

**PARIS ARNOPOULOS**

**PLATO AND ARISTOTLE ON WAR AND PEACE**

## PLATO AND ARISTOTLE ON WAR AND PEACE\*

**Polemogenesis.** For Plato and Aristotle world affairs were truly of a global nature. The earth was a sphere of about ten thousand miles in circumference; with its land mass concentrated around its equator and divided into three great continents: Europa, Asia, and Africa. Originally there was a fourth continent, the fabled Atlantis, which had subsequently been submerged in a cataclysm. The Atlantic Ocean lies between Europe and Asia, said Aristotle, so that if one travels westwards from Gibraltar, he will eventually reach the Indies to the east<sup>1</sup>. All these regions were inhabited by the human race which had intensive intercontinental relations. Since the deluge however, the remaining continents became isolated and their inhabitants lost touch with each other. But, whereas originally in *Phaedo* the earth is separated by insuperable barriers, making international relations impossible, later on in *Critias*, nations are no longer confined to closed regions but are able to interact. Plato thus broke down his early isolationism and opened the way for international exploration and discovery<sup>2</sup>.

During this primordial era, people lived in the state of nature. Since communication among human societies was at a minimum, friction and conflict were almost non-existent. In their desolation, men developed affection and goodwill towards each other and forgot all their pre-deluvian technology, including the art of war (*Nomoi* 678 c - 679 d). Living in a subsistence economy, they were content with the little they had, so there reigned unbroken harmony and tranquility among them<sup>3</sup>. This classical golden age prevailed for a long time until the human race multiplied, communities grew larger and contact was reestablished among them (*Politika* 1252 b - 3 a). As it increased and multiplied, mankind upset the balance of nature and conflicts arose about the distribution of scarce resources. The resulting

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\* For a separate treatment of each philosopher see the author's articles: Aristotelian Interstate Law and Politics, *Skepsis*, V, 1994; and Platonic Ideas on International Affairs, *Hellenic Review of International Relations*, II, 1, 1981; as well as Greeks and Barbarians, *Hellenic Studies*, III, 2, 1995. For a complete study see the author's forthcoming monograph: *Polis-Ethnos-Cosmos*, to be published in 1997.

1. The size was given in *Phaedo* 108 e, as 400,000 stadia; also 109 a - 110 a; *Meteor.*, 1354 and *De Caelo* 129 a. P. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Plato*, New York., Pantheon-Bollinger, 1958, pp. 262, 278.

2. FRIEDLÄNDER, *ibid.*, p. 274.

3. G. SABINE, *A History of Political Theory*, New York., Holt, 1950, p. 78.

violence from the struggle for security and supremacy spread throughout the world. Fearing that mankind would perish through mutual destruction and chaos, Zeus sent down the norm of ethics and the art of politics. Thus men were enabled to handle their problems by instituting law and order, as a result of which the first states came into being<sup>4</sup>.

The primary function of government was to protect society from external threats and internal disorders. Soldiers and police were thus its first public servants. Furthermore, poleis managed to solve demographic problems by balancing population with natural resources, thus guaranteeing everyone the necessities of life. In this state there was neither wealth nor poverty, but just enough possessions, equitably distributed to satisfy everyone (*Politeia* 372; *Nomoi* 677 b - 680 a). Unfortunately, this happy homeostasis did not last very long. As states grew in territory and population, their social structures and functions increased in size and complexity. Specialization emerged and division of labor heightened efficiency, thus producing surplus wealth. Tasting luxury, people became avaricious and acquisitive. The more they had, the more they wanted; so societies were overcome with accumulation fever and before long coveted the possessions of their neighbors. Thereby arose hatreds, rivalries, and quarrels, finally generating conflicts and war<sup>5</sup>.

