founding fathers of the realist school of political thought.⁹⁵ The effective ruler has to constantly assert himself, and to subject events and destiny to his will. The moral judgements that apply in private life have no place in politics. The survival and well-being of the state overrides all other considerations. Political struggle is unceasing and no political forms endure forever.

Machiavelli's conception of 'necessity' needs to be stressed. It is as central to his thinking as dictatorship, republican liberty or *virtù*. He uses the term 'necessity' not simply with regard to what individuals are required to do by circumstances.⁹⁶ It has a much wider significance. Machiavelli's conception of politics and of human nature was that it was unchanging. Politics was subject to certain laws, which had to be followed lest unfortunate consequences follow. But these laws are not absolute and account has also to be taken of *fortuna*. The notion of 'necessity' means that the prince cannot be subject to the same ethical principles that guide individuals in their daily lives. What is not required by 'necessity' cannot be justified, as for example, when an individual seeks dictatorial power for his own vainglory. Nevertheless, Machiavelli allows considerable latitude in interpreting what constitutes 'necessity' – who interprets it and how. *Virtù* might be defined in Machiavelli's terms as the recognition of necessity, either by the prince or the people.

Interpreting Machiavelli's influence is by no means straightforward. Machiavellism existed before Machiavelli, and exists independently of him. Some politicians are instinctively Machiavellians and do not need to read *The Prince* as a blueprint for action. Certain political situations – war, civil war and revolution – call forth Machiavellian solutions. Moreover, the term Machiavellian carries such a negative charge, that few would willingly subscribe to Machiavelli's ideas, and the term has been appropriated as a term of opprobrium, and a way of explaining acts of great horror. Proving the influence or establishing the extent of influence of Machiavelli's ideas is extremely difficult. We are dealing, for the most part, with propositions, whose truth depends more on probability than actual proof.

Machiavelli and the French Revolution

Machiavelli's thought acquired a new significance with the French revolution but Machiavelli's intellectual contribution to the revolutionary movement is difficult to isolate. It might be said to follow two currents. The first was the official ideology of state, exemplified by the notion of *raison d'état*, of which Richelieu was such an exponent and which inspired his *Testament politique*. In the second place, it provided lessons for some of the critics of the prevailing order. Montesquieu, in his famous *Esprit des lois*, expressed the hope that his contemporaries had begun 'to cure themselves of Machiavellism'.⁹⁷ Voltaire was hostile. However, the view of Machiavelli as a defender of republican liberty, which had been advanced by Alberico Gentili and by Spinoza in his *Tractatus Politicus*, was endorsed by Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire* and by Diderot in the *Encyclopedie*.⁹⁸

Amongst the *Philosophes*, Rousseau was the one who was most forthright in his admiration. In his *Social Contract* he wrote 'He [Machiavelli] professed to teach kings, but it was the people he really taught. His *Prince* is the book of Republicans.' In a footnote he adds 'The choice of his [Machiavelli's] debatable hero, Cesare Borgia, clearly enough shows his hidden aim.'⁹⁹ Rousseau highlighted the problem of creating the state, and of finding a legislator who can organize this 'blind multitude', teach the masses what they will, and compel individuals to bring 'their wills into conformity with their reason'.¹⁰⁰ The state's laws should be endorsed by 'a free vote of the people'. The legislator cannot rely on force or reason but, on the basis of Machiavelli's precept, should base the laws on some divine authority.¹⁰¹ In representing the general will, the state acquires the character of a 'moral person'.¹⁰² But Rousseau also recognized the necessity, in some instances, for dictatorship, along the

lines of temporary dictatorship in Rome.¹⁰³ The need for exceptional powers is also addressed in his discussion of the 'tribunate', which in moments of crisis and upheaval 'provides a link or middle term between either prince and people, or prince and Sovereign, or if necessary, both at once'.¹⁰⁴ He shared Machiavelli's disdain for Christianity as a religion which weakened the state, and one that ultimately favoured tyranny: 'True Christians are made to be slaves.'¹⁰⁵

The relationship between the French *Philosophes* of the Enlightenment and the Jacobins is a complex one. For some writers (Adorno, Horkheimer, Bauman and Talmon) the *Philosophes'* concern with absolute political values provided the basis of Jacobin political thought in the 1790s. Thereby the quest for knowledge involved an absolute ideal, a unifying principle, and a transformation of monotheistic ideas into the political and social realm. But as some have argued the *Philosophes* were distinguished by a great diversity of views, a more pluralistic range of opinions, by a sceptical outlook, a confidence in the power of science and reason. In this they were strong critics particularly of religious intolerance. This aspect of *Philosophie* thought was overturned by the new political discourse of the revolution of 1789. The Jacobins ushered in the notion of the nation state with the state as the basis of all sovereignty. The new order was rationalized by the abbé Sieyès' defence of the revolutionary state.¹⁰⁶

Within the works of the *Philosophes* there are themes that are taken up by the Jacobins. Cicero, as a supreme exponent of political realism, was admired by Voltaire, Montesquieu and Rousseau, and by Jacobins such as Desmoulins, Saint-Just and Robespierre.¹⁰⁷ The expression *salus populi suprema lex* (the good of the people is the highest law) became the catchphrase which legitimized both revolutionary dictatorship and state absolutism. The Jacobins rediscovered the ideas of Machiavelli with a specific purpose in mind, the defence of the revolutionary state. A clear line of continuity links the classical tradition of radical republican thought from Machiavelli to the Jacobins.

Robespierre was greatly influenced by Rousseau's concepts such as the 'general will', the 'social contract' and the 'rights of man'. He asserted that sovereignty belonged to the people and spoke strongly in defence of democracy. He also declared that 'the plan of the French Revolution was writ large in the letters and books of Tacitus and Machiavelli'.¹⁰⁸ His conception of politics, like Machiavelli, is active, not one of passive contemplation. It is based on the duality between tyranny and liberty, between which an incessant war is fought. Like Machiavelli, a central idea was *virtù*, which he derived from antiquity, whereby individual

interests are subordinated to the general will. *Virtù* was allied to patriotism and love of one's country. He rejected Christianity for the worship of reason; the rediscovery of the ancient world's conception of citizenship and republican values. Like Machiavelli, he favoured the concept of a citizens' army.

The principle law he asserted was '*salut public*', on the basis of which he defended the right of the democratic society to self-defence; on this basis, he also justified terror and the Committee of Public Safety.¹⁰⁹ He stoutly defended dictatorship on the Roman model, arguing for the 'despotism of liberty' to safeguard the revolution, and for terror to eradicate its enemies. This was advanced also in terms of Rousseau's conception of the ancient Roman tribune. Robespierre highlights the importance of education in reforming manners and customs that have become corrupt. He was an atheist but he advocated the cult of the Supreme Being as a means of instilling *virtù* amongst the populace. He advocated a measure of social equality as the best means of cultivating *virtù*.¹¹⁰

Saint-Just was a leading promoter of the Roman revival amongst the Jacobins, declaring: 'The world has been empty since the Romans, and only their memory fills it and still prophecies liberty' and 'Let revolutionary men be Romans.'¹¹¹ Machiavelli's views on politics are echoed by Saint-Just's famous aphorism 'Nobody can rule guiltlessly.' He offered the realist view of insurrection that: 'those who make revolutions by half dig their own graves.' He was familiar with Machiavelli's works, and defended Robespierre in July 1794 against the charge of adopting Machiavellian values, that the end justifies the means.¹¹² Marat in *Les Chaines de l'Esclavage* cites Machiavelli twice.¹¹³ Guiraudet, a former Jacobin, undertook the translation into French and publication of Machiavelli's works in the 1790s.¹¹⁴

The recourse to terror during the French Revolution was justified by necessity which overrode any moral consideration. It is here that we find the distinction between the enemies of the people, and the friends of the people (Marat's *L'Ami du Peuple*), the latter in the guise of the people's tribunes. Here we might quote the opening line of *L'Instruction*, which was sent by Joseph Fouché to Collot d'Herbois to justify the massacre in Lyon in 1793: 'Everything is permitted to those who act in defence of the revolution.'¹¹⁵ This echoes Machiavelli's precept in *The Discourses* (book III, p. 41) that, in defence of the state, no means should be rejected. This key phrase 'everything is permitted' was to echo down the generations. It is the term which Dostoevskii takes up in his attack on modern revolutionary socialism in the 1870s (see Chapter 3).

Joseph de Maistre, arch-defender of monarchy and the church, and a virulent critic of the French Revolution in his *Considérations sur le France*, written in 1796, was very conscious of the lessons to be drawn from the writings of Machiavelli, 'the great statesman and ardent republican'. He cited Machiavelli that a people accustomed to live under a prince preserve their liberty with difficulty once they have attained it by accident. He cites Machiavelli on the need for new constitution to be carried into effect by the few who have conceived it. Significantly, de Maistre shared with Rousseau Machiavelli's judgement that civil commotion and civil war were not necessarily damaging for the state but could serve to strengthen it:

Long ago Greece flourished in the midst of the most savage wars: blood ran in torrents, and yet the whole country was covered in inhabitants. It appeared, says Machiavelli, that in the midst of murder, proscription and civil war, our republic only thrived: the virtue, morality, and independence of the citizens did more to strengthen it than all their dissensions had done to enfeeble it. A little disturbance gives the soul elasticity; what makes the race truly prosperous is not so much peace as liberty.¹¹⁶

In 1814, Chateaubriand published *De Buonaparte et des Bourbons*, a scathing indictment of Napoleon as a vainglorious tyrant, who had brought France and Europe only ruin and misery. He refers to Napoleon as 'Monsieur le Prince', *condottiere* and Borgia, and accuses him of having revived Machiavelli's methods of rule.¹¹⁷ M. de Mazeres, in a work published in Paris in 1816, presents a royalist indictment of Machiavelli as the inspirer of both the Jacobins and Bonaparte.¹¹⁸ In 1816 Napoleon's notes on Machiavelli were published, which turned out to be a fabrication by the abbé Guillon.¹¹⁹ However, other scholars insist that Machiavelli's military thinking had a direct impact on French military thinkers such as the Comte de Guibert, Napoleon and Marshall Gouvion-Saint-Cyr.¹²⁰

Edmund Burke also claimed to identify Machiavelli's influence in the French Revolution.¹²¹ What unifies both the Jacobin and the Bonapartist traditions in politics is that they both relate to the problem of order and revolution. They constantly interact on one another. Machiavelli's *The Prince* provides a prototype of both Jacobinism and Bonapartist 'revolution from above'. But in Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories* we have an extraordinary exposition of class struggle in history, and of popular insurrection as 'revolution from below'.

The repudiation of the existing social order and the appeal to the values of classical antiquity was not a new invention of the French revolutionaries. It was a tradition that can be traced back at least to Machiavelli. Jacobinism, with what J. L. Talmon calls its 'permanent totalitarian disposition' also provides the connection to Bolshevism.¹²² The close threads binding Jacobinism and Bolshevism have been well charted by Cesare Vetter, Astrid von Borcke, Tamara Kondratieva and D. Shlapentokh.¹²³

German intellectual influences

Amongst German scholars and statesmen there was an active interest in Machiavelli's ideas. In the eighteenth century, Frederick the Great of Prussia, with Voltaire's aid, penned his famous *Anti-Machiavel*, but employed many of his methods. This critical rejection of Machiavelli changed dramatically in the wake of the French Revolution, as a result of Jacobin influence, and when the question of German unification in the wake of Napoleon's military campaign was being broached.

Hegel's engagement with the ideas of Machiavelli is seen most clearly in *The German Constitution*, written between 1800 and 1802. In contemplating the fragmented and demoralized condition of Germany he sought salvation in the kind of ruthless statesman which Machiavelli describes in *The Prince*:

Machiavelli's fundamental aim of erecting Italy into a state was misunderstood from the start by the blind who took his words as nothing but a foundation of tyranny or a golden mirror for an ambitious oppressor. But even if this aim was accepted, it was said that the means were detestable, and thus moralising had further room for displaying its platitudes, such as that the end does not justify the means. In this instance, however, there can be no question of any choice of means. Gangrenous limbs cannot be cured with lavender water. A situation in which poison and assassination are common weapons demands remedies of no gentle kind. When life is on the brink of decay, it can be reorganised only by a procedure involving the maximum of force.¹²⁴

Machiavelli's ideas were not presented as applicable in all times and places, but had to be understood in terms of the context of his time: 'There indeed it will appear as not merely justified but as an extremely great and true conception, produced by a genuinely political head endowed with an intellect of the highest and noblest kind'. These were

the 'genuinely idealistic demands which Machiavelli makes on an excellent prince'. Means, which would otherwise be considered detestable, in the defence of the state, become justifiable:

What would be detestable if done by individual to individual, now appears as just punishment. To engineer anarchy is the supreme or perhaps the only crime against a state, because all crimes of which the state has to take account are concentrated in this. Those who assail the state directly, and not indirectly as other criminals do, are the greatest criminals, and the state has no higher duty than to maintain itself and crush the power of those criminals in the surest way it can.

Hegel, in *Philosophy of Mind*, expounds a Rousseauian vision of the legislator or the Machiavellian notion of prince as founder of the state: 'All states are founded by the sublime acts of great men.' The general will is not the cause but the outcome of the state which owes its beginning to force alone: 'In this way, Theseus founded the Athenian state; also in this way, during the French Revolution a terrible power held the state generally. This power is not despotism, but tyranny, pure terrifying power.' But whilst states have their origin in tyranny, the tyrant unwittingly prepares his subjects for freedom. In educating the people to obey a superior force, namely himself, the tyrant makes possible the obedience to law and therefore brings about his own demise: 'Tyranny is overthrown by the people not because it is abominable, beastly, etc., but because it has become superfluous.' So, he says of Robespierre, 'power abandoned him, because necessity abandoned him and so he was violently overthrown'.¹²⁵

Hegel and Rousseau shared Machiavelli's disdain for Christianity in favour of the civic religion of the ancients. He sought a means for the 'regeneration of civic virtue'. From this time onwards, Steven B. Smith argues, 'revolution became a kind of moral duty' pursued by selfless men, driven by the highest principles, reflected in the writings of Kant, Hegel, Marx and through to Lenin and Trotsky.¹²⁶

In his *Philosophy of History* (lectures delivered in 1830–1) he returns to the defence of Machiavelli. *The Prince* had often been thrown aside in disgust 'as replete with the maxims of the most revolting tyranny'. Whilst it was difficult to reconcile these ideas with ideas of Freedom, it was necessary to recognize that these ideas were *alone* the ones on which a state, in the circumstances of the time, could have been founded. It was necessary to defeat the feudal nobility who displayed an

'indomitable contempt for principle, and an utter depravity of morals'.¹²⁷

In one important regard, Hegel marks a decisive break with the thinking associated with Machiavelli. In place of the notion of an endless succession of cycles of human history repeating itself, he advanced the idea of a flow of progress embodied in the World Spirit. In other respects, Hegel builds on Machiavelli's ideas. The idea of the prince re-emerges as Hegel's 'world historical figures' (*Welthistorische Individuen*):

They may all be called Heroes, in as much as they have derived their purposes and their vocation, not from the calm regular course of things, sanctioned by the existing order; but from a concealed fount, from that inner Spirit, still hidden beneath the surface, which impinges on the outer world as on a shell and bursts it into pieces. (Such were Alexander, Caesar, and Napoleon.) They were practical political men. But, at the same time, they were thinking men, who had an insight into the requirements of the time – what was ripe for development.¹²⁸

To the objection that the activity of such individuals frequently flies in the face of morality, and involves great suffering for others, Hegel replies in terms reminiscent of Machiavelli:

World History occupies a higher ground than that on which morality has properly its position, which is personal character and the conscience of individuals. Moral claims, which are irrelevant, must not be brought into collision with world-historical deeds and their accomplishment. The litany of private virtues – modesty, humility, philanthropy, and forbearance – must not be raised against them.¹²⁹

So mighty a form (he adds elsewhere) must trample down many an innocent flower – crush down many an object in its path.

Notwithstanding Hegel's qualifications (which it should be noted were far fewer than those which Machiavelli postulated), in effect he provides *carte blanche* for statesmen who might claim to be saviours of the state. Stalin in 1936–8 might well have read *The German Constitution* with wry satisfaction. The tradition of revolutionary Jacobinism might be seen to re-emerge in Hegel's *Phenomenology* in which he considers the notion of absolute liberty.

Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762–1814) is famous as a critic of Kant, and as an exponent of dialectics. An ardent 'Jacobin' in the 1790s, he

became a strong critic of Napoleon, and espoused a form of messianic German nationalism, and became a passionate advocate of German national unity.¹³⁰ In 1807, in an article entitled 'Concerning Machiavelli', he advocated *raison d'état* and power policy to secure unity and national independence.¹³¹ It echoed Machiavelli's own call for the unity and independence of Italy in the final chapter of his *Prince*. In *The Closed Commercial State* (1800), he outlined the vision of an autarchic, state regulated economy and society. In his addresses to the German nation (1807–8), he advocated a system of education to rekindle and preserve the nation's identity.¹³² In *State Instructor* (*Staatslehre*), published posthumously in 1820, Fichte outlines a vision of a utopian state based on principles of pure reason, which some have equated with pure despotism. Fichte echoed Machiavelli's sentiment when he declared: 'that everyone who wishes to organise a republic, or any state for that matter, must assume the maliciousness of man'.¹³³ Friedrich Meinecke, in his celebrated work on *raison d'état* or *staatsrason*, points to the profound impact of Machiavelli's thought on Botero and Campanella, and in the thinking of Fichte and Hegel.¹³⁴

Fichte's article on Machiavelli of 1807 had a profound impact on Carl von Clausewitz. He saw Machiavelli as the thinker who had provided a rational and realist basis for the study of politics, diplomacy and warfare. Like Hegel and Fichte, Clausewitz's concern was with restoring the German state. This is what inspired Clausewitz's interest in the educational ideas of Pestalozzi, as a means of nurturing a strong national identity amongst the German people. Echoing Machiavelli's view that politics and ethics were two distinct fields, in *On War* Clausewitz asserts that ethics are not part of war. The Russians always respected Clausewitz, who in 1812 enlisted in the Russian army to fight Napoleon, and fought at the battle of Borodino and in other campaigns.¹³⁵

Goethe and Ranke shared this interest in Machiavelli.¹³⁶ This admiration, however, was not universal. Herder, for example, characterized Machiavelli and Hobbes as 'base and cold misanthropes'.¹³⁷ The ideas of Hegel, Fichte, Clausewitz, Goethe and Ranke, cannot of course, be reduced to the ideas of Machiavelli.

Conclusion

There is a vast literature which seeks to interpret the political thought of Machiavelli. In this work, we do not seek to arrive at any final conclusion on these questions. What we seek is to explore the way in which Machiavelli has been interpreted and used in different situations, in dif-

ferent periods of history. We are concerned with Machiavelli's influence on succeeding generations of political thinkers and statesmen, but also with the way in which his successors in different ages have interpreted him. We are concerned not with one true Machiavelli, but with the very different Machiavellis.

The tendency to see Machiavelli as a satirist on dictatorship, reflected in the work of Rousseau and others, had, by the end of the nineteenth century, been largely discarded.¹³⁸ In this we also tend to discount some of the interpretations, which emerged in the twentieth century, which reflect the concern of the time. The view of Machiavelli, advanced by Benedetto Croce, as one who saw politics as in a sense tragic, underplay his sense of the absurd, and his relish of politics in all its aspects.¹³⁹ Attempts to depict him as a dispassionate analyser of politics, a forerunner of political science, underplay his own engagement and passionate convictions regarding the universal validity of models of behaviour derived from studying the Roman Republic and Empire.

In Machiavelli's political thought there are a number of tensions. There is the obvious tension between the defender of republicanism and the advocate of dictatorship. But it might be argued that allied to this is the tension between different form of political rationality. First, there is the rationality of seizing and consolidating power, the rationality of survival, where all the stratagems of politics as warfare have to be deployed. But this cannot be a system of permanent governance. If continued too long this will provide the basis for anarchy and tyranny. A second rationality is necessary, that of orderly government. Critics of Machiavelli tend to focus on the first aspect of his thought, overlooking the way in which he qualifies himself. In defence of the state, all methods are permissible but the prince must also be able to act with circumspection. Machiavelli, who had been at the centre of radical republican thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was inevitably destined, in the nineteenth century, to be at the heart of revolutionary thought.

2

Machiavelli, Marx and Nietzsche

Having examined Machiavelli's political thought and its impact in revolutionary circles during and after the French Revolution, and its impact in German intellectual circles, we now turn to a broader consideration of the development of Machiavelli's ideas in the nineteenth century. We look at Machiavelli's influence on Marx, Nietzsche and on those thinkers labelled as 'elitists'. The appropriation of basic ideas from Machiavelli by the revolutionary left and the counter-revolutionary right marks the distinctive aspect of Machiavellian thought in the nineteenth century. For these two warring camps Machiavelli's relevance derived precisely from his conception of politics as akin to warfare. Consequently, 'liberal' intellectuals, like T. B. Macaulay, in the mid-nineteenth century regarded Machiavelli as a curiosity, a strange product of an earlier more brutal age, whose relevance for contemporary politics, marked by the rise of parliamentarism and the extension of the franchise, was all but past.

The Italian scholar Cesare Vetter argues that the failure of the revolutions of 1848–9 led European radicals to reappraise the Great French Revolution of 1789. Jacobinism was rehabilitated. The ideas of Gracchus Babeuf and Philippe Buonarroti on dictatorship were given new emphasis. Nicolas Villiaume, in his four-volume *Histoire de la Revolution Francaise* (1850), argued the need for dictatorship 'to save the empire in critical moments', citing Machiavelli, but quoting Marat as his main authority. Robespierre's concept of the 'despotism of liberty' found a new voice. At this time also various works were published on the Italian revolutions of the sixteenth century. Edgar Quinet in his *Revolutions d'Italie* (Paris, 1848) drew a direct connection between Machiavelli's precepts and the Committee of Public Safety's practices. Giuseppe

Ferrari published *Machiavelli: juge des revolutions de notre temps* (Paris, 1849), *Histoire des revolutions d'Italie ou Guelfs et Gibelins* (Paris, 1858), and his most famous work *Histoire de la raison d'état* (Paris, 1860) which also had a lengthy section on Machiavelli's ideas. Edgar Quinet in his book *La Revolution* (1865) passionately denounced these dictatorial tendencies and clashed with Louis Blanc on this matter. J. Jaures, the famous French socialist, passionately denounced the tradition of revolutionary dictatorship and terror.¹

Marx and Machiavelli

The revolutionary left in Europe in the nineteenth century drew inspiration from two principal revolutionary currents. First, was the direct inspiration provided by the French Jacobins and by their heirs, notably Blanqui and Buonarrotti. Second, was the broader philosophical tradition of German thought represented by Hegel and Fichte. Both these currents had deep roots in the tradition of Machiavellian politics. Here we explore the impact of these influences on Marx and Engels. Most standard works on Marx and Engels pay scant attention to the contribution which Machiavelli's thought made to their thinking. Only a few scholars, notably Raymond Aron, Th. Schneider and M. A. Yusim have directly addressed the question.²

A huge intellectual chasm separates Machiavelli and Marx. There is nothing in Machiavelli on dialectics, historical materialism, modes of production, the question of ideology and praxis, and the conception of modern socialism. The world, which Machiavelli inhabited, was very far from the world of Marx's industrial capitalism, the modern nation state, and global imperialism. The idea of progress in human history, so central to Marx, Machiavelli explicitly rejected. Notwithstanding these fundamental differences, Marx and his followers were greatly preoccupied with the thoughts of their precursors, amongst whom Machiavelli figured prominently.

The view that Marx represented the most advanced ideas of his day, combining English economics (Ricardo), French history, and German philosophy (Hegel) sits uncomfortably with the idea that he may also have derived inspiration from a sixteenth-century thinker. This, however, is to ignore the substantial contribution of Italian political writers, notably Machiavelli, Piero Guicciardini, Giambattista Vico and Tommaso Campanella in his thought. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Machiavelli was considered as a subversive, almost revolutionary, thinker. He contributed to the thinking on the state, to the role

of class struggle in history, and drew attention to the importance of economic determinants in historical development. Machiavelli's views on religion were atheistic, and he rigorously separated politics from moral and ethical considerations. He was held in high regard by Bacon, Spinoza, Descartes and by the French materialists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

David McLellan describes Marx, in the summer of 1843, 'immersing himself in the political theories of Machiavelli, Montesquieu and Rousseau'.³ A Soviet period study of Marx's reading, notes: 'Marx had read him [Machiavelli] already in Kreuznach [1843]. Machiavelli's books, in translation, were with him in Paris. In London he acquired a beautiful two volume edition (original) collection of his works.'⁴ The two-volume collection was *Tutte le opere di Niccolo Machiavelli cittadino e segretario fiorentino, divise in 2 Tomi* (London, 1747) in which Marx inserted his own comments.

Marx's acquaintance with the ideas of Vico is usually dated to 1862, when Marx wrote a eulogistic account of the 'New Science' in a letter to Lassalle. But he was already reading Vico in Kel'mskii in the 1840s.⁵ In his vast library in the 1840s, there were works on the ideas of the 'precursors' of socialist thought, such as Campanella's *City of the Sun*, and Morelly's *Codex of Nature*. He added Thomas More's *Utopia* to his library in London.⁶

Marx wrote in an editorial to the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842 that, 'Machiavelli and Campanella at first . . . and later Hobbes, Spinoza, Hugo Grotius followed by Rousseau, Fichte and Hegel, began to consider the state with the eyes of man and to develop its natural laws from reason and experience, not from theology . . .'⁷ Machiavelli comes first and all the others, with the exception of Hobbes, acknowledged their debt to him.⁸ A curious omission from the list is Vico. In the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx took issue with the argument advanced by John Stuart Mill that authoritarian, absolutist, or despotic government could be justified where it was the necessary means to a good end, where the people were immature, and where it was in the interests of the people. This was fully in conformity with Machiavelli's defence of dictatorship. Marx rejected this view of the 'end justifies the means', which he attributed to the Jesuits. Ends and means, he argued, were dialectically interrelated.⁹ Marx declared: 'An end which requires an unjustified means is no justifiable end.'¹⁰

Marx and Engels were also greatly influenced by the French Jacobins.¹¹ In *The Holy Family* (1844), they refer to Babeuf as the precursor of modern communism:

the French Revolution gave rise to ideas which led beyond the ideas of the entire old world order. The revolutionary movement which began in 1789 in the *Cercle social*, which in the middle of its course had as its chief representatives *Leclerc* and *Roux*, and which finally with *Babeuf's* conspiracy was temporarily defeated, gave rise to the communist idea, which *Babeuf's* friend *Buonarroti* re-introduced in France after the Revolution of 1830. This idea, consistently developed, is the idea of the *new world order*.¹² [Emphasis in original]

In this work they also note how Robespierre and Saint-Just spoke of 'liberty, justice and virtue' and explicitly linked these to the 'popular communities' of ancient Sparta, Athens and Rome, quoting Saint-Just's famous aphorisms on revolutionaries imitating the Romans. The Jacobins fell, they argued, because they sought to reconcile the gulf between state and society through recourse to revolutionary terror, and through an overemphasis on the 'omnipotence of the will'.¹³

Marx, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, reflected on how

the Revolution of 1789 to 1814 draped itself alternately as the Roman republic and the Roman empire . . . Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Napoleon, the heroes as well as the parties and the masses of the old French Revolution, performed the tasks of their time in Roman costume and with Roman phrases, the task of unchaining and setting up modern bourgeois society.¹⁴

One of the key concepts in Machiavelli of 'necessity' was developed by others. Spinoza speaks of the 'consciousness of necessity'. Hegel associates freedom with the recognition of necessity. Marx related necessity to the recognition of the laws of dialectical and historical materialism. The interrelationship between human will and necessity was formulated as the philosophy of praxis. Marx, in his critique of Hegel, invests the expression with an activist and revolutionary meaning. For Marx 'necessity' was informed by his conception of historical progress and the mutability of human nature.¹⁵ Engels summarized the transition from capitalism to socialism as the transition from the rule of necessity to the rule of freedom.

There was a huge growth of interest in Machiavelli in Germany, Italy and France in the nineteenth century. Is it conceivable that this passed Marx by? In Marx's writings there is a curious absence, a complete lack of any reference to the work of the French historians Ferrari and Quinet on the Italian revolutions of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, or to

the work of the German scholar Robert Mohl on state formation. All three of these writers place Machiavelli at the centre of their discussion.

In *The German Ideology* Marx wrote:

starting with Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Bodinus and others of modern times, not to mention earlier ones, might has been represented as the basis of right. Thereby the theoretical view of politics was freed from morality, and apart from the postulate of an independent treatment of politics nothing was accepted. Later, in the eighteenth century in France and in the nineteenth century in England, all right was reduced to civil law and the latter to a quite definite power, the power of the owners of private property.¹⁶

In 1852 Marx read *Mandragora*. In 1857 he read (probably re-read) *Florentine Histories*, noting, in a letter to Engels, that it was a masterpiece.¹⁷ Marx applied the term 'Machiavellian' to the intrigues of politicians and statesmen, and to the foreign policies of the imperialist states. In October 1842 Marx wrote that Louis Philippe could be regarded as 'the Machiavelli of our time'.¹⁸ Others saw themselves in the same light, including Mazzini.¹⁹ Marx also wrote with obvious favour of 'Garibaldi, who with fire of soul, still owns his grain of that subtle Italian genius, that you may trace in Dante no less than in Machiavelli'.²⁰ But Marx also referred disparagingly to excessive reliance on such methods of intrigue as 'Machiavellian perfidy', 'unfathomable Machiavellism', or 'deeper Machiavellism'.²¹ Of the German revolutionary Johann Philip Becker, he wrote to Engels: 'He presents all the stupidities he committed as deep and intended Machiavellism.'²² Marx refers to Bakunin's 'Machiavellian plan' to dominate the First International.²³ Although Herzen predicted to Bakunin 'You will never make a Machiavelli with your divide.'²⁴

In 1868 Marx, in the Report of the General Council to the Fourth Congress of the International Working Men's Association, noted that a branch of the French police had issued in London a publication, titled the 'International', which accused the General Council of fomenting strikes in various countries, in anticipation of war so as to create a revolutionary situation. This had been done 'on the request of some foreign Machiavelli who had known how to win the good graces of this all-powerful Association'.²⁵ Here we have an insight into the convoluted Machiavellian politics of revolutionary groups, penetrated by police agents, beset by mutual distrust and suspicion, employed by the security agencies for their own ends in carrying out assassinations

and bombing as part of general strategies of tension to justify further repression.

Engels, in discussing the question of morality as applied to historical actors, came to the same conclusion as Machiavelli that 'the honourable as a rule are made into fools, and the dishonourable triumph'.²⁶ In *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels lists the great figures of the Renaissance, noting: 'Machiavelli was a statesman, historian, poet and at the same time the first notable military author of modern times.'²⁷

In other respects one might also point to parallels between Marx and Machiavelli. Marx as we have seen was familiar with the notion of *virtù*. In his writings he does not use this term, but his use of the term 'revolutionary heroism' carries the same connotations. His view of politics, like Machiavelli, was activist and heroic. A parallel might be drawn also between Machiavelli's view of the masses and Marx's scepticism regarding the proletariat's ability to conceive its own goals and realize them without outside intellectual help and leadership.²⁸ It is difficult to believe that without the *Florentine Histories* that Marx in *The Communist Manifesto* could have proclaimed with such confidence: 'The history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles.' The view of the eminent Italian Machiavelli scholar Prezzolini that Marx's comments on Machiavelli were few and showed little depth of understanding seem wide of the mark.²⁹

Marx's extracts from *The Discourses*

In 1929 the Soviet historian V. Maksimovskii published the quotations from Machiavelli's *The Discourses* which Marx had copied into his notebook, together with an extensive commentary.³⁰ These notes, Maksimovskii argued, were made at a time when 'he was still not a Marxist'. In 1929 Maksimovskii also published a major article on Vico, underlining Marx's debt to him.³¹ In 1933, he published two articles on Machiavelli's view on society and class, which underline his position as a forerunner of Marx.³² Here we reproduce the extracts from *The Discourses* which Marx wrote into his notebook. These were published for the first time in 1929, and earlier writers, including Lenin, would not have been aware of them. They are published here for the first time in English:

1

To me those who condemn the quarrels between the nobles and the plebs, seem to be cavilling at the very things that were the primary cause of Rome's retaining her freedom, and that they pay more atten-

tion to the noise and clamour resulting from such commotions than to what resulted from them, i.e. to the good effects which they produced. Nor do they realize that in every republic there are two different dispositions, that of the populace and that of the upper class and that all legislation favourable to liberty is brought about by the clash between them (p. 113).

2

Actually, however, such disturbances are more often caused by the 'haves', since the fear of losing what they have arouses in them the same inclination we find in those who want to get more (p. 118).

3

. . . the laws of Lycurgus in Sparta prescribed equality of property and insisted less on equality of rank (p. 120).

4

Indictments are made before magistrates, before the people, and before the courts. Calumnies are circulated in the squares and the arcades (p. 129).

5

How difficult it is for a people, accustomed to live under a prince to preserve their liberty, should they by some accident acquire it as Rome did after the expulsion of the Tarquins, is shown by numerous examples which may be studied in the historical records of ancient times. That there should be such a difficulty is reasonable; for such a people differs in no wise from a wild animal which, though by nature fierce and accustomed to the woods, has been brought up in captivity and servitude and is then loosed to rove the countryside at will, where, being unaccustomed to seeking its own food and discovering no place in which it can find refuge, it becomes the prey of the first comer who seeks to chain it up again (p. 153).

6

For corruption of this kind and the ineptitude for a free mode of life is due to the inequality one finds in a city, and to restore equality it is necessary to take steps which are by no means normal (p. 160).

7

Thus, while Rome was subject to kings, she was exposed to dangers that might have ruined her had she been under a weak and malevolent king (p. 167).

8

Furthermore, since [every year] when a commemorative sacrifice was offered it could only be offered by the king in person, and they did

not wish the absence of the kings to arouse in the people a desire for anything, pertaining to the past, they appointed a 'master of ceremonies' whom they called the 'sacrificial king' and put him under the high priest (pp. 175–6).

9

... the Roman nobility always gave way to the plebs in the matter of honours without causing serious troubles; but when it came to property, so great was the obstinacy with which they defended it (that in order to satisfy their appetites the plebs had recourse to irregular means) (p. 204).

10

For though nobles desire to tyrannize, that part of the nobility which finds itself left out in a tyrannical regime, is always the tyrant's enemy. Nor can he win them all over (p. 215).

11

For men, as king Ferdinand used to say, resemble certain little birds of prey in whom so strong is the desire to catch the prey which nature incites them to pursue, that they do not notice another and greater bird of prey which hovers over them ready to pounce and kill (p. 216).

12

To make it clear what is meant by the term 'gentry', I would point out that the term 'gentry' is used of those who live in idleness on the abundant revenue derived from their estates, without having anything to do either with their cultivation or with any other forms of labour essential to life. Such men are a pest in any republic and in any province; but still more pernicious are those who, in addition to the aforesaid revenues, have castles under their command and subjects who are under their obedience. Of these two types of men there are plenty in the kingdom of Naples, the Papal States, the Romagna and Lombardy. It is owing to this that in these provinces there has never arisen a republic or any political life, for men born in such conditions are entirely inimical to any form of civic government (pp. 245–6).

13

... there, where society is so corrupt, that it is impossible to correct with laws, there is needed a more real force, i.e. the hand of a king (p. 246).

14

Anyone who wishes to found a republic in a country where there are many nobles cannot do this if, first, he does not extirpate the lot of

them and, second, anyone who wishes to found a kingdom or principality where there prevails equality cannot do this unless he destroys that equality, selects a significant number of the more ambitious and restless minds and makes of them gentry in fact and not in name, giving them castles and possessions and making of them a privileged class with respect both to property and subjects; so that around him will be those whose ambitions, thanks to him, may be realized (p. 247).

15

The plebs united is strong, but in itself it is weak (p. 250).

16

... in the election of magistrates the populace makes a far better choice than does the prince (p. 255).

17

For a prince who does what he likes is a lunatic, and a populace which does what it likes is unwise. If, therefore, it be a question of a prince subservient to the laws and of a populace chained up by laws, more virtue will be found in the populace than in the prince; and if it be a question of either of them loosed from control by the law, there will be found fewer errors in the populace than in the prince, and these of less moment and much easier to put right. For a licentious and turbulent populace, when a good man can obtain a hearing, can easily be brought to behave itself; but there is no one to talk to a bad prince, nor is there any remedy except the sword (p. 256).

18

When the populace has thrown off all restraint, it is not the mad things it does that are terrifying, nor is it of present evils that one is afraid, but of what may come of them, for amidst such confusion there may come to be a tyrant. In the case of bad princes it is just the opposite: it is present evils that are terrifying, but for the future there is hope, since men are convinced that the evil ways of a bad prince may make for freedom in the end (p. 257).

19

If one asks oneself how it comes about that peoples of old were more fond of liberty than they are today, I think that the answer is that it is due to the same causes that makes men today less bold than they used to be; and this is due, I think, to the difference between our education and that of bygone times, which is based on the difference between our religion and the religion of those days. For our religion,

having taught us the truth and true way of life, leads us to ascribe less esteem to worldly honour. Hence the gentiles, who held it in high esteem and looked upon it as their highest good, displayed in their actions more ferocity than we do. This is evidenced by many of their institutions. To begin with, compare the magnificence of their sacrifices with the humility that characterizes ours. The ceremonial in ours is delicate rather than imposing, and there is no display of ferocity or courage. Their ceremonies lacked neither pomp nor magnificence, but, conjoined with this, were sacrificial acts in which there was much shedding of blood and much ferocity; and in them great numbers of animals were killed. Such spectacles, because terrible, caused men to become like them. Besides, the old religion did not beatify men unless they were replete with worldly glory: army commanders, for instance, and rulers of republics. Our religion has glorified humble and contemplative men, rather than men of action. It has assigned as man's highest good humility, abnegation and contempt for mundane things, whereas the other identified it with magnanimity, bodily strength and everything else that conduces to make men very bold. And if our religion demands that in you there be strength, what it asks for is strength to suffer rather than strength to do bold things. This pattern of life, therefore, appears to have made the world weak, and to have handed it over as a prey to the wicked, who run it successfully and securely since they are well aware that the generality of men, with paradise for their goal, consider how best to bear, rather than how best to avenge, their injuries (pp. 277–8).

20

It behoves them, therefore, to play the fool, as Brutus did, and to act more or less like lunatics, admiring, talking about, attending to, and doing things in which they have not the slightest interest in order to ingratiate themselves with the prince (p. 392).

21

... a republic has a fuller life and enjoys good fortune for a longer time than a principality, since it is better able to adapt itself to diverse circumstances owing to the diversity found among its citizens than a prince can do (p. 405).

Politics and ethics

Throughout Marx's writings there runs a strong ethical critique of the capitalist system, with the vision of the transcendence of this system of

exploitation through the creation of the new classless society, in which the state will wither away. Moreover, in *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx anticipates the disappearance of morality as an established code of behaviour under communism: '... Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experience.' In *The German Ideology*, Marx argues that communism and socialism 'shattered the basis of all morality'.³³ Morality thus disappears with the end of class exploitation and with the transition to communist society in which all social relations become transparent.

In his early writings Marx was taken up with ethical issues, particularly with regard to the question of alienation and the nature of the capitalist state. This aspect of Marx's writings was however largely unknown until the publication of *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* in 1932, and the much later publication of *Grundrisse*. Consequently, at the end of the nineteenth century Marxism was seen almost universally as a science, which placed itself outside of ethics. Engels in 1884 argued that Marx foresaw socialism as a product of the inevitable collapse of capitalism, and did not base his arguments on ethics.³⁴ Sombart, Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin and others expounded the same view.³⁵ The same position was vigorously upheld by the French philosopher Louis Althusser in the 1970s.

The question of ethics in the writings of Marx has been dealt with by a number of scholars.³⁶ Some acknowledge a certain affinity between Marx and Machiavelli. John Lewis describes Machiavelli as 'the first clear-headed advocate of the application of conscious systematic realism to political affairs': 'From Machiavelli Marx learned a great deal about the autonomy of politics, which owes no allegiance to moral rules outside the law of social necessity.'³⁷ R. N. Berki comments: 'The Machiavellian roots of Marx's theory of social conflict and change are of course easily recognisable, though surprisingly perhaps it took a fairly long time for Marx scholarship to attain this level of "genetical" interpretation.'³⁸ Philip J. Kain writes of Marx's view that, like Machiavelli, he divorces politics from morality: 'There is no right and no morality, but simply power – and Marx does not suggest that right can be derived from power.'³⁹ Henri Lefebvre in writing on the Marxian concept of praxis asserts that the concept of military and political strategies were first formulated by Machiavelli, then elaborated by Clausewitz. The major innovation of Marx was the concept of the withering away of the state. To leave this out would be to make Marx a Machiavellian and to view politics or the state as an eternal, supratemporal essence.⁴⁰

Steven Lukes characterizes Marxist thought as a form of 'consequentialism', i.e. 'a theory which judges actions by their consequences only, and requires agents to produce the best available outcome, all things considered'. This he contrasts to deontological theories, which impose restraints on means, which may derive from 'the "moral law" or to some notion of personal integrity or respect for persons, or to the will of God'. Marxism, Lukes argues, is 'deeply and unremittingly anti-deontological', reflected in its hostility to Kant and Kantianism. Any shift in position is construed as a 'deep form of revisionism'.⁴¹

Within Marx's thinking there were two distinct currents: the deterministic view of human development, a view of change as being law-governed, a view of transition from one epoch to another, and, second, a voluntaristic side which sought to intervene in the historical process, to guide developments, to speed them up. The deterministic conception of development, which sees the historical process as law-governed, removes political actions from the realm of ethics. But for Marx, socialism, in representing the interests of the proletariat, in ending class society and exploitation, was of necessity morally superior to capitalism.

Within Marxism, there were three issues on which the ideas of Machiavelli had a particular bearing. First, there was 'absolutism' as the transition period from feudalism to capitalism, in which the power of the state was greatly expanded. Machiavelli was seen as the political theorist of the age of absolutism. Second and third were Jacobinism and Bonapartism, both of which reflected the immaturity of the class struggle: Jacobinism in the attempt by radicals to seize power when the popular classes as the basis of the new order were not sufficiently strong; Bonapartism in the attempt to carry through the bourgeois revolution by the agency of the state when the bourgeoisie was still too weak. Both Jacobinism and Bonapartism set themselves similar tasks to Machiavelli's prince of carrying through 'revolution from above', and adopting similar methods as those espoused by Machiavelli.

The proletariat would have to embrace the same tactics as its enemy in the life and death struggle for power. Marx in the main adopted a critical attitude towards revolutionary conspiracy, stressing the importance of the right preconditions for the transition to socialism, and emphasizing the self-activity of the masses. Thus the idea of 'dictatorship of proletariat' used in 1850–2, 1872–5 and 1890–1, had various connotations.⁴² He looked askance at the Jacobin ideas derived from Buonarrotti, Babeuf and developed by Blanqui.⁴³

In 1872 at the Hague Congress, Marx and Engels presented the report on the conspiratorial activity of Mikhail Bakunin and his

'International Association of Socialist Democracy', accusing him of 'the Machiavellian' plan to take over the International and to dominate the working class. This followed their condemnation of Bakunin's involvement with Nechaev in formulating 'Catechism of the Revolutionist' (see ch. 4). This was allied to a general condemnation of revolutionary conspiratorial organization of a Blanquist type, organized by the Blanquist refugees from the Commune. Engels explicitly rejected this elitist conception of revolutionary organization. Marx and Engels, in their report on Bakunin to the congress, declared:

Those all-destructive anarchists, who want to limit everything to an amorphism and create anarchy in morality, push bourgeois immorality to the extremes. We had the opportunity to note, from several examples, the value of the morality of the 'Association', the dogmas of which, of a purely Christian origin, have been meticulously described by the Escobars of the Seventeenth Century. The only difference is that the 'Association' exaggerated the terms to the point of ridicule and replaced the Holy Apostolic and Roman Church of the Jesuits with the arch-anarchist and all-destructive 'sacred revolutionary cause'. The 'Revolutionary Catechism' is the official code of this morality, expressed systematically and quite openly.⁴⁴

Nevertheless Marx often enthusiastically embraced revolutionary movements, regardless of whether they conformed to his more deterministic view of history. It is in terms of the voluntaristic side of Marxism that we see an affinity with what we shall term 'revolutionary Machiavellism'. In moments of revolutionary agitation in 1848-9 and 1871, Marx himself inclined towards a Jacobin position.⁴⁵ In 1881 he argued that the Russian terrorists who were then on trial, these 'sterling people', should not be moralized about. In 1885, in a letter to Vera Zasulich on Plekhanov's *Our Differences* (1884), Engels argued: 'if ever Blanquism . . . had a certain *raison d'être*, that is certainly so now in Petersburg'.⁴⁶ However, towards the end of his life, in 1895, Engels argued that the methods of revolutionary insurrection and street fighting were now obsolete.⁴⁷

The relationship between Marxism and Machiavelli's thought was recognized by contemporaries. The leading Italian intellectual at the end of the nineteenth century, Benedetto Croce, himself then a Marxist, was profoundly influenced by Machiavelli and Vico.⁴⁸ Reflecting on the eclipse of the liberal tradition represented by Mazzini in Italian politics he declared that 'it was Marxism which brought Machiavelli home to

Italy'. Croce referred complementarily to Marx as 'the Machiavelli of the proletariat'.⁴⁹

Marxism, in the view of Del Noce, involved the union of hyper-moralism (of a messianic end of the praxis of philosophy) with amoralism (an absolute distinction between ends and means). In this lies the distinction between Marx and Machiavelli. For Machiavelli there was no messianic end through philosophical praxis, whilst Marx explicitly rejected the idea that ends and means could be separated, insisting that they were inextricably interconnected.⁵⁰

Eduard Bernstein's criticism of orthodox Marxism was based on the charge that the predicted polarization of capitalist society and its inevitable collapse was not borne out by the evidence. Marx's view on revolution and proletarian dictatorship were construed as a form of Jacobinism. In advancing a reformist strategy in politics, Bernstein also sought to ground the argument in favour of socialism not on any deterministic scientific basis but on the ethical superiority of socialism.⁵¹

The prominent Russian Marxist historian M. N. Pokrovskii, in his *Economic Materialism*, a pamphlet intended for wide circulation and published in 1906, wrote:

Both these hallmarks of Marxism: the economic basis of history and teaching of the class struggle, as the moving force of history, are met both separately and in combination long before *The Communist Manifesto*. Three hundred years earlier, the Italian writer Machiavelli explained the changes in the political structure of his native city Florence brought about by economic factors and precisely by the class struggle. At first landed gentry fought against merchant citizens, then the leaders of commerce and industry contended with the artisans and labour masses. That is how he describes it in his *Florentine Histories*.⁵²

Nietzsche and Machiavelli

If Marx scholars have been slow to acknowledge the debt of their subject to Machiavelli, the same is true of Nietzsche scholars. Nietzsche's debt is most explicit in the most political and polemical of his works: *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) and *Twilight of the Idols* (1888–9).⁵³ His conception of history stands in fundamental opposition to that of Marx. But both shared a conception of politics based on a struggle for power and for domination, and both regarded liberalism and parliamentarism with contempt. Marx's 'parliamentary

cretinism' is rendered by Nietzsche as 'parliamentary imbecility'.⁵⁴ Both entertained a heroic vision of politics and held the pettiness of contemporary politics and of the existing capitalist order in contempt.

In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche insisted on the necessity of force not to secure a particular state but to ensure the basis of human civilization. Unlike Machiavelli, Nietzsche believed in progress, but, like Machiavelli, was plagued by the fear of the corruption and degeneration of society. In a paraphrase of Machiavelli, he advanced the proposition that 'truth is a woman' that favours the warrior. Human civilization was based on masculine principles. He feared the danger of the taming, the domestication of man, emphasizing the role of force in raising human civilization to higher levels, the civilizing role of evil and cruelty. He identified the will to power as the force that characterized human society. He distinguished between the aristocratic, Roman, conception of morality, which emphasized action, will, assertion, vigour and health. In contrast he posited slave morality, which he equated with Christianity and modern socialism. The latter were both driven by *ressentiment*, which led to a weakening of the human impulses, producing what Nietzsche defined as 'nihilism', namely a will to nothingness. Although, it might be argued that Nietzsche himself was the moral nihilist *par excellence* with his outright rejection of the post-Socratic and Judeo-Christian moral tradition.

Nietzsche rejected all established notions of ethics, arguing that ethics had to be created, invented by man. He rejected Kant's attempt to create some universal system of morality based on rationality. He rejected 'utilitarianism' ('the greatest happiness to the greatest number') as reflecting a contemporary nihilism. His position was uncompromisingly atheistic. Progress could only be measured in terms of human civilization as recorded by aesthetic advance, not in terms of the general interests of the members of society. There was no universal code of morality, only different codes of morality applied to different groups depending on their position within the hierarchy. States were established as an act of domination of race upon race, and even social classes reflected different racial components. He thus rejected the notion of bad conscience as a force that weakened humanity, the inculcation in the strong of a sense of guilt by the weak. The struggle between master and slave morality was an ongoing battle. Whilst the French Revolution was a manifestation of slave morality, Napoleon manifested an uncompromising aristocratic master morality.

The notion of the prince as the individual who could create or reform the state became in Hegel the notion of the 'world historical individ-

ual'. Thomas Carlyle took up the role of the individual in history.⁵⁵ In the works of Marx and Engels, it revolves around the debate on the role of the individual in history, particularly in their discussion of Bonapartism. The idea of the 'world historical individual' was transformed by Nietzsche into the concept of 'superman', where, through the actions of active, vigorous minorities, human civilization was raised to a higher plane and man himself transformed. Both Hegel and Nietzsche were great admirers of Napoleon.

In Nietzsche's works Machiavelli's notion of establishing *virtú* was transmuted into a more general discussion of the nature of civilization. Both held Christianity in contempt, and both shared many of the same conceptions of what were the active principles that underlay a healthy society. Nietzsche greatly admired Cesare Borgia,⁵⁶ and he elevated Machiavelli's defence of war, force and cruelty into a general principle of how civilization was forged: 'Things never proceeded without blood, torture, and victims, when man thought it necessary to forge a memory for himself'; 'how much blood and horror is at the bottom of all "good things"'.⁵⁷ For Nietzsche, the state was 'the coldest of cold monsters'.⁵⁸ In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche also recalls how, over centuries, the German people, reputed 'gentle, good-hearted, weak-willed and poetic dolts', were transformed by a new aristocratic morality.⁵⁹

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche expressed his high regard for Machiavelli's *The Prince*, which expressed 'protracted, difficult, hard, dangerous' thoughts at a 'gallop' and with 'the most wanton good humour'.⁶⁰ Here he paraphrases Machiavelli, when he describes the fears of Frederick William of Prussia that his son, the future Frederick the Great (author of *Anti-Machiavel*), lacked the requisite qualities of leadership: 'he suspected the incurable wretchedness of a heart which is no longer hard enough for evil or for good'.⁶¹ In *Twilight of the Idols*: 'Thucydides, and perhaps the Principe of Machiavelli, are related to me closely by their uncontrolled will not to deceive themselves and to see reason in reality – not in "reason", still less in "morality"'.⁶² In a private letter Nietzsche teasingly voiced his desire to write: 'An evil book, worse than Machiavelli and that mild-malicious, most subservient devil, Mephistopheles!'⁶³ Nietzsche's frequent use of the word 'evil' invariably echoes Machiavelli's ironic usage. In an unpublished note, he declared Machiavellism to be 'perfection in politics' and as 'superhuman'. In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, he describes Napoleon as a 'synthesis of the inhuman and the superhuman'.⁶⁴ Nietzsche was a great believer in *staatsraison*; he despised the bad conscience of contemporary commanders who had lost the strength and will to do evil. This was part of his general

contempt for contemporary mores, contemporary politics and its parliamentary games. As a solution to the decadence of modern times, his remedy was to harden the heart.⁶⁵

Nietzsche takes the position of those whom Dostoevskii saw as the great threats to civilization – the Raskolnikovs who saw themselves as creating their own moral codes, the Napoleons of history to whom ordinary moral codes could not be applied.

Nietzsche applies the term 'nihilist' to Christians, socialists, liberals and utilitarians who sought to organize a moral code to elevate the common man, by programmes of social amelioration, and to check the power of the stronger members of society over the weaker. Nietzsche celebrates the rights of the strongest in organizing society according to their needs and desires, and thus through their actions, he believed, raising civilization onto a higher plane. For Nietzsche, the death of God was a fact to be celebrated, with man himself now the master of his fate as a man-god, with the statement 'nothing is true, everything is permitted'.⁶⁶ Both Dostoevskii and Nietzsche can be seen as early existentialists; Dostoevskii, the Christian existentialist who thought morality had to have a religious base and feared the danger of the cult of the man-god: Nietzsche, the existentialist who revelled in the new freedom created in a situation where the man-god became possible.

Bismarck and Machiavelli

For Marx and Engels, the understanding of revolutionary change, involved not only the notion of revolution from below, but also that of revolution from above. The concept of revolution from above was discussed in terms particularly of absolutism and of Bonapartism. Louis Napoleon and Bismarck represented the quintessential examples of nineteenth-century Bonapartism. The 'blood and iron' chancellor, architect of German unification and exponent of '*Kulturkampf*', was the supreme practitioner of *realpolitik*. Bismarck's role in suppressing the Paris Commune, and his initiation of the anti-socialist laws in Germany, laid out the ground rules by which revolution was to be played.⁶⁷ Through an alliance of Junker and bourgeois interests, he forced through the capitalist modernization of Germany, holding in check the power of the working class.

Marx and Engels admired Bismarck's role in the unification of Germany. Engels, in a letter to Kautsky of 1882, commented that 'the real, not the illusory, tasks of a revolution are always accomplished as a result of the revolution', and that Louis Napoleon, Cavour and

Bismarck had been 'the testamentary executors of the revolution' (of 1848–9) in the sense that they had completed 'the restoration of the oppressed and divided nationalities of central Europe, in so far as these were viable and specifically ripe for independence', and the importance of this was that 'an international movement of the proletariat is in general possible only among independent nations'.⁶⁸ Engels repeatedly invoked the idea of 'revolution from above' as applied to Bismarck and Louis Napoleon.⁶⁹ Whilst the prototype of the 'revolutionary from above' is Napoleon, his intellectual progenitor is Machiavelli's prince.

Emil Ludwig described Bismarck as an exponent of Machiavellian *realpolitik*.⁷⁰ Lothar Gall describes him as a 'white revolutionary' and a 'truly great pupil of Machiavelli'.⁷¹ Not surprisingly, Nietzsche, at least in his early years, greatly admired Bismarck, and in *The Gay Science* enthuses about 'Bismarck's Machiavellianism with a good conscience'.⁷²

Bismarck pioneered his own brand of 'state socialism' and was admired by Lassalle and other German socialists.⁷³ Many German economists favoured protectionism and state intervention as advocated by List, whilst a great number had socialist leanings, including Rodbertus who, like Lassalle, developed a statist conception of socialism, which did not exclude the preservation of the monarchy.⁷⁴ Fichte, of course, has been portrayed as one of the seminal authors of a German nationalistic brand of totalitarianism. His idea of national unification and full utilization of the nation's resources, both economic and cultural, was associated with nationalism, but it was also given a socialist interpretation.⁷⁵ George H. Sabine presents Fichte as a forerunner of 'Prussian socialism' as developed by Oswald Spengler and Arthur Moeller van den Bruck.⁷⁶

But Bismarck's tradition was also to be appropriated by the radical right. The ultra-nationalist Heinrich von Treitschke, who glorified monarchical power, and the virtues of war, who lauded the principle of the end justifying the means, who rejected any moral restraints on the actions of the state, was also indebted to Machiavelli.⁷⁷

The elitists

A direct challenge to Marx's conception of politics was provided by the 'elite' theorists, notably G. Mosca, V. Pareto, R. Michels and George Sorel.⁷⁸ Mosca published *Teorica dei governi* (Turin, 1884) and *Elementa di scienza politica* (Turin, 1896). Pareto's *Les systemes socialistes* was published in 1902; his main work was *Trattato di sociologia generale* (Florence, 1916). Michels' work *Political Parties* was published in 1915.

Mosca warned that the Marxist 'collectivist utopia' would produce a tyranny worse than any under capitalism.⁷⁹ Within the elitist tradition, Georges Sorel, author of *Reflections on Violence*, occupied a unique position.⁸⁰ Sorel highlighted the important role of myth and of religious ideas in motivating people. He described primitive Christianity as 'a fully developed and completely armed pessimism'.⁸¹ He saw modern revolutionary elites and their 'fighting organizations' as akin to Christian sects and monastic orders, of which the Jesuits were a prime example.⁸² The concept had a Russian pedigree as well. In the 1870s, *Narodnaya Volya* had proposed creating its own 'central fighting organization' for carrying out terror and assassination.⁸³

Both James Burnham's *The Machiavellians* (1943) and H. Stuart Hughes' *Consciousness and Society* (1958) identify the Machiavellian tradition with the anti-Marxist elite theorists – Mosca, Pareto, Michels, and, to some extent, Sorel. This is in many ways misleading.⁸⁴ These two works greatly oversimplify the division between right and left on this question. They ignore Nietzsche's seminal contribution as an elitist who drew heavily on Machiavelli. Mosca, a liberal and a strong critic of Machiavelli's thought and of Machiavellian practices, is labelled as a Machiavellian thinker. This approach sets up a wholly misleading dichotomy between Marx and Machiavelli, and completely ignores left-wing elitism, the tradition of 'revolutionary Machiavellism'.

The anti-Machiavellian riposte

The growing influence of the ideas of Marx and Nietzsche across Europe in the 1890s did not go unchallenged. Part of the liberal counter-attack was directed at the ideas of Machiavelli. One aspect of the attack was John Morley's Romanes Lecture delivered at Oxford in 1897 (see chapter 3). The lecture was immediately translated into other European languages. Soon after, the leading liberal Italian intellectual Gaetano Mosca published a critical review of Machiavelli's ideas, which closely echoes Morley's views (see chapter 3). He rejected Machiavelli's misanthropic view of human nature as dangerously one-sided, and warned that his advocacy of duplicity in politics would breed corruption. He regarded Machiavelli's aim of restoring the *virtù* of the ancient Roman Republic as wholly misconceived and fantastic.⁸⁵ Mosca also delivered a scathing attack on Jesuitism, or extreme sectarianism, by which parties and sects 'conceal and excuse the worst rascalities of their adherents so long as they are loyal to the colours', and who treat all those who belong to other parties as 'idiots or rogues'. Such parties always know how to find

and capture simple and timid souls who will follow the cause and its apostles.⁸⁶

This ideological counter-attack had a significant impact. In various countries a number of leading intellectuals defected from the Marxist camp to the liberal camp. In Italy the most famous defection was that of Croce. In Russia Pëtr Struve, Mikhail Tugan-Baranovski and Nicholas Berdyaev also abandoned the Marxist cause, prompted in large measure by a concern with the ethical nihilism they perceived to lie at its heart. What is of interest also is that this intellectual struggle led to a kind of crisis within the Marxist camp. In the case of Russia, it was reflected in an attempt by some prominent intellectuals to engage with the debate on ethics, and to provide some linkage between Marxism and Kantian notions of a rational ethical system. This was part of a moral panic that swept Europe and the USA from the 1890s onwards and which equated the rise of political terrorism with 'Machiavellism'.⁸⁷

Conclusion

In the wake of the French Revolution and the revolutionary convulsions of the nineteenth century, Machiavelli was appropriated by a whole series of political tendencies; by the revolutionary left, by the counter-revolutionary right and by ardent nationalists. We have seen the way in which elements of the Machiavellian realist tradition was incorporated into Marxism, and into the anti-Marxist traditions represented by Nietzsche and the elitists. Other political currents, which reflected attempts to base politics on different ethical foundations, including liberalism, reformist social democracy, moderate conservatism, were squeezed by these contending pressures. Marxism represented a fundamental break with the thinking associated with Machiavelli, and its belief in progress was fundamentally at variance with Machiavelli's worldview. But both Marx and Nietzsche, like Machiavelli, aspired to be theorists of action rather than contemplation. Revolutionaries from the Jacobins onwards were forced to confront the problems of organizing revolutionary movements, organizing the revolutionary seizure of power and putting down the threat of counter-revolution, and creating the new social order.

Whilst the Marxist tradition traced its lineage back to Machiavelli through Hegel, Fichte and the Jacobin revolutionaries of the 1790s, the Nietzschean tradition traced its lineage back to Machiavelli through Hegel, Fichte and the Bonapartist counter-revolutionary tradition. Machiavelli, who was neither right nor left, in a world where such

divisions were not yet formulated, was a figure who could, in part, be appropriated by both traditions. Machiavelli's astuteness in identifying the problems of state creation and state reform gave him an extraordinary influence. His rejection of conventional morality, and his focus on human agency in transforming political circumstances acquired an urgent relevance in an age when Christian morality and liberal values were under challenge, and where political polarization in societies threatened by revolutionary crisis encouraged a conception of politics as warfare. Notwithstanding the vast ideological gulf which separated them, the Marxist and Nietzschean positions reflected a strikingly similar action-orientated, heroic, iconoclastic conception of politics.

3

Machiavelli in Russia, 1800–1917

In this chapter we examine the way in which Machiavelli's ideas were disseminated and received in Russia in the period 1800 to 1917. We shall briefly review the debate on Machiavelli in Russia in the preceding three centuries. It was in the nineteenth century that Machiavelli's ideas were widely disseminated and debated. This was part of a trend across the whole of Europe, which witnessed in the nineteenth century a huge upsurge of interest in Machiavelli's political thought. In this chapter we concentrate essentially on the debate amongst scholars: historians, jurists, cultural specialists, philosophers, sociologists, military experts, etc. As we shall see the debate was fierce and highly polarized between Machiavelli's defenders and detractors.

The history of Machiavellian thought in Russia in the period up to 1800 is admirably covered by M. A. Yusim in *Machiavelli v Rossii*,¹ and we shall thus deal with this period quite briefly. The question of how far the political ideas of Ivan the Terrible (1530–1584) were shaped by Machiavelli has been discussed inconclusively. The Polish scholar Jan Malarczyk has examined the critical reception of Machiavelli's works and ideas in eastern Europe and Russia during the sixteenth century.² The Croatian Catholic priest Yury Krizhanich, who lived in Russia in the 1660s and 1670s argued, in his 'Political Thoughts' or 'Conversations on Power', for absolute monarchy based largely on classical and Renaissance authorities and quotes extensively from Machiavelli, but his argument is essentially moralistic. The monarch derives his authority from God who has decreed objective natural laws for all the world.³

Only with Peter the Great, however, was it possible for western political ideas to make any headway in Russia. Some notable figures of the period had some acquaintance with Machiavelli's ideas, such as the historian and statesman V. N. Tastishchev (1686–1750) and the statesman

and diplomat Count P. A. Tolstoi (1645–1729).⁴ According to Prezzolini, Count Tolstoi was called the Russian Machiavelli and supposedly translated *The Political Counsels of Niccolo Machiavelli*, but no trace of this book is found in libraries.⁵

Beyond limited circles it is difficult to identify any influence of Machiavelli's ideas in the eighteenth century. Machiavelli's books were banned and possession of them was considered a serious political offence. In 1737 Prince D. M. Golytsin (1665–1737) was accused of various heinous political crimes; amongst the charges laid against him was that he had read the works of Machiavelli and Boccalini. In 1738 the statesman and diplomat A. P. Volynskii (1689–1740) was arrested and executed for conspiracy against the crown, and was accused again of having read the work of Machiavelli.⁶ Yakov P. Kozel'skii published his *Philosophical Proposals* of 1768, acknowledging the 'great' stature of Machiavelli, although he was denounced on all sides.⁷

In 1779, Frederick the Great's *Anti-Machiavel* was translated into Russian and published in St Petersburg.⁸ Voltaire, who had offered advice on the work, subsequently fell out with its author and asserted that the '*Anti-Machiavel*' was a cover for the Machiavellian policies of the Prussian king.⁹

From the outset Machiavelli's ideas were seen as closely associated with the ideas and practices of the Jesuits. The Society of Jesus had been founded in 1534 by papal bull, of '*Regimini militantis ecclesiae*'. Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556) became its first general. The Society became the driving force in the Catholic Church's struggle against all heretical forces and the impetus behind the Counter-Reformation in Europe. The Catholic Church proscribed Machiavelli's works. The Jesuits led the attack on Machiavelli's ideas. The affinity between Machiavelli and the Jesuits was seen in terms of methods, and the belief that both were committed to a doctrine of the ends justifying the means. The terms Machiavellian and Jesuitical became almost interchangeable. The Jesuits were allowed into Russia at the beginning of the eighteenth century but by the order, made by Peter I, of 18 April 1729 they were expelled. They were readmitted in the late eighteenth century but in 1820 Alexander I disbanded the organization and confiscated its property.

N. M. Karamzin's twelve volumes, *History of the Russian State*, represented the first systematic attempt to analyse the history of the state. Karamzin recoiled from the excesses of the French Revolution but remained a fervent admirer of Robespierre (in contrast to the Russian revolutionary Radishev who compared Robespierre to Sulla). He was an

ardent defender of Russian autocracy but criticized the tyranny of Ivan the Terrible. He credited Peter the Great with the modernization of Russia but condemned his methods as a brutal infringement of national traditions. In 1798, he wrote of Peter the Great: 'Certain acts of cruelty are justified. An eternal goodness is incompatible with greatness of spirit. The great men are not made like the rest' (*ne voyent que le tout*). In the introduction to his book he refers to the 'deep thought of Machiavelli', although he rejected the notion that politics was above morality.¹⁰ Marx possessed a copy of this work.¹¹ Despite his reactionary politics, his *History* was admired by the Decembrists and by Pushkin. Pushkin described Machiavelli as 'greater knower of the nature of man' and criticized the Jesuit Possevin for his attacks on Machiavelli, in *Conringuis*, published in 1660.¹²

Sergei Nikolaevich Glinka, the publisher of *Russkii Vestnik*, played a leading role in the early dissemination of Machiavelli's views. In 1809 *Russkii Vestnik* published extracts from Machiavelli on the wars of the Romans.¹³ In 1813 it published the concluding chapter of *The Prince*, with its call for the unification of Italy.¹⁴ In 1817 the journal published a translation of abbé Guillon's fabricated work on Napoleon's notes on Machiavelli, with its openly polemical attack on Bonaparte.¹⁵ In 1819 *Vestnik Evropy* published a translation of the Polish work by Stan Pototskii which had recently been published in Warsaw, an assessment of Machiavelli's political thought with substantial extracts from *The Prince*.¹⁶ *Moskovskii Telegraf* in 1828 published an article on a French translation of Machiavelli's work, published three years earlier.

Macaulay's essay on Machiavelli, first published in the *Edinburgh Review* of March 1827, was translated into Russian and published by the *Moskovskii Telegraf* in 1828.¹⁷ The article was republished in 1856, and was included in 1860 in Macaulay's *Works* in Russia.¹⁸ Macaulay presents Machiavelli as a fascinating curiosity from an earlier age, a man of wide learning and achievement. The paradox in Machiavelli's make up – democrat but adviser of despots, advocate of violence but a humanist – is explained in terms of the moral standards of his age. His immorality 'belonged rather to the age than to the man', but remained 'a great blemish'. His political writings are infused with a 'mournful earnestness' when he deals with 'calamities of his native land'.

In the first half of the nineteenth century T. N. Granovskii and N. N. Kudryavtsev, both professors at Moscow University, dealt with Machiavelli and his ideas in their lecture courses.¹⁹ In 1851 the journal *Moskvityanin* carried a review of three works by F. W. Ebeling, Theodor Mundt and Macaulay on Machiavelli's ideas. This was part of the

discovery of Machiavelli in Russia, where a more balanced account of his ideas was now possible. The reviewer noted Macaulay's 'brilliant apologia' of Machiavelli, and defence of his views against his more strident critics. But this was still essentially a matter of historical curiosity.²⁰ Russia, however, was rather late in catching up with the huge wave of academic interest in Machiavelli that was then sweeping Italy, Germany and France.²¹

During the 1848–9 revolutions, the French historians Edgar Quinet and Giuseppe Ferrari brought out works on the Italian revolutions of the sixteenth century (see chapter 2). The German scholar Robert Mohl, in his classic three-volume work *Geschichte und Literatur der Staatswissenschaften* (1858), provides a detailed discussion of the way Machiavelli's ideas were treated by a host of writers.²² It is frequently cited by Russian writers of the time.²³

In 1859 the journal *Russkoe slovo* published in two parts a lengthy article on Machiavelli by V. Popov.²⁴ He was closely associated with Blagosvetlov and D. I. Pisarev.²⁵ Popov provides an enthusiastic defence of Machiavelli, and uses this opportunity to provide obvious parallels with the current situation in Russia. The age in which he lived was an age of turbulent change and revolution, a period of struggle for popular and individual power against the dominance of the pope and emperors. All Machiavelli's ideas were directed to the goal of making Italy free. He had favoured a mixed constitution combining monarchical, aristocratic and democratic elements. Popov notes that in his research he had tried to locate a Russian translation of *The Prince* by Volynskii, but had failed to find the manuscript.²⁶

He notes Machiavelli's comments that the masses, especially with a leader, are strong, but individually are weak. Popov provided an extended discussion of Machiavelli's ideas on political conspiracy from *The Discourses*.²⁷ A free society is better able to produce wealth than a tyranny. Popov underlined the similarity between the ideas of Machiavelli and those of the Jesuits. Noting the corruption of the Catholic Church under the popes:

decrepit Catholicism was able to revive itself only with the help of the Jesuits, whose rules were constructed on the system of Machiavelli, with only this difference that they stripped it of all honour, all nobility, all Roman patriotism, with which his works are infused from beginning to end. Machiavelli stood for freedom of thought and conscience: Loyola did not stand for anything, he

demands that the individual be a corpse so that all his spiritual power is directed to the good of society which rules him.²⁸

Popov repeats Rousseau's view that *The Prince* is a book for republicans, exposing the ways of despots, but saw Machiavelli's influence in the English Reformation (Thomas Cromwell), Frederick the Great of Prussia, the imperial policy of England, the French Revolution – the Jacobins and Napoleon.²⁹

In 1861 the journal *Sovremennik* published a lengthy article by Yu. Zhukovskii on 'Political and Social Theory in the Sixteenth Century'.³⁰ This combined an analysis of the views of Machiavelli as advocate of the destruction of the existing feudal order, with an exposition of Thomas More's utopian vision of a 'communist' society. In this Zhukovskii drew a direct parallel between the struggle against feudalism in the sixteenth century and the struggle against capitalism in the nineteenth century.³¹ Machiavelli sought two objectives; the first, the creating of a united Italy, and the second, the promotion of the well-being of the people (*blagosostoyanie naroda*). These two goals, Zhukovskii argues, could be reduced to one basic principle – *salus populi suprema lex esto* (the safety of the people is the highest law).³² He sought to create a state based on a combination of monarchical, aristocratic and democratic principles. Machiavelli is 'the philosopher of all times and all peoples'.³³ His view of politics reflected his age: for Machiavelli, politics was akin to war inasmuch as cunning and force were paramount.³⁴ In seeking the well-being of the people, Machiavelli sought political means, where social means were denied, whereas More sought change through the influence of the citizen. Zhukovskii later became an eminent senator and head of the State Bank. In 1877 he published a sweeping criticism of the ideas of Marx. Lenin dismissed him as a 'common place bourgeois economist'.³⁵

In 1865 A. N. Veselovskii published a work on the Italian novella and Machiavelli in *Sankt-Peterburgskii Vedomosti*. In this the author distinguishes between Machiavelli and Machiavellism, as the latter predates and outlives Machiavelli. It was Machiavelli's genius to define this form of politics.³⁶ In 1867 *Vestnik Evropy* published a review of P. Deltuf's *Essai sur les oeuvres et la doctrine de Machiavel*, published in Paris the same year.³⁷ The same year, *Zapiski dlya chteniya* also published a translation of Deltuf's essay.³⁸

Various Russian works dealing with the history of political thought deal with Machiavelli.³⁹ But the publication of Machiavelli's works in

Russia was notably late. In the nineteenth century there was a tremendous upsurge of interest in Machiavelli's ideas in Germany, France, Italy and England.⁴⁰ The first work published in Russian was *Belfagor*, published in 1824, and then republished in 1830 in the journal *Galateya*. A new edition was published in 1883.⁴¹ *The Art of War* (*O voennom iskusstvo*), translated by M. Bogdanovich, was published in St Petersburg in 1839.⁴²

Machiavelli's *The Prince* was translated using various titles – *Gosudar*, *Pravitel'*, *Monarkh*, *Knyaz'*. In 1869 two works dealing with Machiavelli's thought were published in St Petersburg. The first and most important was Nikolaya Makiavelli, *Gosudar' i rassuzhdeniya na perv'ya tri knigi Tita Liviya*, edited by N. S. Kurochkin.⁴³ This was a weighty tome containing a straight translation of the whole of *The Prince* and of *The Discourses*. The second was Nikolaya Makiavelli, *Monarkh*, edited by G. Reberg and translated from the German by F. K. Zatler.⁴⁴ It contained extracts from *The Prince* with a commentary by Reberg. In discussing chapter 17 of *The Prince*, regarding the use of cruelty, it stresses Machiavelli's view that terror could only be used short term, and that for the citizens to love a ruler it is necessary to respect him and to have confidence that he will protect them. But elsewhere fear plays an important role. Reberg notes: 'Fear [*strakh*] serves to bind civil society, or as the Russian saying has it, "Fear binds the land" [*Strakhom zemlya derzhit'sya*]. But it should be noted that this was not how Machiavelli reasoned.'⁴⁵

In 1880 A. S. Alekseev, a young professor of the Juridical Faculty of Moscow University, published a weighty book on Machiavelli as a political thinker, *Machiavelli kak politicheskii myslitel'*, drawing on the work of Villari, Mohl and others. Alekseev presents Machiavelli as a 'defender of political freedom', a 'sincere republican', a patriot who was compelled by the force of circumstances to recognize that a free state in Italy in the sixteenth century could not be established and that the only means of saving Italy from political ruin was the unbounded power of an absolute monarch who could unite the country.⁴⁶

Alekseev departed from conventional judgements on Machiavelli in two respects. First, he rejected the view that Machiavelli separated morality from politics, arguing that his whole political system was driven by the higher moral goal of Italian unification, on which the internal and external security of the people was dependent. He stressed Machiavelli's strictures on the excessive and unnecessary use of force in politics and his passionate denunciation of tyranny. In contrast to prevailing opinion, he declared 'he not only did not deny morality, but, on the contrary, considered moral demands obligatory for politics'.

