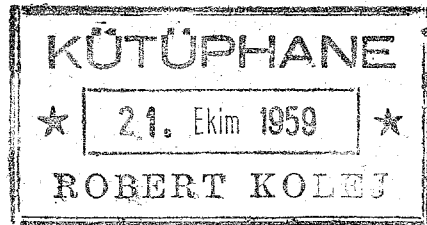


A STUDY ON PLATO'S ATTACK ON DEMOCRACY

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Plato's bias against democracy. Whether Plato formed his bias against democracy early in his youth or whether it was a direct result of Socrates' execution seems to be a question yet to be discovered. But we are warned by A.E. Taylor that if Plato "had such a bias /against democracy/ it is not to be accounted for by the influence of his early surroundings".¹

At this point one thing seems to need some explanation. If we exclude Socrates from the early surroundings of Plato, the above statement is well warranted. Infact, Plato's stepfather Pyrilampes² was a "prominent figure of the Periclean regime".³ Since Perictione and Pyrilampes married in Plato's childhood it seems obvious that Plato spent his early years in the household of his stepfather. This being the case it may even be supposed that Plato was indoctrinated with Periclean politics. However if we include Socrates⁴ into Plato's early

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¹A.E. Taylor, Plato /New York, 1956/, p.2

²When Plato's father Ariston died in Plato's childhood, Perictione married her uncle Pyrilampes. Pyrilampes was a personal intimate of Pericles as well as a supporter of his policy.

³A.E. Taylor, Plato /New York, 1956/, p.2

⁴The "gossiping Alexandrian biographers" fixed the date of Plato's first hearing of Socrates somewhere around 409-7, that is to say when Plato

surroundings we face an important question. Would this inclusion mean Plato's bias against democracy. The proper solution of the problem seems to rest on the assumption that if Socrates had preached against democracy, Plato having heard his master's ideas might have been influenced by him. However this assumption seems to become doubtful /only at the first sight/ if we consider the seventh letter of Plato¹ where he states that the "previous regime /the democracy/ was a golden age beside this one"² /meaning the Thirty/. But this does not necessarily mean that Plato even sympathised with democracy. At any rate the fact that Plato preferred the rule of democracy on this certain occasion is evident from what he says. However Plato's preference of democracy in his seventh letter is a rather particular case in its connection

was about eighteen or twenty. But this is impossible since it is known from Plato's own letters that in 431 B.C., at the beginning of the Peloponnesian wars, Socrates had made the close acquaintance of Plato's maternal uncle Charmides. According to this Plato must have heard about Socrates very early in his childhood. For the date of Plato's first acquaintance with Socrates some scholars believe that this falls to the period of Plato's adolescence. That is between the ages of eighteen or twenty. But since Plato in his seventh letter, referring to the Thirty in 404, speaks of Socrates as his elderly friend, it seems that he knew Socrates sometime before the age of twenty four.

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The seventh letter of Plato, one of the series of letters written in his later life, gives a picture of Plato's political career in Athens.

²T.A. Sinclair, A History of Greek Political Thought /London, 1952/, p.122

to the treacheries of the Oligarchy and hence must not be thought of either as an example to Plato's views on democracy or to the impossibility of Socrates' influence on him.

The evidence which shows Socrates preaching against democracy is to be found especially in a dialogue between Anytus and Socrates, in the Meno, where Anytus warns Socrates when he /Socrates/ speaks of the famous Athenian leaders from Pericles to Themistocles as being unable to transmit goodness to their sons, that he /Socrates/ should be careful not to speak as such.¹ But the fact that Socrates continued to speak likewise becomes clear when his bold remarks ended in his execution. Furthermore, the problem of organising the society according to individual capacities and talents, that is to say, to determine everyman's function in the society as soldier, statesman etc., according to aptitudes, understanding and character was the Socratic ideal contrary to the freedom allowed in the Athenian democracy where anyone who was willing to serve the state was accepted. The fact that this anticipates the idea which appears in Plato's account of his ideal city in the Republic is yet another point suggesting to the possibility of Plato's bias against democracy during his youth.