According to this prehistoric account, Plato's theory of polemogenesis blames social maldevelopment as the prime factor of interstate violence (*Protagoras* 322). When states outgrow themselves beyond subsistence —*typhosan*— they become hyperactive —*flegomenousan*— and acquire an insatiable appetite or addiction for superfluous wealth (*Politeia* 373 d). Unfortunately, military technology is part of political progress, so both develop together and the wish for greater power accompanies the search for more wealth by the use of improved weapons and better strategies. Thus organized armed conflict is a syndrome of enlarging the body-politic, along with its increasing appetite for material possessions (*Nomoi* 678 - 9; 686-9; 829). Accordingly, it is the abuse of power that demotes timocracy, the accumulation of wealth that degrades oligarchy, and the spread of license that destroys democracy, leading everyone down the path to the depths of tyranny (*Politeia* 557 b). The gradual corruption of individuals and states then deteriorates into a chronic condition of war of all against all, making power politics the most essential of human activities. Ultimately states grow estranged from each other, their differences and disagreements widen, so peace among them becomes impossible<sup>6</sup>.

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4. Plato presented this story in the form of a myth told by *Protagoras*, 321 d - 322 c. See also *Nomoi*, 681 c. J. L. MYRES, *The Political Ideas of the Greeks*, New York, Abingdon, 1927, p. 193.

5. The first global conflict which ended the golden age of peace was the Trojan War. Cf. *Politeia*, 373 d; *Politikos*, 271 d; *Nomoi*, 677, 682.

6. *Politeia*, 351, 373; *Phaedo*, 66; *Menexenus*, 242-3; XENOPHON, B. i. 6. For detailed analysis of

This deeply regressive concept of history led Plato and to a lesser extent Aristotle, to believe that the cause of war lay with civilization. It is neither poverty nor necessity that produce organized violence. Rather, the root of all evil is to be found in human egoism and greed for luxury and wealth. From them grow interpersonal and international discrepancies, both material and moral, which sharpen their competition and conflict. Moreover, since no one knows for sure what is good and right — *kala kai nomina* — there arise conflicts over different interpretations by men and states. As long as these disagreements persist, as long as there are rich and poor, oligarchs and democrats, there will be exploitation and violence, within and between states<sup>7</sup>.

As states grow they become strange attractors to which are drawn smaller states, first as allies and then as satellites. This integration gradually upsets the balance of power and *raison d'état* considerations force everyone to take sides until the whole interstate system consolidates into a few centers of power and wealth which ultimately are reduced into bipolar spheres of influence. Once such confrontation develops, clashes are inevitable and a world war finally unavoidable<sup>8</sup>. Platonic evolutionary theory thus traces two historical eras and their distinctive social systems. The first is the primitive settlement with a subsistence economy, self-government, and simple culture. Although this primary state fulfills the basic needs of its people (food, rest, shelter), human drive for security and ambition for hegemony, eventually spills over into the second maldeveloped state with all its negative attributes. Consequently, it became Plato's task to construct an ideal system which would correct these social ills. This third polis, unlike the first primitive habitat, would not deteriorate into the second perverted settlement, but maintain its perfect homeostasis indefinitely (*Politeia* 372 a - e).

One can see that this interpretation of social evolution was influenced both by traditional beliefs and by the political, economic and cultural conditions of Greece. As we know, classical theory of history followed a cyclic or dialectic trajectory in a downward spiral. Each cycle was worse than the previous and opposite of the next, alternating between positive and negative phases. The Greeks thought that their actual era fell into a negative or unwinding phase going from past order into their

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Plato's theory of war see: R. W. LIVINGSTONE, *Greek Ideals and Modern Life*, London, Oxford, 1953, p. 93. W. BALLIS, *The Legal Position of War*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1937, p. 18. E. BARKER, *The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, New York, Dover, 1959, p. 187. W. E. CALDWELL, *Hellenic Conceptions of Peace*, New York, 1919, p. 128. A. H. M. JONES, *Athenian Democracy*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1957, p. 66. K. J. DESPOTOPOULOS, *La Guerre chez Platon*, Athens, Symposium, 1955, p. 34. IDEM, *Politike Philosophia tou Platonos*, Athens, Seferle, 1957, pp. 57-62. E. A. HAVELOCK, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics*, London, Cape, 1957, p. 100.