Machiavelli considered the virtue of the citizens the main basis for society; he depicted the destructive influence of despotism on the morals of the people, and saw a republican form of government as best for the material well-being of the citizens and for their moral education.⁴⁷

Second, and related to this, he presents Machiavelli's view of morality as being derived from the needs of society as a whole rather than from the individual. It is society, and above all the state, which defines morality. In this, Alekseev presents Machiavelli as a 'utilitarian', and sees him as the father of utilitarian thought from whom a direct line of descent could be traced to Helvetius, Holbach, Bentham, J. S. Mill and Clavel. For Machiavelli, Alekseev argues, the state was the great educating force of the individual and society; the role of the statesman was to control historical development, like an engineer constructing dykes and dams to control flood water.

In turning Machiavelli into a 'utilitarian', Alekseev underplays Machiavelli's passionate attachment to the model of Roman politics, his stress on 'virtue' and 'fate' (*fortuna*), and his unabashed defence of violence in politics in some circumstances. Alekseev's work was a major landmark. In 1880 the book drew great critical attention, both positive and negative. Malarczyk, with justice, describes it as a 'brilliant apologia' of Machiavelli's thought.⁴⁸

N. Storozhenko, in a coruscating review, rounded on Alekseev's claim that it was only later writers who had accused Machiavelli of immorality, asserting that 'the republican party in Florence to a man accused Machiavelli of political betrayal and were unable to forgive him for the *Prince*'. The Florentine historian Varchi, on Machiavelli's death, reported the great odium (*dell' odio grandissimo*) in which he was held because of his cynicism of speech and manner of life. Another contemporary, Busini, spoke of Machiavelli with loathing. Other Italian writers on state affairs – Botero, Glasnotti and Paruti – sternly rebuke Machiavelli in their work. Gentillet blamed Machiavelli for the St Bartholomew's day massacre – not because of his ideas, but how immoral and irreligious people took up his ideas. Alekseev was accused of exaggerating Machiavelli's originality, particularly as regards his secularism. He was accused of idealizing Machiavelli as a man of the highest principles, the defender of freedom, a republican and patriot.⁴⁹

In *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, 1896, I. V. Luchitskii noted Machiavelli's experimental method, and the tension between the republican sentiments of *The Discourses* and his defence of dictatorship in *The Prince*. 'All which serves the aims of the politician is recognised as good, all that obstructs him is bad.' The entry outlined four different schools of

thought about Machiavelli's work: first, those who saw him as a representative of the 'shocking' school of political thought, the advocate of unprincipled methods, the advocate of the all-powerful state and the enslavement of the people, and one who himself sought preferment by the Medicis; second, those who saw Machiavelli as the 'secret adherent of freedom', the exposé of the methods of despots, the republican and democrat (Diderot, Rousseau); third, those who saw Machiavelli as the honourable man and a passionate patriot, who wished, above all, to free his homeland from the barbarians and return Italy to its lost glory (Herder, Ranke); and fourth, those (Proudhon) who argued that he must be judged from the viewpoint of the morals and beliefs of the sixteenth century, when the mighty had the right to rule unhindered.⁵⁰

M. M. Kovalevskii, the eminent historian, jurist and sociologist, was another admirer of Machiavelli.⁵¹ He was influenced by Marxist ideas and was a friend of Engels. In 1896 Kovalevskii published an article on 'The development of the idea of *raison d'état* [*gosudarstvennaya neobkhodimost*] and social justice in Italy'. This was analysed in terms of the views of Botero on *raison d'état* – heavily drawing on the ideas of Machiavelli. The tradition of *raison d'état* looked back to the tradition of classical Rome, this came to be interpreted by the teaching '*salus populi-suprema lex*' whereby the state is recognized only as a means to ensuring the balanced development and well-being of all citizens. In opposition to this tendency stood those like Tommaso Campanella, the Italian Dominican friar and author of *City of the Sun*, on social justice. Although in conflict, these two positions, he argued, could be reconciled.⁵²

Kovalevskii, in a work published in 1906, hailed Machiavelli as 'the greatest of the political writers of the epoch of the Renaissance' and 'the greatest of the political writers of Italy'. He explained the prominence of tyrannical regimes in Italy in the later Middle Ages in terms of class conflict, with individual tyrants consolidating their position often by appealing to the popular classes against the ruling oligarchies. Machiavelli's works, he argues, were not 'books for despots'. Although couched in cynical terms, Machiavelli offered sound advice: 'In a word Machiavelli gives the prince advice on how to rule the people with their participation, in accordance with the laws and justice, and with constant concern for the preservation of internal and external security.'⁵³

John Morley

John Morley's Romanes Lecture on Machiavelli, delivered in Oxford in June 1897, was immediately translated and published in Russia.⁵⁴ In the

introduction, the critic A. Volynskii expressed the hope that the article would aid the struggle with the contemporary error of Nietzschean attitudes then so prevalent amongst the Russian intelligentsia.⁵⁵ Significantly, Morley explained that in writing the article on Machiavelli he hoped to combat the Bismarckian ideas that were sweeping across Europe.⁵⁶ Morley presents a careful analysis of Machiavelli's ideas. Machiavelli's views, he argued, grew out of the circumstances of his time; the Italian Renaissance was distinguished by 'contempt of human life, the fury of private revenge, the spirit of atrocious perfidy and crime', but he paid tribute to his 'clinical' approach to politics.⁵⁷

On the question of whether there was a conflict between the views expressed by Machiavelli in *The Prince* and *The Discourses* he provides a convincing answer as to how the state should be safeguarded:

In either case, the saving principle is one: self-sufficiency, military strength, force, flexibility, address – above all no half measures. In either case, the preservation of the state is equally the one end, reason of state equally the one adequate and sufficient test and justification of means . . . Calculation, courage, fit means for resolute ends, human force – only these can rebuild a world in ruins.⁵⁸

In this view, intelligence and will count for all. There is no place for the Christian virtues of humility, pity and forbearance.

Morley stresses that, for Machiavelli, the republic was the preferred form of government: 'Nobody has stated the argument against the revolutionary dictator more clearly or tersely than Machiavelli.'⁵⁹ Machiavelli feared that extraordinary measures, once resorted to, would become established. On a more substantial level, Morley delivers some well-aimed criticisms at Machiavelli's thinking. It raises profound questions of what is permissible and who is to judge. For the prince cannot be confined within the limits of personal morality, because he is the guardian of the state:

The ruler as an individual is, like other men 'no more than the generation of leaves, fleeting, a shadow, a dream'. But the State lives on after he has vanished. He is a trustee for times to come. He is not shaping his own life only, but guiding the long fortunes of a nation. Leaves fall, the tree stands.⁶⁰

The ruler is thus entrusted with enormous responsibility and obligations towards his subjects, towards the whole nation now and for the future.

More profoundly still, it raises the question of the individual's relations with the state:

Does morality apply only to end and not to means? Is the State means or end? What does it really exist for? For the sake of the individual, his moral and material well being, or is the individual a mere cog or pinion in the vast machine.⁶¹

Morley rejects Machiavelli's conception of politics; 'the world, in spite of a thousand mis-chances, and at tortoise-pace, has steadily moved away from him and his Romans'. The attempt to 'awaken the social energy of ancient Rome', Morley dismissed as an absurd anachronism.⁶² The operation of the state could not be reduced to mere technicalities. Writers such as Pufendorf and Rousseau had analysed the state as a 'moral person' with its own obligations and duties: 'Civilisation is taken to advance, exactly in proportion as communities leave behind them the violence of external nature, and of man in a state of war.'⁶³

What Machiavelli leaves out of this equation, Morley implies, is 'moral force', for example, the impact on politics of Christ, Calvin or Savanarola. Thus Morley poses the question: 'But if moral force and spiritual force is exhausted, with what hope are you to look for either good soldiers or good rulers?' The eighteenth-century Enlightenment, he noted, was itself fired by the optimistic belief in the perfectibility of mankind:

An illusion you may say. Was it a worse illusion than disbelief in mankind? Machiavelli and his school saw only cunning, jealousy, perfidy, ingratitude, duplicity and yet on such a foundation as thus they dreamed that they could build. What idealist or doctrinaire ever fell into a stranger error?⁶⁴

Machiavelli's view of politics, Morley feared, could, with the development of modern science, be reduced to a crude kind of social Darwinism: 'Nature does not work by moral rules.' 'Science, with its survival of the fittest, unconsciously lends him illegitimate aid.' Machiavelli, Morley argues, in Lord Acton's words, is not a 'vanishing type, but a constant and contemporary influence', because he represents one side in an eternal struggle between energy, force, will and violence on the one hand and the restraints imposed by justice, conscience, humanity and right on the other.⁶⁵

P. I. Novgorodtsev

In 1898 the distinguished jurist and philosopher P. I. Novgorodtsev published an article which censured Machiavelli's immorality, and his low opinion of mankind, under the title: 'The political doctrine of pessimism'.⁶⁶ Whilst Machiavellism existed before and independently of Machiavelli, Machiavelli's thought is pervaded by pessimism regarding the human condition and human nature. Politics must therefore confine itself not to what should be, but to the unpleasant realities of what is. There can be little hope of progress; temporary success cannot be expected to last, where everything is in flux. Whilst honourable methods might be applied in ruling honourable men, it is impossible to rule honourably over dishonourable men. Machiavelli's central pre-occupation was the problem of the preservation of the state. He was a patriot who dreamt of the unification of Italy. But even in the pursuit of these higher ideals Novgorodtsev argued 'there remain always that cunning diplomat, who considers all means satisfactory if it is a question of the aims of the state'. The Roman Republic survived for so long because of the ruthlessness with which it preserved itself.

Machiavelli's worldview, Novgorodtsev argued, encapsulated a lack of faith in humanity and a sense of the fragility of human existence, which breeds a cynicism of outlook. The censure directed at Machiavelli through the ages, he argued, reflected 'the true instinct of social consciousness'. That consciousness might tolerate 'perfidious politics', but it recoils against the idea of elevating such politics 'into a system' and giving it the sanction of 'the printed word'. Machiavelli did not invent immoral politics but 'he attempted to generalise its rules' in a turbulent epoch when conflicts were resolved by the 'most vile means':

Pessimism and despair may in certain circumstances be the foundation force of social life, when it itself signals the fall of old forms and with the rising of the new prepares consciousness to adopt new basis and new ideals. But when pessimism destroys the very dear basis of human existence, when it undermines all our moral world view, our consciousness with understandable force rises against its destructive work.⁶⁷

In this Novgorodtsev underlined the importance of Kant, who recognized in morality and goodness a profound base for the strivings of mankind and that it was integral to his internal values.

In 1909 Novgorodtsev published a series of lectures for students in which he described Machiavelli as 'the greatest political thinker of the sixteenth century'.⁶⁸ Having destroyed the authority of the Catholic Church, he saw Machiavelli's ideas promoting 'a new faith, a new cult – the cult of the state'.⁶⁹ Machiavelli was a patriot and a republican, who sanctioned all methods to attain the unification of Italy. He turned the loathsome Cesare Borgia into a hero, a 'saviour of the people' (*spasitel' naroda*). He believed 'a good aim fully justifies evil means', 'he stood for the good of the people' (*blago naroda*).⁷⁰ Machiavelli's view was analogous to the medieval view that man was a sinful vessel, but he considered that salvation could be provided not by the church but by the state.

The continuing debate, 1897–1914

In 1897 V. E. Val'denberg in an article entitled 'The basis of Machiavellism' countered the accusation of 'crude immorality' levelled at Machiavelli, and argued that his views were more complex than a simple separation of politics from morality.⁷¹ Rather Machiavelli is concerned with the question of rights, law and justice. Rights can only be enjoyed under a system of law, although on the basis of concepts of justice, which predate law, rights can be conceptualized. Machiavelli has to be understood as a writer preoccupied with the establishment of law, and the power of the state, which alone gives law meaning. It is only when the state and law are established that rights have any meaning and that justice as a concept can be activated. In this, Val'denberg argued, there is a close affinity between the preoccupations which underlie Machiavelli's writings and those of Spinoza. Machiavelli's ideas must therefore be seen in terms of this fundamental problem of how the state can be established and safeguarded.

V. Topor-Rabchinskii in his *Machiavelli and the Epoch of the Renaissance*, published in Warsaw in 1908, presented Machiavelli as a republican, a democrat and an enemy of tyranny. His ideal was a free republic and his support of dictatorial power stemmed from his desire to achieve a unified Italy. He noted the difference between Alekseev's view that Machiavelli did not separate politics and morality and the view of Villari that he did. Topor-Rabchinskii clearly allied himself with those, like Alekseev, who wished to exonerate Machiavelli from the charges of amorality.⁷²

Before the First World War there was an outpouring of books on Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia. In 1900 extracts from Machiavelli's writings *The Prince* and *The Discourses* were published in St Petersburg.⁷³ In

1910 a new Russian translation of *The Prince* (*Knyaz'*) was published in Moscow, translated by S. M. Rogovin from the Italian.⁷⁴ In 1910 E. Lanzheron published an article on Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia in *Istoricheskii Vestnik*.⁷⁵ The same year M. Liven' published songs on Cesare Borgia, in which Machiavelli figures prominently.⁷⁶ In 1912 M. Saltykov published a study of Cesare Borgia.⁷⁷ In 1911 D. S. Merezhkovskii depicted Machiavelli in his trilogy *Christ and Anti-Christ*.⁷⁸ A. V. Amfiteatrov, *Sobranie sochinenii* (St Petersburg, 1914) contained a translation of *Mandragora*. Many of these works reflect the strong influence of Nietzsche amongst the Russian cultural intelligentsia of the time.

Various works on political thought also addressed Machiavelli's ideas; B. Chicherin in his history of political thought, published in 1903, discusses both Machiavelli and Hobbes. Chicherin accused Machiavelli of being indifferent to the role of morality in politics. The state and the individual, he argued, are both subject to a higher law, namely, the general good (*salus populi suprema lex esto*). But this, he added, could not always be attained by irreproachable means.⁷⁹ E. N. Trubetskoi, the editor of Fichte's works into Russian, in his study of Renaissance political thought, depicts Machiavelli as one who promoted pagan values, amoralism and the cult of the state.⁸⁰ There were a significant number of works dealing with the history of law and jurisprudence, which also cited Machiavelli.⁸¹ N. Korkunov identifies a certain inconsistency in Machiavelli's views between his advocacy of social conflict as beneficial for the health of the state and his advocacy of dictatorial powers in some instances. Korkunov had an important point to make: how does a dictatorship create the conditions for a healthy social pluralism?⁸² Machiavelli's military writings remained a matter of interest.⁸³

Translated works from French and German on political science, by P. Janet and G. Jellenek, also addressed the question of Machiavelli's thought.⁸⁴ S. P. Singalevich's *The Renaissance Epoch* was based on lectures read at Kazan Higher Women's Course, 1911–12. Singalevich's most interesting comments concerned the dilemma of Italian humanism, confronted by the needs of the individual and the needs of the state. As a humanist, deeply influenced by classical thought, Machiavelli favoured the all-rounded development of the individual, the promotion of individual fulfilment. However, this could only be attained within the framework of a 'strong and well-constructed state'. But the creation of such a state, he argued, was the product of individual actions: 'Only the individual, possessing all-sided development of mind can be the maker of a strong state.'⁸⁵

Of considerable interest is the article by S. Arkhangel'skii 'The Social History of Florence and the Political Teaching of Machiavelli', published by the Journal of the Ministry of Popular Education in 1911. Arkhangel'skii presented Machiavelli as an exponent of *realpolitik* (*realnoi politiki*) and an advocate of the unification of Italy.⁸⁶ He highlighted the class analysis in *Florentine Histories*, which he outlined in explicit Marxist terms (bourgeois revolution, class struggle, class formation, class divisions, class alliances, class-consciousness, and the reserve army of labour), stressing that this constituted Machiavelli's most important discovery. But the article did not mention Marx and clearly took an anti-Marxist stance.

Arkhangel'skii's analysis offers a direct parallel with tsarist Russia in 1911. He used Machiavelli's work to defend constitutional monarchy. The greatest enemy of political development and citizenship was the feudal land-owning class. Their power, as Machiavelli insisted, had to be smashed. The monarch needed to orientate on the other classes in society, including the bourgeoisie, the working class and peasantry. The monarchy as a modernizing force had to chart a course between the twin dangers of a feudal reaction and a popular revolutionary upheaval. Machiavelli, whilst sympathizing with the people, was an opponent of revolutionary tendencies. The state needs to be strong to resist internal and external enemies. The monarchy should avoid lapsing into tyranny and should be constrained by parliament. Machiavelli's condemnation of tyranny is stressed, although dictatorship in some circumstances is essential. On moral questions he was a 'utilitarian'. Rulers should use amoral methods sparingly, but should not fear to use them where necessary. Only where the survival of the state is in danger does he unequivocally defend all and every method of struggle, although, in the main '*raison d'état* [*blago gosudarstva*] rates higher than the demands of morality'.⁸⁷

N. I. Kareev, in his history of western Europe, accused Machiavelli 'of a complete denial of individual freedom' in opposition to humanistic individualism and a near idolization of the state; Machiavelli was an 'intelligent egoist, whom it is impossible to call nevertheless immoral'.⁸⁸ V. Ger'e, in *The Philosophy of History from St. Augustine to Hegel*, in 1915, identified Machiavelli as a pessimist with regard to human nature, with his view that people only do good out of necessity (even though the people are better than a single ruler). History for Machiavelli is a school without morality; he viewed history as an endless succession of cycles. He adopted a stance of 'patriotic utilitarianism' in which morality and religion were instrumentalized.⁸⁹ In 1916 B. Frommet published *Politika*

i intriga (Po literaturnym istochnikam) which dealt with Machiavelli's ideas on political intrigue.

In 1913, the publishing house Ogni issued a translation of Villari's study of *Savonarola*, which dealt with the failure of democratic government in Florence. The following year Ogni published volume 1 of Villari's classic biography of Machiavelli, with a short introductory article by M. M. Kovalevskii. The first volume dealt only with Machiavelli's life up to 1512.⁹⁰ The other two planned volumes were never published. The book attracted several reviews.⁹¹ As one reviewer, K. Uspenskii, noted, Villari steered a middle course between those who vilified Machiavelli as a prophet of immorality, utilitarianism, or the defender of the law of the survival of the fittest (*tsartsva prava sil'nago*) and those who praised him, depicting him as a man of his time.

The interest in Machiavelli's ideas in Russia was connected with the development of other intellectual trends. An attempt to publish Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan (Leviafan)* in 1868 was blocked by the censor, but works discussing his ideas were published.⁹² The *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, in its entry on Hobbes by O. G., noted how the individual in seeking to escape from the state of nature, of 'war of all against all' (*bellum omnium contra omnes*) was obliged to subordinate himself to one supreme power:

The responsibility of the monarch is the good of society (*salus publica suprema lex*). For its preservation the supreme power possesses all power. Only with the establishment of the state does social life, law and morality become possible. Only where the supreme power is unable to preserve peace against internal or external enemies are the citizens under no obligation to obey it.⁹³

Spinoza's *Political Treaties*, which celebrated Machiavelli's wisdom, prudence and love of liberty, was published in a Russian translation in Moscow in 1910.⁹⁴ The influence of Machiavelli went alongside a very strong interest in the ideas of Hegel, Nietzsche and Fichte. We have already seen how the ideas of Kant were used by the critics of Machiavelli in Russia to argue the case for a moral foundation to be laid to political thought and political action.

Alongside the influence of political philosophy went other influences. Charles Darwin's *Origins of Species* was published in Russia in 1864.⁹⁵ Herbert Spencer, whose work generated enormous interest in Russia in the nineteenth century, explored the implication of social Darwinism.⁹⁶ There were various Russian editions of the work of Thomas Malthus.

With a rocketing population, beset by periodic dearth and famine, Malthus's ideas held potentially enormous appeal. Malthus's ideas can also be ascribed to the school of thought labelled pessimist.⁹⁷ Marx and Engels directed considerable attention to repudiating his ideas. This task was taken up by the Russian Marxists, especially by Plekhanov and Lenin.

The academic debate on Machiavelli in Russia in these years must be viewed as part of a wider political debate. From the 1880s onwards the tsarist state actively promoted a policy of industrializing the country. This might be seen as part of a Russian tradition of 'revolution from above' from Peter the Great onwards. The concept was immediately comprehensible to Russians. In seeking to persuade the nobility to accept peasant emancipation, Alexander II noted that it was 'better to free the people from above' than wait until they free themselves from below. Plekhanov cited this in his first article in *Chernyi Peredel* in 1879.⁹⁸

Germany's transformation into a major industrial power under Bismarck's rule was admired and envied.⁹⁹ Russia, under the influence of successive ministers of finance such as Bunge, Vishnegradskii and Witte in the 1880s and 1890s, adopted remarkably similar policies: protective tariffs, state ownership of most of the rail network; and the state monopoly of spirits. Witte, in his memoirs, drew a direct parallel between the 1891 tariff and that introduced by Bismarck in Germany. Witte's modernization strategy was also directly influenced by the ideas of Friedrich List.¹⁰⁰ Witte, like Bismarck, was frequently accused of being a socialist, a charge he, like Bismarck, regarded with equanimity.¹⁰¹

For the populist writer N. Mikhailovskii, himself a great admirer of Vico, Bismarck was 'the first purely practical politician to appear on the European scene, recognising no standard of value apart from the exercise of power'.¹⁰² But Bismarck was also greatly admired in Russia. *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'* of 1891 provided a lengthy and glowing account of Bismarck's rule. 'He represents the central figure, to whom are drawn all the most important historical events of the second half of the nineteenth century.'¹⁰³ This entry stressed the role of *raison d'état* as a guiding principle in Bismarck's policies: 'Bismarck was never fastidious about means . . . Morality – in its abstract sense – had no role in politics.'¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

The Italian scholar Prezzolini argues that the influence of Machiavelli's ideas in Russia before 1917 was small. On this score Prezzolini is wrong. The literature on Machiavelli in Russian from 1850 to 1914 was quite

considerable, including translations of his work and commentaries. What is also clear is the intense debate surrounding his ideas, raising as it did the fundamental question of power, of state (*vlast*). On the radical-democratic wing of Russian politics were the staunch defenders of Machiavelli: V. Popov, Yu. Zhukovskii, A. S. Alekseev, M. M. Kovalevskii, V. Topor Rabchinskii and V. Valdenburgh. In bitter opposition to them stood P. I. Novgorodtsev, N. Storozhenko and E. N. Trubetskoi. The view taken by this latter group corresponds most closely to the liberal tradition reflected in England by Morley and in Italy by Mosca. In Italy, Mario Mariani published *Il Ritorno di Machiavelli* in 1916, which was careful to differentiate between Machiavelli's ideas and Machiavellism, but associated the latter with the strong tendency in the foreign policy of the German empire and equated it also with the policy stance of the German Social Democratic Party.¹⁰⁵

Those involved in the debate were highly educated people, with a keen understanding of west European culture and society. The reason for this bitter split lies in terms of profound ideological and philosophical differences within the liberal camp. On the one hand were there who inclined towards a statist view of development who were sympathetic to Machiavelli, and on the other were those who adopted a more individualistic, more society-orientated perspective, who were hostile. It is when we turn to the influence of Machiavelli in revolutionary circles in Russia that the true significance of his impact begins to become clearer.

4

Revolutionary Machiavellism

The radical tradition in Russian politics in the nineteenth century might crudely be divided into two strands. First, there was the strand of radical transformation, which sought change by the mobilization of political and social pressures, through propaganda and the educating of public opinion, and which sought to exploit all possibilities for evolutionary change. This was the strand represented by Alexander Herzen, Nikolai Chernyshevskii, Peter Lavrov and Georgi Plekhanov. The second strand represented what might be termed the direct action approach, which was fired by a commitment to revolutionary change, which saw revolution as essential and inevitable, and which believed that revolution would, of necessity, be violent, who saw any other approach as conciliatory and doomed to failure. This was the current represented by N. A. Speshnev, N. P. Ogarëv, P. G. Zaichnevskii, M. Bakunin, P. N. Tkachev and S. G. Nechaev. This was the tradition which might be termed 'revolutionary Machiavellism'.

The Russian revolutionary tradition

Russian radical and revolutionary intellectuals in the first half of the nineteenth century had various political traditions on which to draw; there was the western liberal tradition, the tradition of German radicalism associated with Hegel and Fichte, and there was the French revolutionary tradition in both its Jacobin and Bonapartist manifestations. Hegel exerted enormous influence on Russian radical and socialist thought in the nineteenth century. The Decembrists, who staged their abortive coup in 1825, were familiar with the ideas of Machiavelli. P. O. Pestel, S. I. Turgenev, A. I. Turgenev, N. I. Turgenev, A. F. Brigen and A.

Z. Murav'ev had Machiavelli's works in their libraries, and they referred to him in their correspondence. The reading of Machiavelli by the Decembrists was essentially of Machiavelli the republican, democrat, patriot and political realist rather than simply the advocate of amorality in politics.¹ But Pestel, who was executed in 1826, favoured a military-style, Jacobin-type dictatorship.²

Two of the leading revolutionary thinkers of the nineteenth century, M. Bakunin and V. G. Belinskii, were strongly influenced by Hegel and Fichte.³ Belinskii spoke of his views in 1836, declaring: 'I grasped the Fichtean view with energy, with fanaticism.' He was entranced by Fichte's defence of the French revolution, and also by his view that 'the ideal life is the real, positive, concrete life, and the so-called real life is negation, an illusion, nothingness, emptiness'.⁴ Bakunin later criticized Belinskii for his 'Robespierrian' interpretation of Fichte.⁵ Plekhanov notes how 'the people of the forties' were enthusiastic about Fichte, Schelling and Hegel.⁶ Chernyshevskii in 1860 wrote: 'Kant belongs to that party who wished to establish in Germany freedom by revolutionary means, but he abhorred terroristic methods. Fichte went a few steps further, he was not afraid of even terroristic means.'⁷

In the circumstances of tight censorship, the publication of *The Pocket Dictionary of Foreign Words Introduced into the Russian Language* (in two parts 1845–6), edited by Nikolai Krillov, was used as a means of disseminating radical ideas in Russia. Remarkably, it avoided being censored. The dictionary provided discussions of words such as Authority, Anarchy, Democracy, Despotism and Constitution, drawing readers' attention to other sources where a fuller discussion was available. It drew particular attention to the idea of utopian socialists (Saint Simon, Owen, Fourier). It also drew striking parallels between Russian and pre-revolutionary France. Machiavelli's *The Prince* (*O monarkhe*) was used to illustrate irony, asserting that 'the praise of the despot is nothing other than a strong satire'.⁸

In 1848–9 a group of radical intellectuals formed around M. V. Petrashevskii, a follower of Fourier, a stern critic of the methods of intrigue associated with the Jacobins. The favoured method was propaganda. The Petrashevtsy sought to mobilize the religious schismatic (*raskolniki*) and soldiers through agitation. Within the circle, however, others advocated methods of conspiracy, also referred to as 'Jesuitic' (*iesuitskii*) methods, and revolution.⁹ Nikolai A. Speshnev (1821–1882), one of the leaders of the group, in 1848–9 organized a conspiratorial group to disseminate agitational literature and to organize an underground press. He was sentenced to be executed but this was commuted

to ten years' hard labour. He was amnestied in 1856.¹⁰ According to Venturi, Speshnev advocated Machiavellian revolutionary tactics.¹¹

The revolutionary upheavals of 1848–9 ushered in a period of intense reaction and stringent censorship and also brought with it a general reappraisal of the Jacobin tradition (see Chapter 2). Nevertheless, despite these restrictions, scholarly works commentating on Machiavelli, as we have seen, were published, and Russian editions of his works were also published for the first time. We might even speak of 'legal Machiavellism' in parallel to the 'legal Marxism' of the 1890s.

The concept of *raison d'état* or *staatsrason* quickly entered into the Russian vocabulary. It was translated either as *gosudarstvennaya neobkhodimost* or *blago gosudarstva*. K. Arsen'ev in *Giene Zapada* (*Za chetvert' veka*) wrote that *gosudarstvennaya neobkhodimost* (literally, necessities of state) was sometimes called *raison d'état*, or *salut public*. Cicero's expression *salus populi suprema lex* became a catchphrase which legitimized state absolutism, but it also became a phrase defending revolutionary terror and dictatorship.

In 'From the Other Shore', written during the revolutionary upheavals of 1848–9, the outstanding Russian socialist thinker Alexander Herzen engaged in a sustained debate on the nature of revolution. Having witnessed the horrors of Cavaignac's counter-revolutionary terror in Paris, he posed the question of what is required for the revolution to succeed:

And what were you doing, you revolutionaries afraid of revolution? You, political pranksters, clowns of freedom, you were playing at republic, playing at terror, at government, playing the fool in your clubs, chattering in your chambers. Masquerading with pistols and sabres, you virtuously rejoiced when avowed scoundrels praised your mercy, surprised that they were still alive. You foresaw nothing and forestalled nothing. And those who were the best among you paid for your insanity at the price of their heads. *Now learn from your enemies, from those who vanquished you because they were wiser. See if they are afraid of reaction, of going too far, of staining their hands in blood. They are wallowing in it elbow-deep, up to the chin* (emphasis added).¹²

From this, it follows that the counter-revolution can only be overwhelmed with the most resolute exertion of revolutionary force. For Herzen, this poses the most terrible dilemma and one for which he offers no satisfactory solution: what kind of political order will be ushered in by a triumphant revolution? The revolutionaries assume for themselves the role of liberators of mankind, hardly halting to stop and

ask what the people desire. Soon the liberators themselves turn into oppressors: 'Appoint Proudhon Minister of Finance or President, and he will turn into another Louis Bonaparte in the opposite extreme', adding 'The generation of revolutionaries abruptly turns absolutist.'¹³

For Herzen, modern socialists are like early Christians challenging the might of the Roman empire. Socialism's advance can be halted only by resort to repression: the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Spanish Inquisition and Saint Bartholomew massacres. The authorities seek to dupe and thwart the masses with all kinds of Machiavellian methods.¹⁴ He denounced those who seek to justify their action by invoking divine authority, venerating the state, displaying disrespect for the individual, whilst invoking the interests and name of the people: 'From all these maxims such as "*Salus populi suprema lex*", "*Pereat mundus et fiat justitia*" . . . there rises the terrible stench of burning bodies, blood, inquisition, torture and generally of the triumphant order.'¹⁵ In 1854 Herzen wrote that 'The cult of the French Revolution is the first religion of young Russians; so are there none who have not hidden away the portraits of Danton and Robespierre?'¹⁶ He emphasized the specifically religious veneration of the Jacobin heroes of the French revolution. The cult of the revolution remained extraordinarily powerful amongst educated circles in the 1860s and 1870s.¹⁷

Herzen, in recoiling from the Machiavellism of the counter-revolution, also recoiled from the Machiavellism of the revolutionaries, but saw Machiavellism as intrinsic in a revolutionary crisis. This insoluble dilemma was central to Russian revolutionary politics. In his debate with Chernyshevskii in 1860 the question of means and ends was raised. In response to Chernyshevskii's argument that only by force could the people seize their rights from the tsar, Herzen replied that he differed with him not over ends but over means, that if there was a vestige of hope of avoiding bloody revolution it should be taken, asserting his increasing 'disgust for all bloody revolutions'.¹⁸ The Jacobin strategy was particularly dangerous in Russia with its absolutist state traditions: 'Peter the First becomes despot and institutes the Committee of Public Safety.'¹⁹

In 'From the Other Shore', Herzen frequently echoes the views of Machiavelli: he speaks of mankind possessing 'the feeble urges to do good and the equally feeble impulses to do evil'; 'The masses are elemental forces, their ways are the ways of nature: they are its closest heirs. They are impelled by obscure instincts and unconscious passions'; 'The general sympathies of the masses are almost always correct, just as the instinct of animals is correct.'²⁰ This highlighted the necessity of

leadership, but also the dilemmas of leadership in a revolutionary situation.

Chernyshevskii had read Machiavelli, but how deeply is uncertain.²¹ Like many other Russian intellectuals he was greatly influenced by the English radical Jeremy Bentham's 'utilitarian' ideas. Bentham, incidentally, a great admirer of Napoleon, rejected *a priori* judgements about man's moral behaviour; his test of right and wrong was utility or pleasure or desirability, summarized as 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number'. The label 'utilitarian' was used widely to characterize philosophers and writers who treated political and social issues as separate from ethical and moral judgements. These supposedly included Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza and Marx.²² The equation of utilitarianism with Machiavellism was well established.²³ 'Utilitarianism' had a great impact on Russian revolutionaries, which is reflected in the views of Pisarev. It was a debt which Trotsky also acknowledged.²⁴

G. E. Blagosvetlov, the publisher of the journal *Delo*, himself influenced by 'utilitarianism', in a note to his friend Shelgunov in the 1860s, advised him as to how to operate under censorship: 'Be crafty as a serpent and innocent as a dove.'²⁵ The quotation is taken from the Bible (Matthew, ch. 10, verse 14), 'Be ye therefore wise as serpents and as innocent as doves.' But Blagosvetlov may well have taken it from Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*:

We must be grateful to Machiavelli and to authors like him, who write about what men do and not about what they should do. It is not possible to join the wisdom of the serpent to the innocence of the dove, if we do not know all the characteristics of the serpent – his meanness, his dragging his belly, his slipperiness, his inconstancy, his malice, his poison: and all the rest – that is, all the forms and aspects of evil. Because without this knowledge, virtue is vulnerable and defenceless. On the contrary, honest people could not even redeem evil ones without the help of the knowledge of evil. Men of corrupt minds believe that honesty is characteristic of a simple soul.²⁶

High-mindedness was not enough, it needed to be allied to realism. This thought runs like a thread through the thinking of Russian revolutionaries of this period.

The Russian revolutionaries of the 1860s and Machiavelli

A key figure in the development of the Russian Jacobin or Blanquist tradition was N. P. Ogarëv, whose life was devoted to the revolutionary

cause. A close friend of Herzen's since the 1820s, he worked with Chernyshevskii, and in the 1860s became closely involved with Bakunin and Nechaev. In the early 1860s he was closely involved in the establishment of Land and Liberty (*Zemlya i Volya*). Ogarëv was a communist, greatly influenced by the ideas of Babeuf, and by Buonarroti's book *Conspiration pour l'Egalité, dite de Babeuf* (1828). His main interest was in the question of revolutionary organization. He advocated the creation of a secret revolutionary organization, based on provincial networks, and by the penetration of key groups in society (the military, intellectuals and the peasants) through front organizations. He traced the tradition of secret societies from the early Christians, through the Reformation, the Jesuit order, Freemasonry, the French Revolution to the Decembrists. He advocated the creation of a self-appointed centre of revolutionaries consisting of a few people ('apostles'), with an organization based on unconditional obedience and the development of a revolutionary press to disseminate its ideas. Ogarëv conceived of the future revolution as combining a military-type conspiracy allied to peasant revolution as the way to seize power. His ideas had a deep impact on future revolutionary groups, especially on *Narodnaya Volya* (the People's Will) in the 1870s.²⁷

In 1860 there emerged a new generation of militant revolutionaries, one of the foremost representatives of which was P. G. Zaichnevskii (1842–1896). A fervent supporter of the failed Polish rebellion of 1861 and an active agitator involved in attempting to instigate peasant revolution in Russia, he was repeatedly imprisoned and exiled.²⁸ Zaichnevskii is famous mainly for the proclamation 'Young Russia' (*Molodaya Rossiya*), which called for a merciless bloody revolution and for ruthless dictatorship, pitting itself against the state, itself armed with the concept of '*gosudarstvennaya neobkhodimost'*'.²⁹ Zaichnevskii sought his support mainly amongst revolutionary youth.

Molodaya Rossiya prompted a moral panic and ushered in a new period of state repression. Chernyshevskii was critical. Herzen condemned it as the work of young, inexperienced people who were adopting the Jacobinical methods of Blanqui, of revolutionary conspiracy and of being influenced by Babeuf and Feuerbach. Bakunin, in an article '*Narodnoe delo: Romanov, Pugachev ili Pestel*' in September 1862, denounced the authors as irresponsible, and for their doctrinaire attitude to the people. Both Herzen and Bakunin at this time hoped for the regime to reform from within. By 1868 Bakunin was speaking more favourably of *Molodaya Rossiya*, stressing their support amongst radical youth, and admiring their willingness to adopt a totally uncompromising attitude.³⁰

For Soviet historians, such as Pokrovskii and Mitskevich, *Molodaya Rossiya* was the forerunner of Bolshevism. B. P. Koz'min argued that *Molodaya Rossiya* was the first explicit manifestation of 'Russian Blanquism'. As such it might also be said to be one of the first manifestos of 'revolutionary Machiavellism' in Russia.³¹ According to Koz'min, Machiavelli enjoyed great popularity amongst the revolutionary youth of the 1860s. The *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* of 1930 described Zaichnevskii as 'a revolutionary of the Jacobin persuasion'.³²

The poet-revolutionary I. I. Gol'ts-Miller, a member of the Zaichnevskii circle, in his poem 'My Home' (*Moi Dom*) describes his spartan room, with his favourite books including 'The magnificent Machiavelli who struck such terror in the hearts of stupid people'.³³ Gol'ts-Miller died an early tragic death by his own hand.

The ideas of *Molodaya Rossiya* had a big impact, and set the terms of the debate between Populists and Jacobins that was waged into the 1870s. Radical intellectuals were divided about the Jacobin tradition. Whilst some, such as N. Sokolov, opposed Jacobin ideas, others such as V. A. Zaitsev greatly admired Robespierre and Saint-Just. 'Democrats', in Zaitsev's words, not only were right but were, obliged by force to grant the people 'freedom' in those cases where because of their political underdevelopment, they did not understand its significance and did not yet value it.³⁴ On the most radical Jacobin wing of Russian politics were individuals such as N. Ichoutin (the Organization and *Ad – Hell*).³⁵

Polish Machiavellism

One aspect of Russian revolutionary Machiavellism drew inspiration from the Polish struggle for independence in the nineteenth century. Within the Polish liberation movement there was a pronounced Jacobin element, which also suggests a close affinity with the ideas of Hegel and Fichte.

In 1828 the outstanding Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz published his verse-novel *Konrad Wallenrod*. Although describing the conflicts between the Teutonic knights and the heathen Lithuanians, it was a covert account of the contemporary conflict between Poles and Russians. Significantly, it carried as its motto Machiavelli's words: 'You must know, therefore, that there are two ways of carrying on a contest – one must be both a fox and a lion.'³⁶ The Poles, like the fox, had to adopt methods of cunning against the Russian lion. They should, in Machiavelli's words, 'know how to colour one's action and to be a great liar and deceiver' (*The Prince*, ch. xviii).

In Poland, *wallenrodyzm* became synonymous with 'Machiavellism'. Norman Davies writes: 'it denotes a particular brand of calculated "political action", a two-faced attitude, characterised by apparent servility towards the enemy whom one intends to betray and destroy'. More than this, it recognizes amoral means to moral ends, contemplating betrayal and treachery as sometimes necessary. Davies adds: 'The reading of *Konrad Wallenrod* was widely credited with inspiring the November rising' of 1830.³⁷

Mickiewicz, as a Polish patriot and revolutionary, was an ardent admirer of Napoleon ('the saint of our time'), Robespierre and Saint-Just. He had connections with the Decembrists. A Russian translation of *Konrad Wallenrod* was published in *Moskovskii vestnik* in 1828, and was republished many times. He was forced to flee Russia and live in exile. In the 1840, he held the chair of Slavonic Literature at the University of Paris, where his colleagues included Michelet and Quinet. In Paris in 1849 he edited the radical, socialist-inclined journal *Tribune des Peuples*. During the Crimean War he sought to organize a contingent of soldiers to fight for Polish independence. Mickiewicz was admired by Pushkin, Grigoriev, Herzen and Bakunin.³⁸

The failure of the Polish rising of 1863 rekindled an interest in the ideas of Machiavelli. In 1865 an anonymous work was published, *The Polish Machiavelli*, which sought to explain the country's plight in the lack of intelligent leaders. Dr Ludwik Wolski in 1867 published a work, *The Polish rising of 1863 with a commentary by Machiavelli*, which urged the Polish people to adopt a more realistic view of politics, and to work systematically to realize their dreams.³⁹ Amongst Polish revolutionaries the interest in Machiavellian ideas was usually in the guise of Blanquism.

On 7 August 1863, a government informer, I. Orlov, wrote a report to the Okhrana on the revolutionary situation in western Europe and its impact on the Russian empire, which offered the observation:

In general it is necessary to note that the mode of activity and the character of the current revolutionary society is based mainly on the system of politics of Machiavelli, that for the good of the people it is not necessary to be scrupulous as far as means are concerned. Such methods of action must be expressed not in such crude and cruel forms which we see at the present time in the actions of Polish agitators, but in subtlety, cunning and in the desire to be unnoticed.⁴⁰

Mickiewicz's name was used by the Polish communist regime after 1945 to legitimize its rule.⁴¹

Nihilism

In the 1860s Russian revolutionary youth showed a strong interest in Machiavelli, utilitarianism and the new nihilistic ideas. Discussions on nihilism are often reluctant to explore the interconnection between these currents, and the extent to which nihilism was, in part, an outgrowth of a Machiavellian worldview; the rejection of conventional moral norms, the stress on the role of force and guile in shaping history, the exposé of hypocrisy, the absurdity of the human condition. Nihilism represented one side of a coin, the other side of which was distinguished by a political zeal, which was quasi-religious in character, which sought to construct meaning, and sought, through political organization and action, to bring it into being. For many radicals, the two aspects co-existed within their political make-up. The denial of the old religion led to a quest for a new kind of religion.

Nihilism was 'utilitarian' – only that which served the needs of the people was worthy. Nihilism denied religious belief, idealistic philosophy, despotism in social and family life, rejected 'art for art's sake', and 'science for science', resolutely denied the existing ruling ideology, morals and norms for conducting social life. It demanded freedom of the individual and equal rights for women, propagated 'reasoned egotism', and promoted the study of science. The revolutionary-democratic camp of the 1860s, headed by *Sovremennik* of N. G. Chernyshevskii and N. A. Dobrolybov, and *Russkoe slovo* of D. I. Pisarev aligned themselves with nihilism in its broadest sense.⁴²

The term 'nihilism' acquired wide usage after the publication of Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons* (1862) in which the main hero, Bazarov, is called a nihilist. The term nihilism was widely used in journalistic polemics, in official government documents and in anti-nihilist novels (A. F. Pismenskii, N. S. Liskov, V. P. Klyushnikov) to discredit the revolutionary ideology and the democratic movement. Opponents dismissed nihilism as a striving towards the destruction of the basis of civilization, the denial of spiritual values, amorality.⁴³

Tkachev, Bakunin and Nechaev

A number of works dealing with Machiavelli's political ideas were published in this period – V. Popov's article (1859), Macauley's essay

(1860) and the article by Yu. Zhukovskii on political and social theory in the sixteenth century (1861).⁴⁴ Zhukovskii's article was republished in a collection of his works in 1866.⁴⁵ P. N. Tkachev reviewed the article in *Russkoe slovo*. The publication of the review may have been one of the reasons for the journal being banned.⁴⁶ In his review Tkachev wrote:

Machiavelli completely abandoned medieval mysticism. He saw the good and the right not in abstract principles but in what is expedient – the evil and the unjust in what is futile. Having postulated that *volus [sic – salus] populi supreme lex esto* 'the health of the people is the supreme law' Machiavelli neglected no means which would lead, directly or indirectly, to this end. Machiavelli's understanding of truth and justice leads him to a simple calculation of what is useful or expedient; he denies natural law of the type taught by the Scholastics; he denies mystical morality; he freely admits of force in law and therefore all his actions are directed only towards making Italy above all a strong, united state. Thus Machiavelli understood the essence of law and, in this sense, may be termed an authentic realist.⁴⁷

Tkachev said that Machiavelli finally liberates man from 'the heavy burden of scholarship, he provides us with a reasonable and sober opinion of phenomena which in his time nobody, and in other times only a few could have a clear notion of'.⁴⁸ Tkachev gives *Salus populi, suprema lex* as a summary of Machiavelli's view of politics. In some editions of the *The Discourses* this is given as the heading of book 3.⁴⁹ This was to become almost a slogan of Russian revolutionaries in the succeeding decades.⁵⁰

Machiavelli's ideas were well attuned to the times. His hatred of the feudal land-owning class, his defence of tyrannicide, his atheism, his republican, democratic and patriotic sentiments, his uncompromising defence of the maxim 'the end justifies the means' and his analysis of methods of conspiracy mirrored the concerns of contemporary revolutionaries. Tkachev and Bakunin had studied Machiavelli and admired him. Whether Nechaev had studied him is less certain.⁵¹ Tkachev was widely read and was influenced by Machiavelli, Hobbes, Spinoza, Bentham, Mill, Comte, Adam Smith, Ricardo, Marx, Engels, Blanqui, Malthus and others.⁵²

Bakunin in 1867 expressed his admiration for Machiavelli as the exposé of the ways of tyrants and states in general:

There is no horror, no cruelty, sacrilege, or perjury, no imposture, no infamous transaction, no cynical robbery, no bold plunder or shabby betrayal that has not been or is not daily being perpetrated by the representatives of the state, under no other pretext than those elastic words, so convenient and yet so terrible: *raison d'état*.

It was 'the great Italian political philosopher Machiavelli', Bakunin declares, who had divined the full import of these 'truly terrible words'. In a time of the tyranny of church and state when the rights of the citizen were unknown, when the people had always been considered 'an inert and inept mass, the flesh of the State to be moulded and exploited at will, pledged to eternal obedience'. In this time Machiavelli had concluded that

the State was the supreme goal of all human existence, that it must be served at any command that, since the interest of the State prevailed over everything else, a good patriot should not recoil from any crime in order to serve it. He advocates crime, he exhorts to crime, and makes it the *sine qua non* of political intelligence as well as of true patriotism. Whether the state bears the name of monarchy or of a republic, crime will always be necessary for its preservation and its triumph. The State will doubtless change its direction and its object, but its nature will remain the same; always the energetic, permanent violation of justice, compassion and honesty, for the welfare of the State.

Yes, Machiavelli is right. We can no longer doubt it after an experience of three and a half centuries which is added to his own experience. Yes, so all history tells us: while the small states are virtuous only because of their weakness, the powerful states sustain themselves by crime alone. *But our conclusions will be entirely different from his, for a very simple reason. We are the children of the Revolution, and from it we have inherited the religion of humanity, which we must found upon the ruins of the religion of divinity. We believe in the rights of man, in the dignity and the necessary emancipation of the human species. We believe in human liberty and human fraternity grounded upon justice. In a word, we believe in the triumph of humanity upon the Earth* (emphasis added).⁵³

In another work preserved in his archives, Bakunin discourses on the question of the development of the state:

What then is the basic principle of politics according to Machiavelli? It is terrible and real. It is crime. Only with the help of crime is it possible to create, to strengthen and preserve state power: but from that moment, when crime begins to serve as an instrument of government it becomes virtuous. This is the great principle of Machiavelli, such is the eternal principle of political struggle of all past, present and future states.⁵⁴

But Bakunin notes that, to accomplish the object of uniting Italy and defeating those spiritual and secular powers that stood in the way, this was only possible 'in the artificial creation of a monarchical power, based not on the politics of active and friendly cooperation with the Italian people, but on its political, social and spiritual destruction [*unichtozh-henie*]'.⁵⁵ Machiavelli 'with magnificent perspicacity' prophesied the basic principles of the modern state, namely the application of force for the 'scientific exploitation of the nation's wealth and human resources, and its organisation in order to keep it in absolute obedience', 'the open and concealed enslavement of the people and the triumph of absolute centralised power: military, bureaucratic, police, finance'.⁵⁶ But Bakunin sought, above all, the state's destruction. In promoting revolution he was torn between admiration for the idea that all methods were legitimate in political struggle, and repulsion for the implication that this held, of the danger of an unrepresentative minority seizing power in the people's name and transforming itself into a new caste of exploiters.⁵⁷

Sergei Nechaev, in the words of Anthony D'Agostino, injected Machiavellism from below into Russian revolutionary thought.⁵⁸ This approach to revolution was outlined in what became the notorious 'Catechism of the Revolutionist'. The Catechism outlines the qualities required of the revolutionary, of total dedication to the cause and the subordination of everything to the revolution. There was no action that could not be used for the sake of revolution, including the betrayal of personal friends. The basic principle of the Catechism is summed up in its fourth point:

He [the revolutionary] despises public opinion. He despises and abhors the existing social ethic in all its manifestations and expressions. For him, everything is moral which assists the triumph of the revolution. Immoral and criminal is everything which stands in his way.⁵⁹

The religious term catechism is significant. From the 1790s onwards in France, Germany, Spain and Italy dozens of 'political catechisms'

were published, of a liberal, socialist, nationalist-patriotic, religious and anti-clerical, revolutionary and counter-revolutionary character. A common theme in many of these works is the notion of politics as a battle, defining enemies and friends, and advancing prescription as to how to act. Many of the catechisms were specifically aimed at the education of youth.⁶⁰ Proudhon, Moses Hess, Robert Owen and Louis Blanc all wrote political catechisms.⁶¹ Engels attempted a statement of communist principles in 1847 in the form of a political catechism.

Nechaev, Tkachev and Bakunin may have had a hand in writing the Catechism of a Revolutionist, although admirers of Bakunin, such as Dolgoff and Cofino, strenuously deny his authorship.⁶² Eugene Pyziur describes the Catechism as an 'unsurpassed specimen of revolutionary super-Machiavellism', and claims Bakunin as the father of revolutionary Machiavellism.⁶³ Bakunin, according to Fülöp-Miller, was the 'the spiritual pioneer of this Jesuitical socialism'.⁶⁴

Nechaev also provided practical examples of a new revolutionary immorality. Infamously he initiated the murder of an innocent student by his circle, with the aim to better dominate its members. Nechaev's *Narodnaya rasprava* outlined a cold-blooded approach to revolution, in which local peasant risings (*bunty*) could be transformed into a general popular rising. It advocated the extirpation of those who stood in the way of revolution, including the tsar and the royal family: 'war of life and death' to eliminate the system of 'bureaucratic cattle-rearing'. This was to be achieved through 'secret circles'. The people did not need education; they already knew what was required. What was needed was organization and a cold, merciless approach. Like Bakunin, Nechaev urged the use of Russian brigands, the only true revolutionaries, who were cruel and merciless. He appealed to the tradition of Russian peasant *bunt* of Pugachev and Stenka Razin.⁶⁵

In *Principles of Revolution*, Bakunin wrote:

To reach the gloomy city of Pandestruction, the first requisite is a series of assassinations, a series of bold and perhaps crazy enterprises which will strike terror to the heart of the powerful and dazzle the populace into believing in the triumph of the revolution . . . Without recognizing any activity other than destruction, we declare that the forms in which that activity should manifest itself are variety itself: poison, dagger, knout. Revolution sanctifies everything without distinction.⁶⁶

Police action to arrest members of the group prompted Nechaev's flight to Switzerland. There he continued the publication of proclama-

tions and issued the second edition of *Narodnaya rasprava*. In 1870 together with Ogarëv and Bakunin he made an attempt to revive *Kolokol* (six numbers were issued). After splitting with Bakunin and Ogarëv in the summer of 1870, Nechaev went to London where he published *Obshchina*, in which he developed his plan of social transformation, characterized by Engels as 'barracks socialism'. He returned to Switzerland where he was involved with a group of Blanquist Polish émigrés. In August 1872, he was arrested and deported to Russia where he was put on trial. He died in prison.

B. P. Koz'min, the eminent writer on Russian literature of the nineteenth century, in 1939 noted that 'This catechism issued from the Machiavellian principle: "the end justifies the means."' ⁶⁷ Nechaev's organization *Narodnaya rasprava* (*The People's Vengeance*) was set up in 1869. According to a Soviet work, it 'was based on the principles of jesuitism, intimidation and terrorism professed by Nechaev and his inspirer Bakunin'. ⁶⁸ Sam Dolgoff writes: 'The Revolution, Nechaev claimed, must be directed by a Machiavellian dictatorship and the Jesuits of the Revolution must be absolutely unscrupulous and devoid of all moral feelings and ethical obligations.' ⁶⁹

In July 1870 Bakunin broke off relations with Nechaev:

You by your manner of thought are closer to the Medicis, closer to the Jesuits, than to us. You are a fanatic. . . . You are carried away by the system of Loyola and Machiavelli, from which the first proposed to turn the whole of humanity into slaves, and the second to create a mighty state, whether monarchical or republican was of no account, consequently to enslave the people by police-Jesuit means and methods . . . to treat friends as one treats enemies. ⁷⁰

We know little about the influences on Nechaev. How far he had studied Machiavelli or the doctrines of the Jesuits is unclear.

Bakunin recoiled against the methods of Robespierre, Saint-Just and the Jacobins, with their pure republican ideals resuscitated from ancient antiquity, which he thought led inevitably to a new despotism. ⁷¹ However, one should be cautious. Bakunin was capable of subscribing to different ideas simultaneously. There was a time when he appears to have been strongly drawn by 'revolutionary Machiavellism'. In recoiling from the Nechaev affair, he pursued an idealistic course, based on a faith in the revolutionary will of the people. With the failure of the 'going to the people' movement in 1874, other courses of action had again to be considered.

One of the outstanding revolutionaries of this period was P. N. Tkachev, a brilliant tactician and a man who had immersed himself in revolutionary ideas. Tkachev anticipates a great many of the ideas of Lenin. As early as 1865, Tkachev voiced his admiration for Marx, but interpreted Marx in a crude mechanistic materialism. He also advocated pre-emptive revolution before capitalism became too entrenched.⁷²

Tkachev believed that the Russian revolution, like all revolutions, could only be accomplished with terror and by the elimination of its enemies. Regarding the dilemma of whether the Russian revolution would follow the path of popular risings (*bunty*) in the tradition of peasant risings of the past, or by a Jacobin seizure of power, Tkachev resolved that it would be both: that a seizure of power by a small revolutionary vanguard, distinguished by their moral and intellectual superiority, would be possible in the circumstances of a mass popular uprising. In this he appears to have borrowed ideas directly from Ogarëv. Unlike Bakunin, who desired the destruction of the state, Tkachev wanted to seize the state.⁷³ He was deeply pessimistic about the potential of the masses: the masses left to themselves would build nothing new, but had to be firmly led in order to progress.⁷⁴ The revolution would presage society's total transformation. Social equality would be maintained by the 'levelling of individuality'; through a national system of child-rearing and education the development of outstanding individuals would be restrained.⁷⁵

Tkachev fell under the suspicion of the tsarist authorities and from 1873 lived in emigration. He contributed to P. L. Lavrov's journal *Vpered* but in 1874 broke with Lavrov. He joined the 'Blanquist' *Cercle Slave* which was headed by two Poles – Kasper Turski and Karol Janicki. In 1875 he published the journal *Nabat* (Tocsin) in which he expounded his ideas on the seizure of power by a revolutionary minority and the need for a strong centralized organization. In 1880 Tkachev also contributed to L. O. Blanqui's journal *Ni Dieu, Ni Maître*. In his famous exchange with Engels, Tkachev argued that, whereas Russia lacked the conditions in the west to achieve socialism, it had other advantages: a peasantry that was instinctively communist, intuitively revolutionary, a state that was suspended in a void; and a capitalist economy which had not firmly established itself. In these conditions a revolutionary elite, utilizing a crisis or military defeat combined with peasant rebellion, could seize power and deploy the state for socialist construction. He died in a psychiatric hospital in Paris in 1885.

According to the prominent Russian revolutionary P. B. Axel'rod:

The Nabatovtsei considered the Alpha and Omega of revolutionary politics to be the merciless elimination of all enemies of the revolution, the use of terror and physical annihilation. In this, they made frequent favourable references to Robespierre and Saint-Just, and with pride called themselves Yakobintsi.⁷⁶

Walicki describes Tkachev as 'the chief theorist of the "Jacobin" trend in Russian Populism'.⁷⁷

Dostoevskii

One of those closely involved in the Petrashevskii circle was F. M. Dostoevskii. He was one of the small group of conspirators associated with Speshnev. He was arrested in 1849. After his exile he returned to St Petersburg in 1860.⁷⁸ By the mid-1860s Dostoevskii recoiled against conspiracy and nihilism. He increasingly turned into an opponent of democratic reform and by the 1870s he sided with reaction.

In *Crime and Punishment* (1866), Raskolnikov kills the old pawnshop proprietor in order to steal her money and save his mother and sister from disgrace. But his crime is an experiment in pure murder, an attempt to find out if he is 'a louse like everyone else' or a free man, a Napoleon with the right to transgress moral principles and to hold men's lives in his hands. Raskolnikov expresses the thought 'all great men or even men a little out of the common, who are capable of giving some new words, must from their very nature be criminals'. The Italian scholar Vittorio Strada argues that Dostoevskii is here engaged in a debate with Hegel's notion of the 'world historical individual' (*Welthistorische Individuen*), with Machiavelli's ideas regarding ends and means, especially as they were refracted in Balzac's *Comédie humaine*; and with the ideas of the young Schiller, in his Jacobin phase.⁷⁹

In *The Possessed* (or *Devils*), Dostoevskii depicts the conspirator Shigalev, who develops his own utopian idea of a society based on total equality and freedom. However, in constructing this vision, and resolving its contradictions, he ended up with 'absolute despotism'. Society was to be divided into two, with a minority exercising unrestricted power over the majority. It was to be a society of slaves. Those of superior talents were to be driven out or put to death, since 'in the herd all must be equal'.⁸⁰ This is intended as a deliberate reference to Tkachev's ideas on the 'levelling of individualities'. Shigalev's ideas echo those of Tkachev, Fichte and Campanella's theocratic state in *City of the Sun*.

On its publication Tkachev condemned *The Possessed* as a misrepresentation of the Nechaevtsy. The radical thinker N. K. Mikhailovskii argued that Dostoevskii had taken an unrepresentative, criminal action and extended it to discredit all radical youth.⁸¹

Dostoevskii, in 1873, reflected on the significance of the Nechaev affair and the reasons why often the most educated and most idealistic of young men were attracted to such causes. In the 1840s, as a member of the Petrashevskii circle, he had regarded this cause as 'holy in the highest degree and moral'. Socialism had seemed like the dawn of Christianity. Dostoevskii recalled how, in *The Possessed*, he had sought to explain the complex motives that led even the purest in heart to perpetrate acts of villainy.⁸²

Good intentions and high moral aims, Dostoevskii insisted, provided no justification for the resort to immoral means. Concerning the idealistic intentions of modern socialist thinkers, he declares:

It is very possible that all this is true, and that the aims of all modern leaders of European progressive thought are philanthropic and grand. Still, I firmly believe, that if all these modern, sublime teachers be given ample opportunity to destroy the old society and to build up anew, there would result such a darkness, such chaos, something so coarse, so blind, so inhuman, that the entire edifice would crumble away to the accompaniment of the maledictions of mankind, even before it would finally have been constructed.⁸³

He feared that Russia was doomed to follow Europe, and that the rejection of Christ would lead to perdition. Unconstrained by the fear of God, a sadistic lust for power would prevail.⁸⁴

These issues are directly addressed in *The Brothers Karamazov* in the famous passage 'The Grand Inquisitor', where Christ returns to earth and is interrogated. Throughout the interrogation, Christ remains silent. The Grand Inquisitor demands of him why he has come back, insisting that he has no right to return and to add to the body of ideas that he left on his first coming. Implicit is the threat of severe retribution. The Grand Inquisitor adds that, as guardian of these ideas, they have had to strip them of their more impractical aspects, in conformity with mankind's needs and understanding. They have taken it upon themselves to interpret and protect Christ's teaching, and to ensure that mankind lives according to these precepts, and thus lead them to salvation. The Grand Inquisitor considers these precepts merely as conve-

nient ideas to control and to give purpose and meaning to the lives of men, who cannot live without them.

When Ivan Karamazov, the narrator of the story, asks his brother Alyosha what its meaning is, Alyosha replies 'Everything is permissible' (*vse pozvoleno*). This phrase has generally been interpreted to mean, 'Without God everything is permissible'. Voltaire, in the eighteenth century, had already concluded that no durable code of morality could be established without the idea of a supernatural God, declaring: 'If God did not exist, we would have to invent him.'

The phrase 'Everything is permissible' was seen as a summary of the philosophy of Machiavelli and the Jesuits. It was the phrase used by Fouché in 1793 to justify the massacre at Lyon. This was the motto of the 'revolutionary Machiavellians'. The story of the Grand Inquisitor also recalls Machiavelli's dictum that 'armed prophets triumph but unarmed prophets are defeated'. The Grand Inquisitor has apparently triumphed over Christ, but Christ, although silent, remains unbowed, suggesting that unarmed prophets may themselves, through moral force, be unconquerable. This is clearly Dostoevskii's view, and it is a view that the Grand Inquisitor himself has glimpsed.

The Italian Machiavelli scholar Prezzolini describes Dostoevskii as 'the only Russian writer who seemed to have an affinity with Machiavelli's spirit'. He adds that, in 'The Grand Inquisitor', he poses the problem of the moral responsibility of the leaders of people in a 'completely Machiavellian way':

Men, being 'weak, evil, contemptible and rebellious', must be taught that 'liberty and bread for everyone are things that do not go hand in hand'. Therefore in order to have bread, they must forego liberty and allow themselves to be guided by types like the Jesuits who, in order to 'make them [the majority] happy' will accept for themselves 'a state of unhappiness'. That is, they will risk losing their souls, as Machiavelli had said, for the good of the fatherland. There will be a few thousand of these selected souls 'who will take upon themselves the burden of knowing good and evil' to the end that others, the ignorant majority, may live their life in tranquillity.⁸⁵

The Russian philosopher Berdyaev argued that, in the 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor', Dostoevskii had socialism rather than Catholicism in mind, recalling his involvement with the Petrashevskii circle. The coming kingdom of the Grand Inquisitor is allied not so much with Catholicism as with atheistic and materialistic socialism. Nihilistic and

terroristic socialism, like the Catholic Inquisition, sought to make mankind happy by force and against its will. Both Russian socialism and Jesuitism shared the view that man is unable to bear the burden of free will.⁸⁶ Dostoevskii's works are full of references to the Jesuits.⁸⁷ For Dostoevskii, Catholicism was the heir to ancient Rome, and socialism was a secularized form of Catholicism that sought 'unity through compulsion'.⁸⁸

Andrzej Walicki argues that in *The Possessed*, *The Brothers Karamazov* and *The Diary of a Writer*, Dostoevskii was engaged with the ideas of the rejection of Christ, and the notion of the god-man, which can be derived from Feuerbach, which he had encountered in the Petrashevskii circle.⁸⁹ However, the guilt and remorse which torment Raskolnikov demonstrate Dostoevskii's view that 'everything is not permissible', or rather that it is possible only at the price of one's own humanity, but that redemption is also possible. Russian intellectuals showed a great preoccupation with the role of leaders in the struggle to liberate mankind: Chernyshevskii's 'new people', Lavrov's 'heroes of progress' and Pisarev's 'benefactor of humanity' (*spasitel narodov*).⁹⁰

The aftermath

Amongst Russian revolutionaries of the 1870s, attitudes to Tkachev – initially hostile – began to change under the impact of the two unsuccessful 'going to the people' movements. Seeing the growing popularity of his ideas, Tkachev tried to bring out *Nabat* in St Petersburg, but was foiled by the police.

Members of *Zemlya i Volya* were, as a rule, violently opposed to Tkachev, but some, such as A. A. Sleptsov, were much influenced by *Molodaya Rossiya*. They accused him of compromising the Russian revolutionary movement and betraying the cause of the people for the sake of his own political ambitions. *Zemlya i Volya* argued that revolution should be the work of the masses, that the revolutionaries should make themselves the tools of history. At the same time, it advocated establishing 'disorganization groups' to defend revolutionaries from repression and to attack the enemies of revolution.⁹¹ The Jacobin tradition resurfaced within *Zemlya i Volya*, and when that organization split, it was occasioned by differences over tactics. The northern section of *Zemlya i Volya* strongly defended 'so-called political terror' against state officials.⁹²

The direct action elements of *Narodnaya Volya* explicitly adopted a Jacobin position and advocated terrorism to eliminate the most harmful opponents of revolution. In this, the 'will of the people becomes the

only source of law'. For this work it created its own 'central fighting organization'.⁹³ According to Plekhanov, *Narodnaya Volya* was divided between the constitutional tendency, represented by Zhelyabov, and the 'Blanquist' (or Jacobin) tendency of Tikhomirov. Another member of the party's executive committee was Maria Oshanina, an ardent follower of Tkachev and a disciple of the veteran of Russian Jacobinism Zaichnevskii.

Lavrov condemned the Nechaev line that everything was permissible in the revolutionary struggle, warned against revolutionary adventurism and emphasized the need for lengthy and careful preparatory struggle.⁹⁴ In his article 'The Law of Society's Economic Development and the Tasks of Socialism in Russia', published in the journal *Zemlya i Volya* in January 1879, Plekhanov also attacked the followers of Tkachev and their theory of the seizure of power as a form of Blanquism (Jacobinism).⁹⁵

In the 1880s in St Petersburg, Kiev, Nizhnii Novgorod and Kazan and other towns on the Volga a large number of revolutionary societies whose members were imbued with the tradition of *Narodnaya Volya* gradually evolved towards Marxism.⁹⁶ The advocates of mass education, aiming at securing a mass following, went into *Chernyi Peredel*. Plekhanov, the leading figure in this group, in *Socialism and Political Struggle* (1883) and in *Our Differences* (1885), delivered a withering attack on Tkachev and Tikhomirov. He condemned Blanquism for exaggerating the 'subjective factor' in history, and for its dangerous tendency to 'skip' natural stages of development. Plekhanov's own creed was

No Committee, whether Executive, Administrative or whatever else it may be called, can represent the working class in history; the emancipation of that class must be its own work and in order to carry it out the class must acquire political education and must understand and assimilate the ideas of socialism.⁹⁷

In the 1860s, revolutionaries had enthusiastically proclaimed themselves to be Machiavellians. After the Nechaev affair in 1871, the very name of Machiavelli came to be avoided. In the works of Plekhanov, Dan and Martov we never encounter Machiavelli's name. Yet Plekhanov held that most Machiavellian of modern political thinkers, Spinoza, in higher esteem than Hegel, insisting that Marx and Engels never abandoned Spinoza's standpoint.⁹⁸ But the phenomena which he dealt with was encompassed by discussion of dictatorship in other forms – Jacobinism/Blanquism and Bonapartism. The proliferation and wealth of revolutionary ideas, programmes and manifestos generated in this

period made reference to Machiavelli unnecessary. It might be said that the lessons to be learnt from Machiavelli had by this time been thoroughly digested.

In the first issue of *Chernyi Peredel*, a 'Letter to former comrades' characterized Jacobinism as 'political revolution carried out from above "in the name of the people" but without its initiative'. The political freedom that the Jacobins sincerely professed created instability and, as Proudhon argued, led to the political slavery of Napoleonic absolutism. But the Jacobins and Napoleon shared much in common. Napoleon was educated in the school of Robespierre, and regarded him as a genius. Some Jacobins dubbed Napoleon 'Robespierre on horseback' and regarded him with awe. Napoleon filled his headquarters, councils and administration with Jacobins who were elevated into the nobility.⁹⁹

The Russian revolutionary movement was infused not only with a strong Jacobinical current, but was also infused with a powerful messianic, ascetic, quasi-religious current. This was underlined by Dostoevskii. It was manifest in the 'going to the people' movement of the 1870s.¹⁰⁰ In this Russia was not unique. Roberto Michels identified a similar phenomenon in the Italian socialist movement in the same period.¹⁰¹ This remained an important current within the Russian revolutionary movement, and itself contributed to the turn towards terror in the late 1870s.

An abiding concern of a major strand of Russian revolutionary thought was terror. In 1885 *Osvobozhdenyi Truda* declared it legitimate to adopt 'so-called terrorist actions if this seems necessary in the interests of the struggle'.¹⁰² Within Russian social democracy a wide latitude was accepted in the tactics of political struggle. Following the assassination of Plehve in 1904, *Iskra* published an article on 'Terror and the mass movement'. As a result the newspaper was prosecuted in Koningsburg; the prosecution charged that *Iskra* had condemned terror purely from the standpoint of expediency, without making any moral criticism of terror as such. Martov, the Mensheviks' leader, in reply condemned the dual standards by which the murder of one minister could be condemned, but the issuing by the same minister of an order (dictated by reasons of state – *gosudarstvennaya neobkhodimost*) authorizing mass slaughter was viewed with equanimity.¹⁰³

Jesuitism

In this chapter we have made numerous references to the Jesuits. Here a word of clarification may be in order. The term Jesuit had become

equated essentially with conspiratorial, revolutionary tactics. But more than this, it was virtually a synonym for Jacobin. This is the sense in which it was used of Speshnev, and used by Dostoevskii and Bakunin. This equation of Jesuitic and Jacobin had very wide currency across Europe.¹⁰⁴

Bakunin and Dostoevskii both raised, in their own way, the question of the relationship between Jesuitism and modern revolutionary socialism. In fact a curious interest in the Jesuits and Loyola developed in Russian socialist circles. Such ideas had wide currency. John Stuart Mill, the great utilitarian thinker, in his work *The Considerations on Representative Government* of 1861, argued that the transition of human society from barbarism to civilization involved the submission of individuals to the discipline of continuous labour. In most societies, this had been achieved by slavery, which transformed the savage into a slave. The transition from slave to free man, he argued, might require 'parental despotism'. He adduced as examples of such government 'the Saint Simonian form of Socialism', 'the government of the Incas of Peru' and of the Jesuits of Paraguay.¹⁰⁵ This might be compared with Hegel's view of the civilizing role of tyranny.