Finally it may be said that Plato's bias if not to be accounted for by his early surroundings, nevertheless may be a point in question if his association to Socrates is considered.

¹Plato, Meno, translation by W.H.D. Rouse,
/New York, 1956/, p.61

Generally accepted beliefs. It seems to be generally accepted to think of Socrates' execution as the cause of Plato's attacks on democracy. However before going into the problem of how and where Plato attacked democracy, and whether these so called attacks were infact Plato's own criticism or not a point or two seems to need some explanation.

The tendency to think of Socrates' execution as the cause of Plato's attacks on democracy have been extended by some authors to include also the cause of Plato's seeking for a method whereby the just society would be possible. This seems to be the natural result having analysed Plato's seventh letter which describes his political career in Athens. However Mr. Durant's statement that Socrates' execution filled Plato with "such a scorn of democracy, such a hatred for the mob..../that/ it led him to a Catonic resolve that democracy must be destroyed" ¹ seems to say more than what can be evaluated from the evidences we have.

In the first place it seems doubtful whether we can detect a definite bias against democracy from what Plato has to say in his letter. Plato admits the fact that the "restored democracy /had/ behaved with great fairness"² until Socrates was brought to trial and was put to death. The rest of his remark is that the charge brought against Socrates was most unfair and inappropriate

¹Will Durant, Story of Philosophy /New York, 1953/,
p.10

²T.A. Sinclair, A History of Greek Political Thought
/London, 1952/, p.123

to him. But we hear nothing in particular against democracy. ✓

Secondly the fact that Plato comes to the conclusion that "all modern states without exception are badly governed"¹ seems to be a result not solely of Socrates' execution but also of his reviewing to himself various other facts like the Oligarchical revolution of 404 B.C., and the crime of the Thirty to send Socrates for the unfair arrest of Leon of Salamis.

It seems then, that according to the evidences we have from this letter, it would be a mistake to assume Socrates' death being the only cause of Plato's particular conclusion that all modern states are deficient.

Attacks exposed in the Socratic dialogues.
The execution of Socrates was in 399 B.C. From the way of its delivery the second half of Plato's letter where he is reviewing to himself the previous events and thinking about law and morality seems to point out to the years following 399 B.C. At this time Plato had withdrawn to Megara with some of the friends of Socrates, and had settled himself on the writing of the Socratic dialogues.

At the age of forty, in 388, Plato visited Sicily for the first time. To this period belong some of his works like the Gorgias and the Republic. Both of these dialogues contain severe judgements

¹T.A. Sinclair, A History of Greek Political Thought
/London, 1952/, p.123

on the fifth century Athenian democracy and the famous Athenian leaders like Pericles and Themistocles. But the question is, to what extent the criticisms exposed in Gorgias and the Republic are a result of Plato's own thinking. To a certain degree it would be possible to say that the analysis of democracy as a deficient form of government appearing in the Republic is the direct answer of Plato intended for the democrats who executed Socrates. This much does not seem to violate the truth as far as part of the purpose in Plato's analysis is concerned. But reviewing the matter from a closer angle we seem to have more problems .

Taken as a whole in such dialogues like the Phaedrus, Protagoras, Meno, Republic, Gorgias, Politics and the Laws there are definite references to democracy. But the interesting point about these dialogues is the fact that there seem to be certain inconsistencies among them. What has been established about Pericles in the Phaedrus, foreexample, is contradicted in the Meno.¹ This is somewhat true for the rest of the dialogues; the only difference being the variation in the nature of the inconsistencies. It follows then, that the evident inconsistency between the Republic-Gorgias group and the Laws-Politics group is that the former group presents a severe judgement on democracy whereas in the latter group the atmosphere is more mild. Why is this so? Are we to blame Plato for what it seems to be certain contradictions in his own works

¹In Phaedrus it is said that Pericles through his relations with Anaxagoras had some philosophy. However in the Meno, Socrates blames Pericles for his inability to transmit his goodness to his sons due to his /Pericles'/ lack of knowledge.

or is there a particular reason for this?