7. *Hippias*, I 294 d; *Alcibiades*, I 109 c -112 c; *Euthyphro*, 7 c-d; *Nomoi*, 629. A. W. GOULDNER, *Enter Plato*, New York, Basic Books, 1965, p. 200.

8. *Laws*, 622 c, 625 e, 628 b-c; *Politeia*, 373 d, 422 d, CALDWELL, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

existing disorder. Believing as they did that they were living in a time of anarchy and turbulence, it is understandable that Plato and Aristotle thought of their time as part of a deteriorating cycle (*Politikos* 268-247). In that sense, what was happening appeared natural and inevitable.

In this context they followed both Heraclitos by repeating that conflict is part of the nature of things and Parmenides by seeking to institutionalize a rigorous stable-state system. So, in spite of their pessimistic attitude for the inevitability of confusion and conflict, the philosophers yearned for stability and security. Since it is neither war nor revolt, but peace and friendship that enoble mankind (*Nomoi* 628 c), they sought ways to overcome these historical or existential evils. Their analysis may thus be regarded as the first systematic peace research and conflict resolution ever attempted, so it is worth summarizing and generalizing next.

**Realpolitik.** The concept of power-politics was a direct result of the *nomos-physis* controversy originated by the fifth century sophists. The debate was joined again in the fourth century by Plato who tried to transcend both the natural ethics of Hippias and Prodicos on the one hand and the conventional politics of Gorgias and Protagoras on the other, by introducing the higher notion of universal reason<sup>9</sup>. This philosophic rebuttal of the sophistic argument is to be found mainly in the *Gorgias* (483-489). Therein, Socrates insists that might does not make right, the powerful should not oppress the weak and force may not be used in politics. The platonic argument is that nature and nurture need not be opposite: what is wrong for one cannot be right for the other. Plato's final retort to Protagoras' famous dictum is that God rather than «man is the measure of all things» (*Nomoi* 716). Ethical relativism was thereby replaced by rational absolutism<sup>10</sup>.

Plato does not deny the usefulness of power as a means to both good and bad ends, he only rejects the sophistic concept of power as a good in itself (*Hippias* I, 295 e-296 d). Long before Lord Acton, Plato recognized that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely by destroying not only those who bear it but also those who wield it (*Nomoi* 691 c). Power breeds confidence, thus making men and states careless, slack and arrogant. The lust for power leads communities to destructive wars which sap their strength and degenerate their virtue. When pursued for its own sake, power blinds people to everything else, so they lose all sense of proportion. For that reason, the most wicked individuals and nations are found among the most powerful. History abounds with examples of men who were

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9. A. JARDÉ, *The Formation of the Greek People*, New York, Knopf, 1928, p. 258.

10. T. A. SINCLAIR, *History of Greek Political Thought*, London, Routledge, 1951, p. 186.

corrupted by excessive power and sank into the sin of *hybris*<sup>11</sup>. Especially in international affairs where power politics is unrestrained, the illustrations of this principle are numerous and unequivocal. States which hold hegemony over others treat their dependencies in a deplorable way. They break conventions and crush opposition, thus enslaving those they are supposed to protect. The paradox of power is that whereas used in moderation it makes for law and order; in excess, it leads to spiritual weakness and undermines strength of character<sup>12</sup>.

Both in *Timaeus* and *Critias*, Plato shows how too much power ultimately leads to destruction. In these paradigms it is the small but proper states which eventually defeat the powerful but corrupt empires. Accordingly, it is spiritual virtue rather than material strength which exalts people and nations alike. As any dangerous weapon, it takes very skilled men to wield it safely, so the proper use of power depends on the wisdom of its user (*Nomoi* 686 c). Plato attacked the whole way of traditional thinking which defines power in terms of force. In its place he developed the idea of moral power as goodness. The real meaning of power is not to be found in physical force or coercion, but in educational influence – *paideia* – towards *kalokagathia* (*Gorgias* 466 b). Platonic power then is the active ability to do good, rather than the passive resistance to avoid evil<sup>13</sup>. Plato's answer to the sophists seems to have ended the power controversy, because by the time of Aristotle the great debate was over<sup>14</sup>. The political and philosophical problems of the first half of the fourth century were only of historical interest for its second half. Thus instead of the passionate involvement of Plato, Aristotle stood apart to analyze both sides.