In 1868 Tkachev published a long review of the Russian translation of the German author Theodor Grizinger's history of the Jesuits. In this, Tkachev censured the author for focusing on the misdeeds and vices of individual Jesuits, rather than analysing the historic role of the Jesuit order in the Counter-Reformation, and its attempts to shore up feudal authority through religious sanction. He stressed the reactionary nature of the Jesuits' aims, but expressed admiration for their methods. It was the highly disciplined nature of the order, run on semi-military lines; its success in dominating education and training; its work in organizing the activists and the faithful; its success in organizing social activities (processions, pageants and street theatre); the creation of religious cults that secured the attachment of the faithful.¹⁰⁶ This was part of a wider interest in the Jesuits shared by Ogarëv and others.¹⁰⁷

Paul Lafargue, Marx's son-in-law and a prolific Marxist publicist, published an article on the Jesuit settlement in Paraguay in the eighteenth century that was published in Russia in 1904 and republished in 1909.¹⁰⁸ The article exposes the exploitative nature of the Jesuit colonies in South America, the enslavement of the native Indian population to assist in the economic exploitation of the region, the religious indoctrination imposed on them, the regulation of their lives – including selective breeding organized by the Jesuit priests. This was part of an ideological offensive against the Catholic Church.

The interest in the Jesuits went alongside an extraordinary enthusiasm for the work of the Dominican friar Tommaso Campanella. The *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* for 1895 described Campanella as an 'Italian philosopher and communist' with a discussion of his political thought and account of his utopian vision of a theocratic state – *City of the Sun* by N. Vodovozov' and of his philosophy by Vl. Solov'ev.¹⁰⁹ In 1898 Paul Lafargue's study *Tomas Campanella* was published in St Petersburg. It had earlier been published in Germany in a series edited by Karl Kautsky and Eduard Bernstein. Lafargue described the *City of the Sun* as 'a very attractive Utopia', although he added that Campanella spent most of his life in prison and monastery and knew little of life.

Benedetto Croce, the leading Italian intellectual, then still a Marxist, in his *Historical Materialism and Marxist Economics*, which was published in Russian translation in 1902, deplored Lafargue's attempt to claim Campanella's vision of a regimented, despotic theocratic state as a precursor of modern socialism. Campanella, he insisted, was really a man of the Middle Ages, his vision of the City of the Sun was infused with cabalistic notions, and, contrary to Lafargue's assertion, he was well disposed to the Jesuits.¹¹⁰

However, in his belief that the interest in Campanella's ideas would be fleeting, Croce could not have been more wrong. Lafargue's study of Campanella was republished in Russia in 1906, 1919 and 1926. D. Kvakala published his work *Message of Foma Campanella to the great prince of Muscovy* in 1905.¹¹¹ In 1906 A. G. Genkel' published in the journal *Vsemirnyi vestnik* a translation of the *City of the Sun* (*Civitas solis*) with a biographical sketch of Campanella. This work was republished in 1907, 1918 and 1923.

Plekhanov, in a critique of *Narodnaya Volya*, warned that such a government, if it tried to organize national production, would face the choice between 'proceeding in the spirit of modern socialism' or floundering upon Russia's backwardness:

or it will have to seek salvation in the ideals of 'patriarchal and authoritarian communism', only modifying those ideals so that national production is managed not by the Peruvian 'sons of the sun' and the officials but by a socialist caste.¹¹²

Plekhanov, whilst rejecting the ideas of the Russian Jacobins, remained a militant materialist and a fervent critic of Kant's conception of rational universal morality. In 1905 he scathingly reviewed Bodganov's book

Empiromonizm under the title 'Materialismus Militans', a clear parody of Ignatius Loyola's *Ecclesia militans*.¹¹³

Fichte's contribution to the development of modern socialism was widely discussed.¹¹⁴ In *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'* of the 1890s I. Lapshin provided a lengthy and sympathetic account of Fichte's thought, comparing him with Plato in developing an ideal state. He noted also the 'socialist' element in Fichte's thought in 'The Closed Commercial State', with the state regulating trade and policing the lives of its citizens. In this, Lapshin recognized a tension between the individual and the levelling despotic power of the state.¹¹⁵

Nietzsche and nihilism

In Chapter 2 we argued that Nietzsche was influenced both by the ideas of Machiavelli and by Russian nihilism as it developed in the 1860s. The notorious '*Catechism of the Revolutionist*', it might be argued, was a Nietzschean document before Nietzsche. The scandal surrounding this document and the Nechaev affair of 1871 had passed when Nietzsche came to write his main works on nihilism in the 1880s. Nietzsche paid tribute to Dostoevskii's understanding of the psychology of individuals associated with this movement. Nietzsche in his works used the term 'Jesuitical' in precisely the same way that Dostoevskii used it to characterize the Machiavellian revolutionaries. Throughout his life, he entertained an interest in the Jesuits. Whilst Dostoevskii believed that the challenge posed by revolutionary Machiavellism could be found in a rediscovery of Christian values, Nietzsche believed it could only be met by the adoption of the same tactics by the enemies of socialism.

Here, we want to suggest a closer connection, and to argue that Nietzsche was directly influenced by the Russian revolutionary Machiavellians – Bakunin, Nechaev and Tkachev. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he acknowledged an affinity with the revolutionary Machiavellians, the Blanquists whose journal was entitled *Ni Dieu, Ni Maître* – the journal with which Tkachev was involved – in their iconoclastic rejection of existing spiritual and temporal authorities: "Ni dieu, ni maître" – this is your motto too: and therefore "long live the law of nature!" isn't that so? In this one sentence, Nietzsche threw down the gauntlet to the revolutionary Machiavellians. He saw in revolutionary socialism a new 'herd-animal morality' that he regarded as the enemy of civilization. With the collapse of the existing religious sanctioned order of morality, all that was left was the law of nature.¹¹⁶ The question for Nietzsche was

whether the carriers of slave morality would triumph or whether the carriers of a master morality would regain control. Here, he refers to 'the undisguised fang-bearing of the anarchist dogs which now rove the streets of European culture'.¹¹⁷ Nietzsche drew no distinction between communists, socialist, or anarchists. In this struggle there were no moral constraints, it was a battle 'beyond good and evil'.

What is notable is the extent to which the great ideological battle of the twentieth century between communism, fascism and national socialism, and liberalism had been anticipated in all their basic outlines between the 1860s and 1890s. What is more remarkable is that the conflict in large measure revolved around the question of Machiavellism in politics.

Machiavelli and the far right

We have seen the response which 'revolutionary Machiavellism' prompted in Dostoevskii, converting him into a staunch reactionary. In the 1870s Dostoevskii was on very close terms with Constantine Petrovich Pobedonostev, intellectual and statesman, and the grey eminence of the reign of Alexander III.¹¹⁸ There is a close affinity between Dostoevskii and Pobedonostev. Pobedonostev commented on Dostoevskii's draft of 'The Grand Inquisitor'. Both were sworn enemies of parliamentarism, democracy and socialism. They were ardent admirers of Bismarck's policy of '*kulturkampf*'.¹¹⁹ Both saw Orthodoxy as providing a framework for the actions of rulers and subjects. Underlying Pobedonostev's defence of absolutist, autocratic power lay a profoundly pessimistic view of mankind: man, by nature, was 'weak, vicious, worthless, and rebellious'.¹²⁰ Effective social order was based on the power of the state, the church and the family. Humanity was not driven by reason, and only an 'aristocracy of intellect' was capable of reason.

Although we have no evidence of direct influence, there are aspects of Pobedonostev's thought which come close to Machiavelli. He justified violent and arbitrary government, defended lying and the need to practice evil, arguing that the defence of the state, as the embodiment of the national interest, was of paramount importance. He believed that superior men should always be above criticism in life as well as in recorded history.¹²¹ For Pobedonostev, as for Machiavelli, history was akin to a river, which although it could be dammed and dyked, followed its own course. As a conservative philosopher, he placed far greater stress on the importance of tradition.

Another Machiavellian strand in tsarist politics is provided by the influence of Machiavelli on the work of Maurice Joly, *Dialogue aux enfers entre Machiavel et Montesquieu, ou la politique de Machiavel au XIX siecle par un contemporain* (1864). Joly puts in Machiavelli's mouth these words of self-justification:

My only crime was to tell the truth to people as well as to kings. Not the moral truth, but the political truth; not what it should be, but what it actually is, and what it will always be. I am not the inventor of the doctrine that has been ascribed to me – it is the human heart.¹²²

Separate morality from politics, substitute force and astuteness for law, paralyse the individual intelligence, mislead the people with appearances, consent to liberty only under the weight of terror, pander to national prejudices, keep concealed from the country what is happening in the world and likewise from the capital what is happening in the provinces, transform the instruments of thought into instruments of power, remorselessly inflict executions without trials and administrative deportations, exact a perpetual apology for every act, teach the history of your reign yourself, employ the police as the keystone of the regime, create faithful followers by means of ribbons and baubles, build up the cult of the usurper into a kind of religion, create a void around you thus making yourself indispensable, weaken public opinion until it subsides in apathy, impress your name everywhere as drops of water hollow out granite, profit by the ease with which men turn informers, manipulate society by means of its vices, speak as little as possible, say the opposite of what you think, and change the very meaning of words.¹²³

Later a great deal of the material contained in this work served as a basis for the notorious anti-Semitic work *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* (1905). It is clear that extreme right-wing circles in Russia were familiar with Machiavelli's ideas.¹²⁴

Conclusion

In the nineteenth century, we have noted a fascination with the ideas of Machiavelli in various circles: amongst German radicals (Fichte) committed to the unification of Germany; amongst Polish radicals (Mickiewicz) intent on securing Polish independence; amongst

revolutionaries who sought the overthrow of the existing social order in Russia from 1848 (Speshnev) into the 1860s (Ogarëv, Bakunin, Nechaev and Tkachev). Even in the writings of Herzen and Chernyshevskii there are hints of the influence of Machiavelli. In terms of the revolutionary tradition it manifested itself in Jacobin and Blanquist ideas (Zaichnevskii) which retained extraordinary vitality, re-emerging with new force in *Narodnaya Volya*. These ideas were carried into the Socialist Revolutionary Party. Amongst the Russian Marxists the Jacobin tradition was both condemned and embraced.

This rise of nihilism, revolutionary terror and 'revolutionary Machiavellism' induced a sense of moral panic and public revulsion. Dostoevskii in his work dissects the implication of this 'moral relativism'. Nihilism reflected a pervasive pessimism concerning not only the prospects for peaceful reform, but also the capacity of the masses to rouse themselves and to fight for their rights. A peculiar sub-theme that emerges is the affinity between Machiavellism and Jesuitical practices, and the close interest shown by Russian socialists in Campanella's ideas.

It would be naïve to see the development of revolutionary Machiavellism as a product simply of Machiavelli's writings. His writings undoubtedly had an impact, but how well they were understood and studied remains unclear. The rise of revolutionary Machiavellism also reflected the central dilemma of change in Russia in the nineteenth century; the apparent impossibility of effecting peaceful change; the intransigence of the authorities and the propertied classes; the isolation of the revolutionaries themselves and the difficult task of rousing the masses. But revolutionary Machiavellism was not simply a political manual of how to win and hold power, it was also infused with a quasi-religious socialist vision of the transformation of mankind.

5

The Bolsheviks, Lenin and Machiavelli

In the major studies of Bolshevism and of Lenin's career and political thought, little attention has been paid to the question of Machiavelli's influence. There are two notable exceptions to this trend – Alain Besançon and Kosta Cavoski. Even those who provide a convincing picture of Lenin as the revolutionary Machiavellian politician *par excellence*, such as Walicki, shy away from using the term or of exploring more closely the relationship between Lenin and Machiavelli.¹ There are various explanations for this silence. First, this was an aspect of Bolshevism that Lenin and other leaders understandably preferred to keep quiet about. Second, the cynical and manipulative aspects of Leninist and Bolshevik practices, which are by and large universally recognized, might be derived either from other intellectual sources – the Russian revolutionary tradition, from Marx and Engels, from the tradition of Jacobinism and Blanquism, or derived from circumstances and the psychological disposition of the Bolsheviks as a conspiratorial party. Third, this was a question considered politically sensitive and best avoided, reflecting a view that equated Machiavelli simply with perfidy in politics, ignoring the strong argument that Machiavelli might be seen as a revolutionary thinker in his own right.²

In arguing not only for an affinity with Machiavelli's conception of politics, but for indirect and even direct influence on the Bolsheviks, this is not to assign to the Bolsheviks a unique position, nor is it to argue that it was the Machiavellian dimension in Bolshevism alone that provided a key to the way the party in its tactics, ideology and organization evolved. The depth of the crisis facing the tsarist regime pushed it into the adoption of emergency measures as an almost permanent system of governance. Internationally inter-state rivalries reflected the development of policy on ruthless principles of *raison d'état*. Machi-

avellism was a feature of domestic and international politics. In this revolutionary parties such as the Bolsheviks drew on their own political traditions, but also adapted to the circumstances in which they found themselves.

The reluctance of scholars to address the question of Machiavelli's influence on Bolshevism is perhaps hardly surprising. In the 55 volume, fifth edition, of Lenin's collected works, published in the 1950s and 1960s, Machiavelli's name is not mentioned once. The term 'Machiavellism' is used three times, each in a disparaging sense.³ This might not be such a surprise. Lenin's collected works have very few references to other political thinkers – Hobbes (once), Locke (twice), Rousseau (once) and Nietzsche (twice). The works have a plethora of references to Marx, Engels, Plekhanov, Hegel, Spinoza and Darwin⁴ and, critically, with regard to fighting off the challenge from the Social Darwinians such as Spencer⁵ and the followers of Malthus.⁶ In the catalogue of 8,450 works in Lenin's library, which was published in 1961, there is not a single reference to a work by Machiavelli or about Machiavelli, although there are four works by or on Nietzsche.⁷

Lenin, through his gymnasium education, was steeped in the classics. Livy's histories were as familiar to Lenin as to Machiavelli, and Aristotle was a political philosopher whom both admired, although Lenin read him late on.⁸ Is it possible that the huge surge of interest in Machiavelli in the nineteenth century could have passed him by? Is it conceivable that he was unaware of the high regard that those whom he so much admired held Machiavelli – Marx, Engels, Spinoza, Hegel, Fichte, Clausewitz, Tkachev, Nechaev, or of the supposed influence of Machiavelli on the French Jacobins such as Robespierre? This is even more extraordinary considering the importance of Machiavelli's thought with regard to the 'state', the importance of the *Florentine Histories* as a study of class struggle and of popular insurrection, Machiavelli's reputation as a forerunner of materialist philosophy, his position as a central link between Jacobin and Roman republicanism, and his unrivalled, authoritative discussion of the tactics of political conspiracy.

Notwithstanding this silence, which bespeaks of suppression and self-censorship, there is an extraordinary affinity between Machiavelli's and Lenin's views on political tactics and strategy. The Bolshevik party under Lenin was infused with Machiavellian notions and practices. Was this mere coincidence or can we identify a direct line of influence? It is extremely difficult to trace the origins of ideas amongst political thinkers, given the diversity of possible sources, both direct and indirect. It is doubly difficult where the political thinker concerned possesses

so clearly his own distinctive outlook into which the views of others have been so completely absorbed that few traces of the original remain. It is inconceivable that Lenin was not familiar with Machiavelli's work. When he read him is unclear. What influence this had on his thinking and behaviour remains problematical.

Lenin and the Bolshevik party were heirs to a particular realist tradition of revolutionary thought that had various strands. Six of the strands might be discerned: the Jacobin tradition, in its Blanquist variant; the German tradition of political thought, especially Hegel, Fichte and Clausewitz; the Russian revolutionary tradition, associated with Nechaev, Tkachev and Bakunin; the Marxist tradition; the Nietzschean influence; and the Bismarckian tradition of *realpolitik*. Each of these traditions can be linked to a Machiavellian conception of politics. Lenin and his party embodied this tradition in its most uncompromising form. To say this is not to diminish Lenin. On the contrary, the strength of the Leninist conception of politics was derived from the fact that it achieved such a profound synthesis of this realist tradition of European political thought. But this also requires an understanding of the peculiar mindset of the Bolsheviks, their zeal, fanaticism and intransigence.

An indirect Machiavellian influence comes from the works of Marx and Engels, especially those works which emphasized the voluntaristic, insurrectionary aspect of revolution, the works to which Lenin was most strongly drawn. A similar influence might be discerned in the writings of Hegel, Fichte and Clausewitz. Studies on the influence of Hegel and Fichte tend to focus on their influence on Lenin's thought regarding abstruse questions of philosophy and dialectics. The close affinities between Lenin, Hegel and Fichte on basic political questions, such as the role of force in history, tend to be downplayed. Lenin found in these writers the basis for a thorough rejection of attempts to reconcile Marxism with a Kantian conception of ethics.⁹

In the Marxist lexicon of the period, dictatorial methods of rule were characterized not as Machiavellism, but rather as either Bonapartism (counter-revolutionary) or Jacobinism (revolutionary). Lenin accused various figures of being potential Bonapartes, including Stolypin¹⁰ and Kerensky.¹¹ When Lenin's critics accused him of deceit and duplicity, the accusation levelled against him was not of Machiavellism, but of behaving like a Jacobin, a Robespierre. And Lenin himself revelled in the comparison.¹² There is a very close affinity between Lenin and Robespierre's political thought, which Lenin had clearly studied very closely. For Lenin the judgement made concerning Jacobinical or Bonapartist

movements had nothing to do with the methods which they employed, but everything about their social essence, of whose class interests they furthered.

At the outset of his revolutionary career, Lenin sought out contacts with those Populists from the terrorist wing of the movement, to which his executed brother Alexander had belonged. In Kazan he had contacts with M. P. Chetvergova and M. V. Sabunaev, whilst in Samara he met Maria Golubeva, Nikolai Dolgov and Apollon Shukht.¹³ Valentinov draws attention to Lenin's acquaintance with M. P. Yasneva, political associate of Zaichnevskii, the old Russian Jacobin.¹⁴ He greatly admired N. P. Ogarëv's ideas on revolutionary organization. Bonch-Bruевич in the 1930s records that Lenin pored over the works of Tkachev from the 1870s, describing him 'as a writer undoubtedly closer to our point of view than any other' and recommending the study of these works to his colleagues.¹⁵ Lenin noted that: 'Even the revolutionary milieu was hostile to Nechaev', forgetting, 'that he had possessed a special talent as an organiser, a conspirator, and a skill that he could wrap up in staggering formulations.' He had also approvingly quoted Nechaev's reply to the question of which of the royal family should be killed: 'The entire House of Romanov.'¹⁶

But Lenin also adapted the means of his enemies, learnt from them, and drew practical lessons from the failure of past revolutions of 1848–9, 1871 and 1905–6. Lenin's conception of bourgeois politics was essentially Machiavellian, the actions of government rationalized as *raison d'état*, and, in response, revolutionaries should adopt the same tactics. Lenin's thinking was deeply influenced by the careers of Louis Napoleon and Bismarck, those who in Marx and Engels' terms encapsulated a 'Bonapartist' strategy.

Lenin frequently cites Bismarck.¹⁷ He quotes Marx's approving comments on Bismarck as the agent of German unification and Engels' comments on Bismarck as an exponent of bourgeois revolution 'from above' (*revolyutsiya sverkhu*).¹⁸ Lenin thought that Stolypin might impose a 'Bonapartist' solution on Russia's crisis after 1905–6, by welding a union of landowners and capitalists to force through a capitalist revolution. In January 1908 he describes the situation in Russia as crying out for a Bismarck capable of turning simple reaction into a 'revolution from above'.¹⁹ In 1913 he refers to the view expressed by the Kadet V. Maklakov to the effect "“that reaction is a historical law”, that it is possible (in accordance with Bismarck's strictures) to be able to distinguish the moment when it is necessary to rule liberally, from that when it is nec-

essary to rule despotically'.²⁰ The distinction here is central to all conceptions of *realpolitik*.

Lenin's *State and Revolution* confirms that this was no passing interest. Here he discussed the power that the state could exercise in situations where the warring classes in society were more or less equally balanced. Quoting Marx on the mediating role of the state, Lenin added, 'Such were the absolute monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck regime in Germany'.²¹ But, in all these cases, it is clear that Lenin believed that the state power assisted in the consolidation of the power of the nascent bourgeoisie.

The so-called elite theorists, notably Pareto, Mosca, Michels and Sorel, seemingly had little influence on Lenin.²² Nietzsche's influence on Lenin directly is difficult to determine, but his influence on Russian revolutionary intellectuals was great.²³ In 1905 Lenin denounced Nietzschean influences within the Bolshevik party.²⁴ Bolshevik thinkers such as Stanislav Volskii, A. V. Lunarchaskii, A. A. Bodganov and V. A. Bazarov were heavily influenced by Nietzsche.²⁵ Even in the mid-1920s, a Nietzschean influence can be discerned in the writings of Trotsky and E. A. Preobrazhenskii. There was much in Nietzsche's thought that was close to Bolshevism – the will to power, the stress on the heroic, the visionary aspect to his thought, and his iconoclastic repudiation of Christianity and its 'slave morality'. But his contempt for the masses – the herd – his scornful views on the rights of women, his racist outlook and his hatred of socialism sat uncomfortably with Marxist ideas.²⁶

The early Lenin

A clinical and dispassionate approach marked out Lenin's politics from the outset. In response to the famine on the Lower Volga in 1891 he welcomed its expected impact in speeding up proletarianization and stimulating revolutionizing influence amongst the peasantry. He was dismissive of the ameliorative measures proposed by other radicals, rejecting this humanitarian impulse as 'nothing but an expression of the saccharine-sweet sentimentality' characteristic of the Russian intelligentsia.²⁷

Lenin always insisted that he was an orthodox Marxist. And in Marxism, Lenin believed he had found a truly scientific approach to politics. In 1895 he warmly concurred with the German economist Werner Sombart who wrote that 'in Marxism from beginning to end

there is not a grain of ethics'.²⁸ In *The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement* (1900), Lenin wrote that the social democrat 'recognises all methods of struggle'.²⁹ He regarded liberals with the deepest contempt, which set him in opposition to Plekhanov, arguing that the proletariat should seek allies amongst the poor peasants.³⁰ Lenin was instinctively an extremely calculating politician, but even calculating politicians need to learn and develop the art of calculation.

The strong Jacobin tendency in Russian revolutionary thought with its emphasis on revolutionary dictatorship, and its direct impact on Bolshevism, is shown by Tamara Kondratieva and Astrid von Borcke.³¹ The debate on party organization, which dramatized the differences between the Jacobin and anti-Jacobin tendencies, was prolonged and intense. S. N. Prokopovich condemned Plekhanov's views on party organization in the 1890s as Blanquist.³² In 1897 Axel'rod argued that Russian Marxism could follow one of three different courses. It could follow the path laid down by Plekhanov, it could deviate to the right and immerse itself in trade unionism, or it could deviate to the left in search of a Blanquist or Bakuninist shortcut to socialism. Lenin, already working on his *The Tasks of the Russian Social Democrats* (1897), defined social democracy as Blanquism fused to the working-class movement.

Party organization

Lenin's great innovation as a Marxist was his theory of the party as outlined in *What is to be Done?* Here he discusses revolutionary tactics in purely instrumental terms, there are no moral qualms expressed about revolutionary methods, only the question of efficacy. Throughout the pamphlet politics is analogous to war, the revolutionary party is an army. In this might be seen a direct transposition of Clausewitzian ideas on warfare to the revolutionary struggle. The concept of a revolutionary party is presented in terms of conspiratorial organization. It is a highly elitist conception of politics, with the professional revolutionaries linked to the activists, who were, in turn, connected to the mass of the proletariat. Revolutions, unlike spontaneous uprisings, do not come about by themselves, but have to be willed, organized and directed. It is infused with a distrust of the political maturity of the proletariat. In terms of leadership it stresses implacability of purpose, an uncompromising pursuit of the goal of revolution and a combative approach to the struggle. In this work, Lenin famously stressed the role of the revolutionary intellectuals in bringing political consciousness to the

masses.³³ The 'democratic' credentials of the party were redefined in terms of truth to Marxism and efficacy in the political struggle.

In *What is to be Done?* Lenin voiced his admiration for 'the brilliant galaxy of revolutionaries of the seventies', arguing that the social democrats should seek to create an organization similar to the 'magnificent organization' of *Zemlya i Volya*, the main inspiration of which had been N. P. Ogarëv.³⁴ He applauded Tkachev's view that an epoch of socialist dictatorship would be necessary to extirpate the old regime and that mass terror would also be needed. Lenin wrote:

The attempt to seize power, which was prepared by the teaching of Tkachev and carried out by means of the 'terrifying' terror that did really terrify, had grandeur [*velichestvenna*], but the 'excitative' terror of a Tkachev the Little [Nadezhdin] is simply ludicrous, particularly so when it is supplemented with the idea of an organization of average people (*seredinyatskii*).³⁵

This endorsement of Tkachev was calculated to shock. Tkachev's conception of terror, Lenin asserts, had 'grandeur'. It should be recalled that Machiavelli argues that actions carried out on a large scale and with audacity acquire grandeur, elevating them into acts of great moment, into great acts of politics or great acts of state, to which ordinary moral judgements cannot be attached. This is a terror, Lenin adds, which cannot be carried out by an organization made up of 'average people'. It might be recalled that Raskolnikov, in *Crime and Punishment*, justified his crime with the claim that extraordinary people (Tkachev's concept of an elite of the intellectually and morally superior) were not bound by conventional morality.

Lenin fully accepted the ruthless discipline required of a revolutionary organization: 'An organization of real revolutionaries will stop at nothing to rid itself of an unworthy member.' In *What is to be Done?* he mentions with approval *Zemlya i Volya*'s 'fighting [militant] centralized organization' and *Narodnaya Volya*'s use of terror tactics. He mentioned with approval the terrorists P. A. Alekseev, I. N. Myshkin, S. N. Khalturin and A. I. Zhelyabov. He particularly esteemed, as did Marx, Zhelyabov, who was hanged for his part in the assassination of Alexander II. In the conclusion to this work Lenin notes, in what seems to be in part a reference to his own background, how the young social democrats of the 1890s had 'enthusiastically worshipped the terrorist heroes' of *Narodnaya Volya*. Lenin's admiration for *Narodnaya Volya* set him in direct opposition to the critical stance taken by

Plekhanov. An important aspect of this thinking remained with him throughout his life.

Although Machiavelli was in principle opposed to revolution, in the *Florentine Histories* he offers extremely perceptive views on the nature of popular insurrection. In *The Discourses* he noted the disorganized masses' need of leadership.³⁶ Machiavelli's famous aphorism 'The plebs united are strong, but individually are weak' might have been Lenin's own slogan. On the notion of democracy Lenin also conceived of the Bolshevik regime as a kind of tribune of the people, an echo of the thoughts of Robespierre, Machiavelli and Livy.³⁷

Lenin's theory of the party was linked to the ideal of establishing firm, conscious control over spontaneous, quasi-natural forces. In *What is to be Done?* he refers to 'the elemental destructive force of the masses', which should be combined with and harnessed by 'the conscious destructive force of the organization of revolutionaries'.³⁸ In *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* (1904) he talks of the discipline of factory labour, and of party members as cogs in the party machine.³⁹

Lenin's Jacobinism

At the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) in July–August 1903, Lenin's views on party organization were strongly criticized. B. I. Krichevskii accused Lenin of being infatuated with conspiracy and manipulation and of breaking with Marxist traditions. Lenin, he maintained, had adopted an essentially *narodnik* position. At the congress Plekhanov vigorously defended Lenin's scheme of party organization from the criticism that it was undemocratic:

Every given democratic principle must be examined not in its own self abstractly but in its relationship to that principle, which might be called the basic principle of democracy, precisely that principle so to say that *salus populi suprema lex* (the good of the people is the highest law). Translated into the language of the revolutionary this means that the revolution's success is the highest law.⁴⁰

Lenin's views on party organization in *What is to be Done?* and *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* were bitterly criticized by other Marxists such as V. P. Akimov, A. S. Martynov, P. B. Axel'rod, L. D. Trotsky and R. Luxemburg, not only on the grounds that they constituted a deviation from Marxism, but on account of the dangers which they posed of the creation of a new tyrannical, revolutionary government.

In *Our Political Tasks* (1904) Trotsky criticized Lenin's ideas on party organization and denounced his definition of revolutionary social democracy in *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*: 'The Jacobin indissolubly linked to the organization of the proletariat now conscious of its class interest, is precisely the social democratic revolutionary.'⁴¹ Lenin's conception of organization and tactics, he argued, was elitist and narrowly conspiratorial. Lenin and the 'hard Iskraits' were 'Jacobins as pure as the rays of the sun'.⁴² Lenin's view of party organization reduced it to an impersonal machine, with each cog performing its assigned task, in the hands of the operator.⁴³ These ideas of organization, 'centralization of leadership' and 'decentralization of responsibility' expressed the same ideas as those of the Catholic abbé Sieyès in the 1790s.⁴⁴ As with Robespierre, absolute faith in the metaphysical idea went with total distrust towards real men. 'Suspicion' was the inevitable method for serving 'Truth'.⁴⁵

Underlying this lay a deep pessimism about people and about the nature of the epoch.⁴⁶ From this pessimism – the fear of military despotism, civil war, national calamity – grew a perverted sense of historical duty and obligation. Trotsky insisted that social democracy, unlike Jacobinism, was 'the most optimistic of parties!' as the future 'guarantees' its victory.⁴⁷ The logic of the Jacobin's position, Trotsky argued, led to the absurdity of the guillotine. Lenin viewed himself, Trotsky argued, as surrounded by 'intrigues and traps' and wished to institute a 'state of siege' inside the party: at its head there had to be, as the Romans said, a *dictator seditionis sedendae et rei gerundae causa* (a dictator to put down sedition and govern affairs).⁴⁸

The substance of Trotsky's four charges against Lenin – that he was a Jacobin; that his methods were similar to the Catholic (Jesuit?) Sieyès; that he was a pessimist; that he favoured a Roman type dictatorship – could be reduced to one assertion, namely, that Lenin was a Machiavellian. Trotsky spelled out the logic of the position in his famous prediction: 'The party's organization takes the place of the party itself; the Central Committee takes the place of the party's organization; and finally, "the dictator" takes the place of the Central Committee.'⁴⁹ Notwithstanding his repudiation of Lenin's organizational principles, on most of these disputed points Trotsky embraced the Leninist position after 1917.

Other Marxists were equally vocal in rejecting Lenin's approach to organization. In 1904 Rosa Luxemburg condemned Lenin's ideas of party organization as a form of 'military ultra-centralism' and accused him of the 'mechanical transposition of the organizational principles

of Blanquism into the mass movement of the socialist working class'.⁵⁰

On the insistence of Lenin and Plekhanov, the Second Congress of the RSDLP included in the party programme a reference to the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. This, Vladimir Akimov argued, represented the anti-democratic, Blanquist current in the party, and harked back to the phase in Marx and Engels' thought when they were still influenced by Blanquism.⁵¹ Plekhanov, he asserted, had declared in a paper delivered in Geneva: 'We are terrorists, in the sense of the terror of 1793!'⁵² Akimov recalled Plekhanov's speech to the congress when he uttered the phrase '*Salus revolutiae* [sic] *suprema lex est*' – the Jesuit slogan, the end justifies the means, adding 'But I think that the social revolution itself is only a means for destroying the Jesuitism of modern life.'⁵³ He went on 'The motto of the "hards" leads by natural necessity and with logical consistency, to "Nechaevism" [*Nechaevshchina*]', adding 'Lenin is a Blanquist, and nothing Blanquist is alien to him.'⁵⁴ This Blanquist influence, he surmised, would persist in the party for some time.⁵⁵ Little did he know.

At the congress Trotsky criticized Akimov: 'He is frightened by the dictatorship of the proletariat as a Jacobin act.' Trotsky took up Lenin's view that the party would be allied to the proletariat – which he asserted would constitute the majority of the nation.⁵⁶

Although Plekhanov himself was sometimes inclined towards Jacobinism, his break with Lenin after 1903 was largely over this issue. In 1906 Plekhanov wrote: 'From the very beginning, Lenin was more of a Blanquist than a Marxist. He imported his Blanquist contraband under the flag of the strictest Marxist orthodoxy.'⁵⁷

Lenin, Walicki notes, distinguished between Blanquism and Jacobinism.⁵⁸ Lenin, he argued, was inspired not only by Tkachev but by Babeuf, who had seen the Jacobin stage of the French Revolution as the precursor of a communist revolution, which would be (as Babeuf put it) 'far more grand, far more solemn, and which will be the last'.⁵⁹ Tkachev, Walicki argues, had also been inspired by Babeuf and Buonarrotti and in this 'paved the way for Lenin as a Jacobin communist, not merely as a Jacobin'.⁶⁰

It is interesting to note in this context the work edited by G. A. Kuklin, *Itogi revoliutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii za sorok let (1862–1902gg)* published in 1903. Lenin's links with Kuklin were close. Kuklin was a bookseller and publisher of social democratic literature, who also organized a library of revolutionary literature, which, after his death in 1907, was transferred to the Bolshevik party.⁶¹ Kuklin's work is a veritable ency-

clopaedia of the Russian revolutionary movement, with extensive notes on individuals and movements.⁶² It includes the programme of '*Molodaya Rossiya*', '*Narodnoe Delo*', '*Narodnaya Raspravda*' (the '*Catechism of the Revolutionist*' is referred to but not quoted), '*Vpered*', '*Nabat*', '*Obshchina*', '*Zemlya i Volya*', '*Narodnaya Volya*', '*Chernyi Peredel*', '*Osvobozhdeniya Truda*', and programmes of the Russian Social Democrats and of the Socialist Revolutionaries. The importance of Lenin's *What is to be Done?* is also noted.⁶³

What this collection brings out forcefully is the extent to which Lenin synthesized ideas, which were widely current within the Russian revolutionary movement. The concern with conspiracy, the recognition of the role of violence, a view that ends justified means, and a powerful messianic element. What is particularly significant about Kuklin's volume is that the basic ideas of the Jacobin thinkers of the Russian revolutionary tradition were freely available in Geneva in 1903.⁶⁴

Lenin took up the idea of revolutionary dictatorship. In 1905, in 'Two tactics of social democracy in the democratic revolution', he advanced the idea of the 'democratic revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry'. Cesare Vetter links Lenin's conception of dictatorship to Robespierre's notion of the 'despotism of liberty'.⁶⁵ At the third congress of the Russia Social Democratic and Labour Party in 1905 Lenin cited with relish Marx's comments of 1848 that Robespierre's guillotine in 1793–4 had been 'the plebeian method' of eradicating the feudal order.⁶⁶ This was also evidently a favourite quote for Trotsky.⁶⁷

Lenin as party leader

Lenin's leadership of the Bolshevik party, the expulsion and anathematization of opponents, the repeated splitting of the party, could easily draw the charge of being 'Machiavellian'. In 1906 Lenin posed the question himself: 'Are there any limits to a permissible struggle stemming from a split? No Party standards set limits to such struggle, nor can there be such limits, for a split implies that the Party has ceased to exist.' Lenin's frank admission that lying and deception had been used to discredit the Mensheviks in the eyes of the proletariat shocked his colleagues, but their reaction left him quite unperturbed.⁶⁸

According to Walicki, Lenin's Marxism 'was heavily influenced by the crude, nihilistic critique of "bourgeois freedom" characteristic of the Russian populists and anarchists'.⁶⁹ Walicki also argued that Lenin's contempt for law was, in part, derived from Russian populism. 'There were

three strains in what may be called Lenin's "legal nihilism"; anarcho-populist, Babouvist-egalitarian and Jacobin-centralizing.⁷⁰

Walicki pointed out that Lenin's view of religion was cruder than Marx's. Whereas Marx presents religion as a manifestation of human self-alienation, Lenin linked the origin of religion with the emergence of the state and class oppression.⁷¹ He noted Lenin's 'fanatical intolerance' of religion, and his veneration of Feuerbach. When Gorky argued that religion in the past might have played a progressive role in human history, constraining the 'zoological individualism' in the human herd, Lenin responded heatedly: 'In reality, "zoological individualism" was bridled not by the idea of God, it was bridled both by the primitive herd and the primitive community.'⁷² This passage is worth noting, particularly with regard to the Nietzschean, social Darwinian terminology adopted. This was not exceptional for this period.

The nature of conspiratorial revolutionary politics lent it easily to Machiavellian principles. Marx had noted this already in the 1860s. The role of double agents, agent provocateurs, the use by the Okhrana of revolutionaries to create internal crisis to justify increased repression, to carry out assassinations of politicians was well established. The Bolsheviks' recourse after 1905 to armed robbery to finance their activities underlined the same trend.

Lenin and revolution

In 1905 and 1917 Lenin, Walicki argued, 'opted for revolutionary voluntarism, contemptuously rejecting theoretical principles' by embracing 'revolutionary expediency as the highest law'.⁷³ He followed Napoleon's dictum 'On s'engage et puis on voit'. But Lenin's approach to political strategy and tactics was also shaped by his conception of history as law-governed. He recognized what Marx, and Machiavelli, had described as 'necessity', the need to accommodate oneself to these laws; the need to transform himself and his party into an instrument which could work with those laws and bend them to its will. Here there was no place for abstract moralizing.

Lenin combined a doctrinaire attitude to ideology with tactical flexibility, even opportunism. In this he was, in fact, closer to Marx than the Mensheviks were. The idea of telescoping the bourgeois revolution into the proletarian revolution was not Lenin's invention in 1917. Marx advanced it himself in 1849 with regard to the revolutionary situation in Germany. Lenin based his strategy on seizing power in Russia in 1917 on the premise that it would trigger a European revolution, as a means

of countering the assertion that a proletarian revolution in Russia would be premature. From July 1917, rather than recoiling from the prospect of civil war, Lenin embraced it, in the expectation that it would become a European civil war.

Lenin's critics assert that through a reckless pursuit of power he deepened the divisions in society, destroyed any possibility of compromise and pushed the country in the direction of bloody warfare. Lenin's diatribes against the Provisional Government, the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries should be judged less from the standpoint of truth, than for their political purpose in discrediting the Bolsheviks' opponents. These moral arguments would have cut little ice with Lenin. Moreover, there were counter-arguments to advance. The Russian revolutionaries were not to repeat the mistakes of the revolutionaries of 1848, 1871 or 1905 of excessive moderation. They were to be guided by 'necessity'.

One enduring controversy surrounding the Bolsheviks in 1917 was whether they were in receipt of German funding to subvert Russia's war effort. Whether the Bolsheviks received such funds is still uncertain. Lenin had no compunction in taking such funds, as long as this was kept absolutely secret, whilst in no way feeling obligated to those who provided them.

Lenin and the art of insurrection

In approaching revolution Lenin was the supreme realist. In 1917 he repeatedly invoked the example of the Jacobins as a model of revolutionary vanguard. On 20 June in *Pravda* he published his article 'Concerning the Enemies of the People', which invoked the Jacobin law of 1793 that unleashed the terror as a laudable action.⁷⁴ On 7 July he published his article 'Can "Jacobinism" Frighten the Working Class?', in which he dismissed attempts by the enemies of the Bolsheviks to discredit them by associating them with Jacobinism and terrorism.⁷⁵ On 29 July, in his article 'The Beginning of Bonapartism', he argued that the struggle for the revolution had become a struggle between Jacobinism and Bonapartism.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, he repeatedly rebuffed accusations that the Bolsheviks were resorting to Blanquist methods.⁷⁷

In 'Marxism and Insurrection' in September 1917, Lenin wrote:

To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon a conspiracy, and not upon a party, but upon the advanced revolutionary class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge*

of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that *turning-point* in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish *Marxism from Blanquism* (emphasis in original).⁷⁸

Just a week before the seizure of power, Lenin again took up the charge, arguing that military conspiracy was Blanquism where basic conditions were not fulfilled, where the party did not represent the interest of a definite class, where the party did not have the sympathy of the majority of the population, etc.⁷⁹

Lenin viewed revolution as akin to war. Politics was no longer a question of compromise, negotiation and bargaining, but a battle to the death. In his afterword to 'Can the Bolsheviks retain State Power', written in September–October 1917, Lenin quoted Marx's famous passage from *Revolution and Counter-revolution in Germany* on the tactics of insurrection. Here Marx speaks of insurrection as a form of war: 'Insurrection is an equation with very indefinite magnitudes, the value of which may change every day.' Those who neglected these rules of engagement might well pay the price with their heads. In entering on the insurrectionary course, Marx advocated the greatest resolution to seize the advantage from the adversary, and, in this way, to rally the vacillating elements. 'In the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary tactics yet known: *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!*'⁸⁰

Similar advice on insurrection may be found in Herzen, Saint-Just and even Machiavelli. The laws governing insurrection constitute a particular aspect of 'necessity'. The advice proffered here makes perfectly good sense, once the notion of revolution as an act of violence is embraced. However, the implication as regards ends and means was ominous.

The dictatorship of the proletariat

Rosa Luxemburg warned of the revolution being transformed into a dictatorship of a handful of politicians, 'a dictatorship, to be sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians, that is a dictatorship in the bourgeois sense, in the sense of the rule of the Jacobins'.⁸¹ Lenin, like Marx and indeed Machiavelli, recognized that personal dictatorship could represent broader social interests:

That in the history of the revolutionary movements the dictatorship of individuals was very often the expression, the vehicle, the channel of the dictatorship of the revolutionary classes has been shown by the irrefutable experience of history. Undoubtedly, the dictatorship of individuals was compatible with bourgeois democracy.⁸²

In *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin, in November 1918, provided the following definition of dictatorship:

Dictatorship is rule based directly upon force and unrestricted by any laws. The revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat is rule won and maintained by the use of violence by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, rule that is unrestricted by any laws.⁸³

In an aphorism worthy of Machiavelli, widely used in revolutionary circles, he asserted 'Violence can only be met with violence' (*Na nasilie mozžno otvechat' tol'ko nasiliem*).⁸⁴ The same aphorism is found in *Rabochee Delo*.⁸⁵

Lenin, like Hegel, Marx and Engels, held Clausewitz's *On War* in the highest regard, and took as his own the axiom that 'War is the continuation of politics by other means.'⁸⁶ In 'Left Wing Infantilism and the Petty Bourgeois Mentality' in 1918 he noted that calculating the 'balance of forces' in politics – as 'old Clausewitz' ('one of the greatest authorities on military matters') argued for war – was the 'core of Marxism and Marxist tactics'. They had to be wary of a Russian Cavaignac or Napoleon who, relying on the support of the petty bourgeois, would step into the power vacuum and suppress the revolution. They should copy the state capitalist methods of Germany, but, like Peter the Great, they should not hesitate 'to use barbarous methods in fighting barbarism'.⁸⁷ Trotsky compared Lenin to Napoleon for his extraordinary care in calculating the balance of forces in any encounter.⁸⁸

The masses and the state

In Machiavelli's thought there is a duality in his attitude to the masses: the masses are more intelligent, more constant and dependable than rulers are; but the masses are also fickle and sometimes cowardly. So, in Lenin's thought, there is a similar duality; the proletariat is the class of the future, the carrier of socialism; but the proletariat is weak, disorganized, lacking in consciousness. Whilst for Machiavelli the question was whether the masses possessed *virtù*, for Lenin the question was whether

the proletariat possessed revolutionary consciousness and élan. For Lenin the party (as Machiavelli advised the prince) should operate on the masses. Both Machiavelli and Lenin thought that in republics a measure of equality between citizens should be upheld, that the wages of state officials should be modest and that office-holding within the state should be on a short-term basis. Both also favoured a people's militia to inculcate civic virtue.

In the years after October the problem of the low cultural level and exhaustion of the proletariat pressed still more insistently on Lenin. A mounting pessimism influenced his thought regarding the capacity of the proletariat. The masses still bore the imprint of the burden of the old order. To deal with this problem, the role of the party-state apparatus as an educating force was highlighted.⁸⁹ It should be noted that Lenin discovered Marx's concept of the withering away of the state relatively late. Beforehand the Russian Marxists had seen the state as an agency of social transformation.

In time, the party-state apparatus came to displace the proletariat, which after Kronstadt came to be seen as *déclassé*, as the real carrier of the revolution. But the party-state still needed to operate on the masses. Lenin rejected Trotsky's arch centralizing scheme to do away with the trade unions, but argued that they be transformed into 'transmission belts', or cog-wheels that would connect the vanguard of the working class to the rest of the proletariat which remained 'still so divided, so degraded, and so corrupted'.⁹⁰ This brings Lenin close to Machiavelli's conception of the state as a school for the tutoring of humanity. In the words of Walicki: 'He [Lenin] wanted the party to become the collective teacher of the working class without alienating itself from its mass basis.'⁹¹

But, here we need to be especially careful and on guard lest we simply accept uncritically Lenin's view of a proletariat that was in need of 'education'. Substantial sections of the working class continued to oppose the Bolsheviks. This was based on political conviction, and cannot in any way be construed as a reflection of their supposed political backwardness.⁹²

Lenin's foreign policy

Lenin's view of foreign relations was an apocalyptic revolutionary vision. He expected the First World War to lead to revolution. After the capture of power in Russia he believed that war with the capitalist world was inevitable, dramatized by the foreign intervention during the civil

war. He also believed in the legitimacy not only of propagandizing revolution abroad, but also of spreading it by the force of the Red Army as in the failed invasion of Poland in 1920.

Lenin's foreign policy was revolutionary, but also quintessentially Machiavellian – like the cleverness of the prince of a recently defeated country adept at playing off rival states. Harding writes: 'Lenin's international policy had become more "realist" or Machiavellian, based more on the national aspirations of those countries which had a clear interest in revising the Versailles settlement than upon class analysis.'⁹³ Lenin sought to utilize contradictions and divisions amongst the imperialist states 'to play one off against the other', in order 'to take advantage of every hour granted it by circumstances in order to gain strength as rapidly as possible'.⁹⁴

The thrust of Lenin's foreign policy was clear: 'If we are obliged to put up with such scoundrels as the capitalist robbers, each of whom is ready to knife us, it is our prime duty to make them turn their knives against each other.'⁹⁵ As the tide of revolution receded, Lenin sought to combine the policy of promoting revolution with a policy of normalizing relations with the capitalist world, through diplomatic recognition, trade agreements and alliances. The twin-track approach was associated with different institutions – the Comintern and People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Foreign policy came in time to be shaped by *raison d'état* or *staatsrason* (*gosudarstvennaya neobkhodimost*). Even by the standards of *realpolitik* this involved an extraordinary degree of duplicity.

Lenin's conception of *raison d'état*, it might be argued, was dictated by circumstances, but this is only a partial explanation which ignores the range of options available, on the basis that there was no alternative. Prezzolini offered the following quotation by Barrientos as an expression of a Machiavellian or realist conception of foreign relations:

The new prince who assumes the administration of a defeated kingdom, who is fearful of more enemies, and not being able to rid himself of all of them, nor possessing enough strength to conquer them, must make use of cleverness, bargaining with some, bribing others, attacking those who are weak and easy to conquer.⁹⁶

No half-measures

We have now abundant evidence concerning the conduct of the Bolsheviks after October 1917, particularly during the Red Terror in August–September 1918, of Lenin's central role in demanding of his

subordinates the most ruthless measures in crushing opposition, freely using the policy of execution, the taking of hostages, etc. Before the revolution, Lenin had spoken of how they would need 'scoundrels' to carry out the unpleasant tasks of the revolution. Lenin himself explicitly licensed the terror.⁹⁷ The decision to execute the royal family was one example where it was decided to pursue an extreme course. We also have abundant evidence of the way in which acts of terror committed by the Bolsheviks were to be concealed and attributed to others.⁹⁸ The ruthless suppression of the Kronstadt rising and the peasant risings on the Volga in 1921 were part of the same approach.

Here, one is faced with the Machiavellian maxim of avoiding half-measures, of inclining towards extreme responses; the assertion that rulers do not know how to be perfectly good or bad, but go for the middle course. Here, one might also highlight Machiavelli's view that in great enterprises a prince may rely initially on the support of the masses, but when the masses turn against him he must be in a position to compel them to give their support.⁹⁹ With the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP), at the eleventh party congress in 1922 Lenin drew the analogy between the party and a retreating army, in which machine guns had to be placed at the rear to prevent a retreat turning into a rout.¹⁰⁰

Lenin and morality in politics

Whilst striking parallels can be inferred, it is difficult to draw a direct line of influence between Lenin and Machiavelli. On the question of politics and ethics Lenin and Machiavelli spoke with the same voice. In 1918 he declared to Maria Spirodonova, the doyen of terrorists and a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, that there was no room for morality in politics.¹⁰¹ In his report to the Congress of the Russian Young Communist League on 2 October 1920, Lenin declared there was no morality higher than that of the goals of the proletarian revolution. Lenin rarely spoke on matters of ethics and his words need to be weighed carefully:

We reject all morality based on extra-human and extra-class concepts. We say that it is a deception, a fraud, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is derived from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat . . .

Morality is what serves to destroy the old existing society and to unite all the working people around the proletariat, which is building up a new, a communist society.

For the communist, morality lies entirely in this solid, united discipline and conscious mass struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in an eternal morality, and we expose the deceit of all the fables about morality. Morality serves the purpose of helping human society to rise to a higher level and to get rid of the exploitation of labour.¹⁰²

This is the 'revolutionary Machiavellian' view as expounded by Plekhanov (1902), Tkachev (1866) and Nechaev (1871 – 'Everything that allows the triumph of the revolution is moral, and everything that stands in its way is immoral'). Regarding this passage, Herbert Marcuse noted 'Lenin's primitive and brutal definition of communist morality', and his instrumental conception of morality condemned by some as, in effect, the 'end justifies the means'.¹⁰³

Olga Velikanova, in a penetrating study of the Lenin cult, drew explicit links between Nechaev's conception of revolutionary morality and Lenin's. Nechaev in *'Catechism of the Revolutionist'* wrote:

The measure of friendship, devotion, and other obligations towards such a comrade is determined solely by the degree of his usefulness to the cause of the all-destructive revolution . . . He must consider them as part of the common revolutionary capital placed at his disposal. He must spend his portion of the capital economically, always striving to extract the greatest possible use from it. He is to consider himself as capital fated to be spent for the triumph of the revolutionary cause; however, he has no right personally and alone to dispose of that capital without the consent of the aggregate of the fully initiated.¹⁰⁴

Similarly, Velikanova noted that Lenin, according to a memoir account, declared: 'There is no morality in politics, only purposefulness.' This, she noted, was a central aspect of Bolshevik ethics. G. E. Zinoviev, in 1916, wrote to N. K. Krupskaya insisting that great care be paid to Lenin's health, as this constituted the most valuable aspect of 'party property'. The notion 'party property' was one of Lenin's favourite expressions. In 1919 Lenin ordered A. D. Tsurupa to take care of his health as 'party property'. In 1923 Trotsky called Lenin the 'moral capital of the state machinery (*gosapparat*)'.¹⁰⁵

The implications of such a crude utilitarian conception of ethics is obvious. Who decides usefulness? Who decides what is economical use of the capital? For Lenin, socialism represented a higher morality, as an ideology of liberation for all oppressed classes, groups and nationalities. But it was a concept of 'liberation' as defined and sanctioned by the party. In this, freedom was not absolute: the party favoured not freedom of religion, but freedom from religion, not freedom of thought but freedom from false consciousness, not individual freedom to own property but freedom from private property. This was, as A. J. Polan has argued, a view of politics that negated politics.¹⁰⁶

Lenin and Machiavelli: the direct link

Only in one case can we establish a direct link between Lenin and Machiavelli. On 19 March 1922 Lenin, in a 'top secret' letter sent to Molotov for distribution to all Politburo members, outlined proposals for the ruthless repression of the Orthodox clergy, using the pretext of alleged church opposition to the provision of its treasures to assist in famine relief. In Lenin's own words, they should shoot as many of 'the Black Hundred clergy' as possible so that the Russian Orthodox Church would not be able for several decades to challenge the Communist Party. The seized church treasures, Lenin argued, should be used not for famine relief but for replenishing the country's gold reserves, which the Bolsheviks themselves had recklessly run down. Lenin declared:

One wise writer on matters of statecraft rightly said that if it was necessary to resort to certain brutalities for the sake of realising a certain political goal, they must be carried out in the most energetic fashion and in the briefest possible time because the masses will not tolerate prolonged application of brutality.¹⁰⁷

The wise writer referred to was, of course, Machiavelli.¹⁰⁸ Lenin, even in the most secret correspondence with his colleagues, did not allow himself to use Machiavelli's name. But this fleeting reference tells us two things: first, that Lenin had a very close knowledge of Machiavelli's thoughts and, second, that he knew that this fleeting reference would be immediately recognized by his Politburo colleagues. The letter still has the ability to shock by its cynicism, and it assumes greater significance in that it presaged the ruthless suppression of the Orthodox Church in the succeeding decades. The letter was excluded from Lenin's

collected works. At the same time it is important to note that Lenin used Machiavelli to defend the resort to terror as a swift, merciless action, not terror as part of a permanent system of rule.

Alain Besançon, who first drew attention to the significance of this letter, rightly argued that whereas Lenin ruthlessly employed Machiavellian methods to attain his objective, his worldview and objectives were fundamentally different.¹⁰⁹ Besançon argued that whereas Machiavelli viewed deception in politics as a deliberate ruse, for Lenin the question of deceit was tied not only to tactical considerations but also to a different conception of reality. Their worldviews were fundamentally different, but there is a danger of stretching things too far. Lenin was perfectly well aware of the distinction between deception and ideology.

Georg Lukács in addressing the question declared: 'Persons, says Lenin, who think of politics as small tricks which at times border on deceit must be decisively refuted. Classes cannot be deceived.'¹¹⁰ The logic of the class struggle, the development of proletarian consciousness, the law-governed nature of the transition from capitalism to socialism, provided the check on any narrow 'Machiavellian' conception of politics. This was also Lenin's defence against the charge of amorality in politics. As Marxism was a science there was no place in it for morality. Revolution for Marx, and indeed Lenin, was akin to a birth, the agonies and bloodshed of which were part of a natural process, to protest against which was absurd. But such a scientific conception of Marxism also meant that democracy had to be adjusted to conform to the needs of ideology and tactics.

Lenin was driven not by petty personal ambitions, but by an idea, and by a keen sense of responsibility: to the party, to Marxism, to the proletariat, to the revolutionary movement in general. If he got his calculations wrong they would all go to the wall. In this Lenin corresponds to Machiavelli's idealized image of the prince. But this also allowed the leader extraordinary latitude to decide what was right. It justified Lenin's position in forcing the crisis in Russia in 1917 to a head, and in rejecting any idea of compromise or retreat.

Lenin, Marx and Machiavelli

The question of Lenin's Jacobinism has been vigorously debated.¹¹¹ That Lenin was a convinced Marxist need not be doubted, but he was a

Marxist of a particular kind. With the end of illusions about the regime's base of support and the prospects of international revolution, the realist strand in Bolshevism directed itself at establishing and consolidating the state gained dominance. Both Harding and Walicki argued that Lenin, in 1922–3, adopted essentially a Jacobin solution to the problem of preserving the beleaguered Soviet regime.¹¹²

Harding argued that in the first months of Soviet power in 1917–18 Lenin was intent on creating a commune state, not a dictatorship of the proletariat.¹¹³ Others have seen his commitment to the idea of the commune as purely tactical.¹¹⁴ More plausibly, it might be argued that for Lenin the concept of the commune was always held in tension with the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Here, we might compare Lenin with Machiavelli: Machiavelli preferred a republican form of government, but recognized that temporary dictatorship was sometimes necessary; Lenin, in theory, favoured the commune form of socialist self-administration but recognized that the dictatorship of the proletariat through the party was necessary in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Tactically, in 1917, Lenin advanced a minimum programme, with the intention, once in power, of pursuing a maximum programme. In June 1917 Lenin declared 'Everybody agrees that the immediate introduction of socialism in Russia is impossible.' Yet, following the October Revolution he was intent on the immediate introduction of socialism.¹¹⁵ The dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, and the justification advanced by Lenin and Trotsky might also be seen as bad faith, a denial of democracy, justified by revolutionary expediency. By 1919, Lenin himself publicly was postponing the state's withering away to some distant, unspecified future. The adoption of the New Economic Policy in 1921 was bitterly resisted by large sections of the party as a betrayal of revolutionary ideals.

In his conversation with Chuev, Molotov, in response to the argument that Lenin represented a more humane form of socialism in comparison to Stalin, quickly responded that this reflected a fundamental misunderstanding of Lenin. It was Lenin, he insisted, who continually acted as a goad to his subordinates, demanding that they act politically without regard to conventional notions of moral restraint.¹¹⁶ In 1924 Trotsky wrote of Lenin's single-minded pursuit of the goal of revolution: 'His was perhaps the most determined utilitarianism ever produced in the laboratory of history.'¹¹⁷ As we have seen, it was precisely as a utilitarian that Machiavelli was described, but the same term could be applied to Marx or Nietzsche.

Conclusion

If Lenin employed Machiavellian tactics to seize power and consolidate the state in the period 1917–21, so, it might be argued, he followed Machiavellian precepts after 1921 in seeking to found the state on more solid and durable foundations. The rationality whereby power was seized was not the rationality on which it could be consolidated. From the rationality of politics as warfare, we pass to the rationality of government as administration. In the last active months of his life this was Lenin's overriding preoccupation. This has in the past been called 'Lenin's Last Struggle'.¹¹⁸ And in the final months of his active life his overriding concern was with establishing an orderly system of efficient administration, which alone would guarantee the regime's survival and allow for an orderly development of policy-making. But the commitment to revolutionary violence where necessary was never repudiated.

For Machiavelli many of Lenin's ideas on human progress, the perfectibility of mankind, the ending of class society, the withering away of the state would have struck him as absurd. But in terms of methods, there was close affinity between the two. Lenin was a direct heir to the tradition of revolutionary Machiavellism in Russian history and to the Jacobin tradition in the European revolutionary movement. Lenin's conception of revolution as warfare had its advantages, but it also carried with it enormous dangers. In terms of both domestic and foreign policy, it cut off alternative possibilities, it created a reinforcing pattern of behaviour from which it was difficult to escape, it created a ideological belief system with its own self-referential logic. Intransigence bred intransigence. At the end of his life Lenin felt compelled to address the question of how some mechanism of self-regulation could be built into this apparatus to ensure accountability and an element of responsibility.

Lenin conceived of the Bolshevik party as the new prince, the prophet armed. This was perfectly understood by Antonio Gramsci.¹¹⁹ In defence of the revolution everything was justified. Thus, there was no contradiction between being both a Marxist and a Machiavellian. Machiavellian methods were to be employed for realizing socialist ends. For Lenin it was axiomatic that the revolution would be violent. In this Machiavellian methods were necessary in defeating the enemies of the proletariat, and in ensuring that the proletariat performed its historically assigned role as revealed by Marx. For Lenin, these methods were justified by 'necessity' and the logic of revolutionary struggle. Critics of

Bolshevik methods argued that alternative methods lay to hand: for Kautsky and Martov, it was through the methods of democratic politics, for Rosa Luxemburg, through revolutionary 'mass action'.¹²⁰ Whether these alternatives were real practical options is more debatable.

6

Machiavellism in Soviet Thought

Machiavelli's ideas cannot be considered in isolation either from other intellectual strands which fed into Bolshevism, or from the circumstances that brought with them modifications in Bolshevik ideology. At the outset, we must stress that the object of this work is not to claim some primacy for Machiavelli in shaping the Bolshevik outlook, above and over Marxism. Instead it is to argue that this was only one of a whole number of influences that shaped Bolshevism. Similar claims might be advanced for social Darwinian and Nietzschean ideas, Russian statist traditions or for the quasi-religious strand in Russian millenarian thought. We shall pursue this enquiry by examining the impact of Jacobin and Blanquist ideas within the Bolshevik tradition, the elitist conception of party and state organization, the Bolsheviks' conception of 'absolutism', the Bolsheviks' view of morality and the nature of deception in Bolshevik policy and practice. In the second section we shall explore the view of a number of the prominent critics of Bolshevism, and the significance of the equation drawn between Bolshevism and Jesuitism.

Strands in Bolshevik thought

With the October Revolution, Bolshevism resolutely cut its links with social democracy. As an avowedly revolutionary movement, it defined itself by its militancy and revolutionary commitment, and by its rejection of reformism and parliamentarism. It espoused an elitist vanguardist view of politics, defined itself as the realist Marxian current that recognized that violence was inevitable and had to be embraced. Lenin's attack on Kautsky in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* opened a chasm between social democracy and communism. In

response, Kautsky replied in *Terrorism and Communism* condemning the 'moral catastrophe' brought upon socialism as an idea by the adoption of Bolshevik methods.¹

Social democracy was already in large measure defining its own ethical position, in some cases derived from Christian principles, elsewhere drawn from Kantian notions of rational humanism. Within this tradition a pronounced non-violent and pacifist current was evident. It was characterized by commitment to gradual, peaceful reform. For Lenin and the Bolsheviks in general, social democracy, and Menshevism in particular, was characterized by a supine lack of will, a failure to accept the theoretical conclusions from its own premises, and by 'apostasy' with regard to fundamental tenets of Marxism. For Marxists, Lenin argued, the dictatorship of the proletariat meant dictatorship in its most uncompromising form, and violence and terror were defended as essential parts of the revolutionary process.

In *Terrorism and Communism*, Trotsky rejected the argument that the Bolsheviks were akin to Blanquists only in so far as 'they understood the meaning of a revolutionary government, and did not make the question of seizing it depend on the formal signs of democracy'.² He defended his controversial scheme for the militarization of labour declaring that 'Man is a fairly lazy animal.' There was nothing morally wrong with terror or the taking of hostages, it was just a question of who is applying it against whom:

As for us, we were never concerned with the Kantian-priestly and vegetarian-Quaker prattle about the 'sacredness of human life'. We were revolutionaries in opposition, and have remained revolutionaries in power. To make the individual sacred we must destroy the social order which crucifies him. And this problem can only be solved by blood and iron.³

Here we have the extraordinary notion of creating the god-man by Bismarckian methods! In the struggle for socialism the methods of dictatorship and terror were unavoidable: 'Who aims at the end cannot reject the means.'⁴ This commitment to terror as an instrument of policy was never repudiated. Lenin's letter to D. I. Kurskii commissar of justice in 1922 emphasized that the Soviet criminal code should make allowance for the state's resort to terror.⁵

During the civil war, it is asserted that Trotsky employed the Romans' method of decimation to discipline military formations in which discipline had broken down.⁶ Coincidentally or not, it is Machiavelli, in *The*

Discourses, who gives one of the fullest accounts of this method, and a defence of this 'most terrible' solution.⁷ The Bolsheviks were not to be numbered amongst those modern men, of whom Machiavelli contemptuously refers, who were so weak-willed as to be fearful of emulating the noble deeds of the Romans.

Bolshevik elitism

In March 1922 in his report on the work of the Central Committee, Lenin declared: 'the State, it is we, it is the proletariat, it is the vanguard of the working class', and 'The State – that means the workers, the advanced section of the workers, it is the vanguard, it is us.'⁸

In 1918 G. E. Zinoviev published a short biography of Lenin laying stress on the influence of *What is to be Done?* in the creation of Bolshevism. In the mid-1920s *What is to be Done?* was given great prominence.⁹ The party *Short Course* of 1938 which Stalin edited, drew attention to its importance. Earlier, Stalin, in his *Foundations of Leninism*, codified Leninism as an ideology in the same form as the political catechisms of the nineteenth century. The organizational principles of Bolshevism as a highly disciplined, centralized organization, with selective recruitment was outlined by L. M. Kaganovich in his pamphlet '*How the Russian Communist Party is Built*' (*Kak postroena RKP(b)*).

Implicit in all this was the view that the 'revolution from below' had spent and exhausted itself; that proletarian power had to be exercised by the party and the state in the interests of the class. It was necessary to strengthen, educate and protect the proletariat from the contaminating influence of other ideologies; to make it capable of performing its historic mission. In this, the party effectively substituted itself for the class. The failure of revolution from below paved the way for a statist conception of socialist construction. Felix Dzerzhinskii, head of the Cheka, asserted that in the process of building socialism in the USSR the working class was a dead weight.¹⁰ Soviet leaders repeatedly insisted that they did not idealize the masses, stressing the necessity for strong party leadership. Inexorably, the party came to substitute itself for the proletariat.

The second area in which the Bolsheviks placed great stress on organization was with regard to the state. Only during the First World War did Lenin's reading of Marx lead him to the discovery of Marx's proposition about the withering away of the state. Trotsky, in his debate with M. N. Pokrovskii in the mid-1920s and in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, saw the Russian state as exercising more autonomy over social classes than the state in conditions of European absolutism, thus

allowing it a degree of freedom in promoting modernization in its capitalist and socialist variants.¹¹

The issue of leadership

The issue of leadership was central to Lenin's view of politics from the outset. Correct leadership was bound to correct politics, correct theory. Whereas Machiavelli defended personal dictatorship, for Lenin it was the dictatorship of the proletariat expressed through the party. Charges of personal dictatorship were rebuffed. Appeals by Gorky and N. A. Rozhkov to Lenin in 1919 that he establish a personal dictatorship to save the country from catastrophe were rebuffed.¹² In March 1921 Lenin soundly rebuked Adolf Ioffe for repeatedly using the expression of Lenin 'the Central Committee – it is I' (*Tseka-eto ya*).¹³ This was a variant of '*Le Parti c'est moi*', cited by Michels as a common expression used to characterize the Bonapartist trend in modern socialist parties.¹⁴ Lenin insisted that, on many occasions, the Central Committee had defeated him.

With the evident isolation of the political regime from society, the question of the calibre and accountability of the leadership became a more pressing matter, and it was one to which Lenin returned in his final months of active life. His alarm at the intrigues amongst his deputies led him to a scathing indictment of Stalin. Of Stalin, Trotsky reports, Lenin repeatedly declared that 'this cook can only prepare peppery dishes'.¹⁵ Trotsky may not have fully appreciated the import of this charge. Tommaso Campanella denounced Machiavelli, in his *Atheismus triumphatus* written in the seventeenth century, as 'a bad cook who prepared infernal dishes for princes which will end by bringing ruin on them'.¹⁶ Was Lenin aware of Campanella's words or did Trotsky put these words in Lenin's mouth? Whatever, Stalin was no mere adviser he was the prince in waiting.

The danger of personal dictatorship arising in the 1920s was intensely felt: reflected also in the triumvirs' attack on Trotsky's supposed 'Bonapartist' ambitions. Lenin, in his Testament, famously called for Stalin to be removed as party General Secretary because he was 'too rude'. Stalin's ruthless pursuit of personal power in the ensuing years took his opponents by surprise. In June 1928 N. I. Bukharin confided to L. B. Kamenev that Stalin was 'an unprincipled intriguer who subordinates everything to his appetite for power', with the warning 'He will strangle us', and that Stalin was a Ghengis Khan.¹⁷

The debate on Jacobinism

In power the Bolsheviks were able to control the publication of literature. In the 1920s and 1930s the works of the great revolutionary figures of the past, such as Herzen and Chernyshevsky, were published. The Bolsheviks were entranced by the example of the Jacobins.¹⁸ Robespierre, Saint-Just and Marat occupied a particular place in the pantheon of revolutionary heroes, for their principled defence of revolution and their uncompromising stance on terror. Parallels between the French and the Russian revolutions, between the Jacobins and the Bolsheviks, run like a thread through Trotsky's celebrated *History of the Russian Revolution* with its high evaluation of Robespierre, Danton and Marat.¹⁹

But it might be said that the Bolsheviks outdid the Jacobins in terms of political tactics, and were less constrained by moral scruples. If there is one element which connects the Stalinist and Leninist era in Soviet history, it is the unfolding of the logic of a Jacobinical conception of politics and administration, informed on the one hand by a self-righteous zeal, which recognized no moral boundaries, and on the other guided by a rigorous drive towards centralized political command and an obsessive concern with control and enforcement.

In the 1920s a number of figures took part in the debate on Tkachev as a forerunner of the Bolsheviks, including Professor M. N. Pokrovskii, B. P. Koz'min, B. I. Gorev, S. I. Mitskevitch and N. N. Baturin. Pokrovskii in his *Essays on the Russian Revolutionary Movement in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century*, published in Moscow 1924, celebrated Tkachev as a forerunner of the Bolsheviks, even claiming that the October Revolution followed word by word Tkachev's thesis on revolutionary seizure of power.²⁰ Pokrovskii and S. I. Mitskevich, in *Proletarskaya revolyutsiya* 1923, claimed that Zaichnevskii's Jacobin position, especially his manifesto *Molodaya Rossiya* of 1862, and Tkachev were forerunners of Bolshevism. Baturin, who dismissed Jacobinism as the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie, attacked Mitskevich's article.²¹ In 1930 Koz'min again argued that *Molodaya Rossiya* anticipated the major revolutionary changes and dictatorial methods ushered in by the October Revolution.²²

In 1922 a study by Koz'min of the revolutionary career of Tkachev, noted his debt to Machiavelli, and noted the great influence of Machiavelli amongst the revolutionaries of the 1860s.²³ In the early 1930s a seven-volume collection of Tkachev's works, edited by Koz'min, was published.²⁴

One of the dissident groups which emerged inside the Communist Party in 1923, alongside the Workers' Group and Workers' Truth, was the small 'The Workers' and Peasants' Socialist Party', headed by the sailor Paniushkin, which attracted some former members of the Workers' Opposition. Paniushkin was branded by *Pravda* as a 'self-seeker' and 'Jew baiter', and he was accused of raising 'the inglorious Kronstadt banner'. He and his followers were expelled from the party. It is worth noting that the title of this group's publication was *Nabat*, the title of Tkachev's publication.²⁵

There were several attempts to acknowledge Nechaev's legacy during the first period of Soviet rule. In 1918 *Pravda* printed '*The Catechism of the Conscious Proletarian*' hinting at Nechaev's '*Catechism of the Revolutionist*'.²⁶ Nechaev's own catechism was published in 1924.²⁷ Several books were published in Russia on Nechaev in the 1920s. A poem by Petr Oreshin presented Nechaev as an epic Russian hero.²⁸ In 1931 B. P. Koz'min edited a collection of documents on Nechaev and the Nechaevtsy from the third department. In the introduction, he rejected N. K. Mikhailovskii's assessment that Nechaev was a 'monster', noting that in the historical literature, the question of his 'rehabilitation' was being posed.²⁹ This never happened, but the trend was significant.