It is believed that the dialogues written before 386 B.C. put forward a good deal of real Socrates.¹ To this period belong Crito, Apology, Gorgias, part of Republic and Protagoras. And the dialogues written in a later period, after 386 B.C., are mainly Plato.² This being so in Gorgias and in some parts of the Republic the real person speaking is Socrates rather than Plato himself.

To be able to clarify the above point we have to examine the chapter in Plato's Republic where Socrates makes a severe judgement on democracy, and which seems to be an allusion to the democracy of the Periclean Athens. However the best way is to examine the dialogue of Socrates, in the Republic, together with the famous Funeral Oration of Pericles³ recorded in Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian Wars.

Pericles' Funeral Oration v.S. Plato's analysis of democracy. Pericles, in his famous funeral oration, emphasises the superiority of democracy on grounds that in a system of this kind everyone is able to participate in the affairs of the state. That is to say all citizens have a certain freedom and it is this freedom that stresses talent and ability

¹T.A. Sinclair, A History of Greek Political Thought
/London, 1952/, p.127

²Ibid., p.127

³The Funeral Oration of Pericles delivered over those fallen in the battle embodies the ideals of the Athenian democracy.

when it comes to the selection of leaders. We understand further that in a democracy neither the class differences nor the financial position are being allowed to interfere with merit. This is clear when Pericles says ".....if a man is able to serve the state he is not hindered by the obscurity of his condition".¹ It was this equality for the like or unlike before the affairs of the state which made Athens unique in its day. The city as a whole resembled a moral being with a set character of its own.² This is rather clear when Pericles says "....our constitution does not copy the laws of neighbouring states"³ and more definitely when he adds, "....we are rather a pattern to others than imitators ourselves".⁴

The Athenian constitution was of the many. It was what is now called a direct democracy in which the "whole body of population assembled for the purpose of ruling in one congregation".⁵

The representative democracy being the rule of someone else had no appealing to the Athenians since they "struggled to abolish to be governed by someone else".⁶

¹Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars, translation by Crawley, p.104

²Ernest Barker, Greek Political Thought, 2nd ed., /London, 1925/, p.5

³Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars, translation by Crawley, p.104

⁴Ibid., p.104

⁵Huszar and Stevenson, Political Science /Iowa, 1955/, p.64

⁶H.D.F. Kitto, The Greeks /London, 1954/, p.129

The insistence on direct democracy was rather due to the fact that the Greek conceived the state as a superfamily.¹ Since the family life meant a direct participation in the family affairs the individual Athenian felt inclined to take a direct part in the affairs of the state. But in order to maintain this rather ideal form of government the city had to "have a rather easy atmosphere".² The organic structure of the state ought therefore be free from any rigidity, and yet the proper submission to law and authority and to the accepted code of behaviour were of the first importance.³ This point is well illustrated by Pericles, in his speech, when speaking of freedom he says that, ".....the freedom we enjoy in our government extends also to our ordinary life.....there far from exercising a jealous surveillance over each other we do not feel called upon to be angry with our neighbour for doing what he likes",⁴ and also when he says ".....but all this ease in our private relations do not make us lawless as citizens.....our chief safeguard teaches us to obey the magistrates and the laws particularly to the protection of the injured".⁵

¹H.D.F. Kitto, The Greeks /London, 1954/, p.129

²T.A. Sinclair, A History of Greek Political Thought /London, 1952/, p.101

³Ibid., p.101

⁴Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars, translation by Crawley, p.105

⁵Ibid., p.105

hard narrow
↑

Another feature to note in the Athens of Pericles is the general attitude towards training and warfare. Pericles "rejects the hard narrow Spartan school".¹ He holds that education is what is necessary for the citizens and not simply hard training. We see at once that the strict self control which is accepted to be the foundation of Athenian democracy holds true for warfare as well. It is, according to Pericles, a strong character and not just courage that counts in wartime. To this effect he says ".....we live exactly as we please and yet we are ready to encounter any legitimate danger".² But as it takes character to manage the well being of such a state it also takes the building of this character. This was due to the general education of the Athenian citizens, whose aim it was to create characters. Such characters that, as Pericles puts it, "though occupied with the pursuit of industry are still fair judges of public matters".³ But it is interesting to note that whereas a liberal education generally tends to result in the softness of individuals, Pericles thought that this should not enter among the Athenians. Therefore it was seen that the attention paid to literature and other arts were not to be excessive. This is very clear when Pericles says, "we cultivate knowledge without effeminacy".⁴