Although he agreed with Plato's argument in its essentials, Aristotle also admitted the value of power and the utility of force. For Plato the sources of power – *dynamis* – were parenthood, primogeniture, possession, strength, fortune, and wisdom (*Nomoi* 689 c; D. L., III, 97). To these, Aristotle added: abundance of resources, better weapons, strategic planning, good allies and superior position; remarking that especially in international affairs the good did not often win out. Whether one likes it or not, he stated candidly, even the gods are more likely to be on the side of those with bigger claws and teeth. Thus he agreed with Xenophon (B, I, 12) that the strong generally dominate the weak. As long as there are power

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11. This happened to Sparta and Crete where the legal and educational system were geared towards physical prowess. *Nomoi*, 633; *Gorgias*, 526 a.

12. Notable examples are: the Athenians at Samos, Chios, Lesbos; and the Persians at Media and Babylonia. *Nomoi*, 697, 742 d; *Critias*, 121 a. XENOPHON G, V, 5, 13. FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, p. 204, R. B. LEVINSON, *In Defence of Plato*, Cambridge, Harvard, 1953, p. 226.

13. W. JAEGER, *Paideia*, New York, Oxford, 1945, Vol. II, pp. 134-47.

14. M. GREENE, *A Portrait of Aristotle*, London, Faber, 1963, p. 54.

inequalities, there will always be masters and slaves; so he concluded, it is still the powerful who control the destinies of the world<sup>15</sup>.

Having said that, Aristotle accepted the Platonic ideals as the highest standard of political action. This means that the polis is not primarily an economic organization but a pedagogic institution. As such the ability of a good state to participate in power politics is of secondary importance<sup>16</sup>. As a process of resolving conflicts, power politics is only necessary for imperfect social systems where there is no consensus<sup>17</sup>. Of course, this is the case in international relations, where the lack of agreement is most acute and power politics manifests itself at its worst. Under the circumstances, how is the international system to minimize conflict and control violence? This crucial question occupied the philosophers for a long time, but was finally answered by combining the apparently antithetical concepts of physis and nomos.

**Natural Law.** Like the notion of power, the idea of law in the Fourth century was a development of the nomos-physis controversy of the fifth. Plato's synthesis of the two transcended the sophistic confrontation of culture versus nature. With the same argument, he also resolved the contradiction between positive law and natural order by introducing the concept of natural law — *nomos physeos*<sup>18</sup>. Plato admitted the provincialism and capriciousness of nomos, but at the same time could not accept the sophistic alternative in a law of the jungle; so he used his doctrine of ideas to postulate an absolute standard which would relate human affairs everywhere to the natural order of things<sup>19</sup>. Plato thus created a universal law as the product of a cosmic *nous*. This ideal serves as the basis upon which all human laws are promulgated (*Nomoi* 739 b). In this way, the variations of human laws are included within all-encompassing code of nature. Plato's natural law is somewhat different from that of the Stoics, in that they thought of it as the tie which bound all rational beings into a cosmic community, whereas Plato still focuses on the polis as the primary social unit. Similarly, Aristotle continued

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15. Power is always valued by the powerful. The Scythians, Persians, Thracians and Celts value power because they have enough of it to get what they want. For this reason their constitutions promote and stimulate the military virtues of their people. This is also the case with Carthage, Macedonia, and Iberia. *Politika* 1284 a, 1324 b; *Atheneon Politeia* 1425 a.

16. G. C. FIELD, *Plato and his Contemporaries*, New York, Dutton, 1930, p. 115.

17. SINCLAIR, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

18. The term *nomos physeos* appears for the first time in PLATO's *Gorgias*, 484 and *Timaeus* 83 e. See J. WILD, *Plato's Modern Enemies, and the Theory of Natural Law*, Chicago U.P., 1953, p. 183. G. R. MORROW, *Plato's Cretan City*, Princeton, University Press, 1960, p. 43.