Blanqui enjoyed great respect in the USSR in the 1920s. G. Geffroy's study *L'Enferme* (Paris, 1897) had already been published in a Russian translation in St Petersburg in 1906–7. In the 1920s three studies of Blanqui, by A. Zévaès, Dommanget and Gorev were published.³⁰ *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* had a lengthy eulogistic portrait on Blanqui, as a forerunner of Bolshevism, as a skilled practitioner of revolutionary conspiracy and insurrection. Although some of his views were criticized, his political ideas were still seen as having contemporary relevance.³¹ Graccus Babeuf, famous as the leader of the Conspiracy of Equals, was seen as a forerunner of communism, and advocate of equality. He distanced himself from the Jacobins – criticized them for not being sufficiently radical, but also criticized their excessive reliance on terror.³²

On the death of Dzerzhinskii, head of the Cheka, in 1926, Bukharin wrote an obituary headed 'The Jacobin of the Proletariat' in which he cited Lenin's view that the Jacobins had employed pitiless terror to crush the counter-revolution.³³ In 1927 an article by Ya. V. Staroselskii sought to counter the assertion made by the French historian A. Aulard of a parallel between the French and Russian Revolutions, and a parallel between Jacobin and Bolshevik terror and the existence in both of an 'ideology of terror'. Staroselskii argued that they were not comparable,

and, with little regard for the historic truth, argued that the Bolshevik's resort to terror had been more restrained, more based on law.³⁴

In 1930 the journal *Istorik Marksist* published an article by S. Krasnyi on the development of Blanqui's political and social views.³⁵ The journal at this time also published material on the history of *Narodnaya Volya*. In 1934 the journal *Istorik Marksist* published an article by N. Lukin, 'Lenin and the Problem of Jacobin dictatorship'.³⁶ With the Soviet authorities increasingly concerned about the threat posed by terrorist attacks, the discussion on Jacobinism was closed down.³⁷ The official view presented in Stalin's *Short Course* (1938) was that the Bolsheviks owed all their ideas to Marxism, as developed initially by Plekhanov and then by Lenin.³⁸

Absolutism

The French writer L. Couzinet had developed the idea of Machiavelli as the theorist of absolutism.³⁹ 'Absolutism' was seen as an age of revolution and civil wars, the period of transition between feudalism and capitalism, when there was an enormous expansion in the power of the state, when the state became highly centralized, more bureaucratic, subordinating to itself rival centres of authority, imposing uniformity of law, strengthening its revenue-raising powers, and increasing its military power.⁴⁰ Just as there was a period of absolutist rule between feudalism and capitalism, so, by implication, a similar period of strongly authoritarian rule would operate during the transition from capitalism to socialism. The main political theorists of the age of absolutism were Machiavelli, Bodin, Hobbes and Spinoza.⁴¹

After the Revolution there was a significant growth of interest in the work of Hobbes, who was hailed as the pioneer of materialist philosophy, an atheist and the defender of absolutism. In 1926 Hobbes' collected works were published in Moscow with a foreword by A. Deborin.⁴² *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* in 1930 carried an entry on Hobbes by I. Luppöl. It argued that Hobbes advances the notion of social contract by which 'the state of nature of people as a war of all against all (*bellum omnium contra omnes*)' is ended. This social contract, motivated by man's desire to secure his own security, 'provides the basis to social or, which is the same thing, to state life'. Hobbes favoured a form of absolutist state. He denied the right of revolution, but in his terms a revolution meant 'the death of one leviathan, but, at the same time, the birth of a new leviathan'.⁴³ The intervening period, whilst the new state consolidates itself, was a return to a state of nature of revolution and civil war.

In 1928 Bukharin, in his 'Notes of an Economist', attacked Stalin's economic policies and the burgeoning growth of the state bureaucracy, invoking Lenin's idea of the 'commune state'. L. M. Kaganovich, in response, accused Bukharin of seeking to weaken the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and chided him that he feared 'Leviathan'.⁴⁴ The clear implication was that the Soviet regime embraced 'Leviathan'; socialism, like early capitalism, would also pass through its own absolutist phase.

The leading Marxist historian Pokrovskii was a great admirer of both Witte and Stolypin, the two statesmen of the late tsarist era who came closest to offering a Bonapartist or Bismarckian solution to the problems of Russian development. Selections from Witte's memoirs were published in Moscow and Petrograd in 1923 with a foreword by Pokrovskii. In Pokrovskii's *Brief History of Russia*, the main hero of the late tsarist period is Witte. In *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* in 1930, Pokrovskii describes the 1890s as the 'era of Witte'. Witte was instrumental in strengthening Russian absolutism, creating a form of state capitalism. An explicit parallel was drawn between Witte's industrialization project and that of the Soviet government. Pokrovskii refers admiringly to Witte's 'jesuitical' skill in advancing arguments to the tsar.⁴⁵

The failed Bonapartism of Witte and Stolypin, their inability to carry through a capitalist revolution from above, had clear implications and lessons for the Soviet regime. The exhaustion of the October Revolution from below clearly implied that the tasks of the Revolution could only be realized by a new socialist revolution from above.

The socialist and non-socialist tradition

Nietzsche's influence on Russian intellectuals before the First World War was immense. His influence waned after 1910, but persisted into the 1920s, when his works were finally proscribed, allied to enormous interest in the music of Wagner – seen as a revolutionary. It is tempting to see Lenin and Stalin as inspired by the conception of the superman, unconstrained by conventional morality, but there is little basis for doing so.⁴⁶ Trotsky, as a young man, wrote an obituary on Nietzsche, describing him as an enemy of socialism, whose moral code and cult of the 'superman' represented, in an exaggerated form, the features of bourgeois morality with its contempt for the common man.⁴⁷ But Nietzschean imprints often surface in Trotsky's works, most notably in the concluding passage of *Literature and Revolution* (1924), which is a hymn to the socialist supermen of the future.⁴⁸

Hegel as a philosopher and political thinker occupied a position of considerable importance for the Soviet authorities. Fichte also enjoyed a certain vogue with the publication of '*The Closed Commercial State*', '*The Role of the Intellectual*', '*Addresses to the German Nation*' and other of his political writings. He was as a critic of Kant and as a proponent of dialectics – and he was greatly admired and treated with great respect by Soviet philosophers.⁴⁹ In *The Encyclopaedia of State and Law*, Fichte was sympathetically portrayed: in reconciling the interests of the state and the individual; achieving for the latter real, as opposed to formal, freedom; with the state having power to regulate society; requiring its citizens to work; but the citizens retaining property rights as a check on the power of the state.⁵⁰ In *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* of 1936, G. Veisburg argued that *The Closed Commercial State* had only some features of utopian socialism and, as Franz Mehring had argued, Fichte's model state, with its division of society into two basic classes, was modelled on the old Prussian state and was meant to accommodate the needs of the bourgeoisie.⁵¹

Note might also be made of the influence of Friedrich List, with his advocacy of protectionism, whose ideas provided inspiration for the policies of Witte in the 1890s; Saint-Simon, the advocate of a technocratic socialist order;⁵² Louis Blanc's ideas on labour organization;⁵³ Ferdinand Lassalle's conception of socialism allied to the power of the Bismarckian state;⁵⁴ and Karl Johann Rodbertus-Jagetzow's ideas on state capitalism, allied to monarchical power.⁵⁵ *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* in the 1930s criticized the petty-bourgeois character of this 'state socialism' and drew a parallel with the ideas of 'state socialism' in Germany and France with the notion of 'police socialism' developed in Russia before 1905 by Zubatov.⁵⁶ Notwithstanding these criticisms, it might be argued that these technocratic and statist visions of modernization, all strongly anti-liberal in their outlook, fed into a whole stream of Soviet thought.

Bolshevism and morality

E. A. Preobrazhenskii, the son of a priest and prominent Soviet economist of the 1920s, also had a wider range of interests. A prominent member of the Left Communists of 1918, he remained on the left of the party and was a staunch ally of Trotsky. In 1923 he published a work *Concerning Morals and Class Norms*, which was dedicated to Dzerzhinskii, head of the Cheka/OGPU.⁵⁷ A work dealing with morality from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, he argued, was urgently required, as a guideline for literate workers and young people. In the foreword he

deplored the widespread 'practical amoralism' that dominated much of contemporary life. The principle 'everything is permitted' (*vse pozvoleno*) (an echo of Alyosha's reply to Ivan in Dostoevskii's 'Grand Inquisitor'), he declared, did not hold with regard to the interests of the proletariat.

He defined morality as the mystification of imperatives or restrictions on action, sanctioned by religion or other ethical beliefs. Behind this mystification, he insisted, morality corresponded to specific social interests: 'Moral, translated from cloudy language to the every day, always means favourable for people or specific groups of people, useful, expedient; immoral – that which is harmful, destructive, inexpedient.' In class society, morality reflected basic class interest; that which is advantageous to the bourgeois class is propagated as moral, as obligatory, as natural and necessary for all. That which is directed against this class's domination, its system of property, state, family, etc. is presented as a breach of human morality in general. There was no general or fixed human morality. Different societies held radically different moral views on slavery, infanticide and suicide. The bourgeoisie in its early history professed Christian morality then, as it became stronger, advanced Protestantism (Lutheranism, Calvinism, etc.) and later rejected religion in general as a delusion. Even the proletariat in the early history of its class struggle based itself on Christian morality, but, as the class struggle developed, its vanguard abandoned all connections with religion.

Even the most fundamental moral imperatives, such as 'thou shalt not kill', Preobrazhenskii argued, were subject to conflicting interpretations, depending upon the material benefit or loss which it might entail. Man, Preobrazhenskii argued, was a social animal, whose social instinct to cooperate underwent transformation in tribal society and then in class society. As a result: 'Only the future society, freed from class struggle and the existence of class itself, is able to utilise in its fullness the social instinct of man which is one of the most valuable acquisitions of his long history.'

Morality represented a fetishization of class norms. He cited with approval Bukharin's views in *Theory of Historical Materialism*, and argued that the proletariat in building socialism, should proceed like a turner making a stool. Those who will the ends must will the means. Ethics as such ceased to exist and were replaced by technical rules of conduct. Only when the proletariat began to become a class 'for itself', Preobrazhenskii argued, did it begin to evolve its own class norms, unconstrained by religion and without 'the mystical formula of absolute general-human class norms' (i.e. morality). Thus the proletarian acquired a sense of responsibility 'not before the secret voice of

conscience, but directly before his own class'. In the developing class struggle one of the most important conditions of victory was unity, on the principle 'all for one and one for all'. Victory is possible only when the small, most active and conscious vanguard is fused with the mass.

Kant's attempt to found basic principles of general human morality, and his proposition – never look upon another person as a means to an end, but always as an end in him/herself – was dismissed by Preobrazhenskii as 'petty bourgeois utopianism'. The proletariat in its struggle for power was cruel and merciless. It not only did not spare its enemies, but did not spare, where this was necessary for the cause, the best representatives of its own class. In this he offered an analogy from the natural world:

In northern Siberia it happens that a huge herd of deer comes to a broad river. It is necessary to cross to the other bank to save the whole herd from starvation. But the river is wide and a bridge is made, through the social instinct of the herd, from the bodies of the leaders. The proletariat only realises the fullness of the power of its class when each separate member of the class is ready when necessary to hurl his body to build the bridge by which the whole proletarian collective will pass over to the society of the future.⁵⁸

Nietzsche, in the 1880s, condemned modern socialism with its advocacy of a 'herd-animal morality'. In Preobrazhenskii's work we have a celebration of this collectivist morality. But in their iconoclastic rejection of any fixed, universal morality we see at the same time a close affinity between Preobrazhenskii's ideas and Nietzsche's.

After the conquest of power the class norm of the proletariat changes. What was expedient in the period of struggle for power is no longer expedient. This is reflected in the changing attitude of workers to labour and to the factories. It was reflected in the creation of the new man based on collectivist principles. In this bourgeoisie survivals of the past have to be overcome. The retreat to NEP was a recognition that this transition might be more difficult. Youth, uncontaminated by the old order, represented the greatest hope. This required a transformation of national character: 'The contemporary type of Russian worker is in essence a product of serfdom somewhat modified by Russian capitalism.' In a direct reworking of Lenin's conception in *What is to be Done?*, the proletariat would be remoulded under the dual pressure of factory discipline, '*tsarina machine*', and of the guidance of the proletarian vanguard.

The Communist Party took a different view to European social democratic parties ('those God-fearing petty bourgeois') and regarded lying as legitimate and necessary in the class struggle. The Jesuits were masters of lying on behalf of the Catholic Church. 'For a class the highest morality is what is useful to the class in its struggle, what ensures to it the greatest result with the least expenditure of effort.' For a terrorist in planting a bomb the great moral responsibility that he feels is that to his comrades, his party, his class. After the proletarian revolution, lies and deceit became harmful in terms of comradely relations within the working class and of relations of communists within the party. To the argument that individuals were responsible to their own 'voice of conscience', which Dostoevskii equated with the voice of God, Preobrazhenskii replied 'this voice in class society already rings, as the voice of class'. Here, we might compare Preobrazhenskii's assertion with Machiavelli's declaration: 'Not without good reason is the voice of the populace likened to that of God.'⁵⁹

In its relations with other social classes, such as the Nepmen, and with the older generations it was pointless to attempt re-education. These classes could be controlled by pressure rather than by any appeal to conscience. With the tens of millions of peasants, he anticipated a different approach, as they would have to live alongside them for decades. They should try to win over the best elements, the minority in the countryside. They should recruit peasants, but on the understanding that the party was more important than their individual holdings.

Preobrazhenskii argued that the socialist state should promote eugenics and sexual selection, assuming responsibility for the 'health of the race'. This was a 'social-biological necessity' to which 'sentimental personal predilections' would have to be subordinated. Under capitalism such matters were neglected because of the primacy of the interests of private property. The state should strive to strengthen class unity, mercilessly judging all deserters and class enemies. In this he posed the question as to why communists married non-workers.⁶⁰ In the long term, he argued, the class norms of the proletariat would become fixed and become part of their social instinct.

Preobrazhenskii's book outlined a crude 'utilitarian' conception of morality viewed from a narrow 'proletarian' perspective. It was an argument of moral relativism, a rejection of moral absolutes, in which morality was assigned a purely instrumental role. The argument that other factors intervened – the influence of compassion, pity, the instinct for social reform and betterment, paternalism or charity – was left unaddressed. The assumption was that morality could always be reduced

to class interest and its economic needs. In a sense Preobrazhenskii's pamphlet was a sustained attack on Dostoevskii. For Dostoevskii, Preobrazhenskii's pamphlet would have represented the incarnation of the nihilism of his worst nightmares.

The argument advanced for eugenics we shall leave aside. In 1930 the Soviet leadership ended debate on eugenics, which it argued had been appropriated by fascist movements in Europe. Enough has been said to indicate the moral chasm that was opened up by the Bolsheviks' conception of ethics. Although Preobrazhenskii started off by asserting that the principle 'everything is permitted' did not apply to individuals in the process of building socialism, he virtually granted the state and party precisely that right (as Machiavelli granted that right to the state). In this Preobrazhenskii's ideas, and indeed Lenin's ideas, on morality are in direct line of succession from Nechaev's *Catechism of the Revolutionary*, albeit in a more tempered vein, but it also followed directly from the notion of history as being law-governed, where individuals have to adjust their actions to 'necessity'.

Other works dealt with Marxism and ethics.⁶¹ One important aspect of this was the development of a distinct concept of party ethics, the qualities and virtues which party members and party youth were supposed to display. E. M. Yaroslavkii, like Preobrazhenskii, another former Left Communist, in his work *Concerning Party Ethics* in 1925, maintained that moral conduct was identical with that conduct which served the interest of the proletariat (i.e. as defined by the party leadership). Within this, informing on non-members and on fellow members was considered normal and healthy. Individuals had to transform and educate themselves to be worthy of membership.⁶² Here, the parallel with Nechaev's notion of members of the revolutionary circle as 'capital' to be expended by the revolutionary leader in furthering the cause is obvious.

The politics of deception and self-deception

The Bolsheviks' intention was to bring reality into conformity with their conception. In the 1920s the gap between reality and Bolshevik objectives was huge. To bridge this gap, the party had recourse increasingly to a statist conception of socialist construction. The duality in the Bolsheviks' view of reality was what prompted the view of Bolshevism as almost a surrogate religion, focused on the realization of a vision of mankind's future. In realizing this project, the party was elevated into a supra-historical vehicle for carrying through the project. In attaining

this end all moral considerations were subordinated. Tactical considerations overrode any moral qualms.

Amongst the Bolsheviks there developed a conception of the party as the carrier of historical truth, to which individual members had to subordinate themselves. In this the Bolshevik view of party and ideology was quite new; there is nothing in Machiavelli that approximates to it. It is summed up by Trotsky's statement: 'it is impossible to be right against the party.'⁶³

G. L. Pyatakov, identified by Lenin as one of the most talented figures in the party, a former Left Communist who supported Trotsky in the struggle with Stalin, when challenged by his former colleagues concerning his humiliating capitulation to Stalin in February 1928, responded with passion, arguing that he could not divorce himself from the Bolshevik party. The party was bound by no laws, 'Nothing is inadmissible for it, nothing unrealizable.' The true Bolshevik submerged his individuality into the party; he would swear that black was white, and white was black, even abandon his own personality for the party's sake.⁶⁴ In this statement, we have various elements; the notion that 'nothing is inadmissible' or *vse posvoleno* (everything is permitted), Semon Frank's notion of party idolatry, and the Jesuitical idea that the true believer will swear black is white, white is black.

Preobrazhenskii in his work on communism and ethics had argued that duplicity, deceit and lying were an essential part of the armoury of the revolutionary party. The Bolshevikization of the CPSU's sister parties via the Comintern, in effect, involved the transposition of this ethic on to an international scale. Ignazio Silone recounted an episode at a meeting of the Communist International at which an English communist delegate ingenuously argued in principle against lying, producing gales of incredulous laughter.⁶⁵ Boris Nicolaevsky argued that the corrosive influence of the practice of deceit and lying, which was seen as part of the practice of revolutionary technique, was a major reason why Stalin viewed the oppositionists with distrust, and why he eventually decided to eliminate them.⁶⁶

The Russian state tradition

Trotsky's plans for the militarization of labour in 1920 brought forth criticisms that it would recreate the system of forced labour of Count Arakcheev in the early nineteenth century. Martov already in 1917 accused the Bolsheviks of seeking to establish a form of barrack socialism akin to the ideas of Arakcheev.⁶⁷ Arakcheev was not admissible as a model. However, Bukharin, in a speech to the Central Committee in

December 1930, reported that a book on agricultural collectivization, published under the auspices of the Communist Academy, began with a discussion of Arakcheev's military agrarian settlements.⁶⁸

The Bolsheviks were keenly interested in the antecedents of revolutionary and socialist movements in human history. In 1919 (first published in Russian in 1907) the Soviet State Publishing House published K. Kautsky's book *The Forerunners of Modern Socialism, Part 1 From Plato to the Anabaptists*. It included sections on Plato, the Early Christian and Monastic Communism; the Albigensiens, the Lollards, the Taborites, the Anabaptists, the New Jerusalem and Terror, the German Reformation and Foma Muntser.⁶⁹

In foreign policy, Soviet thinking was infused with the notion of *raison d'état*, and a realist approach to the conduct of foreign relations. In military policy, it was the realist school represented foremost by Clausewitz that was to the fore. In the Soviet context this conception of warfare was allied to an understanding of the role of war in ushering in social revolution, and of the study of war between competing socio-economic systems. In this situation it fostered an interest in a new 'red militarism'. Clausewitz's *On War* was published in Russian translation in 1934–6 and republished in 1941.⁷⁰ Kosta Cavoski and Beatrice Heuser point to the way politics and warfare were combined in the thinking of Lenin, Clausewitz and Machiavelli.⁷¹ Raymond Aron argued that a Clausewitzian strand was developed through Marxism, by Engels, Lenin, then by Mao, Giap and Che Guevera.⁷² One might add also the contribution to Marxism and military tactics of Trotsky, Stalin, Tukhachevskii and V. K. Triandafillov. Military terminology and imagery infused the whole discourse of the regime.

Marxism made a particular claim to its understanding of the science of war, and the way in which this was related to political conflicts within states and between states. The relationships between war, civil war, revolution, revolutionary war and intervention were closely analysed. The main theoretical military journal of the 1920s was *War and Revolution* (*Voena i Revolutsiya*). Trotsky in 'Our Current Basic Military Tasks', written in 1922, described the ideas of offensive war as a 'proletarian doctrine', suggesting a direct analogy between an offensive military strategy in war and an offensive revolutionary strategy.⁷³

The Bolsheviks' admiration for the Jacobins was not a vague matter of sympathy, but resulted in the imitation of Jacobin policies. In 1918, in Tsaritsyn on the civil war front, Stalin as military commander of the region placed a number of captured white officers on a converted raft on the Volga river. The intention was to blow up the raft. In the event

it was held as a holding point, with many officers being taken from there to be executed.⁷⁴ In 1793 at Lyon, where there had been an anti-Jacobin rising, counter-revolutionaries were boarded onto barges that were towed into the river and then blown up. In ordering its suppression, Fouché had issued the command that 'everything is permitted', a direct echo of Machiavelli's injunction that, in the defence of the state, no means were excluded.

During the Russian civil war the peasant risings against the Bolshevik government on the Volga in 1921 were referred to as the Russian Vendée. The North Caucasus was also given the same appellation. In the French Vendée, the anti-Jacobin peasant risings were put down with extraordinary violence. The same methods were applied on the Volga and the North Caucasus and were justified in the same way.

This view was widely held. *Krasnyi Metch*, the organ of the Cheka of Kiev, declared in August 1919:

Our morality has no precedent, our humanity is absolute because it is founded on a new ideal: the destruction of every form of oppression and violence. For us everything is permitted, for we are the first in the world to wield the sword not to oppress and enslave, but to liberate mankind from its chains . . . Blood? Let blood flow!⁷⁵

The practices of the Communist Party, the Soviet state apparatus, the NKVD, the Procuracy and Judicial organs, and the army were infused with this political realist aspect of Bolshevik ideology. The way in which Bolshevik ethics were translated into the training, socialization of state officials and the way this shaped their relations with the wider society remains as an agenda for future research. The Soviet regime, of course, also inspired great heroism, self-sacrifice and idealism. This was the obverse side of this cynical realism. The fate of the regime was shaped by the clash between these conflicting value systems.⁷⁶

In the early years of Soviet power we occasionally find a quite frank expression of the cynical, manipulative view of politics. In time these views were not so bluntly stated. In March 1924 an unnamed worker wrote to Zinoviev, first secretary of the Petrograd party committee, noting the widespread unpopularity of the party with ordinary workers, caused by what he noted to be the 'insincere and fraudulent' way in which they related to the mass of the population. Elections were crudely manipulated. Amongst party workers this was justified by the expression 'the ends justify the means', an attitude that had 'entered into the psyche of the majority of party workers'. This, he argued, had bred a

deep cynicism amongst party members and in the public's attitude to the party.⁷⁷ In literature, the satires of Zamyatin, Piknyak, Bulgakov and Yan Larri often take as their theme the exposure of the cynicism and hypocrisy of the regime.

In *The Discourses*, Machiavelli notes that, in all cities there are unfortunate incidents, which call for the services of the 'physician'.⁷⁸ In this, Machiavelli echoes Plato. Hegel and Nietzsche use similar expressions. Lenin was fond of comparing the statesman with the surgeon dispassionately dispensing medicine, with revolution a form of extreme surgery. In this the proletariat was the 'healthy' part of the body politic.⁷⁹ We find the same terminology used by Trotsky, Pashukanis and other Soviet leaders.⁸⁰ The analogy between politics and surgery is a telling one. The authority of the doctor overrides the opinion of the patient. In medicine, however, the patient generally has the choice of a second opinion.

In the 1930s authoritarian attitudes and practices gained dominance. This transformation was theorized by Timasheff as the 'Great Retreat' and by Trotsky as Bonapartist 'counter-revolution'. It is clear that important aspects of the ideology were transformed: the repudiation of egalitarianism; the destruction of internal party democracy; the reversal of concessions on the rights of the nationalities; the retreat with regard to the rights of women; the shrinking of the areas of autonomy for groups and individuals. With the new primacy accorded to defending the Soviet state went a rediscovery of Russian patriotism. At the same time, there was the rediscovery of the importance of 'law', a rediscovery of the family as an institution of social organization and control.

The critics of Bolshevism

With the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917, their rivals reflected on the lessons to be learnt. Martov, leader of the Mensheviks, characterized Leninism as drawing its inspiration from the political tradition associated with Blanqui, Bakunin, Robespierre, reflecting a tendency towards Caesarism ('primitive' anarcho-Jacobin 'communism') but drawing also on Russian examples – Arakcheev, Pugachev and Stenka Razin. Axel'rod and Potresov also voiced the charge that Leninism was a resurrection of the Bakuninism of the 1870s.⁸¹ Plekhanov, following the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, wrote in his last article: 'The tactics of the Bolsheviks are the tactics of Bakunin, and in many cases those of Nechaev, pure and simple.'⁸² But Plekhanov

himself was placed on the defensive by M. V. Vishniak, having to justify his statement of 1903 that the 'well-being of the revolution is the highest law'.⁸³ Maxim Gorky in his journalism during 1917 and 1918 attacked Bolshevik tactics for subverting legal and moral norms and undermining the basis of civilized conduct. He accused Lenin of seeking to introduce socialism in Russia by the methods of Nechaev.⁸⁴

Leninism was not simply a doctrine of power politics. Lenin's dogmatism, his conception of Marxism as infallible doctrine, his extraordinary Manichean view of the world divided between proletarian and bourgeois worldviews, his execration of heretics, his concept of the party as a fighting organization, his self-righteous ideal of a revolutionary elite imbued with moral and intellectual superiority, his notion of service, sacrifice and martyrdom, his millenarian and redemptive view of revolution are redolent of a worldview that is, in its essentials, quasi-religious. The equation made between Bolshevism and Jesuitism, with Jesuitism used as shorthand for Machiavellism is striking. On the conception of a party of dedicated professional revolutionaries, Lenin noted: 'We are the young Turks of the revolution with something of the Jesuit added.'⁸⁵ The charge of Jesuitism was levelled at Lenin by contemporaries as well as by later scholars.⁸⁶

It is significant that a number of leading intellectuals, who had been Marxists, abandoned Marxism later in their careers. Notable examples were Struve, Berdyaev and Tugan-Baranovskii, who had been associated with Lenin's executed elder brother Alexander. Tugan-Baranovskii sought to found a new system of economics based on the ethical principles expounded by Kant, and to engage directly with the criticism made of modern revolutionary socialism in Russia by Dostoevskii, and by the Vekhi group.⁸⁷

In 1909 the collection *Landmarks (Vekhi)*, edited by N. Berdyaev and others, delivered the most explicit critique in Dostoevskii's vein of revolutionary socialist ideas in Russia.⁸⁸ Semon Frank, in his essay 'The Ethic of Nihilism', argued that 'utilitarianism' and 'nihilistic moralism' marked the political, moral and aesthetic outlook of the Russian intelligentsia. It combined, on the one hand, a 'religious' and fanatical conception to the ideals of socialism and equality, which induced great self-sacrifice, with, on the other hand, a blind intolerance, which sought to exterminate all which did not accord with its ideals. The rejection of religion led to the 'deification of one's fellow man's (the 'people's') subjective interests'. Socialist idealism was driven by a hatred of wealth.⁸⁹ The Russian intelligentsia's outlook was 'populist', and had remained so since the 1870s.

The concept of populism unites all the fundamental symptoms of the spiritual framework described: *nihilistic utilitarianism*, which rejects all absolute values and regards service to the subjective material interests of the 'majority' (or the 'people') as the only moral goal; *moralism*, which requires rigorous self-sacrifice of the individual, unconditional subordination of his own interests (even the highest and purest) to the cause of social service; and, finally, an *anti-cultural tendency*, the aspiration to transform all people into 'workers', to curtail and minimise more elevated needs in the name of realising the demands of universal equality and solidarity.⁹⁰

The non-recognition of absolute and truly binding values and the cult of the majority's material benefit stipulate the pre-eminence of force over law and the dogma of the supremacy of the class struggle and the 'proletariat's class interest' which in practice is identical to the idolatrous worship of the party interest.⁹¹

This quasi-religious aspect of Bolshevism co-existed with a fervent anti-clericalism, the rejection of Christianity as a religion allied to state reaction. Central to this conception of politics was the need for the individual and the party to turn themselves into an instrument of revolutionary change, subordinating everything to this higher purpose, to make themselves worthy of this calling.

Berdyayev described Lenin as the inheritor of

Russian anti-humanism, connected with Russian state absolutism, which always viewed man as a means... Marxism considers evil a way to good. This is the demonical element in Marxism, which they consider dialectic. Evil dialectically is transformed into good, dark into light. Lenin considers moral all which facilitates the proletarian revolution, any other definition of good he does not acknowledge.⁹²

In *From the Depths* (*Iz glubiny*), published in 1918, this attack on the Russian intelligentsia was renewed by Berdyayev, Struve, Frank and others.⁹³

In 1922 N. V. Ustrialov published his famous *Changing Landmarks* (*Smena vekh*) in which he foresaw the internal decomposition of the Bolshevik regime, and a retreat into capitalism. On this basis he urged intellectuals who were opposed to the regime to join it and to reform it from within. In this work, he offered this analysis of Bolshevism: 'The

Bolshevik order is incomparably more compact, disciplined, hierarchical than the Jacobins. Above all Lenin is much more flexible and sensible than Robespierre.' The retreat into the NEP, he argued, demonstrated the ability of the Bolsheviks to combine two qualities, Hegel's 'heroes of history' (i.e. world historical individuals) and Machiavelli's prince, to be both 'great utopians' and great opportunists at the same time.⁹⁴

Bertrand Russell, in 1920, announced the failure of the Bolsheviks' experiment in communism. He attributed this to the failure to prepare public opinion, a willingness to resort to force, dogmatism, intolerance, rejection of the sceptical position, which is the basis of science. He was alarmed at Lenin's apparent relish in countenancing civil war at home and a war on a global scale even more terrible than the First World War to attain his objective. The fanaticism of the Bolsheviks, like that of the early Christians, was capable of producing its own Inquisition. He compared the Bolsheviks' conception of a fully organized society with Plato's *Republic*. 'Bolshevism is internally aristocratic and externally militant.'⁹⁵ Aristocratic, it might be added, is here used, in the Nietzschean sense of creating its own morality. 'The country comes to resemble an immensely magnified Jesuit College. Every kind of liberty is banned as being "bourgeois".'⁹⁶ 'The ultimate source of the whole train of evil lies in the Bolshevik outlook on life: in its dogmatism of hatred and in its belief that human nature can be completely transformed by force.'⁹⁷

Russell was sympathetic to the Bolsheviks' aims but recoiled against their methods. He conceded that in the destruction of the *ancien regime* in Russia that perhaps extreme measures were unavoidable, and that only movements imbued with a kind of 'religious fanaticism' could succeed.⁹⁸ Russell, however, sought to advance an alternative strategy; instead of the strategy of open class warfare he advocated a strategy of advancing popular democracy through workers' self-management as a more constructive approach which might avoid the dangers of civil war. Whether, in the conditions of Russia at the time, this was a practical option is more questionable.

Victor Serge, a supporter of Trotsky in the 1920s, and on the libertarian wing of the Bolshevik party, saw the suppression of Kronstadt as a turning point, heralding the shift towards 'totalitarianism'. This, he argued, was the first occasion that the party lied to itself. The party was the 'repository of truth', its conviction in its rightness imbued it with enormous 'moral energy', but it also gave it a 'clerical mentality which is quick to become Inquisitorial'. Lenin's 'proletarian Jacobinism' was grafted onto a political movement shaped by the struggle against

despotism, producing 'a sort of natural selection of authoritarian temperaments'.⁹⁹

The German writer René Fülöp-Miller drew on Dostoevskii's critique of socialism, and the parallel, which he drew between socialism and Jesuitism, both of which were motivated by the 'Spirit of liberation by despotism, and of making mankind happy by force'.¹⁰⁰ He identified Bakunin as 'the real father of Bolshevism, the spiritual pioneer of this jesuitical socialism'. He drew a direct line of descent from the '*Catechism of the Revolutionist*' (which he thought had been written by Bakunin and Nechaev) and Lenin's and Preobrazhenskii's views on morality.¹⁰¹ He wrote: 'Bolshevism, therefore, is the result of the transference of Jesuit maxims to revolutionary tactics; its spirit is the same as that of the *ecclesia militans* of Ignatius Loyola. In both we find the principle that the end justifies the means.' But Bolshevism lacked the refinement of the Jesuits and constituted a 'barbarous Jesuitism'. Bolshevik rationalism and its apparently 'scientific' materialism was reducible to 'the most commonplace authoritarian utilitarianism', which denied individual conscience and freedom, and created a 'brutal despotism'.

Fülöp-Miller drew attention to the fact that Dostoevskii was initially hailed as a great prophet in Soviet Russia. On the centenary of his birth in 1921, the Bolshevik critic N. Eichenwald attempted the seemingly impossible task of appropriating Dostoevskii for the revolution. He described him as 'one of the enthusiastic prophets of the present bloody time', as one who understood the psychology of the 'revolting mind', declaring:

Today we read *The Possessed*, which has become reality, living it, and suffering with it; we create the novel afresh in union with the author. We see a dream realised and we marvel at the visionary clairvoyance of this dreamer who cast the spell of Revolution on Russia.¹⁰²

Similarly, Lunarchaskii, head of the Commissariat of Enlightenment, wrote:

Russia goes forward on her thorny but glorious way, and behind her stand her great prophets who bless her on her path. Among them the most enthralling and splendid of all, rises the figure of Fedor Dostoevski.¹⁰³

In the 1930s Dostoevskii, whose vision of the Grand Inquisitor acquired new poignancy, fell from official favour.¹⁰⁴

These attempts to appropriate Dostoevskii as a prophet of the coming revolution were anticipated by Berdyaev in his article on 1918, *From the Depths*, in which he identified three main intellectual forces that had heralded the revolution; Gogol's demonical depiction of evil and spiritual mutilation of old Russia; Dostoevskii's 'metaphysical dialectic' with sin and redemption combined in a Christian existentialist philosophy; and Tolstoy's moral absolutism and egalitarianism which left no space for compromise. These three, Berdyaev argued, constituted the basis of the Russian intelligentsia's moral nihilism, apocalyptic vision and ethical utilitarianism.¹⁰⁵

Berdyaev's most telling attack on Bolshevism came in his study of Dostoevskii's worldview or *weltanschauung* (*Mirosozertzanie Dostoevskogo*) which was published in exile in 1922 in French and German. He depicted Dostoevskii as the 'herald of the spirit of the revolution', 'the great revolutionary of the spirit' and 'the prophet of the revolution'. He condemned Marxism for its 'inhuman collectivism' and he dismissed Nietzsche's concept of the 'superman' as folly. Those driven by the 'idea' displayed a 'loss of conscience, loss of humanity'. Like Nietzsche, Berdyaev was conscious of the power of the Dionysian impulses in human behaviour, but fearful of its unbridled realization. He rejected the notion that 'all things are allowable'. Revolution, he asserted, led to tyranny and enslavement. Evil means could not be used for noble ends. It involved a denial of 'moral autonomy' and thus a denial of personality, to which Dostoevskii counterposed the dignity of human personality and its moral value. Citing de Maistre on the leaders of the French revolution, he argued:

Man in revolt loses his autonomy: he comes under the power of an impersonal, unhuman force. There lies the secret of revolution, the inhumanity from which arises dishonour, absence of private opinion, the tyranny of some and the subjection of others.¹⁰⁶

Lenin and the Bolsheviks, Berdyaev argued, represented an element of Russian messianism, expressed through Marxism, which itself was an expression of Jewish millenarianism. For Berdyaev, Bolshevism represented the 'anti-Christ', whilst Russian revolutionary socialism was 'apocalyptic', 'looking for a catastrophic issue to history' and fundamentally religious in its nature, with its worship of the 'people'. It was informed by a fusion of sentimentality and ruthlessness, bred of a lack of honour.

The Russian anarchist Gregory Petrovich Maximoff, in a sombre account of Bolshevik repression in the decades after the October Revolution, argued that Lenin was guided by the precept 'the aim justifies the means'.¹⁰⁷ Lenin was 'the Torquemada, Loyola, Machiavelli and Robespierre of the Russian Revolution' who trampled the banner of liberty underfoot in his unscrupulous drive for power.¹⁰⁸ The Bolsheviks behaved as religious sectarians, resorting, from the very outset, to the methods of torture of the Inquisition and *auto da fe*, with their own '*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*', pursuing a merciless campaign to root out all heresy. The Bolsheviks, basing their rule on terror and the methods of the police state, created an absolutist state with the intention of exterminating their enemies. Lenin as a Jacobin, was a proponent of a totalitarian conception of socialism derived from Marx and Engels. In his ideas of a corporatist state, Lenin anticipated Italian fascism. Stalin was the direct heir of Lenin, creating a totalitarian state, based on a new exploiting social class. The regime was transformed into a new form of fascism: 'social-fascism, com-fascism'.¹⁰⁹

The Italian scholar Vittorio Zincone, former fascist intellectual, argued that Lenin's vanguard party was, in effect, a 'confessional-military party', akin to the Jesuits, and practitioners of political Machiavellism. It was based on faith, not reason; a doctrinaire, proselytizing party of the elect. It advanced a heroic conception of the self, with the ideals of abnegation, sacrifice and martyrdom. It was driven by periodic need to purify its ranks (purges). Politics was conceived as struggle, and akin to warfare, in which the proletariat was the healthy part of society. Such organizations follow their own path of development: 'In sum, faith descends into fanaticism, fanaticism into intolerance and intolerance into tyranny.' Such parties are theocratic, demonizing their opponents, possessing a conception of leadership that is monarchical in character.¹¹⁰ The notion of 'permanent revolution' opened the way to make continuous demands on its subjects, with no let-up.

Cavoski traces the notion of the internal enemy back to Machiavelli and the practices of the French Jacobins. Lenin, in 1917, in a decree outlawing the Kadet party, branded them as 'a party of the enemies of the people'. This division between friends and enemies had far-reaching implications.¹¹¹ Totalitarian regimes, Cavoski argues, envisaged dictatorship not as a temporary suspension of legal rights, legally sanctioned, but rather as a permanent state of siege. Within the same community, two political states co-exist: first, the civil state where law applies for those in power and their friends and, second, the state of

civil war for their enemies, who are excommunicated and outlawed.¹¹² Similarly the idea of 'objective enemy', Arendt argued, led to legal nihilism and state terrorism.¹¹³

Machiavellism and the fate of the revolution

The critics of Bolshevism saw within the basic ideology of the party, and in particular, its approach to questions of ethics, the roots of its degeneration. But these ideas were intimately connected to the psychological make-up of the individuals who comprised the party. The brutal realism outlined in the party's approach to politics and questions of ethics required a particular psychological attitude, and had the effect of drawing to the party those who shared that psychological disposition. The Bolsheviks were distinguished from the Mensheviks as the psychologically hard versus the psychologically soft. It was this quality that in large measure accounted for the triumph of the Bolsheviks.

The Bolsheviks consciously sought to steel themselves as revolutionaries, to turn themselves into the agents of history. Those who aspired to be members of the party had to remake themselves, to prove themselves, and to subject themselves to scrutiny and criticism. The party ranks had to be purged periodically to allow the party to perform its historic role. The language and imagery of the party as a fighting force, as an army, reinforced this image and reinforced the subordination of the individual to the collective will of the party. If the party members were considered to be in need of education, this was even more so with regard to the population as a whole. The Bolshevik passion for education was driven not solely by a commitment to education and enlightenment as an aim in itself, but principally as a means to reforge and re-educate society.

The re forging (*perekovka*) of society and of the working class itself was a central part of the Bolshevik project. In 1903, Lenin celebrated the impact that factory discipline, '*tsarina mashina*', had on creating a disciplined working class. The same preoccupation is seen in his advocacy of Taylorism. It was linked to an enthusiastic embrace of American technology. The theme of re forging, celebrated in literature in Nikolai Ostrovski's novel *How the Steel was Tempered*, reflected a wider concern. Through education, censorship, work discipline, coercion, incentives and idealism the new society was to be shaped. This echoes Machiavelli's notion of cultivating *virtú* in its citizens, Nietzsche's notion of forging a new aristocratic morality, and the ideas of Hegel and John Stuart Mill on the role of tyranny in fostering civilization.

Some writers have seen the Bolsheviks with their concern for the re forging of society and nature as heirs to the Enlightenment. But this was a particular version of the Enlightenment, which rejected the critical, sceptical, scientific approach of the Philosophes, and which shared nothing of their concern with the importance of toleration. The zealousness of the campaigns waged by the Bolsheviks against the so-called exploiting classes and against religious believers, and the hatred directed at the kulaks, the Nepmen, the former people, priests and others invested it with a particular character of its own.

What were advanced as the principal strengths of the Bolsheviks – selflessness, resolve, an unflinching commitment to the cause – could also be transformed into something else – sadism, cruelty, pitilessness – but always defended as a manifestation of strength. This is not to suggest that this process was evident in all Bolsheviks, indeed, many retained their idealism, but that, within the organization as a whole, the slippage from one position to another can be seen in the decades after the revolution.

Conclusion

The discussion of Machiavelli's ideas in the USSR after 1917 cannot be divorced from a much broader consideration of other ideological influences. Bolshevik conceptions of morality; their elitist conceptions of party and state organization; the influence of the Jacobin-Blanquist-Babeufist tradition; their willingness to embrace repressive and terrorist methods; the militarized conception of politics. In addition to Marxism other ideological influences might be identified: an element of social Darwinism, neo-Malthusianism, Nietzschean ideas, the ideas of Clausewitz, as well as the influence of Machiavelli. In 1920 Bertrand Russell asserted that Bolshevism's experiment in communism had failed and that it would transform itself into a regime of forced economic modernization.¹¹⁴ In the process many of the libertarian aspects of the ideology would be finally jettisoned.

In the 1920s the statist conception of socialist construction was consolidated. The strengthening of the state, both internally and externally, became the central priority. *Raison d'état* became the regime's guiding principle, although the term *gosudarstvennaya neobkhodimost* was rarely, if ever, invoked in public. However, Stalin's pronouncements on strengthening the state in 1939 reflected the reality of the situation. Here, a certain continuity between Leninism and Stalinism is evident. The politics of inclusion/exclusion, the labelling of enemies, the preoc-

cupation with the alliance of internal and external enemies, the uncompromising war waged against the regime's opponents developed its own logic. The moral relativism of the Bolshevik regime – its self-righteousness, its denial of the role of individual conscience, its cultivation of class hatred, its heroic conception of politics removed inhibitions – broke taboos, which left the resort to coercion unchecked except by concerns of expediency.

Here, we might pose the question of whether in all this there did not lie a basic contradiction. In terms of Machiavellian politics, we might distinguish a certain cold-eyed detached approach to politics, underpinned by a certain cynicism, even scepticism, as regards ultimate goals. The Jesuitical approach to politics, by contrast, suggests zeal, fanaticism, commitment to an absolute value system; the indoctrination and control of the faithful, the eradication of heresy, and the demonization of opponents. Yet Machiavelli was motivated by strong commitments, whilst the Jesuits acquired a reputation for cynicism and manipulativeness. The interaction between these two principles, it might be argued, reflected the nature of a revolutionary regime in which the earlier zeal was spent, replaced by a bureaucratic administration of the revolutionary state.

7

Stalin and Machiavelli 1

The transition of the Bolsheviks from a revolutionary movement into a party of government brought enormous changes in the party's organizational structure, membership, ideology and general outlook. Machiavellian ideas, as noted in Chapter 6, became infused into the discourse and organizational practices of Soviet institutions in the 1920s. But there was almost no public engagement with the ideas of Machiavelli. From 1917 to 1985 the number of articles and books published in the Soviet Union on Machiavelli can be counted on the fingers of three hands. In contrast to the discussion on Machiavelli in tsarist Russia from 1869 to 1917, there was a sharp reduction in the number of works published and a diminution in the quality of the debate. In a climate of political repression Machiavelli's ideas were considered too dangerous for widespread public circulation. It is the great silence on Machiavelli during the Soviet period that is significant, but the works that were published are especially notable.

Bolshevik leaders, in their public pronouncements, never referred explicitly to Machiavelli, but historians and jurists were less inhibited. The way in which he was interpreted and used provides an insight into the ideological metamorphosis that the Bolshevik regime underwent in these years. The close affinity between the views of Marx and Machiavelli on the writing of history were noted already by M. N. Pokrovskii, the doyen of Russian Marxist historiography, in his *Economic Materialism* in 1906, which was republished in Petrograd in 1920. P. Stuchka in his work *The Revolutionary Role of Law and State*, published in June 1921, which paid tribute to Pokrovskii's work in highlighting the importance of Machiavelli's thought, provided a review of the development of law under capitalism.¹ In 1925 Engels' *Dialectics of Nature* was published, with its flattering reference to Machiavelli.²

In the foreword to a collection of articles on *Historical Science and Class Struggle*, published by the Communist Academy in 1927, Pokrovskii hailed Machiavelli as 'one of the forerunners of historical materialism'.³ In October 1928, at a celebratory session of the Communist Academy, he discoursed on the contribution to Marxist history of various writers, singling out 'old Machiavelli', noting that class struggle ran through his history of Florence like a red thread: 'It is almost unnecessary to translate it into Marxist language, it is already Marxist.'⁴

Machiavelli's literary works continued to attract attention, especially his comedy *Mandragora*.⁵ Machiavelli's political works, however, fell into a curious limbo. His political works were not published in the 1920s. But he escaped being banned, unlike other authors such as Kant, Plato, Schopenhauer, Herbert Spencer, Ernst Mach and Nietzsche. The Main Committee for National Education, chaired by N. K. Krupskaya, in 1923 ordered that works by these authors be removed from the public libraries. In all, 134 books were declared to be prohibited and in addition 94 authors were listed whose complete works were to be removed from the libraries.⁶ Following Lenin's death, the struggle for the succession raised acutely the question of political power in the USSR. Central to the discussion about the nature of political leadership in the Soviet state already in the 1920s was the question of personal dictatorship.

Ya. V. Staroselskii

In *The Encyclopedia of State and Law*, published by the Communist Academy in 1925–6, and edited by P. Stuchka, there is an entry on Machiavelli by Ya. V. Staroselskii.⁷ Staroselskii was responsible for entries on Montesquieu, Revolutionary Tribunals (French Revolution), revolutionary government (bourgeois), sociological school of law, Rousseau, terror (in bourgeois revolutions), Laurence Stein, and the classical school of law. Staroselskii wrote widely on political themes, and was the author of an important study that reviewed the Soviet debate on Jacobinism.

Staroselskii described Machiavelli as 'the greatest political writer of the epoch of the Renaissance', who first outlined and systematized 'the political ideology of merchant capitalism – the idea of state absolutism'. Machiavelli's judgement on human nature in general reflected the rapacity of merchant capitalism in this phase of original accumulation. Machiavelli's view of mankind was pessimistic. Man's destiny is controlled by a blind, inconstant force which he called *fortuna*. It is these circumstances that lead men to combine together in society and create

the state. For Machiavelli, society can have no independent existence separate from the state. States are the products of the conscious actions of people and cannot have any other aim beside the aim of serving the general good. According to Machiavelli the individual even in society remains an egoist. The state is created by force and always represents itself as nothing other than organized force. The basis of all healthy states is first, law and, second, armed force (*voiska*) and that the central weight lies with the second.

For the best resolution of the tasks of government (*vlast'*) an individual personal dictatorship (*edinolichnaya diktatura*) is best. For this it is necessary only that the ruler consciously approaches the resolution of his aims and that his actions are governed only by rational demands of expediency and are not subordinated to considerations of principle, morality or religion:

There is no absolute morality, it is itself created by society i.e. by the state and its content is determined in concrete form by society; there is no basic or revealed religion, all religions are deliberately created by rulers for the aim of supporting social discipline. Therefore, the ruler striving for the general good cannot recoil from the choice of means; force, deceit, perfidy, bribery and secret assassination, which are often an integral part of wise politics (p. 808).

Machiavelli's advice is that rulers should not honour their words where it places them at a disadvantage. Machiavelli's ideal ruler is Cesare Borgia who was 'able to turn his enemies into friends' and who 'not only killed those whose welfare he ruined, but also extirpated their posterity'. The sovereignty of the state requires the subordination to this end of the principle of morality and religion. It was for this reason that Machiavelli was misrepresented as 'orator of atheism, deceit, tyranny, cruelty, plunder, blackmail'.

Machiavelli was 'the forerunner of the materialist approach to history' and the pioneer of the study of class struggle. He saw social life as 'law-governed' and believed that it was possible to establish and regulate the 'laws' of social development. He was interested 'in the study of really existing and previously existing states'. In his study of the interaction of a multiplicity of factors in shaping states, he anticipated the work of Montesquieu by almost two centuries. 'External conditions exert influence on human nature, but man's nature remains in the main unchanged.'

Machiavelli, Staroseltskii asserted, divided all societies into three classes; the people, the lords (*dvoryanin*) and the nobles (*vel'mozhe*). Struggle always takes place between them – the 'struggle of party' – and this constitutes the object of the study of politics, because it directly determines the form the state assumes: 'The whole history of Florence is nothing other than the history of the struggle of parties.' He immediately dismisses from account the 'toiling people' as a conservative, light-headed and stupid mass. The lords, who include the feudal landowners, live well on their incomes and are 'the worst enemies of all kinds of citizenship'. There remain those whom he calls the nobles (*vel'mozhe*) under which he includes 'the best people elevated to high position by their service and talent and who attain power by their own efforts'. These are heroes of primary accumulation and fitted to rule society, 'their love of power does not threaten the state but, on the contrary, is useful to society', especially if they arrange things, to transfer power to one who emerges from their midst – the prince.

Of particular note is the low esteem in which society is held: society cannot exist without the state, morality cannot exist without the state. This served to legitimize the state's power in the wake of the upheavals of revolution and civil war. What is also significant in this entry is the importance that Machiavelli ascribed to the nobles, the pessimism expressed concerning the masses, and the central role of the nobles in the administration of the state (akin to the Soviet *nomenklatura*) and the fact that it is the nobles who promote the prince to a position of supreme power. Not only was this an uncritical presentation of Machiavelli's views, it was, in effect, a direct endorsement of personal dictatorship.

V. N. Durdenevskii

In 1927 the journal *Soviet Law* marked the 400th anniversary of Machiavelli's death with an article by Professor V. N. Durdenevskii, a professor of law at Moscow University, entitled 'Machiavelli and the Science of the State'.⁸ This was the first substantial article to deal with the ideas of Machiavelli in the Soviet period. Through a discussion of Machiavelli's ideas, he was allowed to broach otherwise taboo subjects, and to discuss them with extraordinary frankness – the power of the state, the nature of dictatorship, tyranny in human history, etc. The article touched on the isolation of the regime, its descent into internecine warfare, its loss of faith in the proletariat, and the turn to a more statist conception of socialist construction.

It presents a bleak and pessimistic view of society. There is no heroic idealization of the working class, and no heady rhetoric about the creativity and self-activity of the masses. Instead, we have a dichotomy between a revolutionary governing elite and a recalcitrant, hostile or apathetic society, which has to be bludgeoned, and dragooned to obey the will of its rulers. In this, Durdenevskii harkened back to an older distrust of the revolutionary intelligentsia for the *narod*. By 1922, Lenin had already warned of the regime being overwhelmed by cultural backwardness: the state is a school for the education of mankind; here prevails the morality of *raison d'état* (*gosudarstvennaya neobkhodimost* – necessity of state) and of the end justifying the means.

Durdenevskii insisted that Machiavelli was not an advocate of tyranny, but its critic. However, in some circumstances not only dictatorship but also even tyranny is justified. Rulers, Durdenevskii asserted, echoing Machiavelli, should not fear to be terrible. Noteworthy also is the observation that Cesare Borgia used terror not only against the population but also against his governor-generals who oppressed the people. What also deserves particular note is the discussion of Machiavelli's ideas that all human institutions are transient, that human history follows a cyclical pattern, which prompts a cold indifference to the fate of individuals. This stands in sharp contrast to Marx's conception of progress. Machiavelli is held up as a model state official and as an intellectual. He thus, in a sense, represented that stratum of party-state officials and intellectuals in the USSR in the 1920s who, coldly appraising the situation confronting them, came to the conclusion that what was needed was a personal dictatorship.

Durdenevskii argued that the ideas of Machiavelli constitute a philosophy of 'pessimistic utilitarianism'. He hinted at a link between Machiavelli and Marx via the influence of the French materialists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He significantly drew connections between Machiavelli on the one hand and Malthusian, social-Darwinian and Nietzschean ideas on the other. A parallel interest in Machiavelli was an interest in Hobbes, and the world described in this article came close to that of Hobbes' 'state of nature'.

Machiavelli's age, Durdenevskii argued, was an age of 'original accumulation', a brutal age in which the principle 'the victor is not judged' (*pobeditel' ne sudyat*) ruled without restraint. This famous Russian expression has been attributed to Catherine the Great, speaking of A. V. Suvorov, when he was threatened with a military court.⁹ But the true source is probably Machiavelli's *The Prince*: 'In the actions of all men, and especially of princes, where there is no court of appeal, one judges

by the results.¹⁰ In *Florentine Histories*, the leader of the *ciompi* insurgents declares: 'those who win, in whatever mode they win, never receive shame from it.'¹¹ In the Soviet period the expression 'the victor is not judged', like 'the end justifies the means', gained wide circulation and became a *carte blanche* for officialdom.

Durdenevskii depicted Machiavelli as a 'forerunner of contemporary sociology and political science'. He equated his views with 'utilitarianism' but declared:

Characteristically Machiavelli avoided many of the dangers of pure individualistic utilitarianism of the eighteenth century and comes much closer to our times by his instructions on the objective significance of the state and morality, which restrains and transforms the people's psyche (p. 74).

Al'garotti described him as the Newton of the science of the state. Durdenenskii presented him as 'a brilliant writer and scholar' and a man of affairs, but one driven also by a burning patriotism. Italy of the period was bitterly divided and racked by internal discord. In Florence Machiavelli witnessed four revolutions in 30 years:

These revolutions, inspired by class and party enmity, often led to foreign intervention and, more often, to dictatorship and various forms of tyranny. National consciousness in the mass was absent. The best minds of these times of troubles were conscious of the need for unity, creating their national force: but the divisions of party had the upper hand (p. 75).

He was an opponent of the Church, which he saw as an obstacle to Italian unity, and for this in part his reputation for evil was 'born in the Inquisition's secret conclaves'.

Machiavelli and the science of the state¹²

V. N. Durdenevskii

Th[e] positive inductive method is reflected in Machiavelli's very style . . . [the] striking compression and density of his books, his cold analysis which allowed Morley to compare his manner of exposition with the manner of a clinical lecturer. The adoption of such a method into the

social sciences revived in that time the forgotten tradition of the *Politics* of Aristotle and that itself constituted no small service.

V

If Machiavelli is compared with a clinician then one must recognize that his clinic was a psychiatric one. Man, in his opinion, is the most sorry and unhappy of creatures, his arrival in the world is justifiably heralded by loud crying. The sole advantage that he has over animals is intelligence, but together with intelligence, nature gave him also passion which follows him from place to place; they swarm to swim the seas, and in the main they always quarrel with each other (A, 8). The chief of these passions is self-interest and love of power (D, III, 6; P, 6, 19), which knows no satiation. Individuals pose themselves tasks which exceed their power and ability (D, I, 37). Their passions for the past are diminished and their passions for the future are expectant, thus people always admire olden times, they hope and wait for the future, as something new and they are always dissatisfied with the present (D, II, int.).

They are imitators and lovers of routine, since they are rarely independent in their thinking. Machiavelli especially emphasizes that it is easier to imitate vice from above than virtue (P, 6; D, III, 29). But once they become fixed in their habits, they are badly able to adjust their actions in response to changing circumstances, and, on account of this, they are often destroyed (D, I, 40, int.; P, 25).

Man, for Machiavelli, is an egoist and materialist: 'he believes in that which he sees and feels' (P, 18) but he quickly forgets the past and values above all else his satisfaction and security. Therefore, it is easy to convince him, but difficult to retain his conviction (P, 6). He will light-heartedly destroy that which, in the sweat of their brows, his forefathers created over centuries. Therefore, in the struggle for freedom, people usually end up by beginning to oppress others and to do that, against which they previously fought, as they judge it is necessary to harm or to be harmed. Thus, it is easier to influence people out of fear than love, since fear of punishment is for them always present, but love for them is always based exclusively on received advantage, which they are quick to calculate (D, III, 19; P, 3, 7). Most important for them is their advantage and economic interest, which accounts for their political wavering (D, I, 37 concerning the agrarian laws).

Mankind is a small breed (*melkaya poroda*), sooner inclined to do evil than good (D, I, 9, 42) but lacking the ability to follow either course to its full conclusion (D, I, 27, 30). In general, people are ungrateful,

frivolous, hypocritical, cowardly and greedy; they will promise their lives and the lives of their children when you need them, but they are ready to change and reject you when danger threatens. Moreover, they 'will sooner forgive the murder of their fathers than the loss of their patrimony' (P, 17).

If these wretched beings have so far avoided destruction, this is not because of the absence of means in their self-destructive nature, but because amongst them there is a certain intelligence, there are particular individuals with sufficient clarity of thought and necessary firmness in decision. Such people became the leaders of the human herd (*vozhaki chelovecheskikh stad*) in the dawn of history, when it was necessary to struggle with the elements or with constraining their fellows. They won notice by their ability to organize society, and from their midst arose the founders of religion and states, the two mighty means of educating people. The state, in this regard, is the most important means, for religion is insufficient to restrain and lead the people. The unarmed prophet does not triumph (P, 6). But when people see a firm force, when they are confronted with necessity, then they sometimes accomplish high affairs.

Religion and government are thus created 'by people, who – in Machiavelli's words – themselves understand all' for the education of the rest. The remainder are divided into two groups: those who understand when they are taught, and those who do not understand anything, but live by feelings. The latter are the majority. But since their passions are always one and the same as the sun, the stars and the elements, and since they can be studied, the reformer of society can succeed in educating this dark mass (*temnaya massa*) – the ignorant and complacent (*stupidi e sodisfatti*). Reformers are not all powerful: they have to struggle with many forces that are not subordinate to our understanding, with blind 'fate'; but this can be compared with the blindness of external nature by knowing its laws and adjusting to them, it is possible to cope with 'fate', with the irrational in social life, adjusting to the laws of its development (P, 22, 23, 25; D, I, 10; II, 29; III, 29, 31). Machiavelli does not doubt that such laws exist (D, I, int., 6, 11, 39; II, 5; III, 43) and he cites the example of the history of religions, how they develop and supplant one another (D, II, 5). Machiavelli did not live to see the brilliant confirmation of his ideas by Lutheranism, which shows how all new triumphant religions follow the same path.

Machiavelli is so convinced in the possibility of establishing and utilizing social laws that he compares a talented social leader with a sculptor who carves brute marble (D, I, 11) or an engineer who tames a raging

river with dams (P, 25). Social nature here is resolutely approximated to nature in general. But human triumph over these forces is never eternal. All that is created by people has its end, under the action of these destructive forces, which sometimes develop from its very inception.

Thus, in an orderly society people quickly become spoiled, multiply themselves and grow corrupt. When they overpopulate the country, when the struggle for a crust leads them to tear at one another, promoting their evil and cunning dispositions to extremes, this gives rise to terrible social catastrophes, famines, plagues, etc. Thus nature reduces the number of people and compels them to become kinder and to live more in an orderly fashion (D, II, 5). Of course, comfort does not always increase very much, since sometimes even the memory of the former culture disappears. But this does not trouble Machiavelli (A, 5). Such a return to the start is inevitable, it brings renewal; humanity again begins an endless circle of redistribution of good and evil, the general quantity of which in the world is unchanging (D, II, int.; III, 1). And the entire task of a statesman and the founder of a religion is to ensure by his institutions the possibility of a correct and long-lasting flow of renewing strength without leaping into catastrophe, or more precisely minimizing the latter danger as far as possible. 'Thus all the wisdom of mankind consists in this in order to be able to evaluate the degree of difficulty and inconvenience, and to adopt for the best that which brings less harm than all the others' (P, 21).

From what has been said, we clearly see the bold scale on which Machiavelli's mind seized the fundamentals of science of the state, which we now call sociology. Already the assertion of the laws of social development was a huge advance for that time. But not confining himself to this, Machiavelli noted several of those laws, aspects of which were further developed in the nineteenth century. I attempted above to evaluate the kernel of Malthus's teaching on overpopulation and its consequences, the idea of the role and method of imitation in society, the working out of which in our time is connected with the work of Tarde; finally the large role of economic 'property' as a factor in politics, noted in the recent specialized work of Thevenet (*Machiavel economiste*, 1922) and which allows us to see in him one of the early precursors of the 'economic direction' in the social sciences.¹³

Machiavelli fully confronts the problem of the origins of the state – its artificial creation or organic growth – the problem of religion's historical and social significance, the general question of the possibility of progress in human society, over which the minds of publicists and sociologists of the following centuries worked so feverishly. He has the

honour of having introduced into jurisprudence the very term 'state', which he used for the first time in *The Prince*, in the sense of a specific organization of dominance of one group of people over another. And he finally reminds us on numerous occasions of the ancient teaching that the government is only its own kind of historical 'school' for mankind (D, I, 9; III, 22, 31).

VI

On legislative matters Machiavelli is comparatively silent. But with much greater energy, and evidently partly influenced by the Florentine, Jean Bodin shortly afterwards advanced along both these paths in working out state law which was then transformed into an independent discipline.

Much more than state or constitutional law in the proper sense, Machiavelli is interested in what we term general teaching of the state, where he posed almost the entire circle of problems contained therein.¹⁴ The relationship of law and state, the individual and the state, spiritual and secular power, military power and state power, in particular democracy; forms of government – monarchical and republican, functions of power, popular representation, even federalism – all these questions, one way or another, are illuminated by Machiavelli in his treatise under the title 'Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livy', which was completed later but is broader in its content, and also the earlier political monograph (the more forthright *The Prince* was written after the first book of *The Discourses* and *The Art of War*) and in his work *Florentine Histories*.

Machiavelli, from a contemporary point of view, is a 'parallelism' in questions of the relationship between law and state. In civil society an element of force – the compulsory power of the state – and an element of law are both needed simultaneously. Well-organized military forces are of little avail in isolation – good laws are also needed; one without the other cannot long be sustained. Machiavelli underlines this truth, which so often had been forgotten before and has been forgotten since his time. But good laws themselves are of little avail if they do not meet with a good moral atmosphere in society (P, 12; D, I, 18). To render help in this case is only possible with the best education of youth (D, III, 46) and also religious influence on the people. However, Machiavelli's view on religion and the church is purely secular and humanistic; they may be either beneficial or dangerous for objective human or state institutions, but are always important.

Machiavelli, according to contemporary historians, was a resolute opponent of the theocratic claims of Catholicism. With rare mastery, he exposes the reasons of the rise and fall of the papacy. But he insisted on a tolerant attitude to religion, since in agreement with his time, he asserts that the disappearance of religious feelings leaves in the hands of the state the major means of influencing society – fear; as public morals decline, so power (*vlast'*) can be easily transformed into tyranny (D, I, 11). And our author is an opponent of tyranny, in whatever form it shows itself, whether oligarchic or personal, and a supporter of freedom and equality of citizens; the best means of ensuring this is a certain approximation to equality of property, and opposition to the concentration of wealth and land in a few hands (D, I, 6, 11, 37, 55; III, 16, 25).

Only freedom and equality can elicit a feeling of individual dignity, develop the individual's all-rounded ability, instil in him civil virtue, and inspire confidence in the security of life, honour and property. The tyrant's iron hand can only ensure external order, but it often nurtures amongst the people a hatred for the government (*vlast*) and, worst of all, leads as a rule to the destruction and oppression of the people. Thus, the aim of government is not to encourage egoism but rather to achieve the possibility of realizing the greater general good, to bring the people to actively love it. This aim can best be attained in a sensibly organized free government, which, in Machiavelli's eyes, was a republic. As a republican he staunchly advocated this form of government, even daring to do so in the proposals which he presented to Leo Medici *The Discourse on the Reform of the Florentine State*. In a republic it is easier to establish equality and political freedom; it is easier to draw all the healthy elements of society into administration, to show to all the benefits of the existing government. In brief, the republic, in Machiavelli's opinion, is a firmer form of government, since in it there are no classes (*grado di cittadino*) that are completely alienated from social life and consequently class struggle is softened. This view clearly reflected the outlook of the 'middle classes', we would now say the intelligentsia, of Machiavelli's social position.

Machiavelli speaks more often of parties than of classes of citizens, but he knew very well the phenomenon of class struggle, and contemporary historians highly estimate his depiction of such struggles in the second and third books of his *Florentine Histories*. In agreement with our contemporaries, he inclined to consider material inequality a major cause of this struggle of the *popolo grasso e popolo minuto* and, like the

present-day French sociologist Oriu, foresaw a terrible danger for civil society and republics in the extreme inequalities in the distribution of wealth in Florence. He expresses concern about the possible elimination of such inequalities – a task which it was easier for a ruler to accomplish under a republic than under a hereditary monarchy.

But in lauding the advantages of a republic from his sociological viewpoint, Machiavelli does not ignore its defects: the slowness and sluggishness of the ruling people, the republic's cowardice before intimidation, and its wavering before the promises of demagogues, since people are led more by feelings than by reason (D, I, 47, 53, 57); thought comes afterwards like an echo, according to Montesquieu. Therefore, our author is not an advocate of direct people's government but prefers instead elected organs.

Therefore, he proposes to divide government according to three functions: executive, advisory and controlling (*The Government of Lucca*). The third power introduced people – electors; the second the 'best people'; the first, in which must be resolved the needs of the republic by speed, energy and resolution, must be linked to election of lower rulers, which Machiavelli considers possible to call princes only if they are elected. In the final analysis a republic with a prince – a life-long president or a monarchy similar to that of France of his day, where there was a king connected by laws and independent courts – was for Machiavelli, the most appropriate state form (*The Discourse on the Reform of the Florentine State*).

The greater complexity of the republican mechanism, the abundance of juridical form, compelled Machiavelli to admit in cases of crisis, which necessitate very speedy action, to provide the president with dictatorial plenipotentiary powers or the creation of a special dictatorship. That complexity and cumbersomeness which he noted in history and in his contemporary Switzerland's federal government formation compelled him to incline to this form of development of the state, the advantages of a republic, with great care (D, II, 19); in this, he was justified, although federations have had a much greater future than Machiavelli expected.

In military conscription, Machiavelli sees, in accordance with many later researchers, the basic point of national life and freedom and the necessary basis of democracy, where the citizen bears responsibility for preserving the regime, part of which also comprises the government, which he elects. Towards mercenary armies, he, on the basis of the bitter experience of his motherland, Italy, took a negative attitude; foreign help is rarely rendered disinterestedly – he advises dispensing

with it and proposes, above all, reliance on 'one's own arms' (P, 12; D, II, 20, A).

VII

We come, thus, to the purely political advice and prophecy of Machiavelli, to the practice of statecraft. But in turning to it we need to say a few words about his attitude to state revolutions. Machiavelli personally was opposed to revolution and conspiracy, the perpetrators of which, although well intentioned, always risk their own destruction and the destruction of their fatherland. It is true that there have been revolutions that have been almost bloodless, when only the upper tier – the government – was removed, but often they depend on force, vengeance, and then it is impossible without horror to read about the events that ensue.

Nevertheless, revolutions frequently occur and Machiavelli successfully connects them with his sociological considerations of the predisposition of people before their past, and future hopes of imitation and their weakness for novelty. They are always dissatisfied with their existing rulers and hoping for improvement of their lot, inclined to change them and to introduce new measures. Thus, sometimes the fortunate ones wish such changes with such fervour that they are a people whose fate is quite to be pitied. Such people surround, serve and support the revolutionary leader. Whilst he stands for innovation they will support him, so long as he clings on only for their power.

Should anyone become the ruler . . . in the state, especially, if his power is unstable, and if he does not want to tolerate either a monarchical or a republican civil order then the best way of retaining his state – is to organise everything in the state anew. He must institute – new government, under new names, with new morals from new people; to make the poor rich, as suggested by king David *qui esurientes implevit donis et divites dimisit inanes* (who filled the hungry with good things and the rich sent empty away) creating new cities, destroying the old, transferring the people from place to place, in a word – not leaving anything in the whole country nothing in its former place. Of course, to behave in this way is cruel and hurtful to the whole citizenry, not only Christian, but to humanity in general; of course, all must avoid this and prefer a more modest means of ruling, not based on the destruction of so many people (D, I, 26).

But wishing to establish tyrannical government, to seize power, he must set out on this 'fatal road', which is dangerous also for him; people

now begin to lament the past, and no reforms will satisfy them if they are not connected with the 'shade of the past'. In vain are laws changed: institutions are changed with much more difficulty, and are almost unchanged in essence. Here is why people accustomed to a monarchical regime have so much difficulty in adjusting to a republic, and vice versa (P, 19; D, I, 16, 17).

Republicans defend their freedom ferociously. In sharp contrast, people who have been released from the habits of monarchy preserve their freedom only with the greatest difficulty. As 'wild beasts of the forest' such people, released from their cage, destroy everything in their path and especially if the people have been corrupted by the old order, it is often tamed only by a new yoke of tyranny. It replaces one master for another, it becomes the prey of the first who wishes to catch it, and is able to achieve comparative freedom only accidentally if it falls on a good and honourable ruler; but, even here, freedom continues only so long as the latter lives. With his death all is destroyed and the country returns to its former disposition (D, I, 16, 17).

This picture speaks itself of his realism: Machiavelli depicted it in his contemporary Italy. Precisely here he saw the corruption of a demoralized people with whom, especially in Milan and Naples, in his opinion, only tyranny was possible, since even the application of the best methods of government or a dictator would barely be able to correct these 'dead regions' (*pavshie oblasti*). The rest of Italy was little better. 'Men wishing to be in all respects pure and honourable, must inevitably sooner or later be destroyed in the midst of the dishonourable majority' (P, 15).

We note this phrase since it is the key that unlocks all Machiavelli's practical advice for which he is so defamed. He simply saw and spoke directly that, in his epoch, the ruler either could be a martyr, like Hannibal Bentivolio, or he could combine in himself the qualities of the lion and the fox, as Ferdinand Katolik (King Ferdinand of Aragon) did (to whom Machiavelli often transparently alludes).

Military force, diplomatic flexibility, the ability to organize a sound administration, to be unbending, not knowing half-measures of will, perspicacity, where necessary cunning, dissimulation and even keeping one's word only in response to changing circumstances – here is Machiavelli's advice to both a monarchical and a republican ruler. One should not fear to appear terrible: Cesare Borgia, through the judicious use of cruelty, held in terror not only the population, but also his governor-generals when they oppressed the people. Machiavelli evidently

much preferred this to the softness of the Florentines, which allowed Pistoia to be devastated in the flames of fratricidal slaughter (P, 7).

Precisely on account of 'Machiavelli's recipe' he was harshly accused of immorality, in worshipping success, and of always asserting that all methods are justified. This assertion is untrue. Human life and practice for Machiavelli is undoubtedly utilitarian . . . but in worshipping success as such, he was guilty much less than many others.

His sympathy for Soderini's noble failure is unquestionable. He praised Cesare Borgia for his pure theoretical princely talents, which Machiavelli never wanted to be forgotten, and who died most unfortunately not long before the writing of the seventh chapter of *The Prince*. And if this death had not happened, if the struggle of the strange 'basilisk' with the 'venomous snake' (as Machiavelli characterized the history of Borgia in Decennale I) had ended in the success of Borgia and his elevation as king of Romagna, then what would have been the relationship of the critic and posterity to the strict Machiavelli and his duke? We should remember how Ivan IV in the sixteenth century brilliantly followed the advice of not fearing to be terrible, and, indeed, out-doing the Italian duke, remained far from being a negative figure either in popular tradition, or in Alexei Tolstoi's poems and in Kluchevskii's history. Henry IV of Navarre, a double renegade and Bourbon only in name, retained a good reputation. It would be easy to ascend the ladder of the historical 'people of destiny' (*fatal'nyi lyudi*) to Napoleon and Bismarck. In all such cases they were charmed by success, which Machiavelli's hero was not blessed with.