¹T.A. Sinclair, A History of Greek Political Thought
/London, 1952/, p.101

²Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars, translation by
Crawley, p.105

³Ibid., p.105

⁴Ibid., p.105

Having seen the characteristics of Periclean Athens let us now turn to the picture of democracy in Plato's Republic. We will at once see that the ways of life which Pericles selects in his Funeral Oration as evidences for democracy's superiority over other governments are dwelt upon by Socrates just for the opposite purpose. Infact Socrates' picture is a "satire on Athenian life and manners.....aimed directly against the imperial democracyof Pericles".¹ What was versatility for Pericles is instability for Socrates. The manifold characteristics of democracy are not approved by Socrates. His belief the unity of a common ideal was altogether impossible in a democracy because there are as many different ways as there are many different individuals. "Therefore in a democracy any single or agreed rule is impossible".² Socrates speaking about the freedom in a democracy says that everyone is allowed to do what he likes so that everyman will arrange his own manner of life to suit his own pleasures. The result is a greater variety of individuals than under any other form of constitution. The freedom extends even to ones position in wartime. Thus Socrates points out that one need not fight when his fellow citizens are at war. In a democracy anyone is free to enter politics, and ones background does not matter the least. Hence

¹A.E. Taylor, Plato /New York, 1956/, P.296

²Earnest Barker, Greek Political Thought, 2nd ed.,
/London, 1925/, p.255

Socrates says that the democratic regime with a "magnificent indifference to the sort of life a man has led before he enters politics will promote to honour anyone who merely call himself the people's friend".¹

Plato or Socrates. But why should Plato have criticised democracy so as to make Pericles' Athens an object of satire. Infact from what we know about Plato's life it seems that he should not have acted as such.

Plato was born in 428-7 B.C., two years after Pericles' death. The great war had already started in 431. It is clear that Plato had only been a child during the war. He had neither the chance to see the brilliancy of the Periclean Athens nor to realise to the full extent the tragedy of the Peloponnesian wars. It is said that Plato must have observed the fate of Melos in 416, and the tragic Sicilian expedition in 415-413. But since he was a boy of 13-15 during these events how they had seemed to him is doubtful.

Socrates on the other hand was born in 469 B.C. and when the great war had started he was thirty eight years old. Thus it is more likely that Socrates should have observed and even commented about the events that have taken place during this war.

It is interesting at this point to note the moral breakdown of the Athenian people described by

¹F.M. Cornford, The Republic of Plato /Oxford, 1924/, p.278

Thucydides in his history of the Peloponnesian wars and which follows the brilliant picture of Pericles.

The second picture is that of the Periclean Athens now suffering under the terrible plague. It is only a year after that Pericles has delivered his famous Funeral Oration and the changes that have taken place are striking. Nothing of the brilliancy of Periclean Athens can be seen in this gloomy picture of Athens. Thucydides reports that obedience to law and religion, traits like honesty and decency had all vanished in a suprisingly short time. Death was like a spell over the Athenian people and so not knowing what was to become of themselves people forgot about law and morality and indulged in worldly pleasures.

It seems probable that Socrates has in his mind the Athens during the plague when he blames Pericles in Gorgias for having failed to teach morals to the people. People with strong morals do not fail to behave in the right way even when they are faced with difficult situations. If the Athenian people had strong morals they could certainly have behaved in obedience to law, morality and religion even during this terrible plague.

It is also possible to see the swift process of demoralization of the Athenians from two particular stories that Thucydides reports.

