



# The Dialogue in Hell between Machiavelli and Montesquieu: Humanitarian Despotism and the Conditions of Modern Tyranny (Applications of Political Theory)

*By Maurice Joly*

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The Dialogue in Hell between Montesquieu and Machiavelli is the source of the world's most infamous literary forgery, The Protocols of the Elders of Zion. John Waggoner's superb translation of and commentary on Joly's Dialogue—the first faithful translation in English—seeks not only to update the sordid legacy of the Protocols but to redeem Joly's original work for serious study in its own right, rather than through the lens of antisemitism. Waggoner's work vindicates a man who was neither an antisemite nor a supporter of the kind of tyrannical politics the Protocols subsequently served and presents Maurice Joly, once much maligned and too long ignored, as one of the nineteenth century's foremost political thinkers.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

Joly's *Dialogue* addresses perennial questions that are now more urgent than ever: What are the prospects for freedom? Is the liberal system universally applicable? Is despotism a benighted remnant of the past or can it develop into new forms? After a century and a half, Joly's thought ?repressed, ignored, hijacked, and misunderstood ?comes into light [and] his voice is still quite fresh. The bitter irony of the despotic abuse to which this book was put demands redress by renewed access to Joly's liberal, anti-despotic thought. John Waggoner has made this possible for English-speaking readers. (Richard F. Hassing)

A fair and timely reassessment of one of the earliest and most acute analysts of modern despotism. (Pierre Manent, Centre de Recherches Politiques Raymond Aron (EHESS, Paris))

Joly's is a classic diagnosis of distinctively modern despotism, and Waggoner adds to Joly's text an illuminating commentary. This book has lessons for all who love free government. (Robert K. Faulkner)

In addition to teaching us about the permanence of the possibility of tyranny, and its perverse new forms in modernity, Joly compels us to wonder whether our liberalism or Machiavelli's is truer. (*Azure*)

Joly's work is a brilliant account of modern despotism, and of the vulnerability of republicanism to a Machiavellianism aware of the manipulability of popular mechanisms. Joly's updating of Machiavellianism deserves to be read as a prophetic and unwittingly influential document. Having detailed the despotism of its own century and inadvertently contributed to that of the century to come, perhaps it can help our century to learn to formulate an adequate response to the all-too-enduring voice of tyranny. (*The Review of Politics*)

John Waggoner has done all of us a tremendous service by making available in English the text of Maurice Joly's *Dialogue*, as well as a penetrating analysis of this neglected work. His insight allows us to better understand the origins of both totalitarianism and anti-Semitism in the twentieth century. (Francis Fukuyama, author of *The End of History and the Last Man*)

### **About the Author**

John S. Waggoner has taught at the Sorbonne, the American University of Paris, and the American University of Cairo.

## **Users Review**

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