The assertion that Machiavelli separated morality from politics, that he always justified cruelty, is incorrect. This does not accord with his understanding of the state as an instrument for educating and transforming people. For the statesman pursuing the 'path of honour and kindness', he proposed the possibility of turning to measures that ran counter to humanity only in one extreme case: the danger of the destruction of the motherland. Here, yes, here, Machiavelli was prepared for anything. Not long before his death he threw out this declaration: '*Amo patria mia pi dell anima*' (I love my fatherland more than my soul). These were for him not just empty words.¹⁵

Many of the political writers, his contemporaries, could not make this boast; the practical advice they gave was in the spirit of *raison d'état* (*gosudarstvennaya neobkhodimost*), as shown by the research done into this epoch by Maul de la Claviere, Ferrari, Benoist, etc. But these false accusations are not exposed and they pass into common currency. The

secret of these attacks is the 'ill-fated destiny' of Machiavelli, not his political maxims, which fully accord with the spirit of the times, but rather in the nature of politics. Machiavelli was a scholar who (in the words of Goethe's Margarita Parma) saw 'too far'. He saw the path leading to the unification and national rebirth of Italy in his time and saw the obstacles that blocked it.

* * *

K. Schmückle

A significant input into the Soviet debate on Machiavelli continued to come from Germany. Karl Vorlander's book *From Machiavelli to Lenin* (*Von Machiavelli bis Lenin*) was reviewed in 1928.¹⁶ The most important was a review by the German communist K. Schmückle of the work by Dr Johannes Schubert, *Machiavelli und die politischen Probleme unserer Zeit*, which was published in *Istorič Markist* in 1928. For Schmückle, Machiavelli was 'the first great state theoretician and political historian of the contemporary bourgeois world'. The disjunction between the republican of *The Discourses* and the advocate of dictatorship in *The Prince* is explained from the point of view of class struggle, that dictatorship is necessary to establish a new revolutionary order.

Machiavelli confronted the realities of creating a new state and destroying its enemies. In this, he adopted a realistic position, recognizing the central role of violence in bringing about social change. Later bourgeois historians, Schmückle argued, could not bring themselves to acknowledge the role which force and terror had played in the establishment of the bourgeois order, and recoiled at the way in which Machiavelli clinically separates politics from moral considerations. Central to Machiavelli's discussion was the notion of 'virtù'. This was the same quality, which made the ancient Romans so ardent in their defence of the republic. It was in the name of 'ancient virtue', in the name of '*vertu de tous les bons citoyens*', that the Jacobins, in the Convention, were led to demand the heads of the enemies of the republic and the revolutionary fatherland – in the name of *antica liberta*:

'Virtu' is the material of terror. The same *virtù* which considers the luxuries of life corrupting and harmful, demands the adoption of terror against the class enemies who threaten its freedom. 'The sons of Brutus must be killed'. Machiavelli is the sober theoretician of terror – that terror which is necessary for the young bourgeoisie to

organise its own state, in fighting for and preserving its independence, for the final destruction of feudal power.¹⁷

Machiavelli was 'the theoretician of revolutionary bourgeois *virtù*, the advocate of all beneficial, but cruel, methods of class struggle, the defender of "justified" and "healing" terror'. Here, we have a reference back to Machiavelli's discussion on the role of the 'physician'. The great exponent of Machiavellian ideas in unifying a new bourgeois state, Schmückle argued, was Bismarck.

These ideas had a long pedigree. In 1794 Robespierre wrote:

If the spring of popular government in time of peace is *virtù*, the spring of popular government in time of revolution is a combination of *virtù* and terror. *Virtù* without this terror is pitiable, terror without this *virtù* is impotent. The terror is nothing other than justice prompt, severe and inflexible. It is therefore an emanation of *virtù*.¹⁸

Conclusion

The three articles considered in this chapter represent the fullest attempt to address the ideas of Machiavelli in the USSR in the 1920s. What needs to be stressed is that this was actively promoted by leading party intellectuals such as Pokrovskii and Stuchka, with the backing of prominent bodies such as the Communist Academy. What is striking about these articles is that they demonstrated a degree of frankness in discussing the dilemmas of governance in the USSR that otherwise would have been impossible. What is also clear is that these articles were part of a campaign to legitimize personal dictatorial power. They reflect an elitist, statist conception of government. What emerges is the dilemma of the social reformer in dealing with recalcitrant human material, the dilemma of transforming a society deeply rooted in the traditions and customs of the past, preoccupied with its own narrow concerns and interests. A constant theme is the temptation to resort to coercion and terror to overcome these dilemmas.

An article in the USSR on the theme of Machiavelli could not be simply a exercise in academic debate but was bound to have a wider political significance. Durdenevskii's article, for all its qualification, presented a defence of personal dictatorship, and even of tyranny as a method of rule. Stalin's name is never mentioned, but the implications are clear. Durdenevskii outlined a deeply elitist and profoundly pessimistic conception of the human condition, informed by neo-

Malthusian and social-Darwinian perspectives. In the case of Schmückle we have an open defence of terror in constructing a new social order, using the example of earlier bourgeois revolutions to justify this view. This Machiavellian view of politics was fused to a Jacobin conception of the ruthless imposition of revolutionary authority and an explicit call to revolutionary patriotism in defence of the state and fatherland. These articles were part of a wider trend in the reinterpretation of Machiavelli.¹⁹

8

Stalin and Machiavelli 2

In 1929 the journal *Istorik Marksist*, issued by the Marx–Engels Institute in Moscow, published a long article by Vladimir Nikolaevich Maksimovskii entitled ‘The Idea of Dictatorship in Machiavelli’.¹ M. N. Pokrovskii was the journal’s general editor. The article was based on a paper that Maksimovskii had presented to the Institute’s section on west European history, as part of a larger project on the theme of dictatorship. The article’s publication coincided with the effusive celebrations of Stalin’s 50th birthday in December 1929. This event occasioned a great outpouring of praise in honour of the *vozhd*, and was a turning point in elevating Stalin to the position of virtual dictator. The article, together with three other articles published by Maksimovskii at this time, must be seen against this background.

Maksimovskii was born in 1887 and joined the Bolshevik party in 1903. In April–May 1918 he served on the collegium of People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD), under F. E. Dzerzhinskii. In 1918 he was one of the leaders of the Left Communist group, together with G. L. Pyatakov, N. I. Bukharin, V. V. Kuibyshev, K. B. Radek, V. N. Yakovlev, I. N. Stukov, V. M. Smirnov, M. N. Pokrovskii, S. N. Sheverdin, E. M. Yaroslavskii and E. A. Preobrazhenskii. From 1919 to 1921 he was a leading figure in the Democratic Centralist group. At the ninth congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1919, he scathingly criticized the centralized, bureaucratic regime inside the party, declaring ‘the fish rots from the head downwards’.² In 1923 he signed the pro-Trotsky ‘Platform of the 45’. He supported the Joint Opposition of 1926 – the alliance of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev – but after the fourteenth party congress in 1926 it was claimed that he abandoned oppositional politics.³

From 1922 he worked in the People’s Commissariat of Enlightenment of the RSFSR and became one of its deputy commissars. He then worked

in the publishing house of the Central Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviet, and undertook scientific-literary and lecturing work. He attended the first conference of Marxist historians in December 1928–January 1929. Maksimovskii's article 'The Idea of Dictatorship in Machiavelli' is of interest both as a political commentary on Stalin, depicted as the new prince (*principe nuovo*) and as the most erudite and ambitious attempt to date to synthesize Marxist ideas and Machiavelli's thought. Given that Machiavelli's works had not been published in the USSR, this provided the fullest discussion of his ideas available to Soviet readers at the time. Below we reproduce an edited version of this article, which allows the reader to see the way in which Maksimovskii presents his argument.

The Idea of Dictatorship in Machiavelli

V. Maksimovskii

In Machiavelli's political teaching there is a profound contradiction, and one which has long aroused the general interest of researchers. Anyone who studies or who has only read his main works *Discorsi* and *Il Principe* has been forced to address the question: how could a republican, a democrat who included in *Discorsi* a real 'praise of the people' under the heading 'the popular masses are more intelligent and more constant than a ruler' at the same time on his own initiative in *Il Principe* offer advice to personal rulers, adventurers who seize power, even perhaps to tyrants? This question, posed by various writers in different ways over four centuries, has finally come to be considered a kind of mystery. Every researcher interested in Machiavelli's work has attempted to solve the mystery. Now, we believe, there is sufficient evidence for us to attempt to explain the apparent contradiction from the point of view of a materialistic understanding of history. This gives us very valuable material for the study of the history of the idea of dictatorship.

1. Machiavelli in his epoch

Machiavelli is the greatest political writer of the Renaissance. This epoch represents, as is well known, the beginning of the transition period from feudalism to capitalism in western Europe. The huge growth of artisan trades, the development of merchant capital ruptured the old feudal relations. There began a great social revolution, which was completed in the nineteenth century with the establishment of the capitalist mode of production and the transfer of power into the hands of the bourgeoisie.

Up till now the Italian revolution of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, which overthrew the feudalists and abolished feudal privileges in the Italian petty states, has been little researched. Florence, Machiavelli's homeland, was then industrially the most advanced state in Italy and in its trading relations it rivalled Venice. It had escaped from the dominance of the feudalists already in 1343 and thereafter various bourgeois groups controlled its government, if we exclude from account the short-lived rule of the insurgent artisans and workers – the *ciompi* (in 1378). The Medici family, which rose from the ranks of the merchant bourgeoisie, ruled the republic over several decades . . . The bourgeois revolution, which was only just beginning in Italy, raised to dizzying heights an ordinary merchant family of the Florentine republic, turning elected representatives of the people into tyrants.

Italian history of that era is full of revolutions and wars. Everything was then in great ferment. The popes of Rome themselves, who over several centuries dominated the apex of the feudal pyramid in western Europe, attempted to create a strong secular state in Italy: naturally they clashed with those feudalists who were subordinate to them in central Italy and in the course of this struggle the pope's military leader, the son of pope Alexander VI, Cesare Borgia, the so-called duke Valentino, endeavoured to create not only a papal but his own state; smashing the feudalists, destroying their power, with the support of France, then of Florence, he forged with 'blood and iron' this new state, and strove to unite under his power the whole of Italy.

At that time, taking advantage of the consequences of revolutionary shock (*potryasenie*) and war, the French, Spanish and Germans, all who could, strove to annex from Italy this or that portion for their use. Several times these foreigners, whom the more cultured and advanced Italians regarded as barbarians, entered her territory; the richest parts of Italy suffered devastation and despite all her forces she was unable to complete the nascent revolution for the creation of a unified national state which met the demands of the capitalist epoch.

All the merchant and usurious bourgeoisie, its chiefs, its political and military leaders, played a revolutionary role, advancing history forward, smashing the feudal order. But they often performed this role unconsciously, perhaps pursuing subjectively other aims. Moreover, in clearing the way for a new order, which must be a new form of exploitation, and being in essence exploiters, they adopted the means that properly belong peculiarly to exploiters – oppression, deception and plunder.

In the circumstances of revolution and war all the clutter of feudal decoration fell away and into the arena of history there entered open

class struggle in which each of the exploiting classes, contending amongst themselves, strove to involve the broad mass of simple people (in Machiavelli's term *la plebe*) i.e. above all the urban mass of artisans and workers and then the peasants. Machiavelli lived at the start of this epoch. He was the ideologue of the bourgeoisie. His genius consists in this, that he thought through to the end all perspectives of his epoch and his class. On the basis of his wide political experience and deep knowledge of ancient political works he was the first in western Europe to construct a theory of the new bourgeois state.

We can most fully understand the historical place of Machiavelli's teaching if we consider the well-known characterization of the bourgeoisie of that epoch given in *The Communist Manifesto*. Here is underlined the revolutionary role of the bourgeoisie, its struggle against the feudalists, for the development of commercial and productive forces, for state centralization. Here is pointed out the characteristic phenomenon of the epoch – the penetration of money into all social and personal relations beginning with the distribution of products and ending with the religious faith of people. This accounts for the sober, rationalist, completely irresistible logical way by which all questions were posed by the ideologues of the bourgeoisie of that time, reducing all connections between people to 'naked interest', the 'heartless cash nexus'. This revelation, dismissing out of hand all feudal understanding of religion, morality or right, with its courageous and consistent proclamation of the new all-world historical position in the field of politics, we find in its most scientific form in Machiavelli, despite the fact that the practical posing of the question was done before him by a whole number of political figures of that epoch in their attempts to form the new centralizing national state in place of the old feudal principalities and possessions.

II. The idea of bourgeois democracy in Machiavelli

Machiavelli expresses his basic political idea in the book *Discorsi*, basing his analysis on Titus Livy's history of the Roman state order he gives us a picture of his idea of the model state. Machiavelli was much influenced by political theorists of the ancient world. However, in the main his social-political ideal was formed in the circumstances of the Florentine republic. Sometimes he wholly departs from the democratic traditions of his motherland, sometimes he criticizes it, but he always advanced the interest of this new merchant society and state that set itself in opposition to feudalism.

Machiavelli is an enemy of the feudal order. He stands for its most radical destruction, for the extirpation of all its foundations. Feudalists, temporal and spiritual, are one and the same – parasites that live on the labour of others. They are harmful in all republics, 'This spawn – sworn enemies of all citizenship'. All feudalism is 'ambitious parasitism' (*ambizioso ozio*).

This means above all that Machiavelli is a supporter of political freedom . . . He is a supporter of political and citizen equality. In the new correctly built state, where feudal privileges have been abolished, there must be full equality. Unquestionably taking into account the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, Machiavelli also advances certain egalitarian ideas. For a model, fully democratic system, with little political inequality, a certain economic equalization is needed. Only such a republic can be solid, in which citizens do not surpass one another too much in terms of property relations. Machiavelli writes of this in *Discorsi* and refers to this thought in *The Discourse on the Reform of the Florentine State* ('*Discorso sopra il riformare lo stato di Firenze*'). However, Rousseau does not develop these thoughts, as they were developed earlier by Aristotle and after him.

Machiavelli supported a united, centralized national state. Machiavelli and his contemporaries first formed our modern understanding of the state (*stato, l'état, staat*). We can systematically follow the forming of this understanding through his main works.

Observing the social-political order in France in the form before and after Louis XII he asserts that the greatest achievement was the fact that the king curbed the feudalists. 'Previously', he writes in *Portrait of French things* (*Ritratti delle cose della Francia*):

France was not united because of the multiplicity of barons, who were bold and ready to undertake all kinds of ventures against the king since he was after all only the duke of Guyenne and Bourbon, and now they are very obedient and therefore he more bold.

In former times when any enemy attacked France from without they always found some duke of Brittany, Burgundy or Flanders who would open the door for them into the country. Now, thanks to the system of kingly dominance and the curbing of the feudalists, France became a unified state.

Things were quite different in Germany, which Machiavelli especially set about studying at the time of the assembly of Constanza in 1508

when he was sent there with a very responsible errand. In the already quoted report of his visit he depicts the mainspring of the state machinery of contemporary Germany, the struggle of the emperor with the dukes, the towns against the feudalists, the special role of the democratic Swiss, etc. Here only his mercenary forces served the emperor and indeed only for as long as they were regularly paid their wages. If the wages were not paid on time 'they dispersed and he was unable to get them to return neither by appeals, promises nor by threats if he did not have money'. Germany was not united but Machiavelli admired the fact that it had the strength of the free cities and the Swiss. The people were all armed and able to fight. 'The urban communes are the nerves of the country, from them it derives its wealth and order.'

It is well known that Machiavelli was sent on a mission to Cesare Borgia, that he held many discussions with him, learnt from him the arts of politics (this was at the end of 1502 and the end of 1503) and undoubtedly saw in him then the man who could unify Italy.

Machiavelli estimated Cesare Borgia very highly, above all for the fact that he smashed the feudalists and organized his own independent state. Studying Machiavelli's dispatches, which he sent from duke Valentino's residence to Florence, one is convinced that the duke generally was not the personification of vice and despotism that is usually portrayed. This was a really outstanding politician, stubbornly and systematically fighting to create his own state. Declining his services as a condottiere Florence recommended that he pursue precisely this path. Florence saw the duke, Machiavelli told him at an audience, as a 'new dictator (*un nuovo potentato*) in Italy'. It proposed an alliance. Cesare Borgia was also valued because, in Machiavelli's assessment, he had already freed himself from subordination to the pope. In fact he was stronger than the pope. It was necessary, Machiavelli wrote to his government, to conclude an agreement with him and not with the pope, because the duke would examine an agreement concluded with the pope, but an agreement concluded with the duke would be examined by the pope.

Machiavelli knew how Cesare, crushed and surrounded on all sides by enemies, the feudalists of central Italy, suddenly shifted from the weapons of war to the weapons of diplomacy; commencing peaceful talks and halting military operations, he regathered and reorganized his army, secured help from France, support from Florence and lured the most dangerous of his enemies to a trap in Senigallia, seized them and annihilated them, regaining for himself with one blow his former might. Machiavelli described the operation in his reports, then in more

polished literary form in an essay *Description of the way in which duke Valentino killed Vitellozzo Vitelli, Oliveratto da Fermo, signore Pagalo and the duke Gravina Orsini*. . . . Politically Machiavelli approved of the operation at Senigallia as a step on the path towards the unification of Italy. The duke, of course, was not an angel, morally he was no better than his contemporaries, but he played a progressive role as a new ruler (*il principe nuovo*).

The political order which Machiavelli considered the best was a republic, a free state (*città libera*). A republic was better than a monarchy. It was more solid because it could more easily adapt itself to changing circumstances, thus it was able to advance 'a long series of the most outstanding leaders, in succession one after another'. It was able 'having citizens of various character better to cope with circumstances than a monarchy'. It changed its leaders in response to changing circumstances, each time advancing the one most suited to the demands of the moment.

Republics are also extremely strong externally: 'experience shows that a state acquires might and wealth only in free conditions', for example, the success of Athens after its liberation from the tyranny of Pisistratus and the Romans after toppling the power of the Caesars. 'People's government is better than monarchical.' This is the case because the state's external power is dependent not on the private advantage of one individual but on the general well-being of the whole people. By the way, Machiavelli says, 'the general good undoubtedly is observed only in republics'; if this or that law is breached by any private interest it is always upheld in a republic if it is advantageous to the majority. And with the scorn of the true Florentine democrat he calls monarchy a wretched form of government (*trista forma*).

Republics have one substantial weakness – the slowness in handling matters because of the need for meetings and concord, 'agreement' on every question between republican institutions. In order to avoid this the Romans established temporary personal (*edinolichnyi*) dictators when it was necessary to act speedily, the Venetians established a permanent institution of inquisitors. Some such institution would be sometimes inevitable in a republic, but this is undesirable:

In general republics must avoid such circumstances, which require the adoption of extraordinary measures . . . their example always works harmfully; when they allow themselves to breach the law for some benefits, this is unwise, because one finds someone will breach it with evil intent.

Machiavelli again points out that certain republics sometimes invest supreme power for a long time in particular individuals, in Sparta – the tsar (sic) in Venice – the doge, but in such cases the republic set up special supervisors over these rulers, to stop them abusing their powers. However, such an arrangement is dangerous even where society is uncorrupted because ‘all absolute power in a short time corrupts society, and acquires for itself friends and adherents’.

Machiavelli has several other interesting observations concerning republican order. In a properly organized republic, discipline should be balanced by legality. Therefore, it is necessary to have well-established judicial oversight. Officials must be elected, and elected for a short time. It was a mistake that in Rome the censors were elected for five years. Administrative bodies must, as far as possible, have many members since ‘small numbers of administrators will always be the tool of the influential minority’, i.e. aristocrats or some kind of oligarchic group. From these notes we see how consistently Machiavelli stood for democratic order.

It is very important to note also the repeated emphasis which Machiavelli places on the inviolability of the citizens’ private property and home – one of the most basic of bourgeois rights, triumphantly proclaimed in all declarations of the rights of ‘man and citizen’.

The people, not the aristocracy, must be the bastion of political freedom in the city. In *Discorsi* Machiavelli proves that the people (*popolani ignobili*) strive not for dominance but only so that they are not oppressed. Therefore, it ‘more strives for a free life than the nobility (*znat'*) and it has less means to usurp power for its own use’. The people’s government (*vlast*), therefore, poses no threat to political freedom. Lacking the means to deprive others of freedom it does not allow others to do the same. Hence, it is clear that the people are the best preservers of freedom. The state order in general ‘is good when it represents care for the majority and when it is kept in the hands of the majority’.

Turning to the class basis of society in transition, given most notably in Machiavelli’s assessment of the rising of the *ciompi* in his *Florentine Histories* and also in his notes in other works, we must point out that he was an opponent of the sovereignty of the simple people (*la plebe*); rich citizens, bourgeoisie, are needed to administer the state and to lead the people, but the simple people as a whole (*il popolo*) must participate in administration. In all cases, the simple people must participate in legislation by means of elections of deputies to legislative bodies (in Florence – the council, *il Consiglio*) and higher power.

The administration of the republic must be a compound of elements, Machiavelli declares, repeating Aristotle's view, but on this he does not dwell. Aristotle showed in his *Politics* that the basic distinction between states consists in this – of the different correlation of the political force of rich and poor. Following this path Machiavelli affirms that political freedom is ensured in a state that is divided (*disunione*), where there is struggle between the higher and lower classes, whether between the aristocrats and the simple people as a whole (*popolo*) or between the bourgeoisie and the simple people (*plebe*).

Thus the simple people, who in Machiavelli's opinion, are unable to administer the state, must be ensured the right openly to champion their interests and to conduct a struggle with the richer classes. This right might be expressed as it was in ancient Rome by establishing the post of people's tribunes, who were the official defenders of the simple people.

To preserve the struggle's legal character, confining it within lawful limits and thus protecting the state from civil war, there is the essential right of accusation by people's tribunes or citizens against any citizen or official who constitutes any kind of danger to the republic's freedom. Such an institution eliminates calumny (*calunnie*), secret accusations, gossip and prejudice, ensuring in the state a healthy atmosphere of honour and open relations between citizens.

Some think that Machiavelli considered the ideal republics to be Sparta and Venice, which preserved certain aristocratic institutions, but this is untrue. In book 6 of *Discorsi*, which has great principled significance and is noted by Marx in his notebooks, Machiavelli recognizes that Sparta and Venice were the best republics if one examines them only from the point of view of the internal strength of their order. But these states developed in completely unique conditions that softened the contradictions between the aristocrats and the people and turned the republics into aristocratic states, which barred any participation in government by the common people; this resulted to a high degree from the fact that either the people there were not sent to war, or the country did not extend its borders or it did not admit any foreigners. Such a state may, of course, be solid. 'I do not doubt – writes Machiavelli – that if it were possible to sustain balance in this way, this would really ensure the best political life (*il vero vivere politico*) and the fullest tranquillity for its citizens.' But such is possible to speak of only in abstraction; in reality from Machiavelli's point of view 'all human affairs are always in flux, they cannot stand firm, they rise or fall', every state clashes with others, it cannot live in isolation, its population grows and the state order must

adapt to changing conditions. On the basis of these considerations Machiavelli concludes that in the republic's institutions there is need for democratization, as was the case in Rome. In the interest of development and of the external strengthening of the country it is necessary to draw all people into legislation, to grant the simple people the possibility of safeguarding their rights. Therefore the real ideal for developing contemporary states with a great number of citizens, with nobles and simple people, must be the Roman republic. It is impossible to pose as the sole aim of organizing the republic the securing of its own preservation, it is necessary to strive for something higher, to the growth and strengthening of the state. He says:

I am confident that full balance here is impossible, that it is impossible to stick to a middle path; consequently, in establishing a republic, it is necessary to chose a course more worthy of praise (*piu onorevole*) and to build in such a way that when necessity compels it towards expansion, it is able to take for itself occupied territory.

And further:

I am convinced that it is necessary to imitate Roman order and not the order of other republics, since I do not consider it possible to find any kind of middle order between it and the others. We must consequently tolerate the clashes (*inimicize*) that arise between the people and the Senate, taking account of the price of the inevitable inconveniences attending the attainment of Roman grandeur.

This, it seems to us, is sufficient to settle the argument as to which state Machiavelli took as his model.

In *The Art of War* Machiavelli defends the system of a permanent army, through mobilization of the citizenry. He opposed this to the feudal system of hiring, which had already outlived its time, and the system of mercenary forces, which was adopted as a transitional step towards the new army, and also showed their flimsiness. To create a new state it is necessary to transform the organization of the army. The new army must consist of citizens, it must be supplied by the state, be correctly organized and trained in discipline, it must be infused with patriotism, its fighting spirit raised. The new army must be closely connected to the population, similar to a civilian militia. The Germans and the Swiss are the best soldiers because amongst them the whole population

undertake military matters, are taught drill, during times of celebration they practice shooting, etc.

The new state ushers in new policies in economics and culture . . . Even an autocratic ruler must 'encourage by awards all useful inventions and improvements, to honour all who by some measures help the enrichment and growth of his town or state'. In the field of religion it is necessary to utilize religious belief in the interests of educating the citizens. Religion must serve the state. Catholicism must be radically reformed, returning to a form of primitive Christianity, since it is completely corrupted under the papacy's influence. Machiavelli recognizes religion only as a purely political and educational means adaptable to the needs of the bourgeois state.

Such is Machiavelli's political programme. The most careful analysis of it can lead to only one conclusion; in relation to its political ideal Machiavelli is an advocate of bourgeois democracy. From where does he take the 'monarchist' ideas of *Il Principe*? How does a democrat become the adviser of tyrants? The fact is that in drawing a picture of a free democratic state Machiavelli poses the question: how can the state be organized; how can it be enabled to withstand the attack of the old feudal forces and external enemies? Here begins Machiavelli's political strategy. Having studied the history of Florence and contemporary states he concluded that the city states of his time were incapable of creating durable, extensive and mighty democratic states. In order to curb the feudalists, to create a centralized administration, to organize a mighty and disciplined army, to concentrate the greatest material forces in the hands of the state, to establish firm order and legality, a completely exceptional power was necessary, personal dictatorship was needed.

III. Machiavelli and dictatorship

What is dictatorship? Only now with the works of Marx and Lenin, after the experience of the October Revolution, are we able to give a correct, scientific definition of dictatorship. Dictatorship is 'power [*vlast*] that is unlimited, illegal, and which operates on force, in the most direct sense of the word'. Dictatorship is characterized, above all, by its lack of limits. It distinguishes itself by its complete power from all systems of a compromised [i.e mixed – separation of powers] character.

Dictatorship is government unconstrained by law. It pays no heed to existing legislation and creates new legislation, completely independent of the old, derived directly from the ongoing class struggle in society. Therefore, it also contradicts political theory which is derived from law,

the various conservative, legitimist and parliamentary points of view. It contradicts also such theses, for example, as tyrannicide (*monar-chomakhi*). The latter derives from the fact that the power of the monarch is restrained by the principal law, which reflects the mutual agreement of the monarch and the people, and therefore if the monarch breaches the agreement he is subject to legal account, right up to execution. Then he is not a lawful ruler (*gosudar'*) but a tyrant. Subjects are then obliged to use the law to compel the monarch to observe the 'agreement'.

Dictatorship is power 'operating on force in the most direct sense of the word'. Of course all governments (*vlast*) operate on force. We are compelled to emphasize this point, especially having in view the second feature of dictatorship, that it is unconfined by law. Usually, government operates on force but its actions are underwritten and sanctioned by law. Not so dictatorship – it operates on no law, but directly on the actual correlation of class forces, on the organized force of the masses, above all on the military force that it deploys.

Such, in general terms, is the definition of dictatorship. But dictatorships differ depending on which class establishes it and realizes it. The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie is inevitably characterized by some special traits that belong uniquely to it as a class. The dictatorship of the proletariat has its own distinctiveness. It is natural that the class of the dictator impresses a particular form on the dictatorship. Moreover, one should distinguish between a dictatorship that is revolutionary and one that is reactionary. The first dictatorship is economically progressive, raising to power a class that, in the form of the dictatorship, forms its political organization, unifies itself and accomplishes the revolution (*pervorot*), placing it in the position of a new master (*khozyain*) of society.

The second is the dictatorship of a class which has already reached the zenith of its power and is descending under the pressure of new classes, which strives, by ignoring the laws and by directly resorting to force, to preserve the old order, to reverse or in the end to halt the wheels of history. Machiavelli advocates the idea of bourgeois dictatorship. But there is a distinction between contemporary bourgeois dictatorships which now raise their heads with every intensification of the class struggle and which, in certain countries where there is a strong proletarian movement, turn themselves into real state form (fascism), and those bourgeois dictatorships of the time of transition from feudalism to capitalism, which manifest themselves in all bourgeois revolutions in various forms as revolutionary dictatorships. There is a difference between the reactionary dictatorship of Benito Mussolini and

the bourgeois revolutionary dictatorship advanced by the 'secretary and citizen' of the Florentine republic – Niccolò Machiavelli.

We must finally acknowledge that in history we observe dictatorships in revolutionary epochs, in transition periods from one social formation to another. When a revolutionary turnover (*perevorot*) occurs it destroys the old order (*stroï*) and builds a new one, one that belongs to the struggling classes who smash the bounds of the old regime and turn themselves directly into force. It is in the epoch of the establishment of the dominance of a particular class that we usually meet so-called law-governed states (*vlast'*). Once the revolutionary storm has passed the new class consolidates its power, creates a new ideology, above all institutes law (*pravo*), which consolidates and legitimizes the new order, and dictatorship becomes unnecessary.

Therefore, dictatorship should be viewed as a temporary power. Thus, theorists of revolutionary dictatorship see it as a means of establishing a new state order. The dictator must be seen, in the Latin term, as *dictator reipublicae constituendae causa* (a dictator for the establishment or reform of the state). In general, in so far as dictatorship is a form of government (*vlast'*) met usually in transition periods, it changes its character when this period ends.

Temporary (provisional) is the essential feature of dictatorship, but this term is not wholly satisfactory because it can give the impression of short-term dictatorship, but such a power may exist for decades, depending on how long and drawn out the transition period is. Therefore it is quite sufficient to characterize dictatorship as 'power [*vlast*] unbounded, illegal, operating on force in the most direct sense of the word', which belongs to the transition period between one social formation and another.

The departing point of Machiavelli's ideas concerning bourgeois revolutionary dictatorships was his evaluation of the period of Florence's history when he actively participated in the government of the state (1498–1512). This evaluation we find in book 3, chapter 3, of *Discorsi*, which bares the title 'When liberty has been newly acquired it is necessary in order to maintain it to "kill the Sons of Brutus".' Here Machiavelli achieves a full development of the representation of dictatorship.

Depicting the actions of the legendary Brutus the elder who established a republic in Rome, he tells how Brutus came to judge and execute his own sons as enemies of the republic. Machiavelli uses this to illustrate what he formulates as a general rule 'Who creates a republic and does not kill the sons of Brutus does not last long' (*chi fa uno stato libero e non ammazza i figliuoli di Bruto, si mantiene poco tempo*). In establish-

ing a republic, extreme measures are needed, up to the extirpation of the enemies of the new order. In order to overcome their opposition exceptional, extraordinary power – *straordinaria autorità* – is needed. In this respect Soderini's fate is instructive; he understood the dangers of counter-revolution, but as a true democrat and honourable man he did not want, having been directly elected as the republic's leader, to upset the balance of institutions by dictatorship and hoped to avoid this by humane measures within the confines of normal democratic laws. . . . Therefore, he was 'not able to follow Brutus' example and was destroyed together with his fatherland, its power and honour'.

This evaluation of the actions of the leader of the Florentine democracy in this critical moment in the history of Florence shows that Machiavelli had a quite clear understanding of bourgeois democratic dictatorship in the full sense of the word.

The general form of dictatorship advocated by Machiavelli is state power of an individual ruler, which he calls *il principe nuovo*. The characteristics that belong to dictatorships in general also belong to all revolutionary dictatorships, interlaced here especially with those characteristics that belong to the bourgeoisie. The complexity of Machiavelli's idea of dictatorship accounts for the many vacillations in its evaluation by later political writers, although, in the main, these waverings are determined, unsurprisingly, by the class position of those writers.

The very title of Machiavelli's most popular book, *Il Principe*, has posed difficulty of interpretation and translation. Not one of the Russian words employed – *knyaz*, *monarkh*, *gosudar*, *pravitel* – fully conveys the meaning with which Machiavelli invests *principe*. In general understanding, the term embraces all forms of personal rule. *Principati* are all states with a personal ruler. Machiavelli divides them into *principati ereditari* – hereditary, and *principati nuovi* – new principalities. Under the first he subsumes all old hereditary monarchies of the feudal order (kingdoms, dukedoms, princedoms, etc).

Machiavelli, in *Il Principe*, pays almost no attention to the hereditary monarchies. For a hereditary monarch it is sufficient to preserve the traditional status quo, to be led in all by thoughtful conservatism, and he, without special difficulties, will preserve his power. However, the monarchy itself, operating on the completely rotten feudalists, is doomed to destruction. Machiavelli depicts in *Discorsi*, following in this both Aristotle and Polybius, how degenerate (*degrenerare*) the inherited monarchies become thanks to their privileged position, how they plunder the whole people, how plots are hatched against them, and uprisings organized, which deprive them of their power.

With regard to ecclesiastical states (also feudal) – *principati ecclesiastici* – Machiavelli writes that power is sustained by them, by deep-rooted religious faith, the subjects are subjugated by spiritual lords regardless of whether they rule well; only these states are truly happy. ‘But’, notes Machiavelli, ‘since this proceeds from higher reasons, which cannot be understood by the human mind, I shall not speak about these states, they are established and maintained by God, so only a person impudent and light-minded would seek to judge them.’ Undoubtedly this is irony. Machiavelli, as is well known, always had a negative attitude towards the papacy and was indifferent to religion; with talent he ridicules the papacy in his comedies (*Mandragora*).

The centre of Machiavelli’s attention in *Il Principe* is the ‘new principalities’. Machiavelli classifies them, studies their formation. It is at the ‘new’ ruler that he primarily aimed his political advice. What is this ‘new ruler’ – *principe nuovo*? Above all this is the individual ruler who is not connected with feudal relations and is not limited by them. He is independent, reliant on no one (*solo*). Moreover, this ruler builds a new state of precisely the type that Machiavelli characterizes in *Discorsi*, i.e. a bourgeois state. And our author wishes that by the hands of this new ruler a democratic state be built.

On the basis of historical evidence and his own experience, Machiavelli concludes, that for the organization of a new state, individual power was needed. Book 1, chapter 9 of *Discorsi*, which provides the most precise formulation of the basic Machiavellian theory of dictatorship, bares the title ‘That it is necessary to be the Sole Authority if one would constitute a Republic afresh or would reform it thoroughly regardless of its Ancient Institutions’. In it Machiavelli says:

One should take it as a general rule that rarely, if ever, does it happen that a state, whether it be a republic or a kingdom, is either well-ordered at the outset or radically transformed vis-à-vis its old institutions unless this be done by one person. It is necessary that one individual establishes the order of administration and so that all state construction depends on the reasoning of this person.

This is not a monarch acting only in his own personal interests, creating and strengthening his own personal power. No, the intelligent builder of a new republic (*prudente ordinatore d’una repubblica*) the radical reformer, i.e. in our terms, revolutionary transformer (*riformatore al tutto di nuovo*), ‘desires to serve not himself, but the general good [*giovare non a se ma bene comune*] not his descendants, but the fatherland in general’.

For this alone and not for any other aim must he strive for individual power.

The power that the *principe nuovo* commands, possesses all the basic characteristics of dictatorship. This power is not limited. Machiavelli's whole theory proceeds from the idea of the unity of state power. The separation of powers is a principle quite alien to him. The *principe nuovo* is an absolute ruler, possessing full absolute power. In this consists the sense of his individuality.

The *principe nuovo's* power is not confined by law. He himself creates the new state, establishes its basic laws. He takes no account of the old laws. Machiavelli's whole theory is remarkable, above all, because it represented a complete break with the feudal traditions of his time; it is necessary to destroy all medieval privileges, the complex system of medieval rights and obligations, and to replace them with a new bourgeois law which grows into a completely new or radically transformed state. For Machiavelli it is a matter of indifference who the 'new ruler' is, a private individual or citizen, promoting himself from the people, or promoted by the people, a usurper or a legal ruler . . . Best of all, of course, to fulfil the task is needed not a legal ruler but a new man advanced from the ranks of the citizens.

The *principe nuovo's* power must operate directly on force. The introduction of the 'new order' (*nuovi ordini*), Machiavelli reasons, is very difficult. 'The new ruler encounters enemies amongst all those who lived well under the old order, and acquires only very timid supporters amongst those whose position is improved under the new order.' This issues from the fact that, first, the beneficiaries of the new order fear their opponents, who hold in their hands legal power and have law on their side (*che hanno le leggi in beneficio loro*) and, second, here operates the normal distrust of the popular masses to all that is new.

From this Machiavelli concludes that the 'new rulers cannot in the beginning of their rule expect great support from the side of the mass of the citizens and must themselves be sufficiently strong'. They succeed if they are really independent (*dependono da loro propri*) and are able to act with force (*posson forzare*). Therefore, it is usually the case in history that 'all armed prophets have triumphed and unarmed prophets have been defeated' (*tutti li profeti armati vinsano, e li disarmati rovinarono*). The fact is that the popular masses are unstable, if they waver at the beginning and are not convinced by the arguments of the innovator, he will be in a situation where he must 'by force compel them to be convinced' (*far loro credere per forza*).

We turn now to those features of the *principe nuovo*'s dictatorial power that are connected with the transition period from feudalism to capitalism. If we apply Machiavelli's ideas about the basis of the state and their radical reformation to the conditions appertaining at the time, then it is necessary to recognize that we can speak only of the formation of the bourgeois state or about unifying petty feudal possession into a powerful centralized national state.

The *principe nuovo* must abolish feudal privileges, and thus destroy the power of the feudalists. Before his power all citizens are equal, the feudalists are subordinated to him simply as ordinary people. This means the establishment already under the *principe*'s power of equality of citizenship. Here, people are able to advance themselves either as citizens by their capital and their practical abilities, or as military or civilian servants of the ruler.

The *principe nuovo*'s power naturally operates on the army, which is built neither on a feudal basis nor on mercenaries, but is an army of a new type. Machiavelli repeatedly emphasizes the essential significance of the army for all states. 'The main basis of all states – he says – are good laws and good organization of the armed forces' but at the same time 'without good organization of armed forces in government there cannot be sustained good laws; where the armed forces are well organized there will usually be good laws.' There is especial need for an army and a new army for the new leaders. Seized or hereditary power operates on the people and attracts them to his side. Therefore, Machiavelli says 'it never was so that the *principe nuovo* disarmed his subjects, on the contrary when he found them disarmed he always armed them'. Thus, the new ruler must above all arm the people or strengthen its defences. The people armed is the best support of the new ruler, because if he arms his subjects, this weapon becomes his, because those who were spectators turn to him, those who were already loyal to him are strengthened, and from being his subjects all become his supporters, partisans (*partigiani*). Then the *principe nuovo* acquires force and authority amongst the popular masses. Therefore, Machiavelli establishes as a general rule that such rulers always organize an army in their new states (*un principe nuovo in un nuovo principato sempre vi ha ordinato l'armi*).

Cesare Borgia, whom Machiavelli advances as a model *principe nuovo*, is notable for the fact that he transferred from a system of mercenary force to the new. He mobilized in his government one individual from each family and formed his own army from those mobilized.

Good finances also have great significance for the new government. In Machiavelli's time the growth of trading-usurious capital led to the fact that money was valued and lauded more than it should be. Machiavelli spoke out against the viewpoint that asserted that monies were the nerves of war. He successfully proved that 'the nerves of war are good soldiers'. But he understood very well the need to set up a state exchequer, which accumulates revenue for the new ruler . . . Therefore, in the interests of the state exchequer and the people it is necessary to exercise and not to fear accusations of miserliness. The people regard miserliness only with scorn, but to the generous [ruler] who plunders his subjects the people feel scorn and hatred. Prudent rulers are able, with the help of their income and their reserves, to conduct war 'not burdening the people with taxes'. Then, 'the great majority seeing that he does not demand anything of them will consider him generous'.

Once again on this point, Cesare Borgia is lauded because he was a zealous manager (*khozyain*) who not only organized an army but concerned himself about its supplies, and amassed money in his chancellery that he utilized for all the requisite needs.

The *principe* should himself be the army's commander in chief. He must know military affairs both practically and theoretically, he must study its history, and accumulate during peacetime the knowledge which is needed during war:

The *principe* must not take an interest in anything else since in this art lies all the secrets of his power and thanks to it not only hereditary rulers preserve their supreme power, but also ordinary citizens may attain it.

However, the *principe* should, under no circumstances, subordinate himself to the army, establish the supremacy of the soldiers, as happened in imperial Rome where 'the emperors were compelled by necessity to assuage the armed forces at the expense of the people'. The army must thus be subordinated to the general state power already under the most basic republic so that in the future it is kept in such subordination as Machiavelli noted in *Discorsi*.

The *principe nuovo*'s power operates on the people. He should not orientate himself on the aristocracy, on the remnants of the feudalists. He can never satisfy them, and it would strengthen the danger that they pose to him. They sometimes advance from their own ranks a *principe* but only in the form of a cover. A brilliant passage in *Il Principe* describes for us how the aristocracy, seeing that they cannot resist the people,

sometimes begin to advance somebody from their ranks and make him a *principe*, 'using his name to satisfy their own appetites'. Such a *principe* is a plaything in their hands, furthermore, in the main 'to satisfy the aristocrats thus in order not to act unjustly and not to elevate one at the expense of another would be very difficult'. Orientating on the aristocracy would mean strengthening inequality, i.e. returning to the old feudal order.

No, the *principe nuovo* must orientate himself not on the nobility (*znat'*) but on the people as a whole (*popolo*). An untrue proverb of that time asserted that 'to build on the people is to build on dirt'. On the contrary 'for the *principe* it is necessary that the people be his friend, otherwise in misfortune he will not find salvation'. It is a mistake to build a fortress in order to defend oneself from one's own people (as Sforza did in Milan) – 'the best fortress there is, is not to inflame the hatred of the people' (*la miglior fortezza che sia e non esser odiato da popoli*). Whilst the *principe* must secure the people's confidence, his task must be to 'satisfy the people' (*satisfare a' popoli*). Here, Machiavelli does not differentiate between the politics of a republic and those of the *principe*. As there, so here, politics must be democratic in essence, i.e. bourgeois-democratic. Here also, as in relation to the army, the *principe nuovo's* policy lays the foundations for bourgeois democracy.

In the *principe nuovo's* dictatorship we see a clear expression of revolutionary principles. Above all the new ruler must pursue an active policy. He must foresee events and must go to meet them, not wait for them to come to him, otherwise he loses valuable time for counteracting the danger, which like a sickness in its early stages must be treated before it becomes incurable. Of course, circumstances change, sometimes desperate courage is called for, othertimes, on the contrary, the greatest care and reflection. But here much depends on what forces the *principe* possesses and whether he has sufficient; best of all is courage. In war the offensive is the best strategy. In other fields, also, if there are favourable conditions present, it is necessary to conduct a resolute, courageous policy. Models of political figures who followed such policies were Pope Julius II and the Spanish King Ferdinand of Aragon. Machiavelli, in *Il Principe* (chapters 25 and 21), analyses their activities. In evaluating the policy of Julius II, he concludes with the following well-known words:

I hold strongly to this: that it is better to be impetuous than circumspect; because fortune is a woman and if she is to be submissive it is necessary to beat and coerce her. Experience shows that she is

more often subdued by men who act thus than by those who act coldly. Always, being a woman, she favours young men, because they are less circumspect and more ardent, and because they command her with greater audacity (*feroci*).

Compromise is harmful. In internal policy it is necessary either to caress or to exterminate (*o vezzeggiare o spegnere*). The Romans 'always avoided the middle way and tended to the extremes'. In external policy it is better to declare oneself an enemy or friend of someone, such a path is always more beneficial than neutrality. Machiavelli in detail proves this. Thus, extraordinary measures (*azioni istraordinarie*), heavy extreme measures (*grandissimi straordinarie*) are necessary, especially in the establishment of a new republic. And not one reasonable person will criticize the founder of a new order for adopting such measures.

Wavering in politics is also harmful. Wavering is caused by weakness. 'A weak state always acts indecisively and indecisiveness is always harmful'; so headlines chapter 15, book 2 of *Discorsi*. Like wavering, so slowness in arriving at a decision is harmful. Using examples from Titus Livy, Machiavelli shows 'how harmful and dangerous it is to prevaricate'. Pope Julius II provides the model of rapid action, which denies the opponent the time to appraise the situation.

This does not mean that care is unnecessary or that one should never make concessions. Sometimes, circumstances demand that one goes slowly. Sometimes, in straitened conditions, the reformer is compelled to take into account human conservatism. The majority of the people, as is well known, are influenced 'more by the appearance than the essence of things', therefore, in introducing various reforms, it is advisable to preserve the old appearance, which is hallowed by ages of use and ceremony, and to which the people have become accustomed. Then the transformation will be accepted with pleasure.

This does not mean either that it is necessary obligatorily to adopt cruel measures. Machiavelli is not a supporter of cruel measures *per se*. On the contrary; in the first place it is necessary to adopt humane measures, it is necessary always, above all, to test whether it is possible to go about things without resort to the heavy artillery of repression. It is stupid to resort to it in all cases. It was peculiar to feudalism, to Middle Ages' barbarism, to resort to arms in all cases whether appropriate or inappropriate. But we are dealing now with Italy of the Renaissance. Here people were simply more cultured. Therefore, 'the *principe* must strictly think about his words and actions, not to be suspicious without reason and to act with thought and humanity' (*con prudenza ed umanità*). He must strengthen his powers by good

administration and achieve this by such means that the citizens have faith in him.

However, in forming the new state or seizing power it is usually difficult to observe humanity. 'For the new ruler it is impossible to avoid a certain amount of cruelty, because the new state is in full danger.' The state itself is still fragile, it wages a constant struggle for survival against all the old forces. This was well known even in ancient times. Already Dido, with regard to the cruelty of his rule, says in Virgil's *Aeneid*:

*Res dura, et regni novitas me talia cogunt
Moliri, et late fines custode tueri.*

(Harsh necessity and the newness of my kingdom force me to do such things and to guard my frontiers everywhere.)

But if cruel measures are inevitable, they must, as Machiavelli says, be well directed:

We can say that cruelty is used well (if it is permissible to talk in this way of what is evil) when it is employed once and for all, and one's safety depends on it, and then it is not persisted in but as far as possible turned to the good of one's subjects.

This passage drew much high moral censure from later writers, but in it there is nothing bad. It is usual in bourgeois states, even now, for this rule to be ignored. Cruel measures are normally lightly taken and it is very difficult to replace them with more humane ones. It would be very good if the bourgeois governments of the twentieth century observed what Machiavelli recommended in the sixteenth. In the case of incorrect usurpers who seize power (i.e. those who seize power for their own interests, which Machiavelli especially censures), cruel measures should be adopted resolutely and immediately, it is not necessary to drag out their application over a long time, otherwise this will evoke the hatred of the people. It is necessary

to resolve to put into effect all necessary measures of cruelty at one time, so that it will not be necessary to return to them repeatedly and to ensure power for oneself, not hastening to it again and resolving to win over one's subject by benefits conferred.

In general the ruler must not fear a reputation for cruelty in wartime or when he commands a great army: here, discipline is supported by terror, such is the character of people.

However, if a courageous and open struggle is impossible, if the *principe* is too weak to carry it through successfully, he needs to proceed by cunning. The *principe* must learn, says Machiavelli following ancient writers, 'to be a fox in order to recognize traps and to be a lion in order to frighten wolves'. When it is impossible to be a lion, it is necessary to be a fox. In such cases, it is necessary to use diplomacy, fraud and other similar means:

The ruler, and more particularly a new ruler, cannot observe all that which people consider admirable, since often he is compelled – in order to preserve the state – to act against his word, against charity, against humanity, against religion. For that, it is necessary that he should have the character, the ability to change, watching out for this, how fate changes like the wind . . . [He] should not deviate from good if possible, but he should be able to do evil if it is necessary.

He should keep his word whilst he can, but he should breach it if necessary. Chapter 18 of *Il Principe*, headed 'How princes should honour their word', contains further notes, worthy of the world's greatest satirist, documenting how rulers normally act. Here is the most open and almost cynical depiction of state power. Here, as in several other places in *Il Principe*, Machiavelli writes candidly of the fact, about which normally, both before him and after him, rulers and politicians are silent – he lays bare in this way the political wisdom, the secret power, the latter of which was usually called *arcana imperi*. Machiavelli really understood the mainsprings of politics in general, and of bourgeois politics in particular. He understood that politics, which is in essence the implacable struggle of classes, a struggle to the death (*spegner*), to the destruction of the contenders, cannot but be cruel. In such a struggle means such as deceit, breach of promise, etc., are inevitably employed. One sees all this is applied in war and nobody considers it shameful.

However, in adopting such measures, the *principe* must remember that he is constrained by circumstances and can escape from them only as he feels sufficiently strong for an open struggle. The bourgeois character of the dictatorship of the *principe nuovo* is shown very clearly by the fact that Machiavelli demands that the ruler respect the property and personal rights of his citizens. The *principe* 'must not encroach on the property of citizens and subjects, on the honour of their wives'. It is very important, Machiavelli often emphasizes, not to violate the rights of property. And here, he lays bare the entire bourgeois spirit of his contemporaries saying 'people normally sooner forget the death of their

father than the loss of their patrimony' (*dimenticano più presto la morte del padre che la perdita del patrimonio*). It is necessary not only absolutely to avoid violating the rights of property, but it is also necessary to carefully respect the income of that property. Machiavelli considers this question extremely important. The loss by the citizens of their income more than anything else makes the ruler hated. There is yet another point that expresses the bourgeois character of the *principe nuovo's* dictatorship. Under no circumstances must the *principe* conduct a policy of *divide et imperia* – divide and rule – inside the state. A country in which 'internal discord prevails' is soon destroyed. The system of introducing discord into the state itself shows the ruler's weakness. It is harmful. Machiavelli proves this in chapter 20 of *Il Principe* and chapter 27 of book 3 of *Discorsi*. It is very important to connect this with Machiavelli's teaching on class struggle. He considers, as we have already shown, that in all states there is 'discord' (*disunione*), class stratification; always there are two different tendencies (*duoi umori diversi*). One of the ruling class (feudalists, or later the bourgeoisie), the other of the lower classes (to begin with the whole unprivileged population – *popolo*, then *plebe*). These are the natural groupings in all states. By their struggle Machiavelli explains the whole history of Florence. But only such groups are admissible. Others – parties (*parti*), factions (*sette*) i.e. groups inside classes – are harmful. In Florence factions inside the bourgeoisie, the Medici and other groups, led to the state's destruction. Consequently the government lacked a determined character, and became a plaything of this or that group. The *principe nuovo* must struggle against factions and groups. In this respect he must govern as is necessary in all correctly organized (i.e. bourgeois) states. Agreement, order, are necessary for the state to flourish, and the loss of it through the discord of factions and groups, by attempt to encourage it or operate on it – is harmful for the state (i.e. the bourgeois state) in general. In concluding our discussion of the characteristic of the *principe nuovo's* dictatorship it is impossible to avoid the question of Machiavelli's moral outlook. It is well known that he revived political theory in Europe and did this to a significant degree by separating politics from religion and morality, demonstrating the distinctive social function of each. In his teaching on dictatorship, he subordinates morality to politics.

Machiavelli shows in *Il Principe* what great significance high moral qualities have for the ruler. Of course, it is best of all if the *principe* possesses these qualities: he more strongly attracts the people to himself and increases his authority. However, Machiavelli understands that there is a difference between the ideal ruler and real, existing rulers. For

him the most important quality is truth corresponding to reality (*verità effettuale della cosa*) and not impressions (*immaginazione di essa*) because he sets himself the task to teach what is practically useful. By the way, the gulf between how people live and how they should live is great; whoever inclines away from the study of that which is, for the study of that which ought to be, is more quickly brought to destruction than to salvation. Above all, Machiavelli believed, that people possess many very bad qualities; the semi-animal nature (for example, the centaur); the cruelty of their former life; the corrupting influence of the feudal order; and the Catholic religion – all these instil in them many lowly terrors and feelings. Therefore, ‘the person wishing in our day to be in all respects good, is ruined amongst the majority of the people, who are not good’. Thus he is obliged to be a fox only because he is surrounded by traps, and a lion because he is beset by wolves. From this, it follows that the ruler who wishes to remain in power must ‘learn how to be bad and to utilize or not to utilize this ability depending on the demands of necessity’ (*imparare a poter esse non buono ed usarlo e non usarlo secondo la necessita*). What is the real sense of this reasoning? In so far as in political struggle one clashes with bad people and the ruler is required to adopt sometimes bad methods, even if he himself is truly good, he is obliged in cases of necessity to behave cruelly or dishonourably because otherwise he will be dispatched to the other world, he will be vanquished or he will be expelled from power. Such is the character of political struggle in our time. This is Machiavelli’s reasoning. On the other side, the ruler himself is not always good. If he does not possess those qualities that are highly valued by the people, he must be sufficiently intelligent to avoid those vices which might cause him to lose power, with other things it is not so terrible. From this point of view, Machiavelli comes to his own basic conclusion: ‘if it is good to investigate this question, there are things which seem good but lead to destruction and others which seem vices and the result of them is security and a boon to the ruler.’ Therefore, one should not worry to be reputed, for example, miserly for the state. But of course the question of the ruler’s reputation is very important. If he lacks the requisite qualities he must make a show of possessing them. There are qualities which sometimes it is even expedient to pretend one does not possess than to have in reality. It is usually demanded of rulers that they possess to overflowing charity, truth to their word, sincerity, humanity, piety. But in reality it is not always necessary to have these five qualities. In all cases if he possesses them ‘it is necessary to educate oneself so that when they seem unnecessary one is able to turn them into their opposite’. Thus,

all rulers must be able to feign (*simulare*) and dissimulate (*dissumulare*). An excellent knowledge of the diplomatic arts, which are sealed in the many *Legazioni* (Machiavelli's letters and reports connected with his diplomatic missions), is displayed also in his discourses. Bourgeois states brought with them a new specific form of diplomacy that far excelled the feudal states – just as the bourgeois army excelled the feudal militia. On this diplomacy the specific features of capitalism could not but have an impact, through the development of exchange, the ability to manoeuvre on the market, and capitalist competition. All these traits laid a clear imprint also on Machiavelli's politics and morality. From this, it is evident that a bourgeois revolution does not lose its bourgeois character, and that as well as propagating freedom, equality, humanity, respect for the rights of the person, etc. there is brought in the spirit of competition, stock-jobbing, speculation and swindling. Machiavelli very objectively and with quiet irony mirrors all these specific traits of bourgeois politics, and, in answer to the cries of indignant moralists, points to innumerable modern examples that confirm this truth (*infinita esempi moderni na verità effectuale della cosa*).

The ruler must always subordinate his religious and moral scruples to his political tasks. Morality is that which conforms to the interests of the new state that is organized by the *principe nuovo*. Therefore, the most important thing for him is to be able to use circumstances, to adjust to changing circumstances, to be able to orientate to events, to utilize chance in order to get close to his main goal. Pope Alexander VII and his son Cesare Borgia were noteworthy in that they were able in the complex interweaving of accidents to be experts of chance (*conoscitori della occasione*) and they utilized these chance events magnificently (*la sappiano usare benissimo*).

A basic, unquestionably necessary, quality of the 'new ruler' building a 'new state' is patriotism. Famously, *Il Principe* concludes with an intense call for the liberation and unification of Italy, which is unexpected coming from such a sober politician and satirist as Machiavelli. This summons, which Edgar Keene called the Marseilles of the sixteenth century, is literally historic. Machiavelli served this idea all his life, which was reflected in this appeal, and down the centuries it inspired all Italian patriots as well as friends of Italy such as Goethe and Byron. For centuries the mass of the people struggled for it without success and only after the passage of more than three centuries was it accomplished. The idea of creating a unified Italy was to guide the ideal Italian *principe nuovo*, whom Machiavelli long searched for and did not find. Such a *principe* must be 'a man with a strong spirit, not lapsing into resigna-

tion, able by his energies and courage to support the spirit of the people', then he in turn 'not fearing the people, but entrusting himself to them, he builds on firm foundations'. Such is this original, complete but still fresh idea of a unified Italy.

Machiavelli examines the power of the new ruler who builds the new state, as the power of transition to bourgeois democracy he does not consider power as his ideal, not including it in his programme, but looking at it as a tool for realizing and consolidating democratic regimes according to well-known strategy and tactics. We are firmly convinced that, for Machiavelli, the *principe nuovo's* power is a temporary power. It is true that Machiavelli distinguishes between republican dictatorship, the ancient Roman official magistrates, elected as 'dictator' for a period by the people in exceptional cases for carrying out extraordinary measures, and the power of the *principe nuovo* dictator who has seized power or who has received it by any means for an unspecified time and who establishes a new state. Nonetheless, the *principe nuovo's* power must be temporary. Establishing a new state with equality of citizenship, with a national army, strengthening himself and overcoming the opposition of the feudalists and the church the *principe nuovo* must surrender his power and yield place to normal, democratic elected power.

In chapter 9, book 1 of *Discorsi*, Machiavelli expresses this thought with the greatest clarity. He says:

The founder of the state must be so wise and virtuous that taking power he must not transfer it to another as an inheritance, since people are more inclined to evil than to good and his heir may use it in the interest of personal, vainglorious power which he himself used virtuously (*virtuosamente*).

Moreover, although one person may build a state, it will not be long lasting if it is preserved with the help of only one. Thus, as we know, a state regime is good only when it is supported and preserved by the majority of the citizens, the entire mass of the people. 'The mass (*molti*) are unable to institute a state order because, according to general opinion, they are not able to understand its good side, but once experiencing good order in practice they do not agree to it disappearing.' Thus, the further preservation of the new regime must be transferred wholly into the hands of the popular masses.

Machiavelli does not idealize the people. He knew that the mass of the people have little consciousness, little political development, some-

times wavering and timid; people are sooner bad than good and, in the main, they are usually unable to be either very bad or very good. But, nevertheless, if we take the people as a whole it is in all states better than a minority, than its part, whether it is an aristocracy, an oligarchy or even the party of the Medici. All privileged groups are dangerous since they strive to monopolize all power, at the same time the intelligence and all other forces that they have is always less than that which is possessed by the people as a whole. We see by such conditions that Machiavelli establishes the basis of democracy.

Moreover, the popular masses are inferior to the personal ruler in only one respect; they themselves cannot light upon innovations and immediately carry them into effect, thus to found a state or to radically reform it requires one person, the *principe nuovo*. But he must in all his actions, as we have seen, operate on the people. In all other respects, using Machiavelli's words, 'the multitude (*la moltitudine*) is more intelligent and more constant than is a prince'. Such a heading is noted in chapter 58, book 1 of *Discorsi*. Here, Machiavelli openly speaks against 'all historians' writing before him, and we can say against the majority of those who wrote after him, in defence of the people. He declares that 'the defects for which writers have judged the mass are possessed by people in general and above all by rulers'. He also adds that 'rulers of the state have been quite numerous, but the virtuous and intelligent amongst them have been few'. With the people things stand otherwise. From the history of Rome we see that the people in general and as a whole in the course of centuries conducted themselves correctly, they raised power when it was necessary in the interests of the general good and challenged strong individuals when they oppressed them.

If we take any people and compare it with any individual ruler, then we must recognize that the people in all respects are better. The people legislates better, it chooses magistrates better, it is more considered and consistent, more objective, it observes agreements better, etc. Carrying through systematically this comparison Machiavelli gives an interesting model of the study of mass psychology, and he sharply objects against the establishment in this field of views critical of the masses, the people, and protests against deference to authority. For us, perhaps the most interesting is the following note:

if the general opinion is unfavourable to the people, then this arises because each may scandalize about it without hindrance and without dread, even when it exercises dominion; about individual rulers, they

come to speak with thousands of fears and thousands of backward glances.

This is profoundly true also for our own times.

On the basis of all these considerations and his programme of democratic views, Machiavelli concludes that if a personal dictatorship is necessary in order to establish a new order then it must be only for life, that the dictator, having fulfilled his historical task, must transfer power to the people, who themselves will better cope with administration and preservation of the state. Therefore, precisely in his advice to 'the new ruler', he avoids recommending any measures that would strengthen his power as such, or to return the state to the old hereditary monarchy. Therefore, he advises him not to operate on the nobility (*znat'*), not to establish inequalities, not to create privileges, to organize the army from the citizenry, to arm the people, to operate on the people, to secure its interests, to promote their material benefits. All these measures are intended to prepare and facilitate the transition from personal dictatorship to democracy.

In *The Discourse on the Reform of the Florentine State*, Machiavelli expresses very clearly his thoughts about the provisional nature of personal dictatorship. He proposes here to pope Leo X, as head of the Medici party, to establish in Florence a complex system of administration, in which is combined the personal power of the Medici, the power of the bourgeoisie and that of the simple people. He very diplomatically demonstrates that in the end Florence must be a republic, since feudalism here has been toppled, the feudal aristocracy does not exist, neither are there great economic inequalities, the people are politically developed and are accustomed to liberty. If the people are asked to choose between the Medici and another ruler, they prefer the Medici as their own, but if they are asked to choose between an elected republican head (*capo pubblico*) and some kind of individual ruler (*capo privato*) they prefer the former. Therefore, after some delicate chiding, Machiavelli proposes to Leo X that he establish in Florence during his life a system of personal power so that on his death Florence would transfer from a system of personal rule from the Medici line returning wholly to a republican order. Here again is demonstrated the impossibility of monarchy in a country where there are no feudalists. In France where the feudal ladder was still preserved – king, princes, lords, people – monarchy was possible, in Florence – no.

IV. Machiavelli and tyranny

We can test our interpretation of the *principe nuovo's* power by answering two questions. First, what, in Machiavelli's opinion, should be done

with the *principe nuovo* if he does not give up his power, if his dictatorship is turned from a provisional into a permanent, hereditary one? Second, what is to be done if, in a republic, there appears a *principe nuovo* who seizes all power in his hands? For Machiavelli, there is only one answer to both these questions: it is necessary to kill the tyrant. Here we immediately fall into the chasm of the idea of tyrannicide (*tiranoborcheskii*) of Machiavelli connected with his democratism, his inclination to revolution, by extreme measures, his hatred of feudal monarchy.

The *principe* who forms a new state, becomes a tyrant if he makes his power hereditary, i.e. utilizes it for personal interests. And the founder of a tyranny is as vile as the founder of a republic is virtuous. Machiavelli condemns Caesar for establishing personal power in the Roman republic. He is a tyrant and it is impossible to flatter oneself with the praise which contemporary writers poured on him, since they were unfree.

All tyrants, in Machiavelli's opinion, deserve death. In that stormy time cases of the murder of autocrats were quite frequent. Intrigues and conspiracies were even more commonly hatched. Thus, Machiavelli gives to the latter, as the usual method of fighting against tyranny, a very important place. Besides separate notes in various works, Machiavelli includes in *Discorsi* a whole treatise 'Concerning conspiracy' (chapter 6, book 3).

Machiavelli's chapter on conspiracy is one of those places in his works that can be used both against an autocratic ruler and for his benefit. Above all conspiracies can be hatched not only against a tyrant, but also against a dictator who organizes a new state. Therefore, it was very difficult for Machiavelli to write about conspiracies, particularly as he himself experienced what it means to be suspected of involvement in a conspiracy, he considered this means of struggle to be very risky, and, in part, it was evidently his intention to warn young men of the danger of dabbling in conspiracies. Machiavelli studies mainly conspiracies that have the object of freeing the fatherland from the power of usurpers – tyrants. Machiavelli, of course, was fully sympathetic with this aim. Such was the conspiracy of Brutus and Casius against Caesar and many other ancient conspiracies. Against such conspiracies the tyrant has one means – to give up tyranny, but since no one has ever done this, then they for the most part come to a bad end. In the words of Juvenal, few tyrants die a 'dry death', i.e. without the loss of blood. Machiavelli repeats the opinion of ancient writers, that rarely do we meet with an aged tyrant.

Elsewhere in *Discorsi*, Machiavelli points out that in extreme cases the tyrant has two means of averting conspiracies. First, to win the popu-

larity of the people, to annihilate the aristocracy and generally all those who, before his time, oppressed the people. Thus, Clearchus of Heraclea 'cut to pieces all the aristocracy to the greatest satisfaction of the people and its supporters'. The second means is to restrict the tyranny. The tyrants must understand that only a few of the people seek power, the majority wishes freedom, to live in security. The first can be deprived of life or satisfied by means of various honours, whilst the majority of the people can be easily satisfied by institutions and laws that 'reconcile the power of the *principe* with general security'.

If the people are convinced that the *principe* does not break these laws, the people are pacified. Here, Machiavelli gives the example of France, where the king's power is circumscribed by 'innumerable laws'. We see that in the latter case Machiavelli again leads the question back to the abolition of personal dictatorship. If the tyrant does not give up power, which he has made his affair, he may save himself only by limiting his powers, i.e. replacing dictatorship with something similar to a constitutional monarchy.

Returning to conspiracy, we note Machiavelli's instructions touching their organization and successful realization. To organize a conspiracy there must be people who have access to the court, or are the best friends of the ruler. Great care is needed in the choice of conspirators. This is difficult because conspiracy is the most difficult undertaking, and a person who is experienced in all respects may lose his nerve when matters come to its implementation. Therefore, as few people as possible should be involved in the conspiracy. The secret of the conspiracy can be kept if only three or four people are informed; the rest can be informed only at the very moment of its realization 'in order not to give them time to betray the conspiracy'. It is best only to trust one individual since if he betrays, one can deny everything. It is necessary as far as possible utterly to avoid the dangers of correspondence. The plan of the conspiracy should not be quickly changed, because this may confuse the participants. The one chosen to carry out the undertaking should be chosen very carefully, not relying too much on anyone, since it is not clear how much courage any individual possesses.

The conspiracy has one very valuable virtue, that

for a personal ruler there is nothing more harmful than conspiracy because if there is a conspiracy on his life he is either destroyed or he is defamed. If he succeeds they die, if he discovers them and destroys the conspirators everyone remains convinced that this was

the invention of the ruler himself, striving to quench his greed and cruelty by the blood and property of those who were executed.

Machiavelli ends the chapter on conspiracies with advice to republics and to rulers on how to put down conspiracies, because amongst the latter there are those who strive to harm the state: some of these Machiavelli calls bluntly nasty business (*cattivita*). Above all it is necessary to uncover the whole character of the conspiracy. Then, if it is strong, he should not give a hint that he has discovered it, until everything is prepared for its suppression. He should not frighten the conspirators or arrest any of them before time, because this may provoke their actions. If the conspiracy is weak he should crush it swiftly. Two tried methods (*termine usati*) should be avoided: first, to execute informers in order to show that he does not believe in the possibility of conspiracy; second, to allow somebody supposedly to organize a conspiracy against him in order to check up on unreliable individuals. Both means are dangerous: the first frightens all informers and means that conspiracies may not be uncovered and that they achieve their aim; the second may lead to the provocateur himself being turned into a real conspirator who may more easily achieve his aims.

In spite of all this, in reality, very sensible and sound advice, Machiavelli considers the conspiratorial tactic too dangerous and difficult. With the feeling of some disappointment he writes, giving advice that 'the people usually little understand these matters and make the greatest mistakes especially in matters such as this which is the most exceptional [*istraordinario*].' At the same time the tyrant, as a 'bad ruler' (*i principe non buoni*), always fears that such intrigues are against them, of which they fully are worthy by their deeds. Therefore Machiavelli repeatedly urges the organizers of conspiracies to take the greatest care. Evidently Machiavelli believed that this means of struggle should be adopted only in exceptional cases and then only when open struggle against the autocrat is completely impossible. Here, he again expresses his thoughts about open and courageous policy that, in the end, it is better than all others.

In his *Florentine Histories*, Machiavelli describes various conspiracies and actions of the masses, and repeats his assessment of conspiratorial methods with extensive factual material. Sometimes, he notes, conspiracies work to the benefit of the planned victim, who, in cases of failure, comes out of the affair even stronger.

A similar and very interesting analysis is presented by Machiavelli in his book 8 of *Florentine Histories* of the conspiracy of Pazzi, as a result

of which, in church during the holy service, Guilio Medici was murdered and Lorenzo the Magnificent was wounded. At precisely the same time, there was the conspiracy of Sola in Milan, which ended in the murder of the local duke Gaezzio Sforza, in which the conspirators counted on a rising of the people. They wished to kill the tyrant in the name of the people, they dreamt of eternal honour as liberators of the fatherland. One of the participants in the Sola conspiracy, Dzhivolamo Ol'dzhali, at the time of his execution said, when he was under the axe: '*mors acerba, fama perpetua, stobit retus memoria facti*' (death is cruel, honour eternal, the memory of our action will live long).

Machiavelli highlights the fact that in both cases the people did not rise to help the conspirators. In vain the supporters of Pazzi in the moment of their attack on Medici cried 'the people! freedom!' The people did not rise. 'The wealth and liberality of the Medici made the people deaf, and freedom was unknown in Florence.' The oligarchic rule of the Medici deprived the people of the knowledge of what a free life was.

Evidently Machiavelli's attitude to risings as methods of political struggle is quite different to his attitude to conspiracy. In his history he detains us with descriptions of several uprisings in Florence and other Italian states. The most interesting is his description of the rising of the *ciompi*. The path of mass movements, mass actions, is the natural path for all states in so far as they undermine feudal powers and transfer to bourgeois democracy. This path, generally speaking, is the most expedient because only in clashes of classes; in their struggle is born political freedom and the people themselves have to shape their own destiny. Machiavelli understands the significance of organization and leadership: in *Florentine Histories*, he shows how the popular movement organizes itself; in *Discorsi* he speaks of the fact that the popular masses in rebellion must make somebody from their midst a leader (*ha subito a fare infra se medesima un capo*). This leader must be advanced from the people itself, by which Machiavelli all the time supposes that the natural leaders of the people must be representatives of the bourgeoisie. Such a leader, acquiring authority and force, may become a *principe nuovo* if the people are to complete a revolution and create a new political order. Here, Machiavelli notes the forms of political movements, the peculiar revolutions of the bourgeois epoch, the revolutions of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries in western Europe. Despite all the progress of our time even from his own epoch Machiavelli can be completely modern, for example, his advice in *The Discourse on the Reform of the Florentine State*, which we have already quoted. In proposing to establish obliga-

torily elections to the people's council, he recommends that plenipotentiary powers be given to a special individual to count the votes, who may by several means add the necessary number of ballot papers in the urn (ballot box) with the names of the people who are advantageous for government, not having, in that time, the right to take out the ballot papers from the urn, he is able to choose for himself plenipotentiaries for participation in presenting of the ballot papers. One could speculate that modern American activists of election campaigns have learnt a little of their trade from Machiavelli.

Such was the theory of dictatorship of Machiavelli, who proposed the full transformation of feudal into bourgeois society. Therefore, we can with full justification examine it as the closest forerunner of the bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, which in the struggle with the remnants of feudalism attempted to institute a revolutionary dictatorship.

History, as we know, proceeded not so quickly and not in such a unilinear course as the Florentine secretary imagined. The bourgeois revolution in Italy was destroyed by the Catholic reaction. In other countries it proceeded by means of reformation, i.e. compromise between feudal and bourgeois society. Only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries did the bourgeoisie attempt to carry through a radical bourgeois overturn (*perevorot*) in the sense that Marx understood in characteristic revolutions of that time. The dictatorship of the *principe nuovo* was, in fact, realized in the form of absolutism. It took on some of the traits of revolutionary bourgeois dictatorship in the very beginning, in the moment of the struggle with the feudalists and the Catholic Church for the interests of merchant capital, but soon it transformed itself into a typical expression of feudal-capitalist compromise in the semi-feudal, noble, serf-owning monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Thus, the advice of Machiavelli was utilized by monarchical literature in its own interests, and thus itself created the favourable basis for the legend of Machiavelli, the monarchist and defender of tyranny.

Machiavelli's political theory is sometimes crude and primitive, his philosophy and sociological views suffer from a certain rationalism, locked up in the limits of teaching concerning the immutable character of human nature and about social cycles of development, but this should not prevent us from seeing the most valuable things in him, the original formulation of the theory of bourgeois revolutionary dictatorship.