The first event was the revolt of Mitylene the chief city of Lesbos. The question of how the revolting city should be treated was to be decided by the Assembly. It happened that Cleon, formerly

a leather manufacturer, was the leading figure at the Athenian Assembly. Cleon, an able man, was a good speaker, but he lacked the outstanding qualities of Pericles as a leading figure. He was infact a man of vulgar mind.¹ His desire was to persuade the Athenians that they should put to death the Mtylenians thereby teaching the rest of the Hellenic world that Athens would punish severly any city which dared to stand against her. In the end of his long talk Cleon says, ".....pay them back in their turn without yielding to present weakness.....punish them as they deserve, and teach your allies that the penalty of rebellion is death"²

Athenians were at first persuaded by Cleon's speech. That evening they sent a ship to Mtylene. Paches the commander of the vessel, carried orders to put to death all the men and enslave and sell the women and the children. However the next day Athenians found themselves being bothered by their conscience. They could not possibly commit such a massacre; they were not as cruel to slay the whole of a polis. Immediately the Assembly got together once more. This time Diodotus answered Cleon's remarks. He showed to the Athenians the dangers of giving decisions based on brute force rather than on policy and morals. After this it was decided that the decree

¹H.D.F. Kitto, The Greeks /London, 1954/, p.144

²Thucydides, The Pelloponnesian Wars, translation by Crawley, p.107

should be cancelled. Then a second ship was sent to the island to overtake the first and to prevent the massacre. It is interesting to note the eagerness of the people in the repentance of their mistake.

As Thucydides reports the Athenians were so eager to prevent the massacre that they provided wine and barely cakes for the vessel. Besides great promises were made to the crew if they arrived on time which caused the men to use such diligence upon the voyage that they took their meals of barely cakes kneaded with oil and wine as they rowed, and only slept by turns while others were at the oar.¹

The vessel arrived so little before the first that Paches who carried the orders of execution had only just had time to read the decree and to prepare to execute the sentence when the second ship put into port and prevented the massacre.²

Our second story is about the little island of Melos, a colony of Lacedaemon. The Melians would not submit to the Athenians like the other islanders. At first they remained neutral and took no part in the struggle, but afterwards upon the Athenians using force and violence they assumed an attitude of open hostility.³ The Melian conference reported by Thucydides in his history is concerned with the proposal of the Athenians that the Melians should submit to their rule. When this is refused

¹Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars, translation by Crawley, p.172

²Ibid., p.172

³Ibid., p.330

and even fought against by the Melians, Athenians acted most violently by "putting to death all the grown men.....and selling the women and children for slaves".¹ But having acted thus there was no feeling of repentance or sorrow. In a span of twelve years there had come to be a striking change over the Athenians.

These were but some of the things probably observed by Socrates during the war period. In deciding whether it was Plato or Socrates who criticised democracy it would be helpful to remember the above points. Thus it seems more likely that the verdict belongs to Socrates rather than to Plato.

The democratic man. At this point we have another problem. Namely the criticism on democratic man also appearing in Republic. It is infact a part of the chapter on democracy but the reason we discuss this separetly is due to what it seems to be a certain doubt about its authorship. As we have stated previously these dialogues altough writings of Plato some of them convey the thinking of Socrates. But to think of them simply as evidences for Socratic philosophy would be a rather superficial consideration. We must also try to realise the purpose of the dialogues, if not as a whole at least in part. It would be a mistake to think of Republic merely by Plato. Nor is it correct to think of the purpose which gave birth to Republic merely as Plato's

¹Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars, translation by Cawley, p.337

desire to honour Socrates' philosophy. However the same works when considered in parts rather than as a whole seem to throw some light upon several problems which otherwise would have remained unsolved. This point is particularly true with the democratic man.

Assuming that the dialogue belonged to Socrates, then the question is whether he actually knew someone similar to the person described in the dialogue. In another words, as far as Socrates' authorship is concerned can the dialogue be alluded to some actual person who was living or had lived in Athens. This seems to be rather doubtful.

If some think that there was infact Alcibiades who could have been a model for the democratic man,
even this point seems to be doubtful when we know
that Alcibiades was a very close associate of Socrates
and not only this but also his beloved. Therefore
it is doubtful that Socrates would have anything to
say against Alcibiades. But now let us consider
Plato's position in relation to the authorship of
the democratic man. The first that comes to our
attention is that there is a good reason why Plato
should have criticised the democratic man; the reason
being the execution of Socrates. Secondly there
seems to be a person on whom the allusion might
have been aimed.