19. MORROW, *ibid.*, pp. 29-31.

Plato's argument that there exist global standards which have wider sanctions than local legislation<sup>20</sup>.

Aristotle clearly distinguishes between two kinds of law: a common one —*koinos*— applying to the whole world, and a specific one —*idios*— applying to particular states. The former is valid independently of the wishes of humanity and reflects the underlying order of nature everywhere, whereas the latter depends on local and temporal situations<sup>21</sup>. Natural law sets the common standards of natural justice —*physei koinon dikaion*— which are similar in all societies even though they may not have any relation with each other or agreement in anything else. On the contrary, positive law is manifested as custom or legislation in particular communities and thus differs depending on local conditions (*Atheneon Politeia* 1368 b, 1373 b).

Xenophon (D, IV, 19) had said something similar when he mentioned unwritten laws —*agraphous nomous*— as the common norms of all men, observed independently by every society no matter how different the customs of each. Their consistency proves that these laws are the work of nature and not culture. Often however, it is necessary for general principles to adjust to situational realities, in order to take into account particular cases. Other times, people do not interpret natural laws correctly, so something may be moral of legal in a polis but not right and equitable in physis. So there is often a discrepancy between state law and natural justice<sup>22</sup>.

Aristotle pointed out that the widest gap between natural and historical law is found in international affairs. At this level there exist many treaties which are legally binding and yet are far from being equitable. One example is the principle that to the victor belong the spoils, which means that those who lose a battle become slaves. Such international conventions are not necessarily right, since the vanquished may not be slaves by nature (*Politika* 1255). No matter what international law decrees the common right of nature may contradict it. In such cases, natural law must take precedence over international law. Like national laws, international law should conform to the supremacy of natural law<sup>23</sup>. Upon this overarching principle the philosophers built their global ethics. Just as the principles

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20. Obviously this idea developed out of much earlier notions of divine law as illustrated in the *Antigone* of Sophocles. T. B. WEBSTER, *Political Interpretations of Greek Literature*, Manchester, 1948, p. 131.

21. The principles of natural science form part of the law of nature. That is why, said Aristotle, fire burns similarly both in Greece and in Persia. *Ethica Nikomachia*, 1134 b.

22. When SOPHOCLES (*Antigone*, 456-7) claimed the right to disobey the law of the state, he placed moral laws higher than political. *Atheneon Politeia* 1373 b; *Magna Moralia* 1193 b; *Ethica Nikomachia* 1137 b.

23. To illustrate the absolute nature of catholic principles, Aristotle quoted the dictum of Empedocles against all killing. *Atheneon Politeia*, 1373 b, 1137 a.



of natural law are valid everywhere, so moral laws apply to everyone. This means that there is no moral double standard; both individuals and states have to operate by the same rules. Thus it is clear that Plato and Aristotle are the founders of western natural law philosophy, since their universal principles serve as models for the Roman *jus naturale* and subsequently *jus gentium* (Grotius, III, x, 1)<sup>24</sup>.

Although Plato has been accused of putting *raison d'état* as the criterion of morality, the evidence is too scant to be conclusive. On the contrary, a single measure of morality fits his overall philosophy much better. Both in the *Republic* (576 c) and the *Laws* (645 b), he proposes a common law applying to the individual, the state and the world. The *Gorgias* example above should suffice to show that Plato abhorred a morality based on state expediency or national interest. It is hard to find a more impressive presentation of the claim that personal and political morality cannot be divorced. For these reasons we surmise that Plato did not subscribe to any theory of ethical dualism<sup>25</sup>.

Aristotle clarified the difficulty of applying a single standard to all cases by including morality within polity (*Magna Moralia* 1181 b). Thus although he recognizes quantitative differences between them, he insists that moral qualities apply both to individuals and groups (*Politika* 1323 b). The behavior of men and states must conform to the same criteria of natural law<sup>26</sup>. By making ethics part of politics and politics part of physics, Aristotle thus established the hierarchy along which interpersonal as international action could be judged. The only thing left was to show how these lofty principles could be recognized and realized by people and their governments in this imperfect world. Obviously, given the exigencies of life, one cannot simply wish away power, however much one may hate it. Like it or not, the practical solution to this problem demands some mutual compromise between politics and ethics. The unattainability of the higher good thus led the philosophers to seek the lesser evil as the optimal policy to world peace.