Other works by Maksimovskii

In 1929 Maksimovskii published 'Extracts from the Works of Machiavelli' in the work *Archives of K. Marx and F. Engels*, edited by David Ryazanov. These 21 extracts from Machiavelli's *The Discourses*, Marx had transcribed into his notebook (see chapter 2). Maksimovskii provided an introductory article on Machiavelli's views.⁴ In 1930, in the same publication, Maksimovskii published a review of three new books on Machiavelli, by Orestes Ferrara, Giuseppe Prezzolini and L. Vignal, published to mark the 400th anniversary of Machiavelli's death. Here again Maksimovskii contrasted the progressive revolutionary bourgeois dictatorships of the sixteenth century and the reactionary bourgeois dictatorships of the twentieth century, as exemplified by Mussolini.⁵ In these articles Maksimovskii repeatedly insists that for Machiavelli personal dictatorship was only a temporary expedient, and that power should be quickly handed back to the people. Dictatorship was not an ideal form of government: 'such a form of power does not smell of roses.' In this, Maksimovskii also noted Machiavelli's strong defence of tyrannicide.

In 1929, again in the *Archives K. Marx and F. Engels*, Maksimovskii published a lengthy article on the political ideas of Giambattista Vico.⁶ This was a scholarly piece, drawing partly on the work of Michelet and Croce, which indicated Marx's indebtedness to Vico, and Vico's debt to Machiavelli. In considering Vico's ideas on the cyclical nature of social development, Maksimovskii hints at contemporary events. In human development Vico saw autocratic rule giving way to democratic rule, but the latter, in turn, heralding a state of anarchy, which again is overcome by autocracy.

In 1933 the Academy of Science's journal published a two-part article by Maksimovskii on Machiavelli's view on society and class. He credited Machiavelli with being the first to formulate the idea of class struggle as one of the main driving forces in human history. These two articles add little to what he had said earlier. What was new was the elaboration of Machiavelli's view of the cyclical development of society; from monarch to oligarch; from oligarchy to democracy; from democracy to anarchy.⁷ Maksimovskii quotes from Machiavelli's *The Discourses* to the effect that a state in a condition of 'commotion', when it lacks strength and counsel, can easily fall under the dominance of neighbouring, better organized states.⁸ Stalin's dictatorship could thus be justified with reference to both Machiavelli's and Vico's views on the cyclical nature of historical development. In one of the few reviews, M.

A. Gukovskii rebuked Maksimovskii for 'idealizing the ways of a weak, cunning, irresolute cabinet secretary of the Florentine republic'.⁹

The publication of this work must have had the approval of Pokrovskii. Maksimovskii may have also enjoyed high-level protection from his links with the old Left Communists. Pokrovskii died in 1932, and from 1934 onwards his general view of Russian history came under attack. In 1936 Maksimovskii published a popular account of Colo di Rienzo, the organizer of a popular rebellion in Italy in the fourteenth century, which was inspired by the dream of recreating the glories of ancient Roman Republic and Empire.¹⁰ This was his last published work. Maksimovskii died in 1941. The circumstances of his death are uncertain.

Maksimovskii's views are less crude than those of Durdenevskii and display a more subtle understanding of Machiavelli's thoughts. Their aim was to warn of the dangers of tyranny. It is a remarkable example of what could still be said in print in the USSR in 1929–33. Maksimovskii's work deserves more attention. He provided an exposition of the powerful intellectual influences of Machiavelli and Vico on Marx, which, at the time, was quite new, and one that has not been improved on since.

The article 'The Idea of Dictatorship in Machiavelli' was a bold attempt to appropriate Machiavelli as a democrat, a progressive thinker, and one sympathetic to revolutionary ideas, particularly regarding the destruction of the feudal order. It describes Machiavelli as 'the world's greatest satirist', and, in the tradition of Rousseau, Maksimovskii presents *The Prince* as an exposé of the methods of tyrants. The date of publication of the article is significant, coinciding as it did with Stalin's 50th birthday. It offers an elaborate, intellectually coherent, justification of personal dictatorship, with Stalin depicted as the *principe nuovo*, although, in some cases, the parallel has to be forced, especially where he speaks of the prince's role in centralizing state control over the economy.

The vision of Machiavelli's dictator, as outlined by Maksimovskii, has echoes of Nietzsche's superman. Maksimovskii clearly shared Machiavelli's (and Nietzsche's) admiration for Cesare Borgia. The discussion on Machiavelli's views on deceit and deception in politics recalls Preobrazhenskii's discussion on morality and class norms. There are, however, aspects of Machiavelli's views that might cause further concern; the defence of the public denunciation of officials, advanced against the background of a witch-hunt against 'bourgeois specialists'. What is perhaps more obvious and more significant is that Machiavelli's prince is a proponent of 'revolution from above', as Engels applied the

concept to Bismarck, and, by inference, a model for Stalin. Implicit in this was the recognition of the exhaustion of 'revolution from below'.

Maksimovskii's article is also a commentary on the Stalinist regime. He highlights the democratic aspects of Machiavelli's thought and his espousal of tyrannicide, and focuses on his discussion on conspiracy and risings. He stresses the temporary nature of dictatorship, that dictatorship can only be justified for consolidating the new state. He cites Machiavelli's strictures about those who openly speak of the political incompetence of the masses, but 'about individual rulers they come to speak with thousands of fears and thousands of backward glances'. He stresses the way aristocracies sometimes promote princes to advance their own interests, an echo of Durdinevskii's allusion to Stalin having been advanced by the *nomenklatura*, and by implication to Trotsky's conception of Stalinism as Bonapartism. Maksimovskii's strictures on the corruption of election procedures in the USA could with greater force be applied to the USSR.

Through a discussion of Machiavelli's ideas, it was possible, with great freedom, to speak of the contemporary situation in Russia, to highlight the impact of revolutionary shock (*potryasenie*), the regime's insecurity, and its disillusionment with the proletariat as a dependable base of support. Maksimovskii cites Machiavelli on the need for the regime to orientate itself on the masses and to distrust those who occupy command positions in the new society. But whilst the masses are presented as more competent than individual rulers, there is also a view of the masses as being often inert, conservative and malleable.

Maksimovskii presents Machiavelli as the political thinker who anticipated absolutism. The French philosopher Louis Althusser, whose ideas closely mirror Maksimovskii's, outlines the same view in a posthumous work *Machiavelli and Us*. However, European absolutism, with the hypostasis of the figure of the monarch and the bureaucratization of state structures, does not conform to Machiavelli's conception of politics. His admiration of republican government, his commitment to a citizens' militia, and his hatred of feudal and clerical power sit uncomfortably with the notion of absolutism.¹¹

Maksimovskii's defence of personal dictatorship through historical analogy needs to be appraised critically. The question as to whether the system of oligarchic rule under Lenin could not have continued is not addressed. It might be argued that Stalin's dictatorship arose not from objective factors, but rather from Stalin's ambition to secure absolute power for himself. Alternatives to personal dictatorship are never seriously considered, and within the terms of a discussion of Machiavelli's

ideas this was not possible. More seriously for Maksimovskii's analysis, and for Machiavelli's ideas in general, there are two fundamental objections. First, under what circumstances can dictatorship provide the basis for democracy? Second, can a clear distinction be drawn between dictatorship and tyranny?

That a leading former oppositionist should have published such views on Machiavelli, and, by implication, about Stalin, was especially significant. Maksimovskii was able to exploit fully the ambiguities and tensions in Machiavelli's thought, but he walked a tightrope between justifying Stalin's personal dictatorship and warning against tyranny. These articles served a dual purpose, both to flatter Stalin, and, at the same time, as part of a 'literary struggle' to mobilize opinion against the consolidation of a tyrannical regime. In using Machiavelli, the author could also fall back on the defence that only tyrants would oppose the publication of such views. Where he was critical, Maksimovskii could legitimately claim that he was acting only as the prince's wise counselor. But these criticisms could also be interpreted as having a much more subversive intent.

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Stalin and Machiavelli 3

From 1929 to 1933 Stalin's personal dictatorship was firmly consolidated. The celebration of his 50th birthday in December 1929 led to an outpouring of effusive praise. The establishment of the dictatorship was underlined by a dramatic decline in the formal meetings of the Politburo and Secretariat, especially notable from January 1933 onwards.¹ At the same time Stalin's personal standing suffered a major blow; he was held responsible for the disaster of collectivization, and the famine of 1932–3. This created a major crisis within the party, reflected in the emergence of various opposition groups – for example, the Syrtsov–Lominadze group of 1930, and the Smirnov–Tolmachev–Eismont group of 1932. In 1932 the Ryutin platform, with its bitter attack on Stalin, which Kamenev and Zinoviev had helped to revise, was circulated. In 1932 Stalin's wife committed suicide. In these circumstances of uncertainty, Stalin's position was itself in question, with rumours of intrigues to remove him from office or to curtail his powers as party General Secretary.

Kamenev's preface to Machiavelli

L. B. Kamenev was a member of Lenin's Politburo, a leader of the Joint Opposition against Stalin in 1926–7, but thereafter lost his position. In 1932 he was accused of having read the Ryutin platform, with its scathing denouncement of official policy and its demand that Stalin be removed as party General Secretary, without reporting it. This placed him in disfavour with Stalin. The Menshevik émigré historian Boris Nicolaevsky, in his 'Letter of an Old Bolshevik', argued that in 1933–4 a strong mood for reconciliation developed within the Soviet

Communist Party. As a result Maxim Gorky arranged a private meeting of reconciliation between Stalin and Kamenev. It was said that Kamenev gave Stalin his 'word of honour' to desist from any more oppositional activity. In return, he was given charge of the Academia publishing house and was promised important political work in the near future.

Accordingly Kamenev was allowed to address the Seventeenth Party Congress and his speech presented a 'theoretical' justification for the need for a personal dictator.² He sought forgiveness for his past political opposition. The current epoch, he asserted, was the 'epoch of Stalin' in communist construction, no less significant than the epoch of Lenin. It was incumbent on all party members to uphold his authority. Their success and future success was dependent on 'absolute confidence in the commander'. Now he declared 'discipline and subordination to the centre and to the will of the party is the first law'.³

Kamenev's spell as Soviet ambassador to Italy in 1926–7 may have given an impetus to his interest in Machiavelli. In 1934 the Academia publishing house, under his leadership, published volume one of a planned collection of Machiavelli's works in a series on Italian literature.⁴ The volume went to press on 25 November 1933 and must have been published by the middle of 1934. It was issued with a print run of a mere 5,300 and at a price of 8 rubles. Like other volumes in the Academia series, this was beautifully produced, with wonderful illustrations. Kamenev wrote the preface, and a lengthy, but uncontroversial, article on Machiavelli's life and times was provided by the distinguished scholar of Italian history and literature A. K. Dzhivelegov.

The published volume contained *The Prince*, *The Life of Castruccio Castracane* and two pieces never before published in Russian – the account of how Cesare Borgia (Duke Valentino) destroyed his enemies at Senigallia, and the account of the rising of the population of Valdikian. It included the comedies *Mandragora*, *Belfagor* and some of Machiavelli's poems and diplomatic reports. Another two volumes were planned, containing *The Discourses* and *The Florentine Histories*. These two volumes never appeared.

Already Maksimovskii had used Machiavelli to warn against the dangers of tyranny. Kamenev used Machiavelli in much the same vein. Significantly Robert C. Tucker, in his biography of Stalin, notes: 'It is reported that he [Stalin] spent many hours during his Siberian exile poring over a copy of that classic manual of the advice for the power-seeker, Machiavelli's *The Prince*'.⁵ The source for this is given as Boris I. Nicolaevsky, whose source, in turn, was none other than Kamenev, who

in 1916–17 was in exile with Stalin in Achinsk. Here, we reproduce the preface.⁶

Preface to Machiavelli

Lev Kamenev

The inclusion of the works of Niccolo Machiavelli in the series of volumes published by 'Academia' needs no justification. The episodes that inspired Machiavelli's works, the works themselves (propagandist, historical, fictional), the bitter disputes which raged around his name for centuries afterwards – all these are major events in the cultural history of Europe. The Soviet reader who comes across, as he is bound to do, references to Machiavelli in historical studies, in current editorials in the press ('Machiavellism', 'Machiavellian politics', etc.) and in literary works, rightly wants an opportunity to read the actual, original texts of the secretary of the Florentine Republic in the sixteenth century. The 'Academia' edition is intended to meet this need.

In an excellent study specially written for this volume, A. K. Dzhivelegov outlines Machiavelli's life and the historical circumstances which influenced his work. The fate of Machiavelli's ideas and works after his death falls outside the scope of this study. In fact their destiny was remarkable and revealing. A study of the attitudes displayed by different groups in European society towards Machiavelli over a period of four centuries (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries), in the course of which his work was the object of constant attention on the part of politicians, propagandists and historians, would provide the richest and most varied material for a history of the ideological terms of the class struggle, from the overthrow of feudalism to the era of the proletarian revolution. We can only venture a few remarks in this connection here.

In spite of accepted terminology, the importance of Machiavelli does not lie in his 'theory' or 'political system'. He has, in fact, neither 'theory' nor 'system', in the sense of a deeply considered and fully developed doctrine of society, or even of the state. He had no gift for profound philosophical enquiry, nor for grand sociological generalizations. His real talent is that of the political publicist writing on urgent contemporary issues, or on past events as recorded by historians of the ancient world. In either case his aim is to have direct, immediate influence on the political events of his time. In either case his 'theoretical judgements' and his professional reports really amount to the same thing – a record of the first-hand observations of one whose position was close to the real centre of the struggle for power.

The social content of power, its social determination, interested him very little. Whether power was in the hands of Alexander VI or Cesare Borgia or Prince Orsini or the Duke of Urbino, in the final analysis its content remained virtually unchanged. Machiavelli's primary concern is with the actual process of the struggle for power. His most famous work, *The Prince*, is not a study of the changing social groups that have won power, and the conditions and significance of these changes; it is concerned with the *mechanism* of the struggle for power within one narrow group, in the period of the transition from feudalism to capitalism.

Of course, Machiavelli's work bears the impress of a major historical force: the drive to create a powerful, national and essentially bourgeois state in Italy, by the systematic destruction of the complex of independent feudal, semi-feudal and commercial communes, republics and dukedoms. But in Italy at the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century this idea had to fight its way (and at the time it was unsuccessful) through the inextricable confusion of countless myriads of powerful and petty Italian rulers incessantly warring against each other. It is the political *practices* made up of these innumerable clashes that receives open formulation in Machiavelli's treatise.

He was a master of political aphorism and a dialectician of brilliance, who, from his observations, had come to the firm conclusion that all concepts and all criteria of good and evil, of the permissible and the impermissible, of the lawful and criminal, were relative. Machiavelli made his book an astonishingly acute and expressive catalogue of the rules that a prince of that period had to follow in order to win power and to retain it victoriously in the face of all attempts to wrest it from him. This was far from being a sociology of power, but from his recommendations there emerges a magnificent picture of the zoological features of the struggle for power in a slave society, in which a rich minority ruled over a toiling majority. Thus, by accident or design the secretary of the Florentine bankers, their ambassador at the papal court, set off a shell of such tremendous explosive force that it disturbed the peace of mind of rulers for centuries afterwards.

In Machiavelli's work there is not the slightest mention of religious or metaphysical 'essence' of the state, not a word about a 'divinely chosen' ruler – even of the papal domain – not one reference to the 'will of the people', to the 'laws of history', or to the 'interests of humanity'. This servant of the Florentine oligarchy was not afraid to look at the political reality of his time and to reveal, behind the broad banners and paltry finery, its true countenance: an oppressive class of masters strug-

gling amongst themselves for power over the labouring masses. In one small book he put to scorn the most learned scholars, the authors of innumerable theological, moral and political treatises on the nature of political power, full of references to the philosophy of Aristotle, the tablets of Moses and the precepts of St Paul.

This was magnificent in its naked truthfulness – and therefore frightening. Popes, courtiers, statesmen, kings rushed to attack the secretary of the Florentine oligarchs. The nearer their actions came in practice to his observations the more determined were their attempts to refute his maxims. The secretary of the Order of the Jesuits called him the ‘devil’s partner in crime’, a ‘dishonest writer and an unbeliever’. Apologists for absolute monarchy found his views too strong meat for them, and hastened to announce that ‘there never was a man so devoid of moral scruple as this Florentine’. That typical example of unbridled despotism, the Prussian King Frederick called the Great, wrote a book whose title was ‘Anti-Machiavelli’. Machiavelli’s name came to be used as an epitome of political cynicism by those bent on concealing the real nature of power in feudal and bourgeois society.

In fact the cynicism is not in the words of Machiavelli, but in what they describe. Machiavelli’s book is unprincipled, criminal and harsh only because he resolved, to use Lassalle’s words ‘*aussprechen was ist*’; to express what is. If Machiavelli’s picture of the rulers’ conduct in feudal and bourgeois society could not but provoke consternation and outrage among the rulers, it inevitably also attracted the attention of those who in some way or another shared his critical outlook. ‘We should be grateful to Machiavelli and others like him who openly and without concealing anything described how people normally behaved, and not how they were supposed to behave’, wrote Francis Bacon, the ‘true originator of English materialism and, in general, of the experimental sciences of our time’, as Marx described him. Hegel had the same opinion of the secretary of the Council of the Ten: he categorically refused to tender a moralizing judgement on Machiavelli, and saw in his ‘lack of principles’ and ‘anti-religious’ propaganda only a transcription of the methods of political struggle that inevitably prevailed in that epoch of human history. ‘Machiavelli’, wrote Hegel, ‘established the truly necessary basic principles for the formation of states, principles imposed by the conditions of that period.’

The young Marx wrote down aphorisms from the ‘Examination of Titus Livius’ in the notebooks in which he developed some of the ideas for *The Communist Manifesto*; as a result, he repeatedly reread the works of Machiavelli and pronounced at least some of them ‘magisterial’, ‘genuine masterpieces’. Engels included this ‘devil’s partner in crime’ in

his gallery of the 'giants' of the Enlightenment, the great destroyers of feudal culture whom the founders of scientific socialism held in such great esteem because, in the fulfilment of their historical task, the creation of the new bourgeois state they 'were not limited in a petty bourgeois way' (*Dialectics of Nature*).

The acute perception of the authors of *The Communist Manifesto* detected in the writings of the Florentine secretary the beginning of the theory of the class struggle, and a lucid vision, free from all mysticism or idealism, of the nature of the state and the struggle for power. His was a superbly realist portrait of the political reality of his day. In the words of Machiavelli emperors, popes, kings, lords, bankers and merchants walk without masks, and by their actions confirm the truth of the historical views of the founders of dialectical materialism.

The writings of this publicist of the sixteenth century were an outstanding contribution to the work of discovering the real nature of power in class society, consummated in our own time in the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. For this Machiavelli has a right to the attention of the reader of today.

* * *

Kamenev's preface was well constructed. It recalls Blagosvetlov's advice on working under censorship: 'Be crafty as a serpent and innocent as a dove.'⁷ He presents Machiavelli as the unmasker of the methods of rule of despots, who alone took exception to the circulation of his views, and thus places him in the line of descent of progressive thinkers from the sixteenth century onwards down to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. He emphasized that Machiavelli's work was relevant to feudal and capitalist societies. He had thus established a solid defence for himself.

However, in publishing this work readers could draw their own conclusions, concerning the similarities between Stalin and the prince. In a situation of tight censorship this was a notable achievement. The writing and the reading of such texts in circumstances of tight censorship required quite different skills to those in an open society.⁸ Kamenev refers to Machiavelli as a 'dialectician of brilliance' and it was clear that his work was to be read in this sense. The political meaning for political dissidents was unmistakable. Kamenev repeatedly refers to Machiavelli as 'secretary of the Florentine Republic', 'secretary of the Florentine oligarchs' and 'Florentine secretary', hinting at a parallel with the general secretary. Kamenev's description of Machiavelli as having 'no gift for profound philosophical enquiry – his aim is to have direct, immediate influence on the political events of his time' might be read

as a jab at Stalin's pretensions as a Marxist theoretician. His reference to the 'zoological struggle for power in a slave society', 'an oppressive class of masters struggling amongst themselves for power over the labouring masses' indicates also his intention.

Kamenev's argument that Machiavelli was the exposé of the methods of dictators, rather than an advocate of such methods, harkens back to a tradition represented by Bacon, Rousseau, Hegel and others. Kamenev must have known that scholars studying Machiavelli had largely rejected this viewpoint. He asserts that Machiavelli disapproved of these methods. But the inclusion in this volume of Machiavelli's cold-blooded account of Cesare Borgia's destruction of his enemies at Senagallia, which is recounted with obvious relish, was clearly intended to give the lie to Kamenev's own assertion. The preface's hidden implication is that Stalin is a perfidious schemer, a Machiavelli or a Cesare Borgia, who can only be defeated by resort to the same methods of struggle.

In the volume was included also Machiavelli's 'Life of Castruccio Castracani', which also conveyed its own message about the nature of political struggle. Castruccio Castracani was born a foundling, but was taken up by a powerful *condottiero*, and on the death of his patron became ruler of the Tuscan city of Lucca. He ruthlessly imposed his tyrannical rule over the city, exiled and killed his enemies, and waged bloody war on his neighbours. He died, however, as a result of wounds sustained in battle and before his death transferred the control of the city to his patron's son, for whom he declared he had held it in trust. Machiavelli writes of his cunning and mercilessness: 'He often said that people should use all means and should not waver in this, for God loves strong men, because it is easy to see that he always punishes the weak by means of the strong.'

Kamenev had earlier turned to such literary devices to continue the struggle with Stalin. In 1928 he provided the commentary to three volumes of Chernyshevskii's unpublished works issued to commemorate the centenary of his birth. In it he highlighted the way in which Chernyshevskii had been denied access to the press, a direct parallel with the fate of the anti-Stalin opposition. In another study in 1931 Kamenev underlined Lenin's praise for Chernyshevskii's stance on the plight of the peasants following emancipation, and hinted at a parallel with the peasants under collectivization. Kamenev returned to these two themes in his biography of Chernyshevskii published in 1933.⁹

The book was reviewed by Yu. Spasskii in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in 1935.¹⁰ Spasskii noted that the prince constitutes a kind of abstraction 'of the ideal superman type'. Spasskii complemented A. K. Dzhevelegov

on his introduction but took issue with his depiction of Machiavelli as a spokesman for the interests of merchant capital. Rather Machiavelli should be considered as 'the ideological chief of all the Italian people (*narod*) on its unrealized historical path to a united bourgeois homeland'. Despite these strictures Spasskii added 'Nevertheless, what an amazing, disturbing book . . . has been placed before the Soviet reader.' *The Prince* displays the 'brutish side of young bourgeois society'. But in presenting Machiavelli as a spokesman not just of merchant capital but of the whole Italian people, his significance was greatly enhanced.

In the copies of the volume examined by the author in the Lenin Library, Moscow, Kamenev's preface had been torn out, and his name erased from the title page and the index, as was common practice with disgraced figures in the 1930s.

Campanella

A second publishing venture in which Kamenev was involved in 1934 was an edition of Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun*. Although a savage critic of Machiavelli's atheism and amorality, Campanella, in his *Aforismi politici* (1601), urged the adoption of the crudest Machiavellian tactics. The German scholar Friedrich Meinecke says that Campanella sought to combat 'Machiavellism with Machiavellism'.¹¹ The same observation might be made of Kamenev's relationship to Stalin. But Campanella's vision of society is far more rigid and uniform than that envisaged by Machiavelli, who highlighted the virtue of class conflict in maintaining liberty and preserving the vigour of the state.

In Soviet Russia, Campanella attracted attention as a utopian thinker who anticipated communism, similar to More's *Utopia*. Genkel's translation of *The City of the Sun* was republished in 1918.¹² Stanislav Vol'skii's study, *Foma Kampanella*, was published in Moscow in 1925. Lafargue's *Tomas Kampanella* (first published in Russia in 1898) was republished in Moscow and Leningrad in 1926 in the series *Biblioteka Marksista*, edited by D. Ryazanov on behalf of the Marx–Engels Institute. In his foreword Ryazanov took pains to rebut Croce's criticisms of Lafargue's defence of *The City of the Sun* as a forerunner of modern socialist thought. Ryazanov was also at pains to rebut Croce's claim that Campanella was sympathetic to the Jesuits, citing his comment that the Jesuits 'distorted the pure teaching of the Gospel in order to place it at the service of despotic rulers'.¹³

The City of the Sun (*Gorod Solntsa*) was published in Moscow and Leningrad in January 1934 by Academia. It contained a foreword by

V. P. Vol'gin on 'Campanella the Communist'.¹⁴ Although the foreword gives no hint of this, the contents of the work suggest that it could be read as a satire of the Stalinist state. The work is presented in terms of a dialogue between a mariner and a knight.

Campanella's City of the Sun was a utopian state, governed by a theocratic elite at the head of which was Sun:¹⁵

They have a chief priest, who is called Sun, and in our language one would say Metaphysician; he is the head of all, in matters both spiritual and temporal, and all transactions are concluded by him.

There are three senior officials beside him: Pon, Sin and Mor, which stand for Power, Wisdom and Love.¹⁶

It would be interesting to know who the readers of this book in 1934 identified as Sun's (i.e. Stalin's) deputies. Was Molotov – Wisdom, Kaganovich – Love, and Voroshilov – Power?

It was better to be ruled by a 'learned man'. 'For our Sun, who knows so much, even if he were inept at ruling, would never be cruel, wicked or tyrannical.'¹⁷ Sun, in some respects, resembles Dostoevskii's Grand Inquisitor.

The society was based on hierarchical control by the priesthood with even the minutest details of daily life and economic activity governed by the priests in accordance with their study of astrology. Private property had been abolished, and with it the family had ceased to exist as a social institution, with women held in common. Life was organized on a communal basis.¹⁸ Campanella pays rather obsessive attention to the question of regulating sexual relations, often with hilarious effect. He was also an advocate of eugenics.¹⁹ It is a picture of extraordinary regimentation, distinguished by lack of privacy and a utilitarian approach to sexual relations. The dress code for women was on the strict side: the use of make-up, the wearing of slippers or of long dresses to hide their built up soles, carried the death penalty.²⁰

This was a society based on spying and informing. Those incapable of work were sent to the villages as spies and were to 'inform the state about everything they observe'.²¹ In the organization of agriculture a striking parallel with the situation in the Soviet countryside under collectivization is found: 'Agriculture is held in high esteem and there is not an inch of land which does not yield something . . . They have armed guards on the land, who are continually patrolling the fields.'²²

All learning was under the control of the political authorities:

The principal heads of the sciences are subject to Wisdom, with the exception of the Metaphysician, who is himself Sun and who rules over all the sciences, like an architect, and would be ashamed if there was anything in the field of human understanding which he did not know.²³

In the administration of justice, Sun was the final authority with regard to the death penalty, but executions were to be carried out by all the people in a communal act.²⁴ Extraordinary measures were instituted to achieve social conformity:

The chief priest is Sun, and all the other officials are priests, that is to say, the senior ones, and their office is to purge the consciences of the people. Everyone goes to them to make confession and in this way they learn which sins are most prevalent. They themselves confess to the three principal officials their own sins and also those of others, but only in general, without naming the sinners, and then the three make their confessions to Sun.²⁵

They admit that there is a great deal of corruption in the world and that men are ruled by folly and not by reason, and that the good suffer and the wicked rule: although they call that unhappiness, because a man destroys himself if he shows himself as he is not and pretends to be a king, good, wise, etc. when in fact he is not.²⁶

Surprisingly, the interest in Campanella continued throughout the Soviet era. The Academia edition of *City of the Sun* was republished in 1947 and 1954. In 1956 V. I. Rutenberg's study *Kampanella* was published. A. E. Shtekli's biography *Kampanella* was published in 1959, and republished in 1960, 1966 and 1978. In 1979 there appeared S. L. L'vov's *Grazhdanin Goroda Solntsa* (a poem on Tommaso Campanella). Throughout this period Campanella's vision was presented as a forerunner of modern socialism.

Ignatius Loyola

The German communist writer Gustav Regler, the author of the novel *The Vagabonds of Christ*, in his memoirs recounts another intriguing incident. He had visited Moscow in 1934 for the Congress of Soviet Writers and had met many high-standing officials. Early in 1935, he recounts,

he received a proposal from the Academia publishing house to write a life of Ignatius Loyola 'in the Marxist–Leninist–Stalinist sense'.²⁷ Regler recalls that he visited Moscow in the summer of 1936 to discuss the biography, and in conversation with Kamenev spoke of his aim 'discreetly to underline the parallels between the life of Loyola and that of Lenin, and also the differences in their philosophies'. From a comment made by Kamenev's aide, Regler concluded that what was being asked for was 'a portrait of a tyrant'.²⁸

Regler's recall of the dates of these meetings must be at fault. Kirov was assassinated in December 1934. Kamenev and Zinoviev were both arrested on 16 December. In 1935 they were tried for their role in the assassination and sentenced to imprisonment. Their public life ceased from that moment. In August 1936 Zinoviev and Kamenev were tried a second time and executed. It is difficult to believe that Kamenev should contemplate a biography of Loyola as a means of undermining the authority of Lenin, whom he revered. The notion of a subtle parallel between Lenin and Loyola, as a means of placing the Jesuit label on Stalin makes more sense.

Spinoza

In 1929 Maksimovskii published his article on Marx's notes taken from Machiavelli's *The Discourses*. One of those extracts, which must have raised eyebrows, was the line: 'For a prince who does what he likes is a lunatic, and a populace which does what it likes is unwise'.²⁹ This passage was taken up by Spinoza in support of his argument for absolute power to be balanced by popular power.

In 1935 the State Anti-religious Publishing House, in Moscow, published an edition of Spinoza's work *Theological Political Treatise*.³⁰ Spinoza was influenced by both Machiavelli and Hobbes. To escape this state of nature men contract to establish a state that has absolute authority over its citizens. All rights are lodged in the 'supreme powers', whose central obligation is to secure order and stability. However, Spinoza departs significantly from Hobbes, and argues that there are necessary limits to the sovereign's power. The best state, he asserts, allows its citizens a broad freedom of thought and speech. A republican form of government is best, and democracy is the 'most natural form of government', allowing the people to act as a check on their leaders. There is less danger to fear absurdities in a democratic state, whereas a dictatorship can lead to disaster. The path to political stability lies in constitutional arrangements which 'contain both the rulers and the ruled

so that the ruled [do] not become rebels and the rulers [do] not become tyrants'.³¹

Appraisals of Machiavelli

In prison, according to family sources, Kamenev studied the writings of Xenophon and Titus Livy (the inspiration for Machiavelli's *The Discourses*): the writings of Marx gave him no solace but only increased his brooding.³² Kamenev's preface to the Machiavelli volume was quoted against him at his second trial in 1936. State Prosecutor Vyshinskii declared: 'You, Kamenev, transferred the rules of Machiavelli and developed them to the height of unprincipledness and immorality, modernized and brought them to completion.' Vyshinskii, in underscoring Machiavelli's unprincipled approach to politics, quoted from *The Prince*:

You must know that there are two ways of contending, by law and by force: the first is proper to men; the second to beasts. But because many times the first is insufficient, recourse must be had to the second. A prince must possess the nature of both beast and man.³³

Moreover, Vyshinskii asserted that although 'Machiavelli in comparison with the Trotskyists was a mere puppy, a bumpkin, he was all the same their spiritual teacher.' He poured scorn on Kamenev's assessment of Machiavelli as a 'dialectician of brilliance'.

Vyshinskii's remarks contained a grain of truth: those who had demonstrated the greatest interest in Machiavelli's ideas were Trotsky and other Left Oppositionists, such as Pokrovskii and Maksimovskii. Undoubtedly Kamenev, in publishing *The Prince*, had intended it as part of a literary struggle against Stalin. Vyshinskii's speech set the tone with regard to Machiavelli. The medievalist Brechkevich, in a lecture on Machiavelli, quoted Marx, but failed to mention Vyshinskii's speech and was thereby accused of neglecting the world of politics and of being politically negligent.³⁴ But Machiavelli remained a figure who was still, in many ways, viewed with respect and held in high regard.

In January 1936, Karl Radek published an article on the significance of history for the revolutionary proletariat, in which he argued that historical science had been advanced by the political needs of the emergent bourgeoisie in its struggle with the feudalists. He highlighted the particular contribution of Machiavelli and Hobbes. Machiavelli had been concerned with the unification of Italy and therefore wrote history not from the point of view of morality but from the point of view of

its law-governed nature.³⁵ If historical development is law-governed, it is therefore of no consequence as to whether it conforms to moral precepts.

In *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* of 1938, Machiavelli is described as 'the ideologue of the bourgeoisie' of the sixteenth century, who described with 'the greatest cold-bloodedness and cynicism' the method of governing, justifying the need for force and cunning. To secure power (for the bourgeoisie), it is permissible to employ any means, of cruelty and bloodshed. Machiavelli's teaching on force in politics is now developed by the fascists to justify their open terroristic dictatorship in the interests of imperialism. But the entry also cites Marx and Engels' comments on Machiavelli to underline his standing.³⁶ In 1939 Machiavelli's work *The Art of War* was published in the USSR, under the auspices of the People's Commissariat of Defence, with an introductory article on Machiavelli and his times by Hans Del'bruk. The foreword describes Machiavelli as a patriot who dreamt of uniting Italy.³⁷

Bukharin

In 1933 Nikolai Bukharin published a lengthy discussion, 'Marx's Teaching and its Historical Significance', reviewing Marx's contribution in philosophy, historical materialism, theory of capitalism and his ideas on the dictatorship of the proletariat. The motive behind the work was to vindicate Marx's views against those of modern bourgeois and fascist thinkers, such as H. Kelsen and Carl Schmitt. He rejected Kelsen's assertion that the modern state was not necessarily an instrument of economic exploitation but could also be the embodiment of moral or spiritual values. Such a view had been demystified by classical Indian writers on the state, Machiavelli in *The Prince*, in ideas of '*salus publica*', '*raison d'état*', '*staatsrason*', and by the notion of '*arcana imperi*', or '*arcana dominationis*' ('state secrets'), or so-called 'simulacra', i.e. 'by those decorative-fraudulent institutions of state organizations, which conceals its actual and real function'.³⁸ Here it is evident that Bukharin had also the Stalinist state in view.

Whilst in prison in 1937–8, before his trial and execution, Bukharin wrote various notes, including his *Filosofskie Arabeski*. In these he writes of *City of the Sun* as the 'utopia of the great martyr Campanella' and as 'one of the early swallows of utopian socialism'.³⁹ Machiavelli's conception of politics, he asserted, was constructed on 'a cold and sober accounting of force and means, on a ruthless uncovering and cynical utilization of cynical relations, on the full obliteration of all and every

moral'. This ideal was shaped by the nature of the Italian 'merchant-industrial bourgeoisie' of the time. Machiavelli presented a careful class analysis of his society, and he outlined a 'quite exceptional analysis' of the rising of the *ciompi* (the first workers' rising) in *Florentine Histories*. Machiavelli's views, 'in their way inimitable', and his defence of all means to defend the state, recall, he argues, the Hindu writings of the *Armachasttra* and later writings on *staatsrason*. Hegel and Marx held him in high regard as a political thinker. 'With regard to the norm "the end justifies the means", for the broad movement and simply for attaining victory it is inexpedient, for it disorganizes above all those who adopt it.' This was the socialized practice of a clique or coterie. Machiavelli's dictum should be seen in relation to the politics of his time and not a law of universal application.⁴⁰

Trotsky

In his *History of the Russian Revolution*, the first volume of which was published in exile in 1931, Trotsky reveals an intimate knowledge of Machiavelli. In reflecting on the French Revolution he noted that the French peasants in the 1790s, by destroying the nobility, created the basis for a republic. Trotsky goes on:

A republic with a nobility is not a republic. This was excellently understood by the old man Machiavelli, who in his Florentine exile 400 years before the presidency of Ebert, between hunting thrushes and playing at tric-trac with the butcher, generalised the experience of democratic revolutions, 'Whoever wants to found a republic in a country where there are many nobles, can only do this, if to begin with, he exterminates them all.' The Russian muzhiks were essentially of the same opinion, and they revealed this openly without any 'Machiavellianism'.⁴¹

The expression 'the old man Machiavelli' is an expression of respect and affection for a revered teacher. We might recall Pokrovskii's reference to 'old Machiavelli' or Lenin's reference to 'old Clausewitz'. However, this gives us no clue as to when Trotsky became acquainted with Machiavelli. We have already noted Trotsky's early interest in 'utilitarianism'.

In *Their Morals and Ours* (1938) Trotsky addressed the controversial question of ends and means. The Jesuits, he argued, had never argued that any means were justified if the end was good. Such a position, he argued, was internally contradictory, and was a calumny of the Jesuits

perpetrated by their Protestant and Catholic opponents. The end itself, he argued, determined how the means were judged. Not all means were permissible. At the same time, the same moral standards could not be applied to the oppressors and the oppressed. Moreover, the nature of the class struggle in the transition to socialism determined also the methods that were adopted. There was no eternal morality. He rejected Kant's concept of the categorical imperative. All morality had to be viewed in terms of class interest. The collapse of existing moral systems stemmed from the decay of imperialism.⁴²

To the charge of Jesuitism, Trotsky replied that the Bolsheviks in relation to social democracy were Jesuits – as a fighting, disciplined, heroic organization. What was important was whose class interests they represented. He rejected the charge of 'amoralism' levelled at Lenin, and rejected any notion of equivalence as between Lenin and Stalin, one represented the morality of a revolutionary proletariat (a 'higher human morality'), the other the morality of a bureaucratic caste consolidating its power. In revolution, 'Whoever accepts the ends must accept the means.'⁴³ Revolutions from the standpoint of 'eternal truths' are by their nature 'anti-moral', but only in this way can the contradictions of class society be overcome:

To a revolutionary Marxist there can be no contradiction between personal morality and the interests of the party, since the party embodies in his consciousness the very highest tasks and aims of humanity.

He rejected the charges of 'Machiavellianism' or 'Jesuitism' levelled at himself. To the accusation that the Bolsheviks adopted the doctrine that 'everything is permissible', Trotsky countered that:

That is permissible . . . which *really* leads to the liberation of humanity . . . Permissible and obligatory are those and only those means, we answer, which unite the revolutionary proletariat, fill their hearts with irreconcilable hostility to oppression, teach them contempt for official morality and its democratic echoes, imbue them with consciousness of their own historic mission, raise their courage and spirit of self-sacrifice in the struggle. Precisely from this, it flows that *not* all means are permissible.⁴⁴

At the same time, 'Problems of revolutionary morality are fused with the problems of revolutionary strategy and tactics.' 'Dialectical materi-

alism does not know dualism between means and ends. The ends flow naturally from the historical movement.⁴⁵ Whilst it was wrong to dupe the masses, he added that it was also wrong to 'idealize' the masses.

Trotsky's close ally of 1920, Victor Serge, in 1936 denounced Stalinism proclaiming 'it is untrue, a hundred times untrue that the end justifies the means.' In the struggle for socialism, he argued, certain things were more important than tactical considerations – respect for man, defence of the truth, defence of free thought. Trotsky, in *The Moralists and Sycophants against Marxism* (1939), bitterly attacked his old ally, not least for his suggestion that the seeds of Stalinism may have lain in Leninism. In response, Serge condemned Trotsky for 'an absolute conviction of the possession of the truth' which brooked no contradiction.⁴⁶ In overthrowing the capitalist order the proletariat had to be free itself of 'the fictions of religion, "democracy", and transcendental morality – the spiritual chains forged by the enemy to tame and enslave it'. Trotsky declared: 'Only that which prepares the complete and final overthrow of imperialist bestiality is moral, and nothing else. The welfare of the revolution – that is the supreme law.'⁴⁷ In this, he echoed Plekhanov of 1903.

In his views on morality Trotsky outlined the same position as that taken by Lenin and Preobrazhenskii, although he appears to be unfamiliar with their work.⁴⁸ The American philosopher John Dewey, in an article 'Ends and Means', took strong issue with Trotsky arguing that Trotsky's view of 'class struggle as the law of historical change' rendered all discussion about the morality of means meaningless, and ruled out of court any possible rational assessment of alternative means of attaining the same end.⁴⁹

In a short article in the magazine *Life* in 1939 Trotsky called Stalin 'The super Borgia in the Kremlin'.⁵⁰ Trotsky, in the introduction to his political biography of Stalin, uncompleted at his assassination in 1940, noted a striking similarity between the Renaissance and the twentieth century; they were both periods of transition, 'epochs of violent social struggles free of traditional moral constraints, epochs of life and death struggles'. The twentieth century exceeded the Renaissance in its violence. 'No epoch of the past was so cruel, so ruthless, so cynical as our epoch.' It represented a 'throw-back to the most cruel Machiavellism'. This stood in marked contrast to the optimism of the nineteenth century, when 'Machiavelli was considered absurdly old fashioned' and the height of cynicism. Machiavelli reflected the nature of politics in these more ruthless epochs: 'To Machiavelli the struggle for power was a chess theorem. Questions of morality did not

exist for him, as they do not exist for a chess player, as they no not exist for a bookkeeper.⁷⁵¹

Trotsky's conception of morality is focused exclusively on the conduct of the class struggle. This itself is extremely problematical, regarding how the class is defined, how its interests are defined, how strategic and tactical issues are defined. As a result he is unable to address broader questions of morality. Why did the Soviet regime, notwithstanding its claim to embody the highest human ideals, develop such a vicious form of politics, which consumed so many of its own? If we seek an explanation in Trotsky's analysis for this development, we must look for it in terms of the internal contradictions of Soviet society, the nature of class conflict, the consolidation of the power of the bureaucratic stratum. How convincing this explanation is, is questionable.

The political practice of Bolshevism itself produced an extremely vicious form of politics. Machiavellism and Jesuitical methods followed a relentless logic of their own. In this, the boundaries between dictatorship and tyranny were eroded. Moral thresholds were broached. Precedents were set for even more extreme actions. In the process, the victims of the regime were dehumanized, and the regime itself was dehumanized. The resort to extreme measures created a spiral, whereby resort to ever more extreme methods became the norm. A political leadership, already in too deep, was unable or unwilling to effect a retreat, or to critically reappraise its own actions. More reckless and heedless policies were justified by the regime's ideological resolve, its courage, its determination, and by the viciousness of the enemies it was fighting. Those who might counsel such reflection were branded as weak and pusillanimous. Secrecy, concealment and lies became an intrinsic part of the system of rule. Lenin, before October, noted that, in carrying through the revolution, they would require the service of 'scoundrels'. This raises the question at what point the political leaders themselves became scoundrels, or the point at which the scoundrels took over. The deployment of vicious, perfidious means against 'enemies' cannot be easily separated from the conduct of political struggle amongst those who are supposedly comrades and allies.

Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*

Arthur Koestler in *Darkness at Noon* (1940) provides an examination of the Stalinist Terror through the experience of an imaginary Bolshevik N. S. Rubashov. In this modern Inquisition, the individual confronts a tortured dilemma, required to undergo a Jesuitical examination of the

self. In his interrogation Rubashov is asked to confront the issue of whether his ultimate service to the cause is to confess to crimes which he has not committed, and to sacrifice himself for the cause as his final service, in a final act of self-abnegation. Koestler puts these words in Rubashov's diary:

It is said that No 1 has Machiavelli's *Prince* lying permanently by his bedside. So he should: since then, nothing really important has been said about the rules of political ethics. We were the first to replace the nineteenth century's liberal ethics of 'fair play' by the revolutionary ethics of the twentieth century. In that also we were right, a revolution conducted according to the rules of cricket is an absurdity. Politics can be relatively fair in the breathing spaces of history; at its critical turning points there is no other rule possible than the old one, that the end justifies the means. We introduced neo-Machiavellism into this century; the others, the counter-revolutionary dictatorships, have clumsily imitated it. We were neo-Machiavellians in the name of universal reason – that was our greatness; the others in the name of national romanticism, that is their anachronism. That is why we will in the end be absolved by history; but not they.⁵²

Koestler's book had a profound impact amongst French intellectuals. Albert Camus in his *L'Homme révolté* (*The Rebel*) of 1951 vividly analysed ethical nihilism and its relationship to contemporary politics and its inspiration behind the growth of state terror.⁵³

Conclusion

What is significant concerning the fate of Machiavelli's ideas in the 1930s is the way they were taken up by Stalin's critics; by Maksimovskii, Kamenev, Bukharin and Trotsky. Machiavelli's ideas were used to make sense of the phenomenon of Stalinism, to trace its roots and to discover how the political practices of Bolshevism had produced this regime. In a sense, we have a curious element of continuity – the way dissident intellectuals from the mid-nineteenth century onwards used Machiavelli's ideas as a way of criticizing and exposing the tsarist regime. In the case of Maksimovskii's articles on Machiavelli, and Kamenev's role in publishing Machiavelli and Campanella, this was part of a 'literary struggle' against the prevailing order. Maksimovskii and Kamenev, despite the careful terms in which they voiced their criticisms, were clearly playing with fire. Quite how dangerous a game this was,

was still not clear. For Stalin this must have been regarded as a provocation, which fuelled his distrust and suspicions.

For Bukharin and Trotsky, Machiavelli's ideas were used to understand the transformation of the Soviet regime, but were not part of this hidden 'literary struggle'. But they, like Maksimovskii and Kamenev, were writing from within the Bolshevik tradition of thought and practice. They could not come to terms with the fact that Stalinism had grown directly out of Bolshevism. Stalinism was a product of a certain conjuncture of factors. For Kamenev, Machiavelli is the critic of tyranny. For Bukharin, it is the way Machiavelli's ideas are distorted and applied that draws criticism, whilst Trotsky sees the re-emergence of Machiavellian methods deriving from circumstances of social crisis. Trotsky still resolutely defended Machiavelli's proposition of the ends justifying the means. Whilst both Trotsky and Bukharin see politics as shaped by 'necessity', where moral judgements are redundant, they also recognized that the resort to force should be judged prudentially. Koestler, in contrast, indicts Bolshevism, and its infatuation with Machiavellism, with responsibility for Stalinism. By 1941 Maksimovskii, Kamenev, Bukharin and Trotsky were all dead.

10

Stalin and Machiavelli 4

Having examined the use to which critics of the Stalinist regime put Machiavelli's ideas, in this chapter we shall proceed to look at aspects of the regime itself and to Stalin's own pronouncements. We shall begin with an exploration of the affinity between communism, fascism and national socialism. The great ideological battles of the twentieth century between liberalism, communism, fascism and national socialism had, as we have argued above, been played out in terms of a battle of ideas already between 1860 and 1900. This battle had revolved around the debate on Machiavellism in politics (see chapter 2). The rise of these new regimes in the inter-war period generated enormous reflection on their significance and character. Raymond Aron depicted them as a manifestation of Machiavellism in modern politics.¹ What the connections were between these regimes and a Machiavellian approach to politics and to Machiavelli's actual writings, has, so far, remained largely unexplored. Here we shall attempt to open up this field of enquiry.

Communism, Nazism and Fascism

In the case of fascist Italy, Mussolini acknowledged that he had passed through the political school of Marx and Machiavelli.² He acknowledged that his main debt was to Sorel, but that Nietzsche also influenced him.³ The University of Bologna 1924 awarded him an honorary degree in jurisprudence.⁴ Mussolini proposed to write a thesis on Machiavelli to earn a true doctorate, but this was never completed. In his 'Preludio al Machiavelli', he emphasized Machiavelli's pessimistic view of human nature. All that which was described as 'utilitarianism, pragmatism, Machiavellian cynicism' in politics flowed from this initial position. Mussolini described the state as the only organization able to raise itself

above individual and group interests. It elevated and educated mankind. In this he declared: 'In Machiavelli's conception the Prince is the State.'⁵

Although fascist intellectuals made reference to Machiavelli, it is perhaps surprising that the use they make of him is rather limited.⁶ The extent to which the fascist regime was shaped by intellectual influences might also be questioned. In Italy Gaetano Mosca, a stern critic of fascism and Mussolini, and one of the last great defenders of Italian liberalism published his critical study of Machiavelli in 1925.⁷ In prison Antonio Gramsci wrote his study of *The Modern Prince* in which the prince was the revolutionary Marxist party.

In the case of Hitler and the leading Nazis, we have little evidence to suggest any familiarity with Machiavelli's thought.⁸ The indirect Machiavellian influence on Hitler is probably best seen in terms of the debased Machiavellism of Treitschke's glorification of the state, or Nietzsche's concept of superman and the will to power.⁹ The Machiavellian influence also entered via the practical example of Bismarck, whom Hitler held in awe, seeing himself as the continuer of the 'Iron Chancellor's' work. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler outlines a direct parallel between Bismarck's axiom 'politics is the art of the possible' and the maxim 'the end justifies the means': 'When he uttered that phrase Bismarck meant to say that, in order to attain a definite political end, all possible means should be employed or at least that all possibilities should be tried.'¹⁰

The influence of Machiavelli on second-rank figures, party intellectuals is much easier to analyse than establishing influence on the party leaders. In the USSR M. N. Pokrovskii was clearly influenced by Machiavelli and was an enthusiastic propagator of his ideas. In Nazi Germany Carl Schmitt counted Hobbes, Machiavelli, Donoso Cortes and Jean Bodin as his main intellectual influences. In his major work, *The Concept of the Political*, he defines the political in accordance to the distinction drawn between friends and enemies.¹¹ Schmitt's writings display an extraordinary engagement with Marxist writings on power and the state. In *Die Diktatur*, he deals with the notion of sovereignty from its emergence up to the age of the proletarian class struggle. In the preface he refers to the debate between Lenin and Trotsky and Kautsky regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat. In *Politische Theologie*, he addresses the question of the religious dimension to politics.¹² In Italy Mario Ferrara, in his book *Machiavelli, Nietzsche e Mussolini*, outlined his view on the ideological genealogy of Italian fascism.¹³

The label of Machiavellism was widely directed at the Nazi regime during its existence and after its demise. Following the Röhm purge, at their Vienna meeting Mussolini is supposed to have told Hitler of

Machiavelli's famous aphorism that power is not maintained with the same following that has helped to win it.¹⁴ Intellectual interest in Machiavelli's thought in Germany in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was huge. Special mention must be made of the fundamental work on *raison d'état* in politics of Friedrich Meinecke and Leonhard von Muralt.¹⁵ For P. Tillich and G. Ritter, the violence of contemporary politics prompted their reflections on the 'demonic' in politics.¹⁶

The tradition of German state socialism, derived from Fichte, Rodbertus and others, and from the ideas of Prussian socialism, associated with Spengler, represented a fundamentally opposed tradition to Marxian socialism, although some cross-over of ideas may also have taken place.¹⁷ Fichte, as a proponent of a 'totalitarian' conception of social organization, was one of the few leading German intellectuals in Hitler's library, but his influence is a matter of contention.¹⁸ But Fichte's admiration for the French Revolution, which attracted radical socialists to his ideas, was anathema to the Nazis.

Within the Marxist tradition, August Thalheimer and Leon Trotsky analysed fascism as a form of Bonapartism, with the state executive acquiring an independent power, over and above society, but directed at preserving the interests of the property-owning classes and containing the threat from a radicalized proletariat.¹⁹ Trotsky, of course, also described Stalinism as a form of Bonapartism, but in radically different circumstances, where the major property-owning classes had been dispossessed, but in which state power again acquired an independent role balancing contending social interests. Trotsky drew an interesting contrast between Hitler and Mussolini as leaders, and their relationship to their own ideologies:

Mussolini, from the very beginning, reacted more consciously to social materials than Hitler, to whom the police mysticism of a Metternich is much closer than the political algebra of Machiavelli. Mussolini is mentally bolder and more cynical. It may be said that the Roman atheist only utilises religion as he does the police and the courts, whilst his Berlin colleague really believes in the infallibility of the Church of Rome.²⁰

Trotsky, in part, explains this by Mussolini's Marxist past. It is interesting to note the similarity between Trotsky's notion of 'the political algebra of Machiavelli' and Herzen's notion of the 'algebra of revolution'.²¹

In the 1930s these regimes came increasingly to be described as 'totalitarian'. Initially, this term was not construed as having any clear ideological connotation. Leading anti-Stalinist German Marxists and socialists in the 1930s used the term to explore the nature of both the Stalinist and Nazi regimes.²² It was developed from Carl Schmitt's analysis of fascism, in which the division between state and society, an essential notion of liberal thought from the seventeenth century onwards, was repudiated, and from Ernst Junger's concept of 'total mobilization'.²³ No attempt will be made here to discuss totalitarianism and its application to the Nazi and Soviet regimes. Direct comparisons of these regimes are few.²⁴

Communism and Nazism differed from one another in crucial respects. Nazism was driven primarily by racial ideology as a form of social Darwinism that set it apart from communism, which explicitly rejected such racial theories. But communism had also its own social-Darwinian element, whereby certain classes were doomed by the progress of history, and some social classes were deemed healthy and others diseased. A virulent form of nationalism drove Nazism. Bolshevism started from a radical rejection of such nationalism, but came in time, under Stalin, increasingly to embrace Russian nationalism. Nazism was impelled also by a strong anti-rationalist element, with its cult of blood, soil, *volk* and *fuhrer*, which had no easy equivalents in communism.

The Soviet and Nazi regimes were both anti-liberal, collectivist ideologies that rejected in large measure traditional Judeo-Christian ethics. Both, in the words of Raymond Aron, constituted themselves as 'secular religions'. Both were revolutionary movements, proponents of 'revolution from above' and of 'permanent revolution'.²⁵ But the Soviet regime involved a more fundamental rejection of the past than the Nazi regime. Both were committed to establishing permanent, long-lasting political-social structures, and sought to draw lessons from the past, and from classical antiquity. The Nazi revolution was, in a sense, a nihilistic revolution, as outlined by the ex-Nazi H. Rauschning.²⁶ But the Bolshevik conception of morality, as we have seen, was hardly less nihilistic. But Nazism, fascism and communism were not a rejection of all values, but rather sought to establish a creative counter-concept to the nihilism of the *fin de siècle* aiming for the 'new man', 'national revelation' and cultural rebirth.

Communism and Nazism were both elitist movements, and both became strongly statist in their orientation towards politics. In both

movements Machiavellism in politics figured largely in practice and attitudes to the exercise of power. Their conception of politics was doctrinaire, with politics akin to warfare, where the role of violence and force was central, in which parties were conceived as fighting organizations. Both were guided by an elevated view of the role of will power in transforming reality. In the German case, the Nietzschean influence was significant, but its influence on Bolshevism was also evident. Both regimes were driven by a conception of politics that drew a sharp distinction between friends and enemies. The communist, Nazi and fascist regimes undoubtedly learnt from each other, but they also defined themselves in opposition to one another.

Soviet classicism

Machiavelli saw himself promoting the idea of a revival of Roman civilization, by promoting the Roman methods of government. Stalin and the Soviet leaders were fascinated with the classical world, which was reflected in the publication of histories of the ancient world, the interest in classical learning, the interest in classical architecture, the revival of classical names from antiquity. It was an interest clearly paralleled in Nazi Germany and fascist Italy. Their conception of politics was epic, heroic, grandiose and by extension akin to the megalomaniac.

It might be argued that the Soviet leaders saw themselves as figures akin to the great figures of the Roman past. They conceived themselves as creating a civilization on a par with Rome, one that would be as enduring and as dominant. In their conception of history, feudalism and capitalism were tawdry civilizations; only under socialism could the glory and grandeur of the ancient world be recaptured. On this basis, doubts regarding the morality of the methods employed would, in time, recede. This protected the leadership from self-doubt. It was also believed that this was a moral code that would come to be universally admired and accepted.

The monumental study of Roman history by Mommsen was translated from German into Russian and published between 1933 and 1949.²⁷ Russian works were published on the history of Sparta, but fascist idealizations of Spartan society were criticized.²⁸ What is also striking is the way in which other models became influential – ancient Greece and Rome, the Orient and ancient Egypt.²⁹

Stalin's vision of socialism was characterized, Volobuev and Kuleshov argue, by statism, compulsion, egalitarianism and asceticism. Stalin was interested in Spartan education. In one of his textbooks, he underlined the phrase: 'The Spartan children had a joyless life, without happiness and endearment.' Socialism was to be built by the party-state, or in the words of the writer A. Platonov 'on the basis of the tractive power of the apparatus' (*na apparatnoi tyage*). Whereas Aristotle said that the state needed to be sternly educated by the people, for Stalin: the people needed to be sternly educated by the state.³⁰

Stalin and Machiavelli

Stalin's biographer, Souvarine, doubted whether he had read Machiavelli, although he believed there was a close coincidence of ideas.³¹ But Robert Tucker, Robert Conquest³² and R. Medvedev³³ confidently assert that Stalin had read Machiavelli. These assertions appear to be based primarily on the testimony of Kamenev, who had been in exile with Stalin. Dmitri Volkogonov, who had unrivalled access to Stalin's archive, speaks of Stalin's copy of *The Prince*.³⁴

Nikolai Ryzhkov, prime minister under Gorbachev in the 1980s, in his memoirs writes of having seen this copy of the edition of the *The Prince* (*Gosudar*'), i.e. the 1869 edition which also contained *The Discourses* and was the fullest Russian version of Machiavelli's works available. Ryzhkov refers to 'all his jottings [*pometki*] – underlinings, notes on chapters, isolated words'. He adds:

To tell the truth, the book with its notes gave me a thousand times greater understanding of the personality of Stalin, than all the biographies, all the films about him, all the recollections of his friends and enemies. In it, it is possible to find an explanation of any step made by the great state, which lay in the basis of its government by the celebrated 'textbook of dictators' written in the sixteenth century.³⁵

Unfortunately, Ryzhkov cites only a few passages which Stalin had underlined. These included Machiavelli's assertion that in times of war the ruler need not fear to be ruthless; that the armed do not willingly submit to the unarmed; that it is better for a ruler to be feared rather than loved. Stalin, in the early 1930s, was rumoured to have told Yagoda that he preferred people to support him from fear, rather than from conviction, because convictions could change.³⁶ Attempts by the author to gain access to this work have proved in vain.

Stalin and 'revolution from above'

Engels and Lenin described Bismarck as a proponent of 'revolution from above'. The entry on Bismarck in the *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* for 1927 describes Bismarck's policy of unifying Germany as a 'revolution from above'.³⁷ Boris Souvarine, in his biography of Stalin, compares him to Bismarck.³⁸ In 1929 Trotsky characterized the Stalin regime as a form of Bonapartism, as revolution from above by reaction where revolution from below had exhausted itself.³⁹ In 1935 he compared the 'bourgeois Bonapartism' of Louis Napoleon and Bismarck and the 'Soviet Bonapartism' of Stalin.⁴⁰ In *The Short Course*, which Stalin edited and partly wrote, agricultural collectivization was described as a 'revolution from above' initiated by the state, and supported from below by millions of peasants.⁴¹

E. H. Carr places Stalin in the tradition of great statesmen that defy being labelled left or right:

Stalin presented to the Russian Revolution, and presents to history, two contrasting faces: revolutionary and counter-revolutionary. This was the ambiguous character of the period. Engels' diagnosis of the historical role of Napoleon III, Cavour and Bismarck, who by pursuing reactionary policies and by donning military uniform brought to fruition the capitalist revolution in their respective countries, provided a curious analogy. The grandiloquence of Napoleon III, the cynical diplomacy of Cavour, and the blood-and-iron discipline of Bismarck were all reflected in the dictatorship of Stalin.⁴²

Isaac Deutscher similarly sees Stalin as a practitioner of 'revolution from above' on the Bismarckian model.⁴³ Robert Tucker describes Stalin as the practitioner of 'revolution from above', although Tucker associates this primarily with the tsarist tradition of radical reform from above.⁴⁴

Bismarck was admired for his ruthless domestic policies of state building and modernization, and for his uncompromising foreign policy in defence of German state interests. In the 1930s, the Soviet edition of Marx and Engels' collected works included several pieces on Bismarck.⁴⁵ *The Thoughts and Memoirs of Bismarck* was published in Moscow in three volumes in 1940–1, edited and with an introductory article by A. S. Erusalimskii.⁴⁶ Deutscher remarks that: 'Stalin undoubtedly calculated on the Bismarckian tradition among the German diplomats, a tradition which demanded that the Reich should avoid embroilment with Russia.'⁴⁷ Stalin's article 'Concerning Engels article "The External Policy

of Russian Tsarism'' was published in 1941. In this, he admonished Engels for his criticisms of the tsarist's foreign policy, and he recalled Bismarck's attitude towards Russia.⁴⁸

Stalin, the Jesuits and the terror

Stalin's ruthless purging of opponents and potential opponents is entirely consistent with Machiavelli's view that a ruler cannot rest quiet whilst his rivals for power remain alive, that rulers consolidate their rule with people other than those who have brought them to power, and his view of the conflict between the elite and the masses might be resolved decisively by destroying the elite; the people cannot be changed but the elite can. We have earlier hinted at the interest shown in the Jesuits by radical political figures from Tkachev onwards. E. N. Medinskii, one of the leading Soviet specialists on education, in 1925, included in a textbook on the development of education a section on the Jesuits, described as the 'fighting organization of the Catholic church'. The system of Jesuit education was criticized as it served a reactionary purpose.⁴⁹

In his interview with the German writer Emil Ludwig in December 1931, Stalin recounted the 'jesuitical methods' of training in his seminary, which had made him recoil, and helped turn him into a revolutionary. The Jesuits were 'systematic and persevering' but for 'sordid ends'. 'But their principal method is spying, prying, worming their way into people's souls and outraging their feelings. What good can there be in that?'⁵⁰ When Ludwig asked Stalin if he believed in fate, he replied: 'The very concept of fate, of *schiksal* is a prejudice and absurdity, a relic of mythology.'⁵¹ In this regard, at least, Stalin dissented from Machiavelli. The use of the term *schiksal* suggests that Stalin had some familiarity with Hegel.

In *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* in 1933 the entry on the Jesuits included an item on the Jesuit state established in South America (1610–1768) reflecting the earlier interest of Lafargue in the Jesuit colonies.⁵² In *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* in 1938, the entry on Loyola noted his efforts to establish the Jesuit order within the Catholic Church, an organization to defend the church from its enemies during the Reformation. Loyola became its general 'with unlimited power over the members of the order' and 'the order itself was placed in a completely independent position in relation to the church'. He also wrote *Exercitia spiritualia* (1548) – a course of spiritual exercises and rules necessary for every Jesuit. He attached great significance to the education

of cadres in the Jesuit schools. Loyola, with great energy, created the Jesuit order, this 'fighting organization' of militant Catholicism, 'giving to it great discipline, wide reach and elasticity of tactics'.⁵³

The parallel between the Great Terror of 1936–8 in the USSR and the operation of the Spanish Inquisition of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as part of the struggle of the Counter-Reformation might be noted at this point.⁵⁴ In *The Great Soviet Encyclopaedia* for 1937, there is the entry for the 'Inquisition'. It notes how under Torquemada, the first general inquisitor and a 'fanatical Dominican', the Inquisition became a law unto itself, burning, torturing, expelling people from the land, imposing a rigorous control over intellectual thought and education, isolating the country from outside influences. The leading Russian historian S. Lozinskii published various works on Catholicism and the Inquisition.⁵⁵

Perhaps most dramatic of all was the publication in Russian translation in Moscow in 1936 of the work by J. Llorente, *Histoire critique de l'inquisition d'Espagne*. It was edited by S. Lozinskii, who also provided an introductory article.⁵⁶ The foreword to the work argued, following Marx, that the Inquisition was part of the establishment of absolutism in Spain. The Inquisition plundered the property of so-called 'heretics' and established 'panic terror' (*panicheskii uzhas*) over the population. The foreword outlined the Inquisition's methods: the documentation of instructions; regulation of all procedures; methods and trials of the Inquisition; the rules on torture; the role of confession, etc., which was outlined in the famous *Malleus Maleficarum*,⁵⁷ the process by which was drawn up the *Index librorum prohibitorum*. It chided Llorente for his naïve, moralistic condemnation of the Inquisition's methods, and argued for a Marxist-Leninist understanding of its historic role.

Llorente's book was published as part of the anti-Catholic campaign of the Soviet authorities, influenced by the Spanish Civil War. By demonstrating the depths to which the Counter-Reformation had descended to shore up its authority, it also demonstrated that there were no limits to how far the Spanish counter-revolution would go. By extension, the revolution had to embrace the same principles, both in Spain and in the USSR. The publication of this book coincided with the unleashing of Stalin's own terrorist inquisition. Oleg Khlevnyuk points to the way Stalin's thinking was influenced by events in Spain in 1936–7 and his resolve to eliminate any potential 'fifth column'.⁵⁸

At the Central Committee plenum in February 1937, Bukharin was accused of casuistry in his own defence. Budenny interjected: 'That's the way the Jesuits talk.' To Bukharin's question as to whether Budenny

was familiar with the history of the Jesuits, Postyshev advised Budenny to reply that he had learnt about the Jesuits by studying Bukharin, Rykov and their fellows.⁵⁹

This quasi-religious aspect of Soviet communism, it might be argued, reflected the weakly developed trend towards the secularization of society and social thought before 1917. Many foreign communists felt repelled by much of this; by the Bolshevik practices of criticism and self-criticism, the demonization of dissidents as heretics, the necessity to expose oneself to public criticism sat uncomfortably with notions of individualism and personal dignity.⁶⁰

Stalin's words

Stalin presented himself in every sense as a figure within the Marxist-Leninist tradition. His own theoretical contributions to the corpus of Marxist thought was small, and even these, as Erik van Ree has argued, were mostly based on earlier precedents. The books in Stalin's library were primarily the Marxist classics and, according to van Ree, he showed little interest in works outside of this tradition.⁶¹ However, our understanding of Stalinism cannot be reduced to a reading of the basic texts of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism in isolation from the wider intellectual revolutionary currents in Russia and Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. We cannot be certain of how far the books in Stalin's library reflect his interests – certain volumes, it is clear, have been removed from this collection. Moreover, we need to read Stalin's words carefully, in order to find in them echoes of other traditions and ideas.

Stalin read widely. His reading, Volkogonov notes, included works on 'the techniques of one man rule'. He made a careful study of V. Vorovsky's *On the Nature of Absolutism*, M. Alexandrov's *The State, the Bureaucracy and Absolutism in the History of Russia*, Yu. Kazmin's *The Fate of the Ruler*.⁶² Volobuev and Kuleshov note Stalin's interest in ancient history.⁶³ In his library there were a number of works on ancient history. The histories of ancient Rome and Greece were subjects of interest as was the history of ancient Egypt.⁶⁴ A favourite author was R. Vipper.⁶⁵ The latter's *Historical Essay on the Roman Empire* is covered with Stalin's underlinings, notably the sections on the principate of Augustus. In S. G. Lozinskii's *History of the Ancient World*, in the section 'Empire', he underlined: Augustus Octavian – 'first citizen, prince . . . supreme rule'. He noted the reference to Caesar being conferred the title 'leader-victor' (*vozhdy-pobeditelya*) (*imperatora*). In the section 'Provisional dictatorship of Sulla', Stalin underlined Sulla's method of proscriptions: the

publication of lists of individuals sentenced to death without trial or investigation or without any apparent motive.⁶⁶

On the inside cover of Lenin's *Materialism and Empiro-criticism* (1939 edition), Stalin wrote '(1) Weakness, (2) laziness, (3) stupidity *alone* can be called *vices*. Everything else in the absence of the above undoubtedly constitutes *virtue*.' And arguing from the contrary position of logic: 'If a man is (1) strong (has will power – *dukhovno*), (2) is active (*deyatelen*), (3) is intelligent (*umen*) (or has ability *sposoben*) – then he is *good*, regardless of any other "vice".'⁶⁷ In this book he also entered his own aphorism: 'People have the potential to be worms' (*Cheloveki v potentsii-chervyak*).⁶⁸ The English dramatist Christopher Marlowe in the late sixteenth century put into Machiavelli's mouth the words: 'I hold there is no sin but ignorance.'⁶⁹ In the book *Kurs russkoi istorii* (St Petersburg, 1916), Stalin marked the following passage: 'Genghis-khan destroyed many people, saying, "The death of the vanquished is necessary for the peace of mind of the victors"' (*Smert' pobezhennykh nuzhna dlya spokoistviya pobeditelei*).⁷⁰

In conversation in 1918 Stalin is alleged to have offered the aphorism for resolving political problems: 'Death solves all problems – no man, no problem.' Stalin, in conversation with Kamenev and Dzerzhinskii, supposedly expressed the opinion: 'To choose one's victim, to prepare one's plans minutely, to slake an implacable vengeance, and then go to bed . . . there is nothing sweeter in the world.'⁷¹ Addressing a rally of railway workers in the Kremlin on 30 July 1935, Stalin noted that, in the recovery of the railways all employees had a vital role to play, every cog (*vintik*) had its role, greater discipline, ruthless self-criticism and a greater sense of responsibility had to be inculcated.⁷² Here, Stalin echoed Lenin's view of the party members as 'cogs', as outlined in *What is to be Done?* John Morley, in his famous essay on Machiavelli in 1897, had posed the question as to whether the state served the individual or whether the individual was 'a mere cog or pinion in the vast machine' of the state.⁷³

In October 1937 Stalin, addressing a mass meeting of workers, spoke of the question of relations between managers and workers, how, in the past, workers had been treated with contempt and how this had generated the hatred of the workers towards their bosses:

The confidence of the people in regard to their managers is a great thing, comrades. Leaders come and go, but the people remain. Only the people are immortal. All the rest is transient. Therefore, it is necessary to be able to value the confidence of the people.⁷⁴

Here, we might detect another echo of Morley's essay on Machiavelli where he noted that, whereas leaders, like leaves, come and go, the tree (the state) remains.

At the eighteenth party congress in 1939, Stalin reflected on attempts by the western powers (without naming France and Britain) to push Germany to annex Soviet Ukraine, and the unwillingness of liberal democracies to stand up to Germany, Italy and Japan:

Far be it for me to moralize on the policy of non-intervention, to talk of treason, treachery and so on. It would be naïve to preach morals to people who recognize no human morality. Politics are politics, as the old, case-hardened bourgeois diplomats say. It must be remarked, however, that the big and dangerous political game started by the supporters of the policy of non-intervention may end in a serious fiasco for them.⁷⁵

The elimination of antagonistic social classes, Stalin claimed, had created the basis for the 'moral and political unity of Soviet society'.⁷⁶ The state would not wither away in the near future; its role was to defend the socialist system in capitalist encirclement; 'developing the shoots of the new, socialist economic system and re-educating the people in the spirit of socialism' (*perevospitanie lyudie v dukhe sotsializma*).⁷⁷ The state, moreover, 'must have at its disposal a well-trained army, well organized penal organs and a strong intelligence service'.⁷⁸

In Stalin's thinking there are elements of social-Darwinian thought, in which the elimination of hostile social classes was seen as a necessary part of the construction of the new socialist society. His policy of promoting cadres coincided with Machiavelli's advice not to hold youth back. The 'revolution from above' and the terror of 1936–8 coincided with Machiavelli's prescription that states constantly need to renew themselves, by returning to the original founding principles, to guard against corruption and to restore *virtú*. Revolution was a great consumer of human energy, which needed to be replenished. Machiavelli's advice to tyrants was that, to preserve their rule, they should keep everything in constant ferment; new religions should attempt to completely extirpate the old. In Machiavelli and Stalin's thought, the state is a teacher of the people, guiding and directing its actions.

What is striking is the close affinity between Machiavelli and Stalin on avoiding half-measures, justified by the need to protect the state and the revolution. In accordance with Machiavelli's view, the state-builder creates the basis for morality; therefore, his own actions are above moral

censure. In this he advises a ruthless calculation of what is needed to secure the state's survival and well-being. What is also striking is the beneficial effect that Machiavelli sees deriving from conflict between the contending classes in society, and the need to allow this conflict open expression. But, significantly, he condemned the existence of groups and factions. Notable also is his stress on the need for the prince to operate on the masses. Of particular note is his argument that the upper classes may be dispensable, and that, to appease the wrath of the people, it may be wise to destroy the upper classes who have invoked their anger.