If we examine the story of Socrates' execution we will see that the above points are highly possible. The event, briefly, ran as follows. The restored democracy brought Socrates to trial and charged him with impeity¹ and with the corruption

¹Socrates was blamed of not worshipping the Gods of the state and of introducing new deities into the state relegion.

of the young. The point was in any case to get rid of Socrates. His presence in Athens meant danger for the state. The restored democracy remembered the Oligarchic revolutions of 411 and 404 B.C.,¹ and probably feared a third one. They knew that there was an oligarchic party in Athens which sympathized with Sparta. And they must have also known the character of the oligarchic circles; that they /oligarchs/ favoured the rule of an expert statesman. They must have known how Socrates went around criticising the rule of the mob which was enough evidence to stamp him as an antidemocrat. They thought he might at any time become the leader of yet another revolution.

When Socrates was brought to trial the democrats felt sure that they had the most convenient charges to be brought against him. But the democrats could not have accused and condemned Socrates for what he had preached if it was not for the treacheries of Alcibiades. Alcibiades had rendered Athens the most harm. He was a close associate of Socrates and if the preachings of Socrates produced such harmful persons the democrats thought that they had a good point on which to base their accusations. Socrates was a corrupter of the young. And after all the democrats thought it was not very hard to prove that Socrates busied himself with the corruption of individuals. Since

¹It must be remembered that in the revolution of 404, two of Socrates' associates were involved; Critias and Charmides.

he had been abstaining from rendering any open service to the community.

Ofcourse we must remember that in reality Alcibiades' treacheries had nothing to do with Socrates' teachings. He was spoiled by his family and fellow citizens and he recognised no principal. If he had done so much harm for Athens it must be accounted for his weak character. But the democrats drew a veil over the truth and they used Alcibiades' treacheries as a reason to accuse Socrates. But it is obvious that Plato knew Socrates better than anyone else in Athens. And thus he could not have accepted such false claims against him. Infact the democratic man in Plato's Republic, if we accept it as his own criticism, seems to be a direct answer of Plato to those who held that it was Socrates' teachings which caused the treacheries of Alcibiades. Hence speaking of the democratic person in the Republic, Plato refers to him as a "ficle who makes into principle the absence of principle".¹ A person whose life is subject to no order or restraint and spent indulging in the pleasures of the moment.² Such a person is a self seeking person caring only for his own popularity. Actually there is no difficulty in fitting Alcibiades into this description. He was a spoiled person and he recognised no principle. He involved himself many a times in the violation

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¹ Earnest Barker, Greek Political Thought, 2nd ed., /London, 1925/, p.256

² F.M. Cornford, The Republic of Plato /Oxford, 1924/, p.280

of law and custom. He lived a life of extravagance which made him to extend his tastes beyond what his real means could support. This was true either of his keeping horses or any other aspect of his life. Plato describes such a person as the one "spending as much time, pains and money on his superfluous pleasures as on the necessary ones".¹ But Alcibiades defends the right of the rich to use his wealth lavishly because he thinks it contributed to the credit of his country. This particular point is evident in one of his speeches recorded by Thucydides in his history of the Peloponnesian wars. Here Alcibiades addressing to the Athenians says, ".....the things for which I am abused bring fame to my ancestors and to myself and to the country profit besides. The Hellenes, after expecting to see our city ruined by the war concluded it to be even greater than it really is by reason of the magnificence with which I represented it at the Olympic Games when I sent into the lists seven chariots, a number never before entered by any private person, and won the first prize.....custom regards such display as honorable and they cannot be made without leaving behind them an impression of power".²

But all this to our minds as it was to that of

Plato's seem to be rather showy; committed more or less for personal recognition and interest. In general this egoistic attitude is projected to