**World Order.** By enveloping ethics into politics, the philosophers recognized that moral bonds are usually found within a community. This notion of the coextension of morality and solidarity is of course quite old, so it is reflected in the writings of many ancient thinkers. In the Fifth book of the *Republic*, Plato emphasizes that there is no greater evil than disorder, since it brings discord and destruction<sup>27</sup>.

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24. M. HAMMOND, *City-State and World-State*, Cambridge, Harvard, 1951 p. 65. J. WATSON, *The State in Peace and War*, Glasgow, 1919, p. 176.

25. Popper is a most vociferous critic accusing Plato of making the state superorganic with its own superethic. To the contrary are: LEVINSON, *op. cit.*, p. 226. E. A. TAYLOR, *Plato*, New York, Dial Press, 1929, p. 52.

26. W. ROSS, *Aristotle*, London, Methuen, 1949, p. 268.

27. R. NIEBURH, *The Structure of Nations and Empires*, New York, Scribners, 1957, p. 4.

Further in the *Protagoras* (322 c-d), he introduces justice as the god-given gift which makes it possible for people to live together. So, those who do not partake of it are to be cast out of the human community and left to live alone.

Similarly, Aristotle in the *Ethics* (1134 a) sees justice as a condition found only among those who share common standards of legality. Political justice — *politikon dikaion* — is the highest degree of equity, found only in a community whose requisites are liberty and equality (1129 b). That is to say, justice can only exist if people are roughly equal and freely agree to live together for their mutual benefit (1242 a). Without independent and equal parties there cannot be true reciprocity and hence no moral society (*Magna Moralia* 1193 b). It was well known to the ancient Greeks, as it is to us now, that all these conditions do not exist in international relations and that the world is certainly not anywhere near a true community. Furthermore, to expect nations to behave like a big happy family would be rather unrealistic even for philosophers. Some compromise would therefore seem as the only political option.

Plato saw that political development could increase the domain of moral relations. Historically, in the original primitive communities, the *pater familias* was law into himself. Positive law evolved as the common denominator of the patriarchal laws of many primitive tribes as they united into clans, tribes, nations of federations (*Nomoi* 680). This process is effected by widening the area of law through compromise and consolidation. Likewise, it could be inferred, that the various political systems of the world, i.e. city-states, nation-states, and imperial-states, could develop in the same direction towards an all-inclusive confederation (*Nomoi* 680 ff.). Although Plato was not overly enthused about large and loose social systems, he had to admit that some intergovernmental organization was necessary to ensure peace.

Aristotle also conceived of IGOs as a continuum in the changing intensity of community bonds. Near the inner extreme of this spectrum is the family with its strong bonding of instinctive love, and near the outer extreme is the world system with its low morality and superficial empathy. In between are found the widening circles of tribe, city, nation: corresponding to the movement from sympathetic to antipathetic relations. The polis was, of course, regarded as the golden mean in this expanding range<sup>28</sup>. Based on the principle that the greater the homogeneity of a group the stronger its unity and harmony, Aristotle could explain the disorder and conflict in international relations as a function of cultural heterogeneity and power inequality (*Ethica Eudemia* 1242 b). Politics with similar constitutions or ideologies are more likely to have mutual interests and like-minded policies. Hence their relations can be strong and amicable (*Atheneon Politeia* 1446 b).

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28. E. A. HAVELOCK, *The Liberal Temper of Greek Politics*, London, Cape, 1957, p. 320.

For this reason interstate relations within the same nation or civilization are stronger than international relations between different cultures. As one moves from the familiar to the strange, interactions become more contrived and formal. Accordingly international affairs at large are based on utility and expediency; their contacts are functional or commercial and maintained only as long as they are necessary. The world system is therefore interconnected by social relationships based on mere reciprocal arrangements: *omologia*<sup>29</sup>. In such a system, international friendship is not a meeting of kindred spirits but of practical considerations. This is generally the case among different civilizations. One may feel well-disposed towards faraway individuals or nations, but is very unlikely to go so far as to establish true friendship with them (*Magna Moralia* 1210 a-1212 a).