With the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, the deep ideological gulf between Nazism and communism became a chasm. In this war, Stalin based his appeal to the people on the basis of traditional nationalism of which Soviet communism was a new emanation. Stalin's speech to the Moscow Soviet on 6 November 1941 sought the high moral ground in the struggle against Nazism. The Soviet Union was waging a 'just war of liberation' against tyranny. The Nazis aimed to 'grind down and destroy [*istrebit'*] the Slav people'. They thought that men could only be ruled by force, and in ruling them all methods were permitted (*pozvolitel'ny lyubye metody*). Stalin put in the mouth of Hitler the following sentiments: 'I free man – says Hitler – from the humiliating chimera that is called conscience. Conscience, like education, cripples man. I have this advantage, that I am not encumbered by any considerations of a theoretical or a moral kind.'⁷⁹ This is the nearest we come in Stalin's work to an engagement with 'Machiavellism' in politics. What is notable is how many of his critics before 1941 had spoken of Stalin in these self-same terms.

Machiavelli speaks of the advantages for a leader of inventing conspiracies, so as to gain credit for their suppression. This was undoubtedly one of Stalin's principle *modus operandi*. Within the Politburo from 1928 onwards, he was the most consistent advocate of harsh measures of repression against those labelled as enemies, including show trials and executions. He was the Politburo member most inclined to construct elaborate theories of conspiracy linking internal opponents and foreign powers. The construction of this 'enemy syndrome' was a basic method of his rule. It was used to control not only state officials, but to control and intimidate his closest colleagues.⁸⁰ In other instances, we have an extraordinary affinity between them. Machiavelli's advice with regard to how the prince should deal with successful military commanders is mirrored closely in Stalin's demotion of Marshall Zhukov in 1945.⁸¹

Machiavelli offers advice with regard to the way the ruler should behave. He should, where he is strong, behave resolutely, where he is

weak, he should temporize. In all this he should act with deliberation and calculation; he should evaluate what is to be done as a problem that requires solution; in this, he should behave dispassionately, coldly with detachment. He should not fear to go out to meet problems, to deal with them before they get out of hand. Having decided on a certain course, he should not prevaricate and should carry that policy through with the utmost resolution to its end. Stalin, in Machiavelli's sense, was a model prince, an embodiment of how blind destiny could be subject to human will, but, in another sense, he was also an embodiment of tyrannical power, which Machiavelli reviled.

Ivan the Terrible

One aspect of the Machiavellian influence in Soviet politics derived from the Russian tradition of absolutism. In the late 1930s there was a significant and positive reappraisal of Ivan the Terrible.⁸² This had been anticipated earlier by the Marxist historian Pokrovskii. In his *Russian History from Ancient Times*, first published in 1910, Pokrovskii argued that Ivan Grozny showed knowledge of the ideas of the Russian writer I. S. Peresvetov, who defended the idea of absolutist rule in the same way as Machiavelli, Hobbes and Bodin.⁸³ Moreover, Machiavelli may have influenced Peresvetov's defence of terror.⁸⁴ In his *Brief History of Russia*, a book warmly commended by Lenin, Pokrovskii depicts Ivan as the creator of an absolutist state, transferring power from the boyar class to the gentry and city bourgeoisie, and instituting a 'reign of terror' against the old order. In carrying out this 'revolution', Ivan was not exceptionally cruel. The struggle was not between individuals, but between classes.⁸⁵

The Soviet historian I. I. Polosin argued in 1946 that the political ideas of Ivan the Terrible and those of I. S. Peresvetov were influenced by the ideas of Machiavelli.⁸⁶ I. B. Zil'berman in 1953 asserted that whilst the possibility that Ivan had read the work of Machiavelli and Bodin cannot be discounted, it may be that the ideas of Ivan Grozny derive from a similar class essence of the ideology of absolutism, and from more general contacts between Russia and western Europe.⁸⁷ Stalin had considerable interest in Ivan, and, in his library, he had Alexei Tolstoy's *Ivan Grozny*, both the 1942 and 1944 edition.

Eisenstein wrote of his film *Ivan the Terrible*: 'Before the viewer is presented an image of the Russian ruler . . . in terms of political intrigue equal to Machiavelli or Loyola, the Russian women yielding nothing to

Catherine de Medici or Bloody Mary.⁸⁸ Part one was released in 1945 but part two was released only in 1958. Eisenstein thought that it would be shown during Stalin's lifetime, and believed (mistakenly) that he had struck enough balance between a sympathetic treatment of Ivan's plight, and criticism of his use of the *oprichniki*. Eisenstein depicts Ivan as a man almost crushed by the 'burden of power' seeking to defend the state against internal and external enemies. Ivan's vow to become 'terrible' recalls Durdenevskii's assertion in 1927 that rulers, on the basis of Machiavelli's advice, should not fear to acquire a reputation for being 'terrible', as Ivan IV did not fear it.

Evrosinaya Staritsky, Ivan's aunt, unveils to her son, Vladimir, a plan to assassinate the tsar. Ivan will be killed by one of their relatives. Vladimir pleads that his conscience will not permit this. She tells him that his (Vladimir's) first task on becoming tsar will be to order the execution of the assassin, as a way of establishing his own innocence. She then, in ringing tones, utters the following precept:

The prince must not deviate from the path of good if possible, but he must follow the path of evil if necessary.

(Gosudar' ne dolzhen uklonyat'sya ot puti dobra ezheli vozmozhno, no dolzhen vstupat' i na put' zla esli neobkhodimo.)

This precept is taken directly from *The Prince*.⁸⁹ At the end of the film, the weary Ivan pronounces that all that he has done was for the sake of Russia; the role of the tsar is to punish the evil and uphold the good; whoever lacks the requisite qualities is not fit to be tsar.

In his conversation with Eisenstein and the actor Cherkasov in 1947 Stalin criticized tsar Ivan for his restraint in failing to eliminate all the main boyar families, arguing that his vacillation, caused by conscience and religious scruples, had incurred immense cost, in terms of the ensuing 'Time of Troubles'. Stalin concluded: 'Ivan was hindered by God . . . he should have acted more decisively!'⁹⁰

The Soviet debate on Machiavelli virtually ceased after 1934. In the late Stalin years the discussion on Machiavelli was very muted. O. L. Vainshtein, in his work on the historiography of the Middle Ages published in 1940, corrected Dzhivelegov's view, to the effect that Machiavelli was remote from the people and in fact 'sided with the conservative bourgeoisie'.⁹¹ A textbook history of the Middle Ages published in 1950 included an extract from Machiavelli's *Florentine Histories* on the rising of the *ciompi*.⁹²

One intriguing link in Stalin's association with Machiavelli is the fact that, in the late 1940s, his daughter, Svetlana Allilyueva, completed her PhD on the political thought of Machiavelli.⁹³ She makes no reference to this fact in her own writings, and it has proved impossible to obtain a copy of this work. This was a very unusual topic for any postgraduate student to tackle in this period. The choice of topic may reflect political interests and possibly a desire, in the tradition of earlier Soviet articles on Machiavelli, to exculpate Stalin in the face of historical judgement.

Morality and politics

Historians studying the Stalin era often do so from various perspectives – the impact of domestic forces (economic, social, political, cultural) and external pressures – and pay little heed to the moral dimension. This leaves out of the equation a crucial component, without which it is impossible to understand evolution of the Soviet state from Lenin to Stalin. Without an understanding of this dimension, it is impossible to understand how the regime sought to rationalize its conduct to itself and to its subjects. It is impossible to understand the extraordinarily rapid transformation of a regime committed to the 'liberation' of humanity into one of the worst despotisms of modern time.

This needs to be addressed, at least in part, on the moral plane: the way in which the regime perceived itself and the society; the way in which it trained its own cadres. It relates to the general question of how a one-party state operates, the extent to which it imposes on itself any moral constraints. It relates to the question of accountability, to the notion of legal culture and legal consciousness, it relates to the question of how the regime appraised both its ends and its means, and how far it allowed for the use of violence in politics. It raises question as to how the legitimate rights of the state might be balanced by the rights of the individual and of civil society. It relates to how far regimes respect traditional values, including religious values. This is not simply a question of whether we approve or disapprove of particular policies, but more fundamentally it raises the question of what framework policies are decided within, and how they impinge on rational choice.

The essential aspect of the Bolshevik view of morality was the rejection of absolute moral values, whether the Kantian notion of ethics, or religiously based, as expounded by Lenin and Preobrazhenskii and defended by Trotsky in the 1930s. Politics is a distinct, discrete activity, in which moral norms and conventions cannot be applied. Politics and

statecraft are akin to mathematical theorems, algebra or geometry. In this field moral judgements, or judgements based on religious basis are inappropriate.⁹⁴ The development of human society is law-governed, amenable to scientific analysis. Ethical considerations do not intrude. In this, politics is the recognition of 'necessity' in the sense advanced by Machiavelli. What has to be done is determined not by one's own choices of means, but also by the means to which one's enemies resort.

At the same time a distinction is drawn between 'proletarian morality' and 'bourgeois morality'. Socialism represents an ethically superior system to capitalism. In this the ends justify the means, where a perverted sense of duty, fuelled by a belief in the righteousness of one's cause, and the maliciousness of one's enemies, removes normal constraints on action. But the interpretation of what favours the creation of socialism, of what is in the interests of the proletariat, is lodged in the party, and the party leadership, as the repository of ideological truth. With no transcendent morality, the party becomes the agency of history and the arbiter of morality. Under Lenin's stewardship, it was drilled into the party, that for a communist there was no such thing as private morality.⁹⁵

Machiavelli speaks of events by their scale and audacity passing beyond the limits of normal moral judgements, becoming in effect great acts of politics or acts of state. Bukharin, in his final letter to Stalin on the purges, wrote that 'there is something great and bold about the political idea of a general purge'. J. Arch Getty writes of Bukharin: 'perhaps because he had sat in the highest councils for so long and understood the Bolshevik utilitarian attitude towards "truth"'.⁹⁶ G. R. Urban, in discussing Stalinism, notes, 'murder, when perpetrated *en masse* under the authority of the State representing an ideology, ceases to be stamped on our conscience as a "crime"'.⁹⁷

The triumph of socialism is preordained, therefore, history will absolve its creators from any wrong. The passage of time places the judgement of events in a different perspective. Stalin believed that his system would endure. The state-builder and law-maker is not subject to moral limits, because, in building the state, he creates the framework within which alone morality is possible. This is the argument of Maksimovskii, shaped by Hobbes' conception of the 'state of nature'. By implication Stalin as the builder of the Soviet state, imposing order on anarchy and civil war, in acting as an agent of modernization, as the defender of the state from its internal and external enemies, cannot be subject to moral criticism. This argument is founded on the assumption of the absence of alternatives.

The elevation of political duties and obligations above moral considerations had far-reaching consequences. It involved a denial of personal responsibility, with the party and state authorities removing the weight of conscience from the individual as Kolakowski argues.⁹⁸ As a consequence, people oscillate between positions, what they hail today, they condemn tomorrow, without any sense of shame or incongruity.⁹⁹ Andrei Amalrik asserted that such societies provided a breeding ground for psychotics and even psychopaths, by denying and deriding moral obligation as an epiphenomenon.¹⁰⁰ The transgression of moral norms, which constrain individuals, might be justified by reasons of state. However, as Raymond Aron argues, unless this is constrained by some sense of prudence, of what is appropriate or commensurate, it offers a *carte blanche* to rulers. Hannah Arendt cites the aphorism by David Rousset, 'Normal men don't know that everything is possible', as a challenge to the rejection of moral parameters by twentieth-century tyrannical regimes.¹⁰¹

The Soviet regime developed a complex set of arguments to rationalize its behaviour in moral terms. But this was an approach fraught with difficulties. Already in the 1920s we note the widespread cynicism and amorality that permeated the party, and shaped public perceptions of the regime. In 1924 E. A. Preobrazhenskii, whilst allowing the state full leeway in determining what was and what was not moral, insisted that the concept 'everything is permitted' as a guide to individual action should be combated. Similarly Stalin, who had identified with the notion 'the victor is not judged' in the 1930s, in February 1946, cited the phrase only to repudiate it.¹⁰²

Machiavellism is often associated with the idea of an omniscient ruler who is able, through guile and cunning, to shape political events according to his will. What, however, is central to Machiavelli's thinking is the necessity for the ruler to be flexible and to adapt to circumstances: 'he must have a mind ready to turn in any direction as Fortune's winds and the variability of affairs require.'¹⁰³ Stalin's approach to politics was very deliberate, and his attention to detail great. Kaganovich, at one time Stalin's close deputy, said of him:

He must be assessed differently according to the time, the period; there were various Stalins. The post-war Stalin was one Stalin, the pre-war Stalin was another, and Stalin between 1932 and the 1940s was yet another Stalin. Before 1932 he was entirely different. He changed. I saw at least five or six different Stalins.¹⁰⁴

Kaganovich compared Stalin to Robespierre for their firmness and resolution in defending their revolutions: 'Great individuals do not disappear,' he said of Robespierre, adding, 'I say this also of Stalin. True there is no statue to Robespierre in Paris.' Stalin was a person who displayed great historical will. The same was true of Lenin.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

Many writers stress that it was the Marxist influence that predominated in Stalin's thinking.¹⁰⁶ This is difficult to dispute, although E. E. Nesmeyanov lists a number of other intellectual influences on Stalin which various writers have identified. Plato (D. Volkogonov, B. Oreshin, A. Rybtsov), the medieval scheme of argumentation and method of investigation (N. Kapustin), Hegel (A. Avtorkhanov, N. Berdyaev, D. Lukacs, F. Fukuyama, A. Tsipko), Bakunin and Nechaev (A. Shubkin) and the ideas of L. Feuerbach, N. K. Mikhailovskii, N. G. Chernyshevskii and the utopians.¹⁰⁷ What we have sought to argue in this work is that Stalin's thinking represented a synthesis of various revolutionary strands – Marxism, Jacobinism, the Russian revolutionary tradition – which all shared a common 'revolutionary Machiavellian' view of politics.

Soviet communism, German Nazism and Italian fascism grew out of very different intellectual and political traditions; they arose in very different circumstances; they represented different social interests and were guided by different intentions. Each represented its own particular 'revolutionary Machiavellian' conception of politics. In their rejection of conventional moral norms, and in their conception of politics as a form of warfare, they embraced a Machiavellian approach to politics. Whilst each, in part, drew some inspiration from Machiavelli, each had its own quite different conception of Machiavelli. Machiavelli's thought was reinterpreted through the prism of each movement and the circumstances in which these movements developed. At a certain level of generality, there were certain orientations towards politics which they shared. These become clearer in comparison with liberal democratic political regimes. Communism, Nazism and fascism were not simply products of economic, social, political and cultural circumstances. The ideologies themselves were an independent force, with their own internal logic.

This is not simply a question of dictators learning from Machiavelli or pursuing Machiavellian strategies. In Italy Mussolini claimed Machiavelli as an inspiration, but Mosca used a critique of Machiavelli from

a liberal standpoint to attack Mussolini, whilst Gramsci, sympathetic to Machiavelli, used his ideas to develop an anti-fascist revolutionary strategy. In the USSR the Bolsheviks derived no small measure of inspiration from Machiavelli and might be said to have been Machiavellian, but Machiavelli's ideas were also used by Maksimovskii and Kamenev as a way of criticizing the Stalinist tyranny. Friedrich Meinecke argued that Machiavellism and *raison d'état* were universal features of politics and not confined to the twentieth century, but argued that, whereas, in the past these ideas had been the preserve of a narrow ruling circle (part of the arcana of these circles) the distinctive feature of 'Hitlerism' was that it became the 'Machiavellism of the masses'.¹⁰⁸ More precisely, Nazism and Bolshevism might be defined as the Machiavellism of parties which claimed to rule in the name of the masses.

Conclusion

In this work we have examined the way in which Machiavelli's ideas were received, presented and used in Russia. In January 1932 Trotsky described Stalinism as 'a hodge-podge of the most heterogeneous elements, held together by plain Stalinist ignorance'.¹ No one has adequately explored what this amalgam of ideas was. What we have attempted in this book is to explore a more complex set of ideas, in part Marxist, but in part borrowed from other sources and incorporated into the Stalinist scheme of thought. In many respects, Marxism-Leninism left great lacunae with regard to the question of power, the organization of government, the question of state and society. In this we take a contrary approach to Neil Harding on Lenin and Erik van Ree on Stalin, both of whom emphasize the extent to which their subjects were orthodox Marxists.² We have argued that Bolshevism and Stalinism represented a synthesis of various ideological currents, that shared together certain key characteristics; that Bolshevism and Stalinism were part of a longer tradition of revolutionary thought and practice, which we have labelled 'revolutionary Machiavellism'.

The various strands that were interwoven into Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism can now be identified. Leninism and Stalinism represented a strand of Marxist thought, but it was interwoven with other strands. First, the specific elements in Marxism that were most closely tied to a Machiavellian conception of politics have to be acknowledged. Second, there was the Jacobin tradition, associated with its latter developments by Buonarotti and Blanqui, and which found further development amongst the Russian Jacobins. Third, there was the German intellectual tradition, influenced by the French Revolution, Represented by Hegel, Fichte and Clausewitz, with its conception of politics, the role of violence in history and the role of great leaders. Fourth, there was the

impact of the Russian Jacobin tradition, and the influence of Ogarëv, Tkachev, Nechaev and Bakunin, and the tradition of revolutionary conspiracy and the doctrine of terror. Fifth, there was the input provided by the Bismarckian conception of politics and the notion of 'revolution from above' and the rule of *realpolitik* in domestic and foreign affairs. Sixth was the input of Nietzschean ideas, the iconoclastic rejection of existing systems of morality and the elevation of the will.

The 'revolutionary Machiavellian' tradition also drew strength and inspiration from other sources. It was shaped, in part, by a Soviet social-Darwinian thought. It was shaped by the prevalent ideas of *realpolitik*, *raison d'état* that had wide currency in this period. It was influenced by the Russian authoritarian and statist traditions from Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great onwards, but also included the kind of authoritarian model presented by Arakcheev. It was rationalized by an understanding of 'absolutism' – as reflected in the works of Machiavelli, Hobbes and Bodin – with the early phase of socialist construction being analogous to the early phase of capitalist development. It was informed by a notion of Soviet classicism that drew inspiration from the ancient world. It was fuelled by an interest in Jesuit principles and practices, which was related to the quasi-religious aspect of Russian revolutionary socialist thought in the nineteenth century, linked also to a nihilistic vision of existing social and moral codes. In this, it was inspired by the conception of the educative role of the state. Finally, we need to consider the complex interrelationship between fascism, Nazism and communism, notwithstanding major ideological differences, of elements of borrowing in terms of political practice.

When we examine the nature of the relationship between the ideas and practices of Lenin and Stalin and Machiavelli's conception of politics we can say that the evidence of direct influence is slim, but not insignificant, and this is, in part, a result of self-censorship and of the deliberate suppression of these connections at the time and subsequently. The evidence of indirect influences, as noted above, is very considerable. The affinities between the practices and policies of Lenin and Stalin and those advocated by Machiavelli are also very significant. But, as we noted in the introduction, affinities can exist without any direct or indirect influences. In this case, we would argue that the affinities are so strong, and were recognized as such by contemporaries, that the influences, both indirect and direct, were also very great.

This is not simply a question of single ideas being taken up and applied. The whole discourse and practices of the Bolshevik party were

saturated by a Machiavellian conception of politics. This embraced a broad spectrum of ideas and approaches that were not directly taken from Machiavelli, which included Jesuitism, utilitarianism, nihilism and social Darwinism. It might also be said that Machiavelli's ideas were used not only as a rationalization of the Bolshevik and Stalinist regime, but were used as the framework in which some of these trends could be criticized and challenged. The work of Maksimovskii and Kamenev argues for the centrality of Machiavellian discourse to all major currents of thought within the Bolshevik tradition. The critics of Russian revolutionary socialism, from Dostoevskii to Berdayev, from Bertrand Russell to Ernst Gellner, couched their criticisms in an attack on 'Jesuitical' or 'Machiavellian' tactics.

In a sense, Lenin might be considered truer to the spirit of Machiavelli than Stalin. For Lenin, Machiavellism was the means to attain specific ends to consolidate the state. Under Stalin, methods of force and compulsion were translated from temporary expedients into a permanent system of rule. But whilst Machiavelli strongly condemned tyranny, in his writings the boundary between dictatorship and tyranny is an uncertain one, and the prescriptions that he offers can easily be seen to translate into a system of tyrannical rule. Lenin, arguably, was more 'prudent' in resorting to coercion and terror than Stalin, that the coercion used was more commensurate with the objective in hand. But the question has to be posed as to whether the Bolshevik project in 1917 could be realized without the establishment of a permanent system of coercive rule. Machiavelli equated the wholesale uprooting and reordering of society, the confiscation of the property of subjects, the suspension of legal process and denial of political rights, with tyranny.

Stalin's personality, no doubt, played a major part in this process. Stalin, in a sense, might be characterized as a 'natural Machiavellian', whether he had been familiar with Machiavelli's works or not. His conception of politics derived from a deep sense of distrust, suspicion and paranoia. Whilst acknowledging the importance of personality, the impact of the Russian political tradition, the cultural influences of the past, and the circumstances in which the regime found itself, the questions of motivation and intention remain. The close correspondence between Stalin's methods of operation and the ideas espoused by Machiavelli are striking. Stalin had access to these ideas as we now know. It is no longer a question of speculation. The most striking parallels concern the general thrust of Machiavelli's advice: the separation

of politics from morality; the central role of force and violence in history; the need to ruthlessly dispense with opponents and potential rivals, and the avoidance of half-measures.

Machiavelli provides a link to the French Jacobin revolutionary tradition, to the Italian Renaissance and back to ancient Rome. At the same time, the discussion on the ideas of Machiavelli reflected in reality a dilemma central to the history of Russia in the twentieth century, the relationship between politics and morality. The separation of politics and morality was so central to the thinking of Lenin that it might be argued that it had its own logic, which worked its way out into the Stalinist regime. The dilemma is whether any other form of politics was practical in the circumstances of the time. For Lenin, there was no other way; in a situation of revolution, politics was akin to warfare in which success depended on the willingness to countenance all practical means. The success achieved in this, however, must also shape the ends attained.

This realism which is so central to Machiavelli's thought is the reason why he has exercised such a strong influence on Marxist thinkers: Marx and Engels, Gramsci, Althusser, Merleau-Ponty and Claude Lefort.³ Gramsci was an ardent admirer of Machiavelli, the Jacobins, Marx and Lenin.⁴ Gramsci's contribution is seen as unique, the product of that most erudite of Marxist revolutionaries. But Gramsci only made explicit what was already implicit within Bolshevism. Gramsci defined his position, 'pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will'. Where, he argues, Marxism represents a departure from Machiavelli is with regard to 'human nature'. For Marxist 'human nature' is not fixed and immutable, but is the product of the 'totality of historically determined social relations' and thus open to investigation and to modification.⁵

Gramsci's position is of particular significance in terms of establishing the connections that link Machiavelli, the Jacobins, Marxism and Leninism. He called Machiavelli 'the first Italian Jacobin' and declared that the Jacobins were 'realists of the Machiavelli stamp' or the 'imperative incarnation' of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Gramsci described Jacobinism as a force, which historically had unified town and countryside, a force which Italy had lacked, but 'the force which, in the other nations, gave birth to and organised the collective national popular will and founded modern states'.⁶ Gramsci's conception of politics is infused with the notion of 'necessity' as derived from Marx and Engels.⁷ Gramsci speaks of the process by which the individual is transformed into 'collective man' through the educative power of the state, 'so as to obtain their consent and their collaboration, turning necessity and coercion

into "freedom"'.⁸ He speaks of the kind of discipline and ideological loyalty expected within political parties: 'In the parties necessity has already become freedom, and thence is born the immense political value (i.e. value for political leadership) of the internal discipline of the party.'⁹ For Gramsci, as for Machiavelli, *virtù* lies in the recognition of necessity, but this is also where freedom is located.

Gramsci's view of politics draws heavily on military analogies (war of movement, war of manoeuvre). Gramsci, in his discussion of Machiavelli, Togliatti argued, came close to recognition of tyranny, and was linked to the organization of the PCI in its early decades on a semi-military basis.¹⁰ As Machiavelli recognized particularly talented individuals who arose from the masses as organizers and leaders, so Lenin spoke of the advanced workers, and Gramsci spoke of the organic intellectuals. In contrast to a tendency to depict Gramsci as the more humane, democratic face of communism, it is worth noting the assessment of Henri Lefebvre who asserts:

As for the philosophy of praxis formulated by A. Gramsci, it turns into the justification of one particular practice – that of the Party, the modern prince. In other words, it becomes a philosophy of Machiavellism, bestowing the cachet of philosophy on political pragmatism.¹¹

The issue of the Machiavellian dimension of Bolshevism and Leninism was broached by Gramsci in his discussion of *The Prince* as a model for a modern revolutionary party.¹² Machiavelli, as the Italian historian G. Procacci has argued, was himself a kind of revolutionary: the avowed enemy of feudal power and the advocate of a fundamental reordering of the political and social order, and the advocate of Italian unification.¹³ In Machiavelli, as also in Marx and Engels, Lenin could find a model for the clinical analysis of political situations, the ruthless demystification of power relations, the evaluation of the balance of forces, and the dispassionate choice of political options.

Machiavelli represents a 'realist' view of politics, in which the conflict between means and end is held in tension. The idea of *raison d'état* was developed from Machiavelli, and elaborated famously by the German scholar Friedrich Meinecke. One of the leading historians of Soviet Russia, E. H. Carr, represented a continuation of this tradition. He was an ardent admirer of Meinecke, who greatly influenced his own work on the study of international relations. In 1940, Carr wrote: 'The greatness of Machiavelli is that he saw a part, though not the whole, of

the truth about politics with unrivalled penetration.' What was missing was the element of idealism, which Carr also appreciated, as in his high regard for the romantic Russian revolutionaries of the nineteenth century.¹⁴

There is an important distinction to be drawn between the ideas espoused by Machiavelli and the way in which those ideas were subsequently used. Machiavelli, as we have seen, argued that amorality in politics was justified in very specific circumstances, to deal with specific problems, and that it was not envisaged as a permanent system of rule: it was concerned with constructing a new state or reforming an existing state. He was opposed to tyranny. In this, a distinction might be drawn between Machiavelli's ideas and the 'neo-Machiavellism' of twentieth-century dictators, such as Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini, in which, as Siegfried Marck argued, the exercise of power becomes an exercise in cynicism and nihilism.¹⁵ The difficulty with this approach is that it ignores the relentless logic whereby dictatorship is transformed into tyranny, whereby the dictator removes any obstacle to the further consolidation of his power. To this problem, Machiavelli offers no answers.

In this, we argue that Stalinism and Nazism need to be understood not simply as curious aberrations produced by unique circumstances, but as core ideologies which grew directly out of a particular European intellectual tradition. This was not a tradition on the fringes of European political thought, but was, in many ways, central and at the forefront of intellectual debate in the preceding century. In this, it might be argued, that Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini were monstrous offsprings of their time.

We have confined our discussion to the experience of Europe after the French Revolution. From this convulsion, various lines of development emerge. There was the discussion of Machiavellian politics as part of the Jacobin and Bonapartist tradition, in France and elsewhere, both condemning and approving. In Germany there was a close interest in Machiavelli's thought regarding the dilemmas of constructing the state, and creating national identity, as seen in the work of Hegel, Fichte and Clausewitz. These two trends followed their own trajectories. The Jacobin tendency was revived after 1848-9. The Bonapartist course was renewed with Louis Bonapart and Bismarck. The German intellectual tradition took various forms, including a strong intellectual, academic interest in Machiavelli that later developed into statist, culturalist adaptations of Machiavellism. The revolutionary tradition was absorbed into Marxism so completely that little was left of the original

Machiavellian input, which survives as footnotes to Marx's early reading.

Here, it might be questioned how far Lenin and the Bolsheviks were aware of the influence exerted by Machiavelli on the Jacobins, on Hegel, Fichte, Clausewitz and Marx. What importance, if any, did they assign to such connections? How far were they familiar with Machiavelli's own writings? How influential were Nietzschean ideas in the Bolshevik party outside of a narrow group of intellectuals? This work cannot provide definite answers to these questions. Further research may cast more light on the matter. But the nature of such intellectual influences is notoriously difficult to pin down, and assertions as to their importance need to be advanced with caution. These intellectual influences may also be treated as symptomatic of deeper cultural and value orientations of the Bolsheviks as a revolutionary movement of a very particular kind, shaped also in part by its environment and by circumstances.

The fate of Machiavelli was very different in the various European countries; his influence fluctuated over time, and he was always interpreted in conflicting ways. In the British case, Machiavelli was regarded as a figure of curiosity (Macaulay), the product of Renaissance Italy, whose relevance for contemporary politics was small. This reflected the confidence of a modernizing British state, where the problem of modernization had been largely solved, where belief in progress and the strength of liberal democratic institutions held out the prospects for successful reformist strategy. Machiavellism here was seen as a largely alien product, reflected in the concern for the actions of terrorist groups, or the rather tepid form of self-centred politics. By the 1890s, the challenge of modern Machiavellism was reflected in the alarms sounded by liberal writers such as Morley and Mosca.

In examining the relevance of the Machiavellian problematic in terms of revolutionary politics, we see striking similarities between the situation in France in 1789, and replicated in other European countries, even into the twentieth century. This reflected in the action of small organized minorities of revolutionary activists contending with the power of an autocratic state. It also reflected the nature of backwardness, the survival of the *ancien regime*, the weakness of an emergent bourgeoisie. The nature of the state, the lack of strongly defined national identity, the lack of democratic traditions compounded the problem: the task of integrating the masses into a modern political state; the organization of the general will of the populace; the intransigence of entrenched state, landed and ecclesiastical power; the weakness of

civil society; the power of clerical influence; the brutal nature of economic and social exploitation. The inherent weakness or failure of liberalism creates a deeply polarized polity, the anticipation that revolution cannot be effected by piecemeal reform, but only by means of violence.

In Russia, as we have seen, there was a liberal current which rejected Machiavelli, but a radical democratic current which identified with him. What is particularly significant about the Russian case is the pronounced strength of the revolutionary tradition, which drew inspiration partly from the Jacobin tradition and from Machiavelli. In some cases, Jacobinism and Machiavellism were reinforcing, whilst in the case of the anarchist Bakunin, they were seen to be, in part at least, in contradiction. The direct action tradition of Russian revolutionary thought with its terrorist offshoot was at its height in the 1860s and 1870s, 'revolutionary Machiavellism', but probably received major impetus from the defeat of the revolutions of 1848–9, which led to a new appreciation of the Jacobin tradition amongst revolutionaries across Europe.

After 1880 in Russia, as in other countries, the interests in the Jacobin and in Machiavelli subsided. The defeat of conspiratorial, terrorist strategy, the condemnation of Nechaev, led to fundamental rethinking. These were decades characterized primarily by a concern with theoretical problems; the elaboration of ideology, the settling of accounts between anarchists, populists and Marxists. These modern ideologies themselves, in their richness, required little from Machiavelli, or what Machiavelli had to offer in the 1860s and 1870s had been so thoroughly absorbed and assimilated that any reference to him was superfluous. At the same time, the priority was the development and dissemination of ideas. Only as Russian revolutionaries returned to question of revolutionary tactics and strategy did they again return to the Machiavellian paradigm.

In Russia the Machiavellian trend re-emerged after 1900. Leninism was an adaptation of Marxism to Russian backwardness. In this it harkened back to the more explicit Jacobinical roots of Marxism. Leninism, was in many ways, the Machiavellization of Marx. In part, this was a response to the nature of the political problem confronting a revolutionary group such as the Bolsheviks. In this, the role of leadership assumed paramount importance. In 1885 Engels spoke of Russia as a country where Blanquist tactics might still be possible. With Lenin the Machiavellian current is seen, with Clausewitz, the Jacobins and Bismarck acting as surrogates for Machiavelli. But it is also clear that there

was a direct Machiavellian input into Leninism as well, which all efforts were made to conceal.

In Russia after the October Revolution, the nature of politics corresponded closely to the Machiavellian paradigm; the problem of the creation of the new state, the root and branch extermination of the remnants of the *ancien regime*; the problem of securing authority; the difficulty of gaining popular consent; the development of the educative role of the state. The Machiavellization of Marxism under Lenin remained pronounced. It acquired a new dimension with the revolutionary party taking control of the state. In its practices, the party, particularly under Stalin, embraced what was considered a more clearly Machiavellian line. The regime encapsulated a combination of cynicism of means and zeal as regards ends. Whereas Leninism was equated with Jesuitism, a fundamentalist approach to Marxism, Stalinism implied a more deliberate and cynical exercise of power, a willingness to adjust ideology to need, to use ideology as a smokescreen to conceal true intentions, to stifle debate, and to impose control and order.

In response to these developments, Machiavellism in the USSR assumed various forms; the hidden, unspoken Machiavellism of the ruling circle, the concealed language and assumptions underpinning their thoughts and actions (*arcana imperi*), or, in some cases, the use of Machiavelli to legitimize dictatorial rule (Dudenevskii). We have tantalizing hints of Stalin's own thinking, and his acquaintance with Machiavelli. At the same time, a second aspect of Soviet Machiavellism emerges, the attempt by those defeated elements in the party to try and theorize and think through the meaning of Stalinism just as Lenin, in defeat after 1914, turned to Hegel.

We have the efforts of Maksimovskii, Kamenev, Bukharin, Trotsky, each of who turned to Machiavelli to try and explain what had happened to the revolution. In some cases the focus is on Stalin's own role, in others most notably Trotsky it is an attempt to explain the return to the Machiavellian paradigm by the nature of the crisis of international and national politics ushered in by the First World War, in terms of the crisis of imperialism and the intensification of class conflict. It is as though Marxism, of itself, could not provide adequate tools to understand Stalinism, which Machiavelli, through his understanding of politics in its most pure and brutal form, provided insights that Marxism itself failed to address adequately. Whilst Trotsky resolutely refused to recognize that the foundations for the Stalinist system may have been laid by the approach to politics and ethics which he and Lenin more than anyone else had created by 1921, others, notably

Kamenev, Bukharin, Serge and Koestler came to recognize the connection.

With the consolidation of the Stalinist regime and the stifling of debate, and the rooting out of internal dissidents, these attempts to comprehend the nature of the regime using the Machiavellian problematic disappeared. In place of a small revolutionary elite fighting for its survival against the entrenched forces of the *ancien regime* and of a nascent capitalist order, Stalinism saw the consolidation of a powerful bureaucratic state, which sought its own solution to the problem of state organization, modernization and identity.

Where the Machiavellian paradigm was revived was in the counter-offensive of liberal democracy against the onslaught from communism and fascism and Nazism. The elaboration of 'totalitarianism' as a concept was a central part of this counter-attack. Central to this trend was the contribution of Raymond Aron who characterized totalitarianism as a modern form of Machiavellism. Aron, like Trotsky, recognized the central importance of Machiavellism in the politics of the decades following the First World War. The two interpreted it in diametrically opposed ways. Whilst Trotsky saw Machiavellian politics as purely the reflection of the crisis of imperialism and the heightening of class conflict, Aron rejects this reductionist approach and insisted on the autonomous role of political ideas and practices, and argued that the adoption of Machiavellian politics by political movements placed moral responsibility on those movements for their actions, and that the adoption of these methods had direct consequences, in terms of domestic politics and in terms of inter-state relations.

In pursuing this enquiry into 'revolutionary Machiavellism', we have sought to establish some of the intellectual lineages of Stalinism as a political phenomenon, in terms of Russian political thought and in terms of European intellectual traditions. There are certain ideas which recur: the notion of the 'physician' who, by brutal surgery, seeks to save his patient; the notion that it is the well-being of the people that is the highest law (*salus populus suprema lex*); and the notion of the revolutionary leader as the 'saviour of the people' (Pisarev's *spasitel nardov*) or a 'world historical individual' (Hegel). We already have the recognition of a possible fusion of revolutionary traditions and Russian statist traditions; with Herzen's idea of Peter the Great founding a Committee of Public Safety. We have the Russian saying regarding the role of terror in 'binding the land'. In the nineteenth century we already have morality defined in 'utilitarian' terms and we have Dostoevskii's discussion on

crime and redemption. It might be said that, with Stalinism, we have a reversion to a view of politics that predates the neat distinction between left and right born of the French Revolution, and the return to a political world which would have been immediately recognizable to Machiavelli.

Appendix: Machiavelli in Post-Stalin Russia, 1953–98

Stalin's death in March 1953 marked a decisive change in the way in which the Soviet state was organized, and in the way in which the state related to its own society. The 'cult' of personality, of illegality and arbitrary government was denounced. It was heralded as a return to 'Leninist' norms of government (presumably the Lenin of 1922 rather than the Lenin of 1918), with a new emphasis on socialist 'morality'. Nevertheless, the USSR remained a highly authoritarian, highly secretive state, in which legal norms were applied selectively. Not surprisingly, the Soviet regime's attitude to Machiavelli remained extremely guarded.¹ In the 1950s a small number of works on political thought and philosophy do mention him.² In 1958 A. A. Zimin published his article on Peresvetov, with its speculations concerning the early influence of Machiavelli in Russia.³ A scholarly article by F. De Sanktis in 1964 was one of the few works of note in 1960s on Machiavelli.⁴ One important development in this period was the beginnings of a discussion on the work of Friedrich Meinecke and the concept of *raison d'état* (*ideya gosudarstvennogo razuma*) in which the ideas of Machiavelli were so central.⁵

Only in the 1970 and 1980s did there begin to develop a substantial scholarly literature about Machiavelli.⁶ At the same time, Machiavelli is thus much less at the centre of political issues – the problem of order, the construction of a new state – than was the case in the early decades of Soviet power. Surprisingly, there was little reflection on the impact that Machiavelli's thought had on the shaping of the Stalinist state. In 1977 Fedor Burlatskii, a high-level government adviser under Brezhnev, published *The Riddle and Lesson of Niccolo Machiavelli* as a series of novellas.⁷ In this, Burlatsky writes about himself, the dilemmas of an adviser who, understanding the need for changes, is unable to find an agent capable of effecting these changes.⁸

In the post-Brezhnev era the preoccupation shifted from a concern with Machiavelli's political ideas to a concern with their broader social-cultural significance. Under Gorbachev's '*glasnost*' censorship was lifted. Works by L. M. Batkin, K. M. Dolgov and R. I. Khlodovskii dealt with the man, his ideas and his age. There were studies on Machiavelli and the use of language, his place in Italian drama, his impact on English Elizabethan drama, and on humanism and aesthetics of the Renaissance. Machiavelli's writings on the nature of political and social organization of Renaissance Italy and ancient Rome continued to draw scholarly attention. Various new studies appeared on Machiavelli's political and military thought, and his treatment in west European historiography. In the early 1980s the application of Machiavelli's ideas to the study of domestic and international politics attracted some attention, as a way of exposing the duplicity of the poli-

cies of the capitalist world. Machiavelli's thoughts on political leadership became a subject of study.

The collapse of communism in 1991 further opened up the possibility for independent publishing. With the disillusionment of the reform process after 1991 scholars explored the implications of Machiavelli's writings concerning the nature of power,⁹ and examined how far political ideology and practice merely reflected the self-interest of politicians.¹⁰ A new impetus to the study of Machiavelli's ideas on Stalin was given by the publication, in 1992, of Nikolai Ryzhkov's memoirs with its reference to Stalin's copy of Machiavelli's works with his annotations and marginal notes.¹¹ In 1992 Boris Lanin published a selection of extracts from *The Prince* under the heading 'Adviser to Stalin – Niccolo Machiavelli'.¹² Only one analysis of any note, by Nesmeyanov in 1993, examined the relationship between Machiavelli's thought and Stalinism.¹³ In 1990 *Dialog* published Maurice Joly's debate between Machiavelli and Montesquieu in hell.¹⁴

In these years Machiavelli's works were themselves published in large editions. The *Florentine Histories* (*Istoriya Florentsii*) was published in a Russian version for the first time, translated by Ya. N. Rykov, and general editor V. I. Rutenburg (Leningrad, 1973, and republished in 1988). Rutenburg provided an article 'The Life and Work of Machiavelli'.¹⁵ The first edition of Machiavelli's work *Izbrannye sochineniya* appeared in 1982. This included chapters from *The Discourses* (translated by R. I. Khlodovskii) and *The Prince* (translated by G. D. Murav'ev) as well as some of his songs and verse.¹⁶ This version of *The Prince* (*Gosudar'*) was published in Moscow in 1990.¹⁷ In 1991 extracts from *The Discourses* were published.¹⁸ A collection of pieces on the life of Machiavelli published in 1993, edited by Artem'ev included *The Prince* and chapters from *The Discourses*.¹⁹

By 1998 it was possible to buy in Moscow three different collections of Machiavelli's works, containing various parts of his work, and of varying quality: Nikkolo Makiavelli, *Gosudar'*, *Rassuzhdeniya o pervoi dekadē Tita Liviya. O voennom iskusstve* (Moscow, Mysl', 1997) contains an introduction by Professor E. I. Temnov 'Machiavelli as a Political Writer' and also the essay by Dzhivelegov on Machiavelli from the Academia edition and Del'bruck's piece from the 1939 version of *The Art of War*; Nikkolo Makiavelli, *Sochineniya* (St Petersburg, Kristall, 1998), in the series *Biblioteka mirovoi literatury*, also contains the article by De Santis on Machiavelli; and Nikkolo Makiavelli, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* (Rostov on Don, Feniks, 1998) with an introductory article by E. I. Temnov 'Machiavelli as a Political Writer'.

M. A. Yusim has made the most significant contribution to the study of Machiavelli's political thought in articles dealing with Machiavelli's ethics and the connections between Machiavelli and Marx. The main work is Yusim's book exploring the impact of Machiavelli's political thought in Russia from the sixteenth century to the present day.²⁰

Notes

Introduction

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78. *Ibid.*, p. 514.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 515.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 527.
81. *The Prince*, p. 97.
82. *The Discourses*, p. 527.
83. *The Prince*, p. 85.
84. *The Discourses*, p. 156.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
86. *The Prince*, p. 58.
87. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–6.
88. Niccolo Machiavelli, *Florentine Histories* (translated by Laura F. Banfield and Harvey C. Mansfield Jr) (Princeton, NJ, 1990), p. 122.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
90. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
91. *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 123. The speech by the leader of the *ciompi* might be compared to another famous harangue, namely Sallust's *De coniuratione Catilinae*. The insertion of such harangues into works of history raises questions as to how far the author is putting his own thoughts into the speech of his protagonist. See Carlo Ginzburg, *History, Rhetoric and Proof* (Hanover and London, 1999), ch. 3.
92. *Selected Political Speeches of Cicero* (translated and introduced by Michael Grant) (Harmondsworth, 1977), pp. 143–4. 'For foreign enemies are either vanquished and enslaved or enrolled as friends and bound by obligations of gratitude.' But with rebellious subjects who have been defeated he ruled out reconciliation as impractical and advocated 'an unending war against these godforsaken criminals'.
93. Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Re Publica: De Legibus* (translated by Clinton Walker) (London, 1929).
94. Daniel C. Boughner, *The Devil's Disciple: Ben Jonson's Debt to Machiavelli* (Westport, 1968), p. 78.
95. Machiavelli uses the expression the art of state (*arte dello stato*), which might be translated as statecraft. The term reason of state (*ragioni dello stato*) was used by Guicciardini, but may have an earlier origin. Maurizio Viroli, 'Machiavelli and the republican idea of politics' in Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli (eds), *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 1990). Machiavelli, was certainly one of the founding fathers of political realism, and was the author of the notion 'effective truth' (*verità effettuale*). Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli* (Oxford, 1998) pp. 81–2.
96. Skinner, *Machiavelli*, pp. 15–16, 38–40, 42–3, 45.

97. Nannerl O. Keohane, *Philosophy and the State in France: The Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ, 1980), pp. 174–5, 403, ft. 25; K. M. Baker, *Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics* (Chicago and London, 1975), pp. 345–8.
98. Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 114–15. Bayle, *Political Writings* (Edited by Sally L. Jenkinson) (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 162–71.
99. J. J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses* (London, 1968), book III, ch. 6.
100. Ibid., book II, ch. 6.
101. Ibid., book II, ch. 7, ft. 1.
102. Ibid., book I, ch. 4.
103. Ibid., book IV, ch. 6.
104. Ibid., book IV, ch. 5.
105. Ibid., book IV, ch. 8.
106. Robert Wokler, *Rousseau* (Oxford, 1995); Robert Wokler (ed.) *Rousseau and Liberty* (Manchester, 1995).
107. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1934), vol. 60, pp. 765–6. The entry also refers to Cicero as 'an unprincipled politician'.
108. Marco Armandi (ed.), *Maximilien Robespierre: Dizionario delle idee* (Rome, 1999), p. 134.
109. Ibid., p. 128.
110. Cesare Vetter, *Il Dispotismo della Liberta: Dittatura e rivoluzione dall'Illuminismo al 1848* (Milan, 1993), pp. 219, ft. 120, 13, ft. 12, 214, ft. 87.
111. A. V. Gordon (ed.), *Lui Antian Sen-Zhyust: Rechi traktaky* (Moscow, 1995). See the article by A. V. Gordon, 'Illyuzii-realii Yakobinism'.
112. Ibid., p. 175.
113. Vetter, *Il Dispotismo della Liberta*.
114. Albert Cherel, *La pensée de Machiavel en France* (Paris, 1935), pp. 243–4.
115. Quoted in Vittorio Zincone, *Lo Stato totalitario* (Rome, 1999), p. 173.
116. Joseph de Maistre, *Considerations on France* (translated and edited by Richard A. Lebrun, Introduction by Isaiah Berlin) (Cambridge, 1994), p. 28, n., Cites Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, book. iii, ch. ix, n.
117. François René de Chateaubriand, *De Buonaparte et des Bourbons* (Paris, 1814).
118. M. de Mazeres, *Machiavel, et l'influence de sa doctrine, sur les opinions, les mœurs, de la politique de la France pendant la Revolution* (Paris, 1816). This is a disappointing work, which bases its argument for Machiavelli's influence in France primarily on hearsay, and on parallels between his views and contemporary events. A more scholarly work is Cherel, *La pensée de Machiavel en France*, but the connections between the Jacobins and Machiavelli remain rather illusive.
119. The work was entitled *Machiavel commenté par N-on Buonaparte. Manuscrit trouvé dans la carosse de Buonaparte apres la bataille de Mont-Saint-Jean le 18 juin 1815* (Paris, 1816). Cherel, *La pensée de Machiavel en France*, pp. 251–2. This fabrication received wide coverage. It was published in Russia. It was also circulated in Poland. See Andrzej Kijowski, *Granice literatury: Wybór szkiców krytycznych i historycznych* (Warsaw, 1991), pp. 62–9.
120. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Art of War* (Indianapolis, 1965). See especially the introduction by Neal Wood pp. xlii–xlv.
121. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, 1910), p. 78.

122. J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London, 1952), p. 107.
123. Vetter, *Il Dispotismo della Liberta*. Astrid von Borcke, *Die Ursprünge des Bolschewismus: Jakobinische Tradition in Russland und die Theorie der Revolutionären Diktatur* (Munich, 1977). Tamara Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins: Itinéraire des analogies* (Paris, 1989). D. Shlapentokh, *The French Revolution in Russian Intellectual Life 1865–1905* (Westport and London, 1996).
124. *Hegel's Political Writings* (translated by T. M. Knox, with an introductory essay by Z. A. Pelczynski) (Oxford, 1964). See also Shlomo Avineri, *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 53–4.
125. Steven B. Smith, *Hegel's Critique of Liberalism: Rights in Context* (Chicago and London, 1989), pp. 94–5.
126. *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 42, 48.
127. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (New York, 1956), p. 403.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
130. J. L. Talmon, *Political Messianism* (London, 1960), pp. 177–201.
131. Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat: Its place in Modern History* (New Brunswick and London, 1998), p. 371. See also Dante Germino, *Machiavelli to Marx: Modern Western Political Thought* (Chicago and London, 1972), pp. 302–8. A. Philonenko, 'La Probleme de la guerre et le Machiavellisme chez Fichte', *Guerres et Paix*, 1968, vol. 3, pp. 30–40.
132. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Addresses to the German Nation* (translated by R. F. Jones and G. H. Turnbull) (Westport, CT, 1979 reprint).
133. Reinhold Aris, *History of German Political Thought from 1789 to 1815* (London, 1965), p. 355.
134. Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, ch. 14. See also C. J. Friedrich, *Constitutional Reasons of State* (Princeton, NJ, 1957), which examines the development of the concept of *raison d'état* from Machiavelli to Hegel. On Machiavelli's influence on Fichte and Hegel see also Jacques Maritain, 'The End of Machiavellism', *Review of Politics*, 1942, vol. 4, pp. 1–33.
135. Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State* (Oxford, 1976), especially ch. 3, 'Fichte, Machiavelli, Pestalozzi'. The relationship between Clausewitz and Machiavelli is discussed also in Raymon Aron, *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz* (Paris, 1976). There is an English translation by Christine Booker and Norman Stone – Raymond Aron, *Clausewitz: Philosopher of War* (London, 1983).
136. Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, chs 12–16.
137. Aris, *History of German Political Thought*, p. 247.
138. Niccolo Machiavelli, *Il Principe* (edited by L. Arthur Burd) (Oxford, 1891).
139. Benedetto Croce, *Politics and Morals* (translated from the Italian by Salvatore J. Castiglione) (London, 1946), ch. II, 'Machiavelli and Vico. Politics and Ethics', p. 45.

2 Machiavelli, Marx and Nietzsche

1. Cesare Vetter, *Il Dispotismo della Liberta: Dittatura e rivoluzione dall'Illuminismo al 1848* (Milan, 1993), pp. 44–5, 75, 155, ft. 414, 214, ft. 87.

2. Raymond Aron, 'Machiavel et Marx', *Etudes politiques* (Paris, 1972). This was a lecture delivered by Aron in 1969, but was clearly written without knowledge of the work of Maksimovskii (see note 29 below); Th. Schneider, 'Machiavelli im Marxismus', *Geschichte in der Gegenwart. Festschrift für Kurt Kluxen* (Paderborn, 1972), pp. 33–44. M. A. Yusim, 'Marksizm i Makiavelizm', *Srednie veka* (Moscow, 1995), volume 58, pp. 112–32.
3. David McLellan, *Marx before Marxism* (Harmondsworth, 1972), p. 158.
4. E. A. Zhelubovskaya (ed.) *Marks-Istorik* (Moscow, 1968), p. 624.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 610.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 613.
7. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works* (London, 1975), vol. 1, p. 201.
8. Don Garret (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza* (Cambridge, 1997), ch. 7. Edwin Curley, 'Kissinger, Spinoza and Genghis Khan', describes Spinoza as 'arguably the most Machiavellian of the great modern political philosophers'.
9. Hal Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution: 1 State and Bureaucracy* (New York and London, 1977), p. 52.
10. David W. Lovell, *From Marx to Lenin: An evaluation of Marx's responsibility for Soviet authoritarianism* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 17–18. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 164.
11. Masimo L. Salvadori, 'Il giacobinismo nel pensiero marxista' in M. L. Salvadori and N. Tranfaglia, *Il Modello Politico Giacobino e Le Rivoluzioni* (Florence, 1984), pp. 240–53.
12. K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism* (Moscow, [1844] 1975), p. 141.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 143–5. Shlomo Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* (Cambridge, 1970), p. 190, cites Marx's article in *Vorwärts*, 7 August 1844.
14. K. Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Moscow, 1972), pp. 10–11.
15. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx*, p. 92.
16. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Collected Works* (London, 1975), vol. 5, p. 322.
17. *Ibid.*, vol. 39, p. 125; vol. 40, pp. 186–7; vol. 16, p. 419.
18. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 360.
19. *Ibid.*, vol. 39, p. 31; vol. 46, p. 262.
20. *Ibid.*, vol. 17, p. 491.
21. *Ibid.*, vol. 16, pp. 130, 447, 517.
22. *Ibid.*, vol. 43, p. 463.
23. *Ibid.*, vol. 23, p. 488.
24. Aileen Kelly, *Mikhail Bakunin* (Oxford, 1982), p. 237.
25. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 75; vol. 21, p. 419. In a letter to Marx, O'Donovan Rossa in 1870 wrote of campaigns of calumny directed at him: 'Many a time the circumstances have reminded me of Machiavelli's words; "that tyrants have a special interest in circulating the Bible so that the people understand its precepts and offer no resistance to being robbed by brigands".'
26. F. Engels, 'Ludwig Feuerbach and the end of classical German philosophy', in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, p. 307.

27. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 25, p. 319. See also vol. 18, pp. 107, 191.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 245, 63.
29. Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Machiavelli* (London, 1968).
30. V. Maksimovskii, 'Vypiski K. Marska iz sochinenii Makiavelli', *Arkhiv K. Marksa i F. Engelsa*, book 4 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1929), pp. 55–94.
31. V. Maksimovskii, 'Viko i ego teoriya obshchestvennykh krugovorotov', *Arkhiv K. Marksa i F. Engelsa*, book 4 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1929), pp. 7–63. See Giorgio Tagliacozzo (ed.) *Vico and Marx: Affinities and Contrasts* (New Jersey, 1983).
32. V. Maksimovskii, 'Vzglyady Makiavelli na obshchestvo i klassy', *Izvestiya Akademii nauk SSSR: Otdelenie obshchestvennykh nauk* (Leningrad, 1933), no. 3, pp. 225–48; no. 4, pp. 291–306.
33. Philip J. Kain, *Marx and Ethics* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 117–18.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 98.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
36. R. N. Carew Hunt, *The Theory and Practice of Communism* (Harmondsworth, 1969), ch. 7 'The Marxist Ethic'.
37. John Lewis, *The Life and Teaching of Karl Marx* (London, 1965), p. 35.
38. R. N. Berki, *The Genesis of Marxism* (London, 1988), p. 31.
39. Kain, *Marx and Ethics*.
40. Henri Lefebvre, *The Sociology of Marx* (translated by Norbert Guterman) (London, 1968), pp. 164–5.
41. Steven Lukes, *Marxism and Morality* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 142–3.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
43. Lovell, *From Marx to Lenin*, pp. 42, 66. A. Lehning, 'Buonarrotti's Ideas on Communism and Dictatorship', *International Review of Social History* (1957), vol. II, pp. 266–87. A. Lehning, *From Buonarrotti to Bakunin* (Leiden, 1970). A. Galante Garrone, *Buonarrotti e Babeuf* (Turin, 1948) p. 95, note 1.
44. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 544. The report by Marx and Engels contains the full text of 'Catechism of the Revolutionist' and the rules and programmes of the organization. See Elli Pappa, 'Machiavelli versus Marx', *Journal of Symposium* 90, vol. 1, no. 1, May 1992, p. 60. Escobars is a reference to the followers of the Spanish Jesuit Escobar Mendoza, who taught that pious intentions sanctify actions condemned by common morality.
45. Elli Pappa, 'Machiavelli versus Marx', p. 73.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
47. *Ibid.*, pp. 82, 84.
48. Croce noted how profoundly Vico had been influenced by earlier 'Utilitarian' writers – Hobbes, Spinoza, Locke, Bayle and Machiavelli. Benedetto Croce, *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (London, 1913), p. 78.
49. David D. Roberts, *Benedetto Croce and the Uses of Historicism* (Berkeley, 1987), p. 45.
50. A. Del Noce, *Il suicidio della rivoluzione* (Milan, 1992). See Del Noce's discussion on authority, power and party in Gramsci's thought.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 98, 118.
52. M. N. Pokrovskii, *Ekonomicheskii materializm* (Moscow, 1906, St Petersburg, 1920), pp. 4–5.

53. Some commentators dispute Nietzsche's debt to Machiavelli. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (Harmondsworth, 1972), translated and with commentary by R. J. Hollingdale, especially the notes on Machiavelli and Cesare Borgia, *ibid.*, pp. 200, 205. But see also Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche Contra Rousseau* (Cambridge, 1991) pp. 38–9, which stresses Nietzsche's indebtedness to Machiavelli as regards first the 'Machiavellianism of power (Macht), that is, the view that morality can always be seen to be built on "immoral" foundations', and, second, in his thinking on morality and 'Machiavelli's notion of virtue, a notion which he constantly counterposes to the Christian understanding of virtuous action'. Nietzsche was greatly influenced by the treatment of Machiavelli in Jakob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.
54. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Harmondsworth, 1990), p. 138.
55. Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven and London, [1946] 1974), ch. 15.
56. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 89–90.
57. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Harmondsworth, 1996), pp. 42, 44.
58. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 75.
59. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p. 140.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 60.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
62. Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, pp. 106–7.
63. Geoff Waite, *Nietzsche's Corpse* (Durham and London, 1996), p. 316.
64. Cited in Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (Chicago and London, 1990), pp. 4, 49.
65. Nietzsche's interest in Machiavelli was no passing whim. In his notebooks of 1887 he wrote that Christianity was a religion suitable only for private not public life: 'In the end the Christian prince, too, practices the politics of Machiavelli: assuming, that is, he doesn't practice bad politics.' See Rudiger Bitter (ed.) *Nietzsche: Writings from the Late Notebooks* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 197.
66. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, p. 126. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 285.
67. On Bismarck as an exponent of *raison d'état* or *staatsrason*, see Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'État: Its Place in Modern History* (New Brunswick and London, 1998) (first published in German as *Die Idee der Staatsrason in der neueren Geschichte* [Berlin, 1925]).
68. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, vol. xxxv (1967), pp. 269–70.
69. Marx and Engels, *Werke*, vol. xxii (1963), p. 236; *Werke*, vol. xxii, p. 516; *Werke*, vol. xxvi, p. 499. On 'revolution from above' in Engels' work, see E. H. Carr, *Foundations of a Planned Economy 1926–1929*, 2 (Harmondsworth, 1976), p. 472. See also Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 540 on Napoleon, Bismarck and Alexander II as proponents of 'revolution from above'.
70. See Emil Ludwig, *Bismarck: The Story of a Fighter* (London, 1927), pp. 252, 261, 540. Ludwig describes Bismarck as 'a pupil of Machiavelli', 'a disciple of Machiavelli' and 'an adept in the school of Machiavelli'.
71. Lothar Gall, *Bismarck: The White Revolutionary* (London, 1986), vol. 2, p. 16.

72. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, p. 217.
73. A major role in promoting Bismarck as the architect of state socialism was the English writer William Harbutt Dawson in his book *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle* (London, 1888) and its sequel *Bismarck and State Socialism* (London, 1890). In the Italian translation of the latter the Machiavellian and state socialist elements were underlined in the title *Il Principe Bismarck ed Il Socialismo di Stato* (Rome, Florence, Turin, 1891).
74. Dawson, *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle*, pp. 253–4.
75. J. G. Fikhte, *Izbrannyye sochineniya* (Moscow, 1916) (edited by E. N. Trubetskoi), vol. 1, p. xxxiii.
76. George H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (London, 1960), p. 715.
77. Meinecke, *Machiavellism*, chs 12–16. H. W. C. Davis, *The Political Thought of Heinrich von Treitschke* (London, 1914); and Joseph McCabe, *Treitschke and the Great War* (London, 1914), pp. 26–7, 187–200.
78. H. Stuart Hughes Jnr., *Consciousness and Society* (London, [1958] 1979); Geraint Parry, *Political Elites* (London, 1969); Z. A. Jordan, *Karl Marx: Economy, Class and Social Revolution* (London, 1971), pp. 62–3.
79. Lovell, *From Marx to Lenin*, p. 91.
80. J. R. Jennings, 'Sorel, Vico and Marx', in Giorgio Tagliacozzo (ed.) *Vico and Marx: Affinities and Contrasts* (New Jersey, 1983), pp. 326–41.
81. Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (translated by T. E. Hulme and J. Roth, introduction by Edward A. Shils) (New York, 1971), p. 35.
82. Jack J. Roth, *The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians* (Berkeley, 1980), p. 264.
83. G. A. Kuklin (ed.), *Itogi revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii za sorok let (1862–1902gg)* (Geneva, 1903), part 2, p. 16.
84. On Machiavelli's influence on Mosca, Pareto, Labriola and Gramsci, see Joseph V. Femia, *The Machiavellian Legacy* (Basingstoke, 1998), and M. A. Fionchiari, *Beyond Right and Left: Democratic Elitism in Mosca and Gramsci* (New Haven, 1999).
85. Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class (Elementi di Scienza Politica)* (translated by Hannah D. Kahn, edited and revised by Arthur Livingstone) (New York, 1939), pp. 43, 202–3. Gaetano Mosca, *Storia delle dottrine politiche* (Bari, 1978), pp. 106–13.
86. Mosca, *The Ruling Class*, pp. 194–5.
87. This is reflected in various literary works: Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* and G. K. Chesterton's *The Man who was Thursday*.

3 Machiavelli in Russia, 1800–1917

1. M. A. Yusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii: moral' i politika na protyazhenii pyati stoletii* (Moscow, 1998), chs 1, 2, 3.
2. J. Malarczyk, 'Machiavellismo e antimachiavellismi nell'Europa Orientale del Cinquecento' in *Machiavellismo e antimachiavellismi nel Cinquecento* (Florence 1969), pp. 106–14 (reproduced in *Il Pensiero politico*, 1969, pp. 434–44).
3. James H. Billington, *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretative History of Russian Culture* (London, 1966), pp. 167–8. S. V. Utechin, *Russian Political Thought* (London, 1963), p. 31.

4. Jan Malarczyk, 'Politicheskoe uchenie Makiavelli v russkoi dorevolutsionnoi i sovetskoi istoriografii', *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Sklodowska*, vol. vi, section g, 1959 (Lublin, 1960), p. 4.
5. Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Machiavelli* (London, 1968).
6. Malarczyk, 'Politicheskoe uchenie Makiavelli', pp. 4–5.
7. Yakov P. Kozel'skii, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya russkikh myslitelei vtoroi poloviny XVIII veka* (Moscow, 1952), vol. 1, pp. 550–1.
8. *Anti-Makhiavel', ili Opyt vozrozhdeniya na Makhiavelevu nauku o obraze gosudarstvennogo pravleniya, sochinennyye slavno vladeiushchim korolem prusskim Friderikom II* (St Petersburg, 1779). Review in *Sankt Peterburgskii vestnik*, part vii, 1781.
9. Malarczyk, 'Politicheskoe uchenie Makiavelli', pp. 5–6. I. S. Sharkova, "'Anti-Mak'yavelli" Fridrikha II and ego russkie perevody', in *Problemy kultury ital'yanskogo Vozrozhdeniya* (Leningrad, 1979), pp. 106–11.
10. Yusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii*, p. 142. Vittorio Strada, *URSS-Russia* (Milan, 1985), pp. 225–8. Strada refers to Karamzin possessing the Jacobinism of a conservative, and contrasts Karamzin with the revolutionary Radichev who was strongly anti-Jacobin.
11. E. A. Zhelubovskaya (ed.) *Marks-Istoriik* (Moscow, 1968), p. 624; Yusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii*, p. 142. J. L. Black, *Nicholas Karamzin and Russian Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto and Buffalo, 1975), pp. 16, 114, 195, notes both Karamzin's distinction between the morality of rulers and citizens, and his use of the concept of *virtù* as having been borrowed from Machiavelli.
12. A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (edited by Mal'tsev) (Moscow, 1887), p. 198. Yusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii*, pp. 142–6. N. Ya. Eidel'man, *Pushkin: Iz biografii i tvorchestva 1826–1837* (Moscow, 1987), pp. 247–54.
13. 'Vypiski iz Makhiaveliya o voine rimlyan; zamechaniya ego o sile belogo ili kholodnogo oruzhiya; mneniya o tom zhe Petra Pervogo, grafa de Saksa i Suvorova', *Russkii vestnik* (Moscow, 1809), no. 6, pp. 280–350; no. 7, pp. 12–41; no. 8, pp. 150–73.
14. 'Vozzvanie k zhiteyam Italii', *Russkii vestnik* (Moscow, 1813), no. 6, pp. 43–6.
15. "'Knyaz" ili vladelets sochinenie Makhiaveliya, s zametkami Napoleona Bonaparta, pisannymi im so vremeni nachal'stva ego v Italii do begstva c o. El'by, to est' ot 1795 do 1815 goda', *Russkii vestnik* (Moscow, 1817), no. 1 and 2, pp. 67–88; no. 3 and 4, pp. 36–40; no. 5 and 6, pp. 31–6.
16. S. Pototskii, 'O dykhe sochinenii Makiaveliya', *Vestnik Evropy* (Moscow, 1819), part cvi, no. 13, pp. 14–41; no. 14, pp. 99–113.
17. T. B. Makolei, 'Makiavel' i ego vek', *Moskovskii Telegraf* (Moscow, 1928), no. 5, pp. 50–76, 172–203. 'Polnoe sobranie sochinenii Makiaveliya. Novyi perevod Zh. V. Per'e' (from the *Edinburgh Review*, March 1827).
18. T. B. Makolei, 'Machiavelli', *Otechestvennye Zapiski* (St Petersburg, 1856), vol. 108, no. 9–10, pp. 364–99. T. B. Makolei, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii* (St Petersburg, 1860), vol. 1, pp. 71–107.
19. Yusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii*, pp. 150–2.
20. 'Inostrannaya literatura – Sochineniya Ebelinga, Mundta, Makoleya o Makiavelli', *Moskvityanin* (Moscow, 1851), part III, pp. 216–26. Macaulay's original review in the *Edinburgh Review*, March 1827, was prompted by the publication of *Oeuvres complètes de Machiavel* (translated by J. V. Perier) (Paris, 1825).

21. Prezzolini, *Machiavelli*, pp. 254–5.
22. Robert Mohl, *Geschichte und Literatur der Staatswissenschaften* (Graz, [1858] 1960), vol. III, ch. XVII.
23. See review by K. Uspenskii in *Golos' minuvshago*, no. 3, March 1916, p. 279.
24. V. Popov, 'Makiavelli', *Russkoe slovo* (St Petersburg, 1859), no. 4, pp. 201–36; no. 5, pp. 271–320.
25. Yusim, *Makiavelli v Rossii*, p. 153.
26. Popov, 'Makiavelli', *Russkoe slovo* no. 5, p. 302.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 305–9.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 312. This is evidently a reference to Ignatius Loyola's *Summarium Contitutionum* in which he states that every Jesuit must obey his superior, and be guided and led by him, 'as if he were a corpse or a staff in the hands of an old man to serve him who holds it wherever and however it seems good to him'. Cited in Renè Fülöp-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism* (London and New York, 1927), p. 282.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 320.
30. Yu. Zhukovskii, 'Politicheskaya i obshchestvennaya teoriya v XVI vek', *Sovremennik*, vol. lxxxviii (St Petersburg, 1861), pp. 37–98.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–9.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
35. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. 9 (Moscow, 1972), pp. 714–15.
36. A. N. Veselovskii, 'Ital'yanskaya novella i Makk'yavelli', *Sankt-Peterburgskii Vedomosti* (St Petersburg, 1865), no. 65, 13 (25) March 1.
37. *Vestnik Evropy* (St Petersburg, 1867), vol. III, pp. 13–14.
38. 'Zhizn' i tvoreniya Makiavelli-pets.truda P. Deltufa', *Zapiski dlya chteniya* (St Petersburg, 1867), no. 8–9, pp. 73–7.
39. D. I. Kachenovskii, *Vzglyad na istoriyu politicheskikh nauk v Evrope* (Moscow, 1859), pp. 44–6; M. Stasyulevich, *Opyt istoricheskogo obzora glavnykh sistem filosofii istorii* (St Petersburg, 1866), pp. 43–6. Yu. Zhukovskii, *Materialy dlya obshchestvennoi nauki* (St Petersburg, 1866).
40. Sergio Bertelli and Piero Innocenti, *Bibliografia Machiavelliana* (Verona, 1972).
41. See Yusim, *Makiavelli v Rossii*, p. 148. 'Bel'fagor'-povest' iz Makiavell', *Galateya* (Moscow, 1830), part XIV, no. 29, pp. 145–57.
42. Nikkolo Makiavelli, *Voennoe iskusstvo, sochinenie Makiavelli*, (translated by Captain M. I. Bogdanovich), vol. IV (St Petersburg, 1839).
43. Nikolaya Makiavelli, *Gosudar'i rassuzhdeniya na pervye tri knigi Tita Liviya* (edited by N. Kurochkin) (St Petersburg, 1869). The book was reviewed in *Sankt-Peterburgskie Vedomosti* (St Petersburg, 1869), no. 243, p. 2; *Bibliograf* (St Petersburg, 1869), vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 88–95.
44. Nikkolo Makiavelli, *Monarkh* (translated from the German by Fedor Zatler) (St Petersburg, 1869).
45. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
46. A. S. Alekseev, *Makiavelli kak politicheskii myslitel'* (Moscow, 1880), pp. v–xi, 336. Parts of the work were published earlier: A. S. Alekseev, 'Politicheskoe uchenie Makiavelli', *Yuridecheskii Vestnik* (Moscow, 1879), vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 316–51; no. 4, pp. 536–73; A. S. Alekseev, 'Uchenie Makiavelli o npravstven-

- nosti i utlitarizm', *Yuridecheskii Vestnik* (Moscow, 1879), vol. 2, no. 7, pp. 3–41; no. 9, pp. 421–55.
47. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
 48. Malarczyk lists the following reviews of Alekseev's work: A. L. Komarovskii, *Alekseev, Makiavelli kak politicheskoi myslitel'* (Moscow, 1879), separately published from *Sbornik Gosudratvennykh znaniy* (St Petersburg, 1880), vol. viii, pp. 1–15; N. Shelgunov, 'Makiavelli (Makiavelli kak politicheskii myslitel' A. S. Alekseeva)', *Delo* (St Petersburg, 1880), no. 4, pp. 1–31; V. Gol'tsev, 'A. Alekseev – Makiavelli kak politicheskii myslitel'', *Rysskaya mysl', Bibliografiya* (Moscow, 1880), book 3, pp. 1–5, criticized the idea of utilitarianism as applied to Machiavelli.
 49. N. Storozhenko, 'Novaya kniga o Makiavelli. (Makiavelli kak politicheskii myslitel'. Soch. A. Alekseeva)', *Vestnik Evropy* (St Petersburg, 1880), vol. 3, book 4, pp. 759–77. Republished in N. Storozhenko, *Iz oblasti literatury (Stat'i, lektsii, reich, retsenzii)* (Moscow, 1902), pp. 305–24.
 50. *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, vol. xviii (St Petersburg, 1896), pp. 420–1. The entry provided an extensive bibliography of French, German and Italian works on Machiavelli.
 51. On Kovalevskii see S. V. Utechin, *Russian Political Thought* (London, 1963), pp. 111–2. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1973), vol. 12, pp. 1057–8.
 52. Maksim Kovalevskii, 'Razvitie ideii gosudarstvennoi neobkhdimosti i obshchestvennoi pravdy v Italii: Botero i Campanella', *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii*, book 1 (31), January 1896 (Moscow), p. 132.
 53. M. M. Kovalevskii, *Ot pryamogo narodopravstva k predstavitel'nomu i ot patriarkhal'noi monarkhii k parlamentarizmu* (Moscow, 1906), vol. 1, pp. 364–434.
 54. Dzh. Morlei, 'Makiavelli', *Severnyi Vestnik* (St Petersburg, 1897), no. 9, pp. 71–107. John Morley, *Machiavelli* (The Romanes Lecture delivered in the Sheldonian Theatre 2 June 1897) (London, 1897).
 55. Yusim, *Makiavelli v Rossii*, p. 170.
 56. W. E. Gladstone papers, British Library, London: Add 44257. I am indebted for this reference to Marco De Waard.
 57. Morley, *Machiavelli*, p. 20.
 58. *Ibid.*, pp. 26–7.
 59. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
 61. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
 62. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
 63. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
 64. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
 65. *Ibid.*, pp. 49–50.
 66. P. Novgorodtsev, 'Politicheskaya doktrina pessimizma (Opyt kharakteristiki politicheskogo ucheniya Makiavelli)', *Obrazovanie* (St Petersburg, 1898), no. 1, pp. 97–106; no. 2. pp. 117–24. This lecture was delivered at Tver' in December 1897. P. Novgorodtsev also wrote a study on 'Machiavelli' in the book *Kniga dlya chteniya po istorii srednikh vekov* (Moscow, 1899) (under editorship of P. G. Vinogradov), issue 4, pp. 249–64. P. Novgorodtsev, *Konspekt i lektsiyam po istorii filosofii prava* (Moscow, 1908), pp. 50–69. Novgorodtsev was a lecturer at Moscow University and the author of major studies of the

- history of law, and a major work on the ideas of Hegel and Kant on the state and law. In 1906 he was elected a deputy as a Kadet party member to the first Duma. In 1917 he emigrated, and died in exile in Prague in 1924. On Novgorodtsev see *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. 18 (Moscow, 1974), p. 173. See also Utechin, *Russian Political Thought*, pp. 188–90.
67. Novgorodtsev, 'Politicheskaya doktrina pessimizma', *Obrazovanie*, no. 2, pp. 123–4.
 68. P. I. Novgorodtsev, *Istoriya Filosofii Prava* (Moscow, 1909), pp. 50–65.
 69. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
 70. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
 71. V. E. Val'denberg, 'Osnovaniya makiavellizma', *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* (Moscow, 1897), March–April, pp. 219–39.
 72. V. Topor-Rabchinskii, *Makiavelli i epokha Vozrozhdeniya; Vvedenie v' izucheniye Makiavelli* (Warsaw, 1908), p. 161. See the review by V. Pertsov, published in the bibliographical section of the journal *Rysskaya Mysl'* (Moscow, 1910), January, pp. 9–10.
 73. N. Makiavelli, *Gosudar'*, *Rassuzhdeniya o pervykh 10 knigakh Tita Liviya* (St Petersburg, 1900).
 74. Nikkolo Makiavelli, *Knyaz'* (translated from the Italian by S. M. Rogovin) (Moscow, 1910).
 75. E. Lanzheron, 'Makiavelli i Tsezar' Bordzhia', *Istoricheskii Vestnik* (St Petersburg, 1910), vol. cxix, no. 1, pp. 348–56. The interest in Cesare Borgia may be an importation: see Par Charles Yriarte, *Caesar Borgia* (Paris, 1889).
 76. M. Liven', *Tsezar' Bordzhia. P'esa v vos'mi kartinakh* (St Petersburg, 1910).
 77. M. Saltykov, *Tsezar Bordzhia* (Moscow, 1912), pp. 49–68.
 78. D. S. Merezhkovskii, *Voskresshie Bogi Leonardo da-Vinchi*, second volume of the trilogy *Khristos i Antikhrist* (St Petersburg and Moscow, 1911).
 79. B. Chicherin, *Istoriya politicheskikh uchenii* (Moscow, 1903) part I, pp. 317–30.
 80. E. N. Trubetskoi, 'K kharakteristike politicheskikh idealov epokhi Vozrozhdeniya', in *Kievskie universitetskie izvestiya* (Kiev, 1893), no. 1, pp. 1–14. Article republished in the book *Sbornik statei po istorii prava posv V. F. Vladimirskomu-Budanov* (Kiev, 1904), pp. 331–51.
 81. G. F. Shershenevich, *Istoriya filosofii prava* (St Petersburg, 1908), pp. 228–46; A. N. Fateev, *Istoriya obshchikh uchenii o prave i gosudarstve* (Kharkov, 1909), pp. 160–7.
 82. N. M. Korkunov, *Istoriya filosofii prava* (St Petersburg, [1896] 1907), p. 127.
 83. I. Mavrikii, *Taktika i strategiya. Pervoistochniki sochinenii O voennom iskusstve imperatora L'va Filosafo i N. Makiavelli* (St Petersburg, 1903).
 84. P. Janet, *Histoire de la science politique* (Paris 1872); G. Ellenek (G. Jellenek), *Obshchee uchenie o gosudarstve* (especially ch. 5) (Russian translation, St Petersburg, 1908).
 85. S. P. Singalevich, *Epokha Vozrozhdeniya, kul'turno-politicheskaya istoriya ital'yanskogo i nemetskogo Renesansa* (Kazan, 1912), p. 213.
 86. S. Arkhangel'skii, 'Sotsial'naya istoriya Florentsii i politicheskoe uchenie Makiavelli', *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (St Petersburg, 1911), part xxxi, pp. 1–58.
 87. *Ibid.*, p. 43.
 88. N. I. Kareev, *Istoriya Zapadnoi Evropy v Novoe vremya* (4th edition) (St Petersburg, 1908), p. 311.