The greater the social or spatial distance between people, the fewer their contacts and the smaller their affinities. The implications of this principle of inverse distance are quite important. The implications of this principle of inverse distance are quite important. They relate the ideal concepts of cosmic order of the philosophers and the practical conditions in world affairs. Since the globe is not a tight system, the alternative to disorder and conflict is a graduated scale of attachments, realistic enough to be viable and idealistic enough to serve as a model. By this interpretation, the philosophers realized that there was no point preaching world peace and brotherhood when even their own nation was at odds with itself. It was much better to concentrate on a more limited scale and a more immediate goal. So they only proposed that states show some consideration for their neighbors and avoid entangling contacts with those further away. If nations followed this rule they would only maintain few relations and low communications with each other, thus keeping frictions and conflicts at their least level. In such heteroclitic world, order would be maximized by morality and autarchy, violence minimized by simplicity and autarky. That was the best philosophical wisdom could do and no one has done better ever since.

In the contemporary world of accelerating complexity and interdependence, such advice may seem atopic and anachronistic. Obviously, having tasted from the tree of knowledge, we cannot go back to the purity and innocence of the past. By now, the world seems headed for an irreversible journey to technification and globalization, with only a few intrasingents fighting a rear guard action. Yet, common sense tells us that the philosophers may be right. Even if the present course of action cannot be reversed, it could be slowed down and deflected. Simple prudence demands heeding the Platonic and Aristotelian warnings about

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29. As the saying goes, quoted Aristotle, when the Athenians no longer needed the Megarians, they hardly recognized their existence. *Ethica Eudemia*, 1236 a, 1242 b; *Ethica Nikomachia*, 1161 b.

doing too much and going too far, thus falling in the ultimate sin of hybris. To avoid such fate akin to a Greek tragedy, following the precepts of the ancient wisdom may yet be our best policy.

Paris ARNOPOULOS  
(Montreal)

**ΟΙ ΠΛΑΤΩΝΙΚΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΙΚΕΣ ΑΠΟΦΕΙΣ  
ΓΙΑ ΤΟΝ ΠΟΛΕΜΟ ΚΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΕΙΡΗΝΗ**

Π ε ρ ί λ η ψ η

Στή μελέτη αυτή διερευνώνται οι συνέπειες τής κλασικής θεωρίας σχετικά με τόν πόλεμο και τήν ειρήνη, όπως αυτή άπαντά στά έργα του Πλάτωνος και του Άριστοτέλους. Οι Έλληνες φιλόσοφοι άσχολήθηκαν με τις αίτιες του πολέμου και τις προϋποθέσεις τής ειρήνης και έπιχείρησαν να λύσουν τα σοβαρά προβλήματα που προκύπτουν από αυτές, καθώς τις θεωρούσαν ως τις περισσότερο σημαντικές αντιθετικές συνθήκες τής μακροπολιτικής. Έδώ θα έρευνήσουμε τόν τρόπο με τόν όποιο οι δύο φιλόσοφοι έκθέτουν και έξηγοϋν τήν ύπαρξη οργανωμένης βίας σε μεγάλη κλίμακα, και τις σχετικές προτάσεις τους για τήν εγκαθίδρυση και διατήρηση ένός καλύτερου και ειρηνικότερου κόσμου. Παρότι οι ιδέες και ή πρακτική τών Έλλήνων πριν από είκοσιπέντε αιώνες υπήρξαν άπλως και μόνο ένα μεμονωμένο παράδειγμα στην παγκόσμια Ιστορία, τα φιλοσοφικά τους όράματα θα μπορούσαν να χρησιμοποιηθοϋν ως καθολικές αρχές και να συμβάλουν έτσι στην επίλυση σύγχρονων προβλημάτων

Πάρις ΑΡΝΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