89. V. Ger'e, *Filosofiya istorii ot Avgustina de Gegelya* (Moscow, 1915), pp. 28, 34, 35.
90. P. Villari, *Dzhirolamo Savonarola i ego vremya* (St Petersburg, 1913)) (edited by A. Volynskii), vols 1 and 2. P. Villari, *Nikkolo Makiavelli i ego vremya* (Moscow, 1914) (translated by I. M. Krigel', and with a short introductory article by M. M. Kovalevskii).
91. The book was reviewed by K. Uspenskii in *Golos minuvshogo* (Moscow, 1916), no. 3, pp. 278–81; and by N. Lyubovich in *Istoricheskii Vestnik* (Petrograd, 1916), no. 3, pp. 877–9.
92. I. Serebrennikov, *Uchennii Lokka o prirozhdenikh nachalakh* (St. Petersburg, 1890); D. Bershadskii, *Ocherki istorii filosofii prava* (St Petersburg, 1892), pp. 169–207.
93. *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* (St Petersburg, 1893), vol. ix, pp. 2–4. Other works on Hobbes were V. G. Kamburo, *Ideya gosudarstva y Gobbsa* (Kiev, 1906). Hobbes' *De Cive* was published in Moscow in 1914: *Filosofskie osnovaniya ucheniya o grazhdanine (De cive)*.
94. B. Spinoza, *Politicheskii traktat* (translated by S. M. Rogovin and B. V. Cherdin) (Moscow, 1910).
95. James H. Billington, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism* (New York and Oxford, 1958), pp. 28–31.
96. H. Spencer, *Sobranie sochinenii* (edited by N. A. Tilben) (St Petersburg 1856–69), in 7 volumes. H. Spencer, *Sochineniya* (under the general editorship of N. A. Rubakin) (St Petersburg, 1899–1900).
97. T. Mal'tus', *Opyt o zakon' narodonaseleniya* (translated by P. Bibikov, with introductory article) (St Petersburg, 1868). Notes of Chernyshevskii to the Russian translation of *Osnovaniya politicheskoi ekonomii* Millya; N. V. Vodovozov', *Mal'tus, ego zhizn' i nauchnaya deyatel'nost'* (St Petersburg, 1895); Mal'tus', *Opyt zakona o naseleniya* (translated I. Verner, with introductory article) (Moscow, 1895). See also the entry on Malthus by Tugan-Baranovskii in *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, vol. xviii (St Petersburg, 1896), pp. 505–7.
98. G. A. Kuklin (ed.), *Itogi revoliutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii za sorok let 1862–1902 gg* (Geneva, 1903), part 1, p. 63.
99. F. Engels, 'The Socialism of Mr. Bismarck' (1880), in Marx and Engels, *Complete Works*, vol. 24, pp. 272–80.
100. S. Yu. Vitte, *Po povodu natsionalizma. Natsional'naya ekonomiya i Fridrikh List* (St Petersburg, 1912). Reference in *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1930), vol. 11, p. 331. S. Yu. Vitte, *Vospominaniya* (Moscow, [1892] 1960), vol. 1, p. 370. See also T. H. Von Laue, 'A secret memorandum of Sergei Witte on the industrialization of Imperial Russia', *Journal of Modern History*, no. 26, 1954, p. 60. Von Laue writes of Witte's memorandum to the tsar of 1899 that it was 'written in the spirit of Friedrich List's National system of political economy'.
101. Vitte, *Vospominaniya*, vol. 2, p. 298. Witte, in his memoirs, recalls how as minister of finance he was accused by his bitter rival K. P. Pobedonostev of being as socialist. 'I answered that if I was a socialist, then this was in miniature compared to Bismarck, and that I preferred to be in his company than that of Pobedonostev', *ibid.*, p. 309. Witte also spoke of the need to emulate Bismarck's example in promoting legislation to improve the well-being of industrial workers, *ibid.*, pp. 254, 493.
102. Billington, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism*, pp. 71–2.

103. *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* (St Petersburg, 1891), vol. iiii, pp. 924, 931, 937.
104. *Ibid.*, p. 935.
105. Mario Mariani, *Il Ritorno di Machiavelli* (Milan, 1916).

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1. M. A. Yusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii* (Moscow, 1998), pp. 146–7. See also V. S. Parsamov, 'O vospriyatii P. I. Pestelya sovremennikami (Pestel' i Machiavelli)', in *Osvoboditel'noe dvizhenie v Rossii*, part III (Saratov, 1989), pp. 23–33.
2. Vittorio Strada, *URSS-Russia* (Milan, 1985), pp. 229–34. Tamara Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins* (Paris, 1989), pp. 24–6.
3. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1936), vol. 57, pp. 658–71: A. A. Kornilov, *Molodye gody Bakunina* (Moscow, 1915), chs. 11–18.
4. Georgi Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, vol. IV (Moscow, 1980), p. 402.
5. Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought: From the Enlightenment to Marxism* (Oxford, 1980), p. 120.
6. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, vol. IV, p. 504.
7. N. G. Chernyshevskii, *Sochinenie*, vol. VI, p. 180. This was cited by Plekhanov in his essay on Chernyshevskii, see Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, vol. IV, pp. 84, 256. It was also cited by the Soviet historian M. N. Pokrovskii in his essay 'N. G. Chernyshevskii kak istorik', see M. N. Pokrovskii, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya*, book 4 (Moscow, 1967), p. 399.
8. V. R. Leikina-Svirskaya, 'Revolyutsionnaya praktika petrashevtsev', *Istoricheskii zapiski*, vol. 47, 1954, p. 191.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 203, 205. J. H. Seddon, *The Petrashevtsy: A Study of the Russian Revolutionaries of 1848* (Manchester, 1985), pp. 175–7.
10. V. R. Leikina-Svirskaya, 'N. A. Speshnev' in her book *Petrashvtsy* (Moscow, 1924). Leikina-Svirskaya, 'Revolyutsionnaya praktika petrashevtsev', *Delo petrashevtsev* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1951), vols 1–3. *Filosofskie i obshchestvenno-politicheskie proizvedeniya petrashevtsev* (Moscow, 1953).
11. F. Venturi, *The Roots of Revolution* (London, 1960), p. 87.
12. Alexander Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Works* (Moscow, 1956), p. 436.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 461.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 453.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 466. Herzen in his 'Letter to Moscow friends' in September 1848 also warns of the way the term '*salus populi suprema lex*' can be used as a *carte blanche* for state repression.
16. A. I. Herzen, *Sobranie sochinenie* (Moscow, 1963), volume xxx, book 2, p. 502, cited in Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins*, p. 15.
17. See the comments of N. A. Lyubimov on the situation in the 1880s cited in Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobin*, p. 78.
18. David W. Lovell, *From Marx to Lenin: An evaluation of Marx's responsibility for Soviet authoritarianism* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 124.
19. Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobin*, p. 28, cites Herzen, *Sobranie Sochinenie* (Moscow, 1963), volume vii, p. 40; volume xvi, p. 27.
20. Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Works*, 'From the Other Shore', pp. 429, 408.

21. Yusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii*, p. 155, notes the Machiavelli reference in Chernyshevskii's poem 'Theory and Practice' of 1849–50. In an article (signed A. Russian, but probably by Chernyshevskii) entitled 'From the Russian Provinces', which was published by *Kolokol* in 1860, there is a reference to Alexander II dismissing Kleinmikhail, one of Nicholas I's favourite ministers: 'by the well-known maxim of Machiavelli' – 'to sacrifice to the people's hatred the favourite minister of the former reign'. *Revolyutsionnaya situatsiya v Rossii v sredinie XIX veka* (edited by M. V. Nechkinoi) (Moscow, 1978), p. 174.
22. E. Lampert, *Sons Against Fathers: Studies in Russian Radicalism and Revolution* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 149, 152–53, 161–2, 250, 305. Bentham's collected works were published in Russia: J. Bentham, *Izbrannye sochineniya* (St Petersburg, 1867).
23. George Eliot, *Romola* (Harmondsworth, 1996, first published 1863). This novel, set in Savonarola's Florence, in many ways anticipates the themes of Dostoevskii's *Crime and Punishment* (1866). Eliot draws a clear connection between Machiavellism and a 'utilitarian' approach to morality.
24. Leon Trotsky, *My Life* (New York, 1970), p. 99, records his early intellectual influences: 'The utilitarianism of Bentham seemed to me the last word in human thought.' In 1938 Trotsky expressed the following view regarding Bentham's 'utilitarianism' and his view of 'the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number': 'In its general philosophical formulations Anglo-Saxon utilitarianism thus fully coincides with the "Jesuit" principle "the end justifies the means".' L. D. Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours: The class foundations of moral practice* (New York, 2001), p. 22.
25. B. P. Koz'min, P. N. Tkachev i revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie 1860x godov (Moscow, 1922), p. 49.
26. F. Bacon, *Advancement of Learning* (edited by Arthur Johnston) (Oxford, 1974) ii, pp. 21, 9.
27. S. V. Utechin, *Russian Political Thought* (London, 1963), pp. 119–21.
28. V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenie*, vol. 29, p. 612.
29. G. A. Kuklin (ed.), *Itogi revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii za sorok let 1862–1902gg* (Geneva, 1903), part 1, pp. 1–3.
30. B. P. Koz'min, P. G. Zaichnevskii: 'Molodaya Rossiya' (Moscow, 1932), pp. 117–20.
31. B. P. Koz'min and G. Lelevich, *Poet revolyutsioner: I. I. Gol'ts-Miller* (Moscow, 1930), p. 62.
32. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. 26, 1933, p. 20.
33. Koz'min and Lelevich, *Poet revolyutsioner*, p. 62.
34. B. P. Kozmin, *Literatura i istoriya* (Moscow, 1969), p. 441, cites V. A. Zaitsev, *Izbrannye sochineniya* (Moscow, 1934), pp. 94–6.
35. Kondratieva, *Bolcheviki et Jacobin*, pp. 46–7.
36. *Konrad Wallenrod and other writings of Adam Mickiewicz* (translated from the Polish by Jewell Parish, Dorothea Prall Radin, George Rapall Noyes and others) (first published 1925, Berkeley, republished 1975). See also Ksawery Pruszyński, *Adam Mickiewicz: the life story of the greatest Polish poet* (London, 1950).
37. Norman Davis, *Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 217–18.

38. *Adam Mitskevich v russkoi pechati 1825–1955* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1957). On his influence see also Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, pp. 166–7, 219, 269. See the very positive assessment of Mickiewicz in *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1938), vol. 39, pp. 529–30.
39. Jan Malyarczyk (Yan Malarchik), 'Politicheskoe uchenie Makiavelli v Pol'she', *Pravovedenie* (Moscow, 1959), no. 2, p. 158.
40. *Russko-Pol'skie revolyutsionnye svyazi: Vosstanie 1863 goda: Materialy i dokumenty* (Moscow, 1963), vol. II, p. 371.
41. In 1951 the communist government in Poland erected a statute to Mickiewicz in the centre of Warsaw; they named their daily newspaper – *People's Tribune* (*Tribuna Lyudy*) after Mickiewicz's paper, but they forbade the study of the poem 'Konrad Wallenrod' in schools. Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, legitymizacja, nacjonalizm. Nacjonalistyczna legitymizacja wladzy komunitarycznej w Polsce* (Warsaw, 2001).
42. On Nihilism see Koz'min, *Literatura i istoriya*, pp. 225–42; A. I. Novikov, *Nigilizm i nigilisty* (Leningrad, 1972), pp. 34–117.
43. See Charles A. Moser, *Anti-nihilism in the Russian Novel of the 1860s* (London, 1964).
44. Yu. Zhukovskii, 'Politicheskii i obshchestvennye teorii XVI veka', *Sovremennik* (St Petersburg, 1861), vol. 88, pp. 37–98.
45. Yu. Zhukovskii, *Politicheskie i obshchestvennye teorii XVI veka* (St Petersburg, 1866), ch. iii on Machiavelli.
46. Yusim, *Makiavelli v Rossii*, p. 154.
47. *Russkoe slovo* (St Petersburg 1866), no. 12, Bibliograficheskii listok. Republished in B. P. Koz'min (ed.), *Izbrannye sochineniya na sotsial'no-ekonomicheskii temy P. N. Tkachev* (Moscow, 1932), vol. 1, p. 71.
48. P. N. Tkachev, *Izbrannye sochineniya* (edited by B. P. Koz'min) (Moscow, 1932), p. 72.
49. Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (Harmondsworth, 1979), book 3, 40, p. 513.
50. The Italian writer C. Formichi, *Salus Populi (saggio di Scienza Politica)* (Turin, 1908), provides an exposition of the views of Machiavelli, Hobbes and the Indian writer Kamandaki (author of the *Nitisara* of the fourth century AD). Formichi advances various points in common between these writers, their defence of the power of the state, their advocacy of violence and fraud. In his discussion of the need for the state to combat both internal and external enemies it anticipates the work of Carl Schmitt.
51. Albert L. Weeks, *The First Bolshevik: A Political Biography of Peter Tkachev* (New York and London, 1968), p. 67n. Weeks' assertion that 'Bakunin, Tkachev and Nechaev called themselves dedicated Machiavellians' needs to be treated with caution. The lessons which Bakunin, Tkachev and Nechaev derived from Machiavelli may have been rather different.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 105n.
53. Sam Dolgoff (ed.), *Bakunin on Anarchy* (New York, 1972), pp. 134–6.
54. M. A. Bakunin, 'Korruptsiya. O Makiavelli. Razvitie gosudarstvennosti', *Voprosy filosofii*, 1990, no. 12, p. 64.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
57. Arthur Lehning, 'Bakunin's Conceptions of Revolutionary Organisations and Their Role: A Study of His "Secret Societies"', in Chimen Abramsky (ed.) *Essays in Honour of E. H. Carr* (London, 1974), pp. 57–81.

58. M. Confino, *Violence dans la violence: La debat Bakounine-Nechaev* (Paris, 1973); M. Prawdin, *The Unmentionable Nechaev* (London, 1961); Anthony D'Agostino, *Marxism and the Russian Anarchists* (San Francisco, 1977), p. 43.
59. M. Confino, *The Daughter of a Revolutionary* (London, 1974), pp. 224–7.
60. For works on French political catechisms see Jean Hebrard, 'Les catéchisme de la première Révolution', in Lise Andries (ed.) *Colporter la Révolution* (Montreal, 1989); and Jean-Claude Dhotel, *Les origines du catéchisme moderne d'après les premiers manuels imprimés en France* (Paris, 1967). In German see Karl Markus Michel, *Politische Katechismen, Volney, Kleist, Hess* (Frankfurt on Main, 1966); and Jakob Otther, *Katechismen* (Cologne, 2001). I am grateful for these references to Emilie Delivré.
61. Louis Blanc, *Le Catéchisme des Socialistes* (Paris, 1849). The Catechism begins with the question and answer: Q. 'What is Socialism?' A. 'Socialism is the Gospel in Action.'
62. Weeks, *The First Bolshevik*, p. 67, n. 24. Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, pp. xxiii, 13. Bakunin had earlier drafted his own political manifesto as a form of catechism, outlining the basis of the new social order, based on individual liberty and reason, in which he denounces the notion of *raison d'état* and rejects Christianity as the 'religion of slaves'. This was published in Daniel Guérin, *Ni Dieu, Ni Maître: Anthologie de l'Anarchisme* (Paris, 1970).
63. Eugene Pyziur, *The Doctrine of Anarchism of Michael A. Bakunin* (Milwaukee, 1955), pp. 11, 93.
64. René Fülöp-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism: An Examination of Cultural Life in Soviet Russia* (London and New York, 1927), p. 282.
65. Kuklin (ed.), *Itogi revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii*, part 1, pp. 30–43.
66. Gaetano Mosca, *The Ruling Class (Elementi di Scienza Politica)* (edited by Arthur Livingstone, translated by Hannah D. Kahn) (New York, 1939), p. 195.
67. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. 41, (Moscow, 1939), p. 812 (entry by B. Koz'min). Koz'min, *Literatura i istoriya* (Moscow, 1968), p. 472.
68. G. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, vol. 1 (London, 1961), p. 835, ft. 84.
69. Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, pp. 13, 387.
70. *Michael Bakounine et ses relations avec Sergej Necaev. 1870–1872. Ecrits et matériaux* (Leiden, 1971), p. 126. On 2 November 1872 Bakunin, in a letter to Ogarëv, expressed pity for Nechaev, whom he still believed had the plight of the people at heart, but recoiled from his methods: 'It was his authoritarianism and his unbridled wilfulness which very regrettably and through his ignorance together with its Machiavellian and Jesuitical methods, finally plunged him irretrievably into the mire.' K. J. Kenafick, *Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx* (Melbourne, 1948), pp. 132–3. The same point is made in Bakunin's letter to A. Taland'e on 24 July 1870, quoted in Boris Souvarine, *Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism* (London, 1939), p. 582.
71. Dolgoff, *Bakunin on Anarchy*, pp. 16, 117, 181.
72. Mikhail Agursky: *The Third Rome: National Bolshevism in the USSR* (Boulder and London, 1987), p. 35.
73. *Nabat*, 1878, cited in Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Writings*, vol. 1, p. 182.

74. Weeks, *The First Bolshevik*, p. 75. On Tkachev's Jacobinism see V. Strada, 'Giacobinismo i antigiacobinismo in Russia', in M. L. Salvation and N. Trafaglia, *Il Modello Politico Gioacobino e Le Rivoluzioni* (Florence, 1984) and Strada, *URSS-Russia*, pp. 217–44.
75. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 248.
76. Cited in Weeks, *The First Bolshevik*, p. 55.
77. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 244. See also p. 249.
78. N. F. Bel'chikov, *Dostoevskii v protsesse petrashevtshev* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1936).
79. Vittorio Strada, *Tradizione e Rivoluzione nella Letteratura Russa* (Turin, [1969] 1980), pp. 46–53.
80. Fülöp-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*, pp. 287–8.
81. James H. Billington, *Mikhailovsky and Russian Populism* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 50–1.
82. F. M. Dostoevsky, *The Diary of a Writer* (Salt Lake City, 1985), pp. 149, 151. See also P. S. Reifman, 'Dva upominaniya o Makiavelli (Dostoevskii i Chernyshevskii)', *Tsartuskii universitet. Uchenye zapiski. Part 683. Literatura i publitsistika. Proble, y vzaimodeistviya* (Tartu, 1986), pp. 20–31.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 151.
84. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 317.
85. Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Machiavelli* (London, 1968), p. 306.
86. N. Berdiaev, *Dostoevskii's Weltanschauung* (1925), cited in Fülöp-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*, pp. 280–1. (See Nicholas Berdiaev, *Dostoevsky* (translated by Donald Attwater) (New York, 1974), ch. 6, 7, 8.
87. There are references to the Jesuits in ten works by Dostoevskii: 'The Double', 'Uncle's Dream', 'The Village of Stepanchikovo', 'The Insulted and Injured', 'Notes from the House of the Dead', *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot*, *The Possessed*, 'A Raw Youth', and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Richard Chapple, *A Dostoevsky Dictionary* (Ann Arbor, 1983).
88. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 318.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 315.
90. Yusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii*, pp. 161–2.
91. Kuklin (ed.) *Itogi revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii*, part 2, pp. 3–7.
92. *Ibid.*, part 2, p. 60.
93. *Ibid.*, part 2, pp. 12–28.
94. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 236.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 409.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 411; S. V. Utechin, 'The Preparatory Trend in the Russian Revolutionary Movement in the 1880s', *Soviet Affairs* (London, 1962), no. 3. See also Y. A. Polevoy, *Zarozhdenie marksizma v Rossii* (Moscow, 1959).
97. Plekhanov, *Selected Philosophical Works*, vol. 1, p. 201.
98. Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought*, p. 421.
99. Kuklin (ed.) *Itogi revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossii*, part 2, pp. 78–9.
100. Franco Venturi, *Il Populismo Russo, III Dall'andata nel popolo al terrorismo* (Turin, 1979).
101. Vittorio Zincone, *Lo Stato totalitario* (Rome, [1947] 1999), p. 177, cites R. Michels, *Storia critica del movimento socialista italiano* (Florence, 1926), and the work of Henri de Man, *The Psychology of Marxian Socialism* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London, 1983, reprint).

102. Ibid., part 3, p. 6.
103. O. V. Budnitskii, *Terrorizm v rossiskom osvoboditel'nom dvizhenii: ideologiya, etika, psikhologiya* (Moscow, 2000), p. 310, ft. 1.
104. The French novelist Eugène Sue in his highly popular novel *Le Juif errant* (*The Wandering Jew*), published in serial form in 1844–5, presents an anti-Jesuit (anti-Jacobin) and utopian socialist vision, influenced by the humanitarian ideals of Fourier.
105. John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism, Liberty and Representative Government* (introduction by A. D. Lindsay) (London, 1971), p. 199.
106. Tkachev, *Izbrannyye sochineniya*, pp. 258–71. The book reviewed was Teodor Grizinger, *Iezuizy, polnaya istoriya ikh yavnykh i tainnykh deyanii ot osnovaniya ordena do nastoyashchego vremeni* (Volf edition, 1868).
107. Russian works on the Jesuits included Mikhail Moroshkin, *Iezuizy v Rossii, s tsarstvovaniya Ekaterina II i do nashego vremeni*, 2 volumes (St Petersburg, 1867); A. A. Bykov, *I. Loiola ego zhizn' i obshchestvennaya deyatelnost'* (St Petersburg, 1890). Russian writers were aware of works published in the west: M. Philippson, *La Contre-revolution religieuse au XVI siecle* (Brussels, 1884); Eberhard Gothein, *Ignatius von Loyola u die Gegenreformation* (Halle, 1895); Nuber'a, *Der Iesuiteorden* (Berlin, 1873). See the entry on Loyola in Brockhaus and Efron, *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, 1896, vol. 34, pp. 914–5.
108. Pol' Lafarg', 'Iezuitskii respubliki', *Vesemirnyi vestnik*, 1904, no. 1. It was reprinted as 'Poseleniya iezuitov v Paragvae', in *Predshestvenniki noveishego sotsializma*, part 2, 4th edition (St Petersburg, 1909).
109. *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'*, vol. xiv, pp. 210–12.
110. B. Croce, *Istoricheskii materializm i Marksistskaya ekonomika* (St Petersburg, 1902) (translated by P. Shutkov), pp. 317–18. Croce's book was reviewed for its economic arguments by Plekhanov in *Zarya*, see G. V. Plekhanov, *Sochineniya* (Moscow, 1920–7), vol. xi, pp. 329–44.
111. D. Vvakala, *Poslanie F. Kampanelly velikomy knyazyu Moskovskomy* (Yurev, 1905). Vvakala also published a study of Campanella in *Zhurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosveshcheniya* (October 1906, January, May, August, December 1907).
112. Lovell, *From Marx to Lenin*, p. 135, cites G. V. Plekhanov, *Socialism and the Political Struggle, Selected Philosophical Works* (Moscow, 1977), vol. 1, p. 99.
113. Plekhanov, *Sochineniya*, vol. xvii, pp. 1–99.
114. George Lichtheim, *The Origins of Socialism* (London, 1968), pp. 149–51. See Marriane Weber, *Fichtes Sozialismus und sein Verhältnis zur Marx'schen Doctrin* (Tübingen, 1900); H. Lindau, *Johann G. Fichte und der neuere Sozialismus* (Berlin, 1900). Other works studied Fichte's sociology: F. Schmidt-Warneck, *Die Sociologie Fichtes* (Berlin, 1884); W. Windelband, *Fichtes Idee des deutschen Staates* (Freiburg, 1890) and his ideas on education: S. H. Gutman, *J. G. Fichtes Sozialpädagogik* (Tübingen, 1907).
115. *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, vol. xxxvi, pp. 49–59 and the bibliography provided.
116. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (Harmondsworth, 1990), p. 52.
117. Ibid., p. 125.
118. Robert F. Byrnes, *Pobedonostev: His Life and Thought* (Bloomington and London, 1968), ch. v.

119. Pobedonostev, in 'The Great Falsehood of Our Time', denounced socialist ideas and 'the idiotic theory of State Socialism'. See K. P. Pobyedonosteff, *Reflections of a Russian Statesman* (London, 1898), p. 52.
120. *Ibid.*, p. 291.
121. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
122. Prezzolini, *Machiavelli*, pp. 265–6.
123. Boris Souvarine, *Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism* (London, 1939), p. 583. Souvarine adds that these words might have been written for Stalin.
124. H. L. V. Rollin, *L'Apocalypse de notre temps* (Paris 1939); V. Burtsev, *Protokoly sionskikh mudretsov* (Paris, 1938); Y. Selevsky, *Protokoly sionskiokh mudretsov* (Berlin, 1923); and N. Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide* (London, 1967).

5 The Bolsheviks, Lenin and Machiavelli

1. Andrzej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom* (Stanford, California, 1995).
2. G. Procacci, 'Machiavelli rivoluzionario', preface to the Collected Works of Machiavelli, *N. Machiavelli Opere Scette* (Rome, 1969).
3. V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (hereafter PSS), vol. 5, p. 46; vol. 20, p. 125; vol. 44, p. 123.
4. PSS, vol. 1, pp. 139, 143–4; vol. 18, p. 349; vol 25, p. 46; vol. 29, pp. 127, 437, 439, 441–7, 454 (Darwin).
5. PSS, vol. 1, vol. 18, vol. 29, vol. 33 (Spencer).
6. PSS, vol. 1, pp. 471–2, 475–505, 507–8, 523; vol 2, pp. 169–70, 175–7, 201–2; vol. 5, pp. 105, 107–8, 153; vol. 18, p. 349; vol. 22, pp. 153–4; vol. 23, pp. 255–7 (Malthus). Lenin did not always acknowledge particular influences on his thought, as for example his interest in Gustave Le Bon's work on the mass psychology of crowds.
7. *Biblioteka V. I. Lenin v Kremle* (Moscow, 1961). The catalogue, however, lists Villari's study *Savonarola* (Moscow, 1913). It also curiously includes G. K. Chesterton, *The Man who was Thursday*, a study of 'revolutionary Machiavellism'. It also includes M. N. Pokrovskii's *Ekonomicheskii materializm* (Moscow, 1906, St Petersburg, 1920) and P. Stuchka, *Revolutionary role of law and state* (Moscow, 1923), both of which have positive references to Machiavelli. It included also B. P. Koz'min, *P. N. Tkachev i revolutionnoe dvizhenie 1860x godov* (Moscow, 1922), on the debt of the revolutionaries of the 1860s to Machiavelli. It also included F. Dostoevskii's *Writers Diary. 1880–1881* where he discusses the relationship between socialism and Jesuitism.
8. Giovanni Meloni (ed.) *Dittatura degli antichi e dittatura dei moderni* (Rome, 1983), Johannes Irmscher 'Lenin e l'antichità', Giovanni Meloni 'Concetti romani e pensiero leniniano', Giovanni Lobrano 'Lenin e il 'tribuno dei soviet'.
9. A. I. Volodin, *Gegel' i russkaya sotsialisticheskaya mysl' XIX veka* (Moscow, 1973). V. E. Evgarov et al. (eds), *Gegel' i filosofiya v Rossii 30–3 gody XIX v.-20e gody XX veka* (Moscow, 1974). Guy Planty-Bonjour, *Hegel Et La Pensee Philosophique En Russie 1830–1917* (The Hague, 1974). Plekhanov held Fichte in very high esteem as a critic of Kant, and as a forerunner of Hegel

with regard to his dialectical approach. Lenin in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1909) delivered a critique of Fichte's philosophical subjective idealism but regarded him as a philosopher of significance.

10. PSS, vol. 17, pp. 325–8.
11. PSS, vol. 26, p. 52.
12. R. Service, *Lenin: A Political Life* (London, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 135, 191.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 32–3.
14. N. Valentinov, *Vstrechi s Leninym* (New York, 1953), pp. 73–4.
15. See Service, *Lenin: A Political Life*, vol. 1, pp. 29, 200–1, ft. 64. See V. D. Bonch-Bruевич, *Izbrannye sochineniya v trekh tomakh* (Moscow, 1961), vol. 2, pp. 314–16. On the influence of Tkachev on Lenin see Tibor Szamuely (ed.) *The Russian Tradition* (London, 1974).
16. Dmitri Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and Legacy* (London, 1994), p. 22, cites V. D. Bonch-Bruевич, *Tridtsat' dnei*, January 1934, p. 18.
17. PSS, vols 8, 9, 28.
18. PSS, vol. 17, p. 33; vol. 22, pp. 315, 321; vol. 23, p. 84.
19. PSS, vol. 17, pp. 33, 273–5, 325–8; vol. 15, pp. 226–7; vol. 16, pp. 298–9; vol. 22, p. 321.
20. PSS, vol. 23, p. 248.
21. PSS, vol. 33, p. 13.
22. H. Stuart Hughes Jr., *Consciousness and Society* (London, [1958] 1979), p. 78. Robert Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution* (London, 1979) ch. 1, ft. 43, p. 219. In 1919 Sorel added to his book *Reflections on Violence* his appendix 'In Defence of Lenin', Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (New York, 1972), pp. 277–86. The *Reflections* had been translated into Russian in 1907, see Jack J. Roth, *The Cult of Violence: Sorel and the Sorelians* (Berkeley, 1980), p. 172. Lenin dismissed Sorel as a 'notorious muddle-head' for his work 'Les preoccupations metaphysiques des physiciens modernes', but we have no comment on the *Reflections*, see V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, in PSS, vol. 18, p. 310.
23. Nietzsche and Spengler's strong influence amongst sections of the Russian intelligentsia is evident in the work of Alexander Blok, reflecting a view of revolutions as apocalyptic phenomena, akin to catastrophes in the natural world, bringing new dangers and new opportunities, but also as phenomena imbued with religious meaning. A. Blok, *Izbrannoe* (Moscow, 1996). See Blok's essay 'Intelligentsiya i revoliutsiya' and the famous poem 'The Twelve'. In 1917 Blok wrote an article, 'Catiline', which dealt with the abortive attempt by Lucio Sergio Catilina to seize power in Rome in 63 BC. Catilina is depicted by Blok as 'the Roman Bolshevik'. In this Blok drew on Nietzsche. See Judith E. Kalb, 'A "Roman Bolshevik": Alexander Blok's "Catiline" and the Russian Revolution', *Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 44, no. 3, Autumn 2000, pp. 413–28. Reference to this failed conspiracy are found in Nietzsche's *Twilight of the Idols*, p. 100, and Machiavelli's *The Discourses* (Basingstoke, 1979), pp. 420–1.
24. George L. Kline, 'Nietzschean Marxism in Russia', in Frederick J. Adelman, (ed) *Demythologizing Marxism* (The Boston College Studies in Philosophy III) (Chestnut Hill and The Hague, 1969) pp. 166–83. One minor hint of a certain Nietzschean aspect to Lenin's thought concerns his reading. One of his favourite authors was the popular American socialist writer Jack London.

- London was a great admirer of Nietzsche and he saw the 'superman' as the embodiment of the proletarian revolutionary, as in his novel *The Iron Heel*.
25. George L. Kline, "'Nietzschean Marxism' in Russia", in Adelman (ed.) *Demythologizing Marxism*.
 26. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, *Nietzsche in Russia* (Princeton, NJ, 1986), especially the introduction by Rosenthal. See also Edith W. Clowes, *The Revolution of Moral Consciousness: Nietzsche in Russian Literature, 1890–1914* (DeKalb, 1988). Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago, 1981).
 27. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, p. 287.
 28. V. I. Lenin, 'Ekonomicheskoe soderzhanie narodnichestva', PSS, vol. 1, pp. 440–1.
 29. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, p. 286 cites *Collected Works*, vol. 4, p. 371.
 30. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, p. 287.
 31. See Tamara Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins* (Paris, 1989) and Astrid von Borcke, *Die Ursprünge des Bolschewismus: Jakobinische Tradition in Russland und die Theorie der Revolutionären Diktatur* (Munich, 1977).
 32. Jonathan Frankel, *Vladimir Akimov on the Dilemmas of Russian Marxism, 1895–1903* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 34.
 33. David W. Lovell, *From Marx to Lenin: An evaluation of Marx's responsibility for Soviet authoritarianism* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 93.
 34. V. I. Lenin, *What is to be Done?* (Moscow, 1969), pp. 26, 131.
 35. PSS, vol. 1, p. 173.
 36. N. Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (Harmondsworth, 1979), book 1, 57, p. 261.
 37. Lenin, *What is to be Done?*, p. 80. Meloni (ed.) *Dittatura degli antichi e dittatura dei moderni*, Giovanni Lobrano 'Lenin e il 'tribuno dei soviet'. For Machiavelli on the Roman tribunes see *The Discourses*, p. 251.
 38. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, p. 301.
 39. *Ibid.*, p. 300.
 40. *Vtoroi s'ezd RSDRP, iyul'-avgust 1903 goda: Protokoly* (Moscow, 1959), pp. 181–2.
 41. L. D. Trotsky, *Our Political Tasks* (1904) (London, 1985), p. 121.
 42. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
 46. *Ibid.*, pp. 122–3.
 47. *Ibid.*, p. 123.
 48. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
 49. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
 50. Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism?* (introduction by Bertram D. Wolfe) (Ann Arbor, 1967), pp. 87, 88.
 51. Frankel, *Vladimir Akimov on the Dilemmas of Russian Marxism*, pp. 136–7.
 52. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
 53. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
 54. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
 55. *Ibid.*, pp. 317–8, 336.
 56. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

57. Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and Legacy*, p. 22, cites Plekhanov, 'Sovremennaya zhizn', *Zametki publitsista*, December 1906.
58. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap into the Kingdom of Freedom*, p. 291.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 292.
61. G. A. Kuklin (ed.), *Itogi revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia v Rosii za sorok let (1862–1902gg)* (Geneva, 1903), part 1. Lenin took up residence in Geneva in 1903. On Lenin's links with Kuklin see PSS, vol. 46, pp. 260, 261; vol. 47, pp. 109, 157.
62. *Ibid.*, part 2, pp. 78–9.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 284–5.
64. Lenin's debt to the ideas on revolutionary organization of Ogarëv, Nechaev and Tkachev are discussed by various writers: 1. Ogarëv – S. V. Utechin, 'Who Taught Lenin?', *The Twentieth Century*, vol. 168, 1960. 2. Nechaev – M. Slonim, 'Le précurseur de Lénine', *Revue universelle*, vol. 62, 1935; 3. Tkachev – M. M. Karpovich, 'A Forerunner of Lenin', *Review of Politics*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1944; David Shub, *Lenin: A Biography* (Harmondsworth, 1966) p. 73; Szamuely, *The Russian Tradition*, ch. 16.
65. Cesare Vetter, *Il Dispotismo della Liberta: Dittatura e rivoluzione dall'Illuminismo al 1848* (Milan, 1993).
66. Service, *Lenin, A Political Life*, vol.1, p. 135.
67. Trotsky uses this expression in his speech to the Polish Commission of the Executive Committee of Comintern in 1926 and in his article 'The Only Road', 14 September 1932, see L. D. Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (introduction by Ernest Mandel) (New York, 1971), p. 282.
68. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, p. 306; PSS, vol. 12, pp. 425–8.
69. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, pp. 281–2, 284, 285, 329.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 318.
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 316, 317; PSS, vol. 14, 127; vol. 18, 129.
73. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, pp. 289, 305.
74. PSS, vol. 32, pp. 306–7.
75. PSS, vol. 34, pp. 10–12.
76. PSS, vol. 34, pp. 48–52.
77. Neil Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, vol. 2 (London, 1981), p. 151.
78. PSS, 26, pp. 22–3. On the relationship between Blanquism and Marxism regarding the nature of revolution see also L. D. Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1967), vol. 2, pp. 161–2.
79. PSS, 26, pp. 212–13.
80. V. I. Lenin, *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* (Moscow, 1971), pp. 45–6. Lenin was particularly taken with the passage from Marx. In *What is to be Done?* he provides a summary of the passage as follows: 'As we know, in time of war, it is not only of the utmost importance to imbue one's own army with confidence in its strength, but it is important also to convince the enemy and all neutral elements of this strength; friendly neutrality may sometimes decide the issue.'
81. Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution and Leninism or Marxism?*, p. 72.

82. PSS, vol. 27, pp. 267–8.
83. PSS, vol. 37, p. 245. For similar definitions of dictatorship by Lenin see PSS, vol. 10, p. 246; vol. 27, p. 265; vol. 31, p. 353.
84. PSS, vol. 37, p. 260.
85. Kuklin, *Itogi revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya v Rossiia srek let (1862–1902gg)*, 'Nasha Novaya Programma', part 3, pp. 13, 20.
86. PSS, vol. 26, pp. 224, 225, 316–17. See also Lenin's article 'War and Revolution' of May 1917 in PSS, vol. 32, pp. 78–9, 82.
87. V. I. Lenin, *Left-wing Childishness and the Petty Bourgeois Mentality* (Moscow, 1973), pp. 8, 12, 20. On the danger of a Russian Cavaignac see Lenin's article 'The Class Origin of Present-Day and Future "Cavaignacs"', *Pravda*, 3 July 1917.
88. Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vol. 3, p. 123.
89. PSS, vol. 29, p. 335.
90. PSS, vol. 32, p. 21.
91. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, p. 42. See also p. 324. On Lenin's conception of the pedagogical role of the dictatorship see also Vetter, *Il Dispotismo della Liberta*, p. 248.
92. See for example Jonathan Aves, *Workers Against Lenin: Labour Protest and the Bolshevik Dictatorship* (London, 1996).
93. Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, vol. 2, p. 246. George Kennan, without using the term Machiavellian, makes the same point: George Kennan, *Russia and the West under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston, 1961), pp. 184–5.
94. PSS, vol. 31, p. 443.
95. PSS, vol. 31, p. 448.
96. Giuseppe Prezzolini, *Machiavelli* (London, 1968), p. 249.
97. L. D. Trotsky, *On Lenin: Notes Towards a Biography* (London, 1971), pp. 115, 118. Trotsky cites Lenin's opposition to the abolition of the death penalty: 'How can one make a revolution without firing squads', and his observation 'Do you really think that we shall come out victorious without any revolutionary terror.'
98. Service, *Lenin: A Political Life*, vol. 3, pp. 37–42. Richard Pipes (ed.) *The Unknown Lenin* (New Haven and London, 1996), pp. 50, 69.
99. Isaac Deutscher writes of 1921; 'The revolution had now reached that cross-roads, well known to Machiavelli, at which it found it difficult or impossible to fix the people in their revolutionary persuasion and was driven "to take such measures that, when they believed no longer, it might be possible to make them believe by force".' I. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky 1879–1921* (Oxford, 1970), p. 506.
100. PSS, vol. 33, pp. 259–326.
101. Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and Legacy*, p. 22.
102. V. I. Lenin, *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues* (Peking, 1975), pp. 11, 15.
103. Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis* (London, 1968), p. 215.
104. Olga Velikanova, *Making of An Idol: On Uses of Lenin* (Göttingen, 1996), p. 114. Here I have used the English translation of the Catechism: Sergei Nechaev, *The Catechism of the Revolutionist* (London, 1971), p. 2.
105. Velikanova, *Making of an Idol*, pp. 113–14.
106. A. J. Polan, *Lenin and the End of Politics* (London, 1984).
107. Pipes, *The Unknown Lenin*, p. 153.

108. N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, (Harmondsworth, 1986) vii, p. 66; Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, book 1, 45, pp. 221–2.
109. Alain Besançon, *The Intellectual Origins of Leninism* (Oxford, 1981), esp. ch. 14.
110. Georg Lukács, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Berlin, 1968), and Georg Lukács, *Lenin* (Berlin, 1968).
111. Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, vol. 2, pp. 169, 309. Massimo L. Salvadori, 'Il giacobinismo nel pensiero marxista', in M. L. Salvadori and N. Trafaglia, *Il Modello Politico Giacobino e Le Rivoluzioni* (Florence, 1984), pp. 240–53.
112. Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, vol. 2, p. 326, see also p. 307. Harding concedes that in 1917 Lenin came 'perilously close' to a Jacobin position in his stress on the support of Moscow and Petrograd in securing the fate of the revolution against the opposition of the rest of the country. *Ibid.*, p. 229. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, p. 396.
113. Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, vol. 2, p. 169.
114. Gregory Petrovich Maximoff, *The Guillotine at Work: Vol. 1: The Leninist Counter Revolution* (Orkney, 1979, first published 1940).
115. Harding, *Lenin's Political Thought*, vol. 2, pp. 75, 192–3. The view that Lenin was intent on the immediate introduction of socialism is supported by Trotsky, *On Lenin*, p. 125, and by Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, p. 273.
116. F. Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym; Iz dnevnika F. Chueva* (Moscow, 1991).
117. Trotsky, *On Lenin*, p. 43. Trotsky stressed 'Lenin's inimitable slyness, his quick and brilliant ingenuity, the passion of a virtuoso with which he delighted in tripping the adversary and seeing him fall, or ensnaring him into a trap' (*ibid.*, pp. 160–1). Trotsky took exception to Gorky's description of Lenin as a 'doubting Marxist' who does not believe in the intelligence of the masses in general and the intelligence of the peasantry in particular, but who believed that the masses had to be ruled 'from outside', from above (*ibid.*, p. 173). But he approved of Gorky's characterization of Lenin as possessing 'fighting optimism' (*ibid.*, p. 172).
118. Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (London, 1973); George Fyson (ed.) *Lenin's Final Fight: Speeches and Writings, 1922–23* (London, 1995).
119. Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York, 1970).
120. Steven Lukes, *Marxism and Morality* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 108–9.

6 Machiavellism in Soviet Thought

1. For a discussion of Kautsky's writings on ethics see Tom Burns, 'Karl Kautsky: Ethics and Marxism' in Lawrence Wilde, *Marxism's Ethical Thinkers* (Basingstoke, 2001).
2. L. D. Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism* (Ann Arbor, 1963), p. 31.
3. A. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom* (Stanford, CA, 1995), p. 384.
4. Steven Lukes, *Marxism and Morality* (Oxford, 1985), p. 113.
5. V. I. Lenin, *PSS* (5th edition), vol. 45, p. 190.

6. D. Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy* (London, 1991), p. 46, writes 'On 12 May 1920 Berzin, a member of the Revvoensoviet (the Revolutionary Council) of the Southwestern front, reported that units of the 14th Army had deserted on the Polish front, and that the order had been given "to shoot every tenth man who had run away".' Cites TsGASA, f. 33 987, op. 3.d. 46, l. 413.
7. N. Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (Harmondsworth, 1974), book 3, 49, p. 527.
8. Cited in Gregory Petrovich Maximoff, *The Guillotine at Work: Vol. 1: The Leninist Counter-Revolution* (Orkney, 1979, first published Chicago, 1940), vol. 1, p. 36.
9. R. Service, *The Bolshevik Party in Revolution* (London, 1979).
10. N. Werth, 'Une source inédite', p. 27, cited by A. Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War* (Cambridge, MA., 1996), p. 73.
11. L. D. Trotsky, 1905 (Harmondsworth, 1973), ch. 1, pp. 25, 26; ch. 27 'On the Special Features of Russia's Historical Development: A Reply to M. N. Pokrovskii'. L. D. Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1967), vol. 2, p. 158.
12. A. G. Latyshev, *Rassekrechennyi Lenin* (Moscow, 1996), pp. 231–2.
13. PSS, vol. 52, pp. 99–100.
14. R. Michels, *Political Parties* (New York, 1959), p. 227.
15. L. D. Trotsky, *My Life* (New York, 1970), p. 467.
16. G. Prezzolini, *Machiavelli*, (London, 1968), p. 215.
17. Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 315.
18. See A. Mathiez, *Le Bolchevisme et le jacobinisme* (Paris, 1920). Tamara Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins: Itineraire des analogies* (Paris, 1989). D. Shlapentokh, *The French Revolution in Russian Intellectual Life 1865–1905* (Westport and London, 1996). Cesare Vetter, *Il Dispotismo della Liberta: Dittatura e rivoluzione dall'Illuminismo al 1848* (Milan, 1993).
19. Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution*, vols 1–3.
20. M. N. Pokrovskii, *Ocherki russkovo revolyutsionnogo dvizheniya XIX–XX Vekov*, (Moscow 1924).
21. *Proletarskaya revolyutsiya*, 1923, no. 6–7, p. 8. S. Mitskevich, 'Russkie iakobintsy', *Proletarskaya revolyutsiya*, no. 6–7 (Moscow, 1923), p. 26; N. N. Baturin, 'O nasledstve russkikh yakobintsev', *Proletarskaya revolyutsiya*, no. 7, 1924; S. Mitskevich, 'K voprosy o kornyakh bol'shevisma', *Katorga i ssylka*, 1925, no. 3. Albert L. Weeks, *The First Bolshevik: A Political Biography of Peter Tkachev* (New York and London, 1968), pp. 176–83; Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins*, pp. 209–15.
22. B. P. Koz'min and G. Lelevich, *Poet revolyutsioner: I. I. Gol'ts-Miller* (Moscow, 1930), p. 8.
23. B. P. Koz'min, *P. N. Tkachev i revolyutsionnoe dvizhenie 1860x godov* (Moscow, 1922), pp. 88–90.
24. B. P. Koz'min (ed.), *Izbrannye sochineniya na sotsial'no-ekonomicheskii temy P. N. Tkachev* (vols I–VII) (Moscow, 1932).
25. Maximoff, *The Guillotine at Work*, vol. 1, pp. 264–5, 161.
26. *Pravda*, 4 August 1918
27. S. Nechaev, 'Katekhizis revolutionera' in *Bor'ba Klassov* (1924) no. 1–2, p. 268, cited by Olga Velikanova, *Making of an Idol: On Uses of Lenin* (Göttingen, 1996), p. 113.

28. M. Prawdin, *The Unmentionable Nechaev* (London, 1961), p. 188, quoted in O. Beskin, *Kulatskaia khoudozhestvennaia literatura i opportunisticheskaia kritika* (Moscow, 1930), p. 26.
29. B. P. Koz'min (ed.), *Nechaev i Nechaevtsy: sbornik materialov* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1931), p. 3. Boris Souvarine writes: 'In the hardest struggle between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks the latter often taxed the former with Nechayevism and Jesuitism, to the indignation of Lenin and his disciples. But a posthumous revenge was reserved for Martov with the rehabilitation of Nechayev attempted by various communist historians under Stalin, and it is not mere chance that one of them, A. Gambarov, ended his work with the statement that Nechayev's anticipations "have become embodied in full in the methods and practices of the Communist Party of Russia in the course of twenty-five years of history".' Boris Souvarine, *Stalin: A Critical Survey of Bolshevism* (London, 1939), p. 582.
30. Gustav' Zheffrua, *Zhizn' i revolyutsionnaya deyatel'nost Ogyusta Blanki* (St Petersburg, 1906). A. Zévaès' study *Auguste Blanqui* (Paris, 1920), was published in a Russian edition in Moscow, 1922. M. Dommanget, *Blanqui* (Paris, 1924), was translated and published in Leningrad in 1925. B. I. Gorev's book on Auguste Blanqui, was published in Moscow in 1921 and 1923. He also published an essay on Blanqui in *Ot Tomasa Mora do Lenina – 1516–1917 – Populyarniye ocherki po istorii sotsializma v biografiakh i kharakteristikakh* (Moscow-Petrograd, 1923).
31. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1927), vol. 6, pp. 479–88. On Marx and Blanqui, see D. Riyazanov, *Pod znaniem marxizm*, II, no. 1–2, March 1928, pp. 140–9.
32. *Trud pervoi vessoynuznoi konferentsii istorikov-marksistov* (Moscow, 1929), pp. 158–83, 183–208.
33. *Pravda*, 24 July 1926, cited in Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins*, p. 161.
34. Ya. Staroselskii, 'Burzhyaznaya revoliutsiya i iuridicheskii kretinizm', *Revoliutsiya prava*, nos 2 and 3, 1927, cited in Kondratieva, *Bolcheviks et Jacobins*, pp. 218–22.
35. S. Krasnyi, 'Evolutsiya sotsialno-politicheskikh vozzrenii Blanki', *Istoriik Marksist*, vol. 20, 1930, pp. 68–86, 86–100 (discussion of Krasnyi's views).
36. N. Lukin, 'Lenin i problema yakobinskoi diktatura', *Istoriik Marksist*, vol. 1, 1934, pp. 99–146; Ya. V. Starosel'skii, *Problema yakobinskoi diktatura* (Moscow, 1930).
37. Boris I. Nicolaevsky, *Power and the Soviet Elite* (London, 1965), pp. 41–3.
38. Jonathan Frankel (ed.) *Vladimir Akimov and the Dilemmas of Russian Marxism 1895–1903* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 4–5.
39. L. Couzinet, *'Le Prince' de Machiavel et la theorie de l'absolutisme* (Paris, 1910).
40. See the entry on 'absolutism' in *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1926), vol. 1, pp. 87–90. In the *Encyclopedia of State and Law*, vol. 1, p. 16, the entry on Absolutism, by I. Razumovskii, couples together Machiavelli and Hobbes as philosophers of absolutism, whose ideas for their time had a 'revolutionary-progressive significance'.
41. F. Pollock, 'Spinoza et la Machiavelisme', 1919, *Revue Int de Geneve*. Don Garrett (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza* (Cambridge, 1997), ch. 7 by Edwin Curley.

42. Tomas Gobbs, *Izbrannnye Sochineniya* (Moscow, 1926). See also A. I. Cheskis, *Tomas Gobbs: rodonachalnik sovremennogo materializma* (Moscow, 1924).
43. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1930), vol. 17, pp. 327–30. See also I. Luppel's entry on Hobbes in *The Encyclopedia of State and Law* in 1925–6, vol. 1, pp. 611–5.
44. L. M. Kaganovich, 'Dvenadtsatyi let stroitel'stva sovetskogo gosudarstva', *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i revolyutsiya prava*, no. 1 (1930), p. 38.
45. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, vol. 11 (Moscow, 1930), pp. 323–31. M. N. Pokrovsky, *Brief History of Russia*, vol. II (London, 1933), pp. 84–9, 163–4, 172–3.
46. Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal, *Nietzsche in Russia* (Princeton, NJ, 1986), especially the introduction by Rosenthal. See also the influence of Nietzsche in Russian literature in Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago, 1981).
47. Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed: Trotsky 1879–1921* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 49–50.
48. Andrzej Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom* (Stanford, California, 1995), pp. 388–9.
49. J. G. Fichte, *Zamknutoe torgovoe gosudarstvo* ('Der geschlossene Handelsstaat') (Moscow, 1923), and 'The Role of the Intellectual' *O zadachakh uchenogo* (Moscow, 1935). Extracts from other works; 'Basic Characteristics of the Contemporary Epoch', 'Addresses to the German Nation': 'Osnovnye cherty sovremennoi epokhi: Rech k nemetskoj natsii', in *Khrestomatii po istorii pedagogiki*, vol. 1, (second edition, Moscow, 1935). See also F. Mehring, *Na strazhe Marksizma* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927), which reproduces Fichte's speech to the German people; L. Axel'rod (Ortodoks) *Protiv idealizma* (Moscow, no date), has a section on Fichte; A. Deborin, 'Dialektika v sisteme Fikhte', *Vestnik Sotsialisticheskoi akademii* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1923), book 3; A. Deborin, 'Fikhte i Velikaya frantsuskaya revolyutsiya', *Pod znameniem marksizma* (Moscow, 1924), book 10–12; 1925, book 3; A. Deborin, 'Ocherki po istorii dialektiki. Ocherki vtoroi', in *Arkhir K. Marksa i F. Engelsa*, book 3 (Moscow and Leningrad, 1927); V. F. Asmus, *Marks i burzhuanzi istorizm* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1933), ch. iv.
50. *Entsiklopediya Gosudarstva i prava* (ed. P. Stuchka), vol. 3, part 2, pp. 1453–6.
51. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1936), vol. 57, pp. 658–71.
52. A. Sen-Simon, *Izbrannnye sochineniya* (1819–1825) (Moscow and Petrograd, 1923). See also V. P. Vol'gin, *Sen-Simon i sensimonizm* (Moscow, 1925), 2nd edition.
53. L. Blan, *Organizatsiya truda* (Leningrad, 1926).
54. F. Lassal', *Sochineniya*, vol. II, 'Glavnyi otvet Tsentral'nomu komitetu', vol. II (Moscow, 1925); F. Lassal', *Sochineniya*, vol. III (Moscow, 1925), with 'Kniga dlya chteniya rabochikh', 'Gospodin Bastia-Shul'tse Delich, ekonomicheskii Yulian, ili kapital i trud'. See also P. Vinogradskaya, *Ferdinand Lassal'* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1926); 'Perepiska Lassalya s Bismarkom', *Letopisi marksizma* (Moscow, 1928), no. 6.
55. A lengthy discussion of Rodbertus's ideas was published in *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* vol. xxvia (St Petersburg, 1899), pp. 897–901. G. V. Plekhanov, 'Ekonomicheskaya teoriya Karla Rodbertusa-Jagetsova' *Sochineniya*, vol. 1,

- 3rd edition (Moscow, 1925). On Rodbertus see also *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1941), vol. 49, pp. 36–8.
56. *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (Moscow, 1930), vol. 18, pp. 499–503.
 57. E. Preobrazhenskii, *O morali i klassovykh normakh* (Moscow, 1923). See the discussion of this work in René Fülöp-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism* (London and New York, 1927), p. 279.
 58. Preobrazhenskii, *op.cit.*, p. 13.
 59. *Ibid.*, p. 90. N. Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, p. 255.
 60. Preobrazhenskii, *op.cit.*, p. 104.
 61. Ya. S. Rozanov, *Marksizm i etika: sbornik statei* (Ukrainian Gosizdat, no place of publication given, 1923), contained selections from Kautskii, Mehring, Ferster, Lafargue, Plekhanov, Ioffe and Axel'rod. Reviewed by A. Troitskii in *Pod znamyem marksizma*, 1923, no. 10, p. 257. Ludwig Krzhivitskii, *Razvitie npravstvennosti* (Moscow, 1924), translated from Polish, first published in 1913. Reviewed by G. Tizhyanskii in *Pod znanyem marksizma*, 1924, no. 6–7, p. 287. Ya. S. Rozanov, 'Marksizm i Kantianstvo', *Pod znamyem marksizma*, 1925, no. 7, pp. 209–22. See also the critical review of the article by G. Belat, 'L'education moral et sociale du proletariat par la doctrine marxiste' in *Revue de Mataphysique et de Morale*, 1927, July–September, pp. 393–417, in *Pod znamyem marksizma*, 1927, no. 3, pp. 248–9. Belat argued that Marxism encouraged a doctrine of class hatred.
 62. E. M. Yaroslavl'skii, *O partethike* (Leningrad, 1925).
 63. *Trinadtsati s"ezd RKP(b), Stenograficheskii otchet*, (Moscow, 1963), p. 167.
 64. Leonard Schapiro, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (London, 1978), p. 385, cites N. Valentinov, 'Sut' bolshevizma v izobrazhenii Iu. Piatakova', *Novyi zhurnal* (New York), no. 52, 1958, pp. 140–61.
 65. Richard Crossman (ed.), *The God that Failed* (New York, 1949), pp. 103–4.
 66. Boris I. Nicolaevsky, *Power and the Soviet Elite* (London, 1965), p. 55. On lying, or saying the direct contrary to what was intended, as part of 'revolutionary technique', see Gustav Regler's account of a conversation with L. B. Kamenev: Gustav Regler, *The Owl of Minerva* (London, 1959), pp. 235–6. In 1936 Bukharin gave this assessment of Pyatakov to Ordzhonikidze: 'My impression of him is that he is the sort of person who is so thoroughly ruined by his tactical approach to things that he doesn't know when he is speaking the truth and when he is speaking from tactical considerations.' J. Arch Getty and O. V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror* (New Haven and London, 1999), p. 311.
 67. Jane Burbank, *Intelligentsia and Revolution: Russian Views of Bolshevism, 1917–1922* (New York and London, 1986), pp. 19, 79, 240, 261 n. 24.
 68. Getty and Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, p. 47.
 69. K. Kautskii, *Predshestvenniki Nov'ishago Sotsializma, Chast' 1, Ot' Platona do anabaptistov* (Moscow, 1919).
 70. See *Leninskii sbornik*, xii (Moscow, 1928). *Vypiski i zamechaniya Lenina na kapital'nyi trud Klauzevitsa* (Moscow, 1933). *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya*, 1938, vol. 33, pp. 48–50, which recalled Clausewitz's participation in the Russian army against Napoleon in 1812–13. It condemned attempts by fascist theoreticians to appropriate Clausewitz's ideas for their own ends.

71. Kosta Cavoski, *The Enemies of the People* (London, 1986). Raymond Aron, *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz* (Paris, 1976). Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz* (London, 2002).
72. Aron, *Penser la guerre, Clausewitz*, vol. 2, pp. 349–50.
73. Bernard Semmel (editor and introductory article) *Marxism and the Science of War* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 80–2.
74. *Leninskii sbornik*, Moscow, 1970, vol. 37, p. 139. A. Wood, *Stalin and Stalinism* (London, 1990), p. 21.
75. Alain de Benoist, *Communisme et nazisme* (Paris, 1998), p. 27.
76. Terry Martin, 'Nationalities policy and the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy', *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 40/1–2, January–June 1999, pp. 113–24. Martin distinguishes between 'soft-line' institutions, which dealt directly with the public, whose task was to present official policy in the most attractive light, to win popular consent and foster participation within official institutions and the 'hard-line' institutions which were concerned with control, surveillance and where necessary repression, intimidation and terror.
77. Velikanova, *Making of an Idol: On Uses of Lenin*, pp. 76–7
78. Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, book 3, ch. 49, p. 526.
79. PSS, vol. 21, pp. 200–1.
80. L. D. Trotsky, *Our Political Tasks* (London, 1980), pp. 2–3. See also L. D. Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution* (Ann Arbor, 1960), p. 387. Trotsky speaks of saving society by the 'most cruel surgery'.
81. Burbank, *Intelligentsia and Revolution: Russian Views of Bolshevism, 1917–1922*, pp. 33, 37, 42, 49, 64, 240–1, 263 n. 68. Frankel, *Vladimir Akimov on the Dilemmas of Russian Marxism, 1895–1903*, p. 74.
82. Dmitri Volkogonov, *Lenin: Life and Legacy* (translated by Harold Shukman) (London, 1994) p. 22, cites Plekhanov, *God na rodine*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1921), p. 267.
83. Burbank, *Intelligentsia and Revolution*, p. 89.
84. M. Gorky, *Nesovremennyye mysli: Zametki o revoliutsii i kulture* (Moscow, 1990), p. 43.
85. A. Camus, *The Rebel* (Hamondsworth, 1971), p. 194.
86. Edward Radzinsky, *Stalin* (London, 1997), p. 233. Radzinsky asserts that V. R. Menzhinskii, who became head of the Cheka in 1926, in a Socialist Revolutionary newspaper in 1909 branded Lenin as a 'political Jesuit'. Ernest Gellner described Lenin as the 'Ignatius Loyola of Marxism', Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and its Rivals* (Hamondsworth, 1996), p. 117.
87. M. I. Tugan-Baranovskii, *K luchshemu budushchemu* (Moscow, 1996).
88. N. A. Berdyaev et al., *Landmarks: A Collection of Essays on the Russian Intelligentsia* (New York, 1977).
89. Ibid., pp. 159–63.
90. Ibid., pp. 165–6.
91. Ibid., p. 181.
92. N. A. Berdyaev, *Istoki i smysl' russkogo kommunizma* (Moscow, 1990), p. 149, cited in M. A. Yusim, *Machiavelli v Rossii; moral'i politika na protyazhenii pyati stoletii* (Moscow, 1998), p. 198.
93. Burbank, *Intelligentsia and Revolution*, pp. 132–7, 150, 191–99, 202.

94. N. Ustrialov, *Pod znakom revolutsii* (Harbin, 1927), 2nd edition, p. 29.
95. Bertrand Russell, *Bolshevism: Practice and Theory* (New York, 1972, first published in 1920), pp. 6, 14, 29, 30.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 155.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
99. Victor Serge, *Memoirs of a Revolutionary 1901–1941* (translated and edited by Peter Sedgwick) (London, 1975), p. 134. On the press campaign of lies regarding Kronstadt see *ibid.*, p. 126.
100. Fülöp-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism*, pp. 280–1.
101. *Ibid.*, pp. 281–2.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 287.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 287.
104. The Italian novelist Alberto Moravia, who visited the house where Raskolnikov had supposedly committed his murder, commented on the parallels between the Bolsheviks and Raskolnikov, the old woman and the bourgeoisie, Marx and Dostoevskii. A. Moravia, 'Marx e Dostoevskii', *Un mese in U.R.S.S.: Opere complete di Alberto Moravia*, vol. 8 (Milan, 1976), cited in Jonathan Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity: E. H. Carr, 1892–1982* (London, 1999), p. 46.
105. Nikolaj A. Berdjaev, *Gli spiriti della rivoluzione russa* (introduction by Gustaw Herling, edited by Mauro Martini) (Florence, 2001).
106. Nicholas Berdyaev, *Dostoevsky* (translated by Donald Attwater) (New York, 1974), p. 151.
107. Maximoff, *The Guillotine at Work*, vol. 1, pp. 25, 92, 161.
108. Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Princeton, 1967) p. 238, cites Volin, *Anarkhicheskii Vestnik*, no. 3–4, Sep–Oct 1923, p. 3., cited in Maximoff, *The Guillotine at Work*, vol. 1, p. 17.
109. *Ibid.*, p. 328.
110. Vittorio Zincone, *Lo Stato totalitario* (Rome, [1947] 1999), p. 177.
111. Cavoski, *The Enemies of the People*, p. 38.
112. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
113. H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London, 1951), pp. 423–7.
114. Russell, *Bolshevism: Practice and Theory*, p. 175.

7 Stalin and Machiavelli 1

1. P. I. Stuchka, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya po marksistsko-leninskoi teorii prava* (Riga, 1964), p. 194.
2. *Arkhiv K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa* (edited by D. Ryazanov) (Moscow, 1925), book 2, p. 157.
3. M. N. Pokrovskii, *Istoricheskaya nauka i bor'ba klassov* (vol. I) (Moscow and Leningrad, 1933), p. 121.
4. M. N. Pokrovskii, *Na boevom postu marksizma* (Moscow, 1929). It was republished in Pokrovskii, *Istoricheskaya nauka i bor'ba klassov* (vol. II), p. 298.
5. A Russian version of *Mondragora* was published in Berlin in 1924: Nikkolo Machiavelli, *Mandragora* (translated from the Italian by V. N. Rakvint) (introductory article by Ya. N. Blokh) (Berlin, 1924). But there was also a Soviet

- version: Nikkolo Makiavelli, *Mandragora* (translated by A. N. Ostrovskii) *Pamyati A. N. Ostrovskogo (Sbornik statei of Ostrovskom i neizdannnye trudy ego)* (Petrograd, 1923). Republished in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenie A. N. Ostrovskogo*, vol. 9 (Moscow 1978). Contemporary works dealt with the history of the rising of the *ciompi*, memorably described by Machiavelli, as an early expression of class struggle: N. P. Gratsianskii, *Krest'yanskoe i rabochie dvizhenie v srednie veka* (Moscow, 1924).
6. René Fülöp-Miller, *The Mind and Face of Bolshevism* (London and New York, 1927), p. 55.
 7. *Entsiklopediya gosudarstva i prava* (Moscow, 1925–6), vol. 2, pp. 806–11.
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79. I. V. Stalin, *O Velikoi Otchestvennoi voine Sovetskogo Soyuza*, 5th edition (Moscow, 1948) pp. 18–36. I am grateful for this reference to Professor Erik Kulavig.
80. E. A. Rees (ed.), *The Nature of Stalin's Dictatorship: The Politburo 1924–1953* (Basingstoke, 2004), chs 2 and 7.
81. N. Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (Harmondsworth, 1979), pp. 181–2, 184–5. Machiavelli states that a successful military commander poses the greatest danger to a prince. The prince should therefore consider his own security and either put the commander to death or discredit him in some way in the eyes of the people and army. The successful commander has two options, either to immediately surrender his command and place himself at the prince's service, or work to overthrow the prince.

82. Maureen Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin's Russia* (Basingstoke, 2001).
83. M. N. Pokroskii, *Russkaya istoriya s drevneshchikh vremen* (Moscow, 1910), vol. 2, p. 112.
84. Ya. S. Lur'e and Yu. D. Rykov (eds), *Perepiska Ivana Groznogo s Andreem Kurbskim* (Moscow, 1993). Peresvetov argued that it was as impossible for the tsar to ride his horse without a bridle, as to rule the state without terror.
85. M. N. Pokrovsky, *Brief History of Russia* (translated by D. S. Mirsky) (London, 1933), vol. 1, p. 68.
86. I. I. Polosin, 'O chelobitnykh Peresvetov', in *Uchenye zapiski Moskovskogo gos. pedagogicheskogo instituta im V. I. Lenina*, vol. xxxv, *kafedra istorii SSSR*, vyp. II (Moscow, 1946), pp. 25–55. In *The Encyclopaedia of State and Law* in 1925–6 the entry on Absolutism refers to the 'Machiavellian' policies of Ivan Grozny: *Entseiklopediya gosudarstvo i pravo*, pp. 6–7.
87. I. B. Zil'berman, *Politicheskie vzglyady Ivana IV Groznogo* (Leningrad, 1953), pp. 127–8. See also A. A. Zimin, 'Peresvetov i ego sovremenniki', in *Ocherki po istorii russkoi obshchestvenno-politicheskoi mysli serediny XVI veka* (Moscow, 1958), p. 272.
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89. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, part xviii, p. 101.
90. Davies, *Soviet History in the Gorbachev Revolution*, p. 20, cites *Znanie-sila*, August 1987, pp. 54–5 (V. Kobrin): Cherkasov's notes were first published in 1953.
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92. *Khrestomatiya po istorii srednikh vekov* (T.P.M. 1950), pp. 231–41.
93. Yu. Leksin, 'Khochetsya dumat', chto ya ne obryval svyaz' vremen', *Znanie-sila*, February 1988, p. 74.
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95. G. R. Urban (ed.), *Stalinism: Its Impact on Russia and the World* (Aldershot, 1982), pp. 11–12.
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98. Ibid., p. 255 cites Kolakowski, *Marxism and Beyond*.
99. Ibid., p. 339. See the comments of Bao Ruowang on the behaviour of individuals during the Chinese cultural revolution.
100. Ibid., pp. 106–7.
101. David Rousset, *The Other Kingdom* (New York, 1947), cited in Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (London, 1951), p. 436.
102. Stalin, *Sochineniya*, vol. 16, pp. 1–22.
103. On the need for flexibility of rulers see Quentin Skinner, *Machiavelli* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 15–16, 40.
104. F. Chuev, *Tak govoril Kaganovich: Ispoved' stalinskogo apostola* (Moscow, 1992), p. 154.

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106. See van Ree, *The Political Thought of Joseph Stalin*; Herbert Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism: A Critical Analysis* (London, 1968), esp. part II 'Ethical Tenets'. See also Tucker *Stalinism*, in particular Leszek Kolakowski, 'Marxist Roots of Stalinism' and Mihailo Markovic, 'Stalinism and Marxism'. Walicki, *Marxism and the Leap to the Kingdom of Freedom*, pp. 497–8.
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Appendix

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