¹F.M. Cornford, The Republic of Plato /Oxford, 1924/, p.280

²Thucydides, The Peloponnesian Wars, translation by Crawley, p.347

all of Alcibiades' ambitions. When compared with Pericles there seems to be a great difference between the two. Alcibiades lacked the firmness of purpose which on the other hand was so prominent with Pericles. It is mostly due to this lack of firmness of purpose that Plato abased the democratic man, describing him this time as a person whose mind is an "unstable equilibrium of all desires".¹

Attacks exposed in the Gorgias. The severe condemnation against the famous leaders of the Athenian democracy which appears in Gorgias is based on the Socratic conception, "the tending of the soul". Socrates begins with the tending of the body which is conceived as a combination of two separate arts, namely, keeping the body in health, and the tending of the soul which in turn includes another pair of arts. The care of the body is basically physical education, gymnastics and medicine which has as its scope the restoration of the unfit to health.² However the tending of the soul utilises a single name, state-manship.³ But under a single title there are two separate branches, legislation which sets the standard of spiritual health and justice or righteousness.

¹Earnest Barker, Greek Political Thought, 2nd ed.,
/London, 1925/, p.252

²A.E. Taylor, Plato /New York, 1956/, p.III

³Ibid., p.III

which cures the disease in the soul. Each one of the four branches is conceived as being a genuine art. Taken as a whole their scope is the maintenance of the best condition of both the body and the soul. Like the rules of physical education and medicine are based on knowledge of what is good and helpful for the body, those of the legislator and the judge are based on knowledge of what is good for the soul. It is also shown that the basic difference between the true art and the counterfeit rests on the fact that the counterfeit takes as its standard the pleasant¹ whereas in the true art the standard is not what is pleasant but what is good. Thus we learn that the counterfeit of the physician is the confectioner.² The reason being that whereas the doctor gives his patients certain diets in order to maintain a healthy state the confectioner does the opposite. He gives as much as he can afford to please the tongues of his customers.

The philosopher then is not merely a man who indulges himself in abstract values but an educator who appears in Gorgias as the parallel to a doctor. The philosopher's interest is like that of the doctor's. He is primarily interested in well being. Like the doctor whose job it is to maintain the health of the body, the philosopher tries to restore the health of the soul. His art as we have mentioned earlier is a genuine art resting on knowledge of the good and the evil. Knowledge

¹A.E. Taylor, Plato /New York, 1956/, p.III

²Ibid., p.III

is not contemplation of truth divorced from life.¹ It is closely linked with life and it is a technique, an art or skill of reasoning the good and the right. In the Republic the Good appears to be the highest object of knowledge. There are various other fields in which knowledge flourishes but above all of them is the "Royal Art".² This is what we have previously called the art of statesmanship. This certain field conceives the rest of the arts as special ends contributing to well being, happiness. The philosopher whose job is now to direct the individuals of the state to the pursuit of wisdom, to the knowledge of what is good and right does not function as a real statesman and philosopher if his efforts are directed an "unlimited wealth or at an imperial domination".³

The state is an educational institution and helps the individual to develop the best that is in himself. From this point of view any individual or state believing that pleasure, power and wealth would have been sufficient for human happiness are at the midst of a great mistake. This had been the case with many of the Athenian leaders. Hence in Gorgias it is claimed by Socrates that neither of the leaders from Themistocles to Pericles had the proper knowledge of the Good. The severe condemnations against these leaders were due to the fact that they are conceived by Socrates as being the

¹A.E. Taylor, Plato /New York, 1956/, p.III

²F.M. Cornford, The Republic of Plato /Oxford, 1924/, p.207

³Ibid., p.207

servants of the state. Socrates claims that they had filled the city with ships, docks etc., but not with righteousness or justice. They made Athens powerful and wealthy but they did nothing for the moral of the people. Hence they were no more than the body servants of the state. Like the confectioner they had served to please the people and therefore they were far from being real physicians of the state, and real statesmen.

We see in Meno a somewhat similar passage to that in Gorgias. Taken by itself the criticism in Gorgias presents a possible doubt about its authorship but the dialogue between Anytus and Socrates, in Meno, assures us that Socrates had infact spoken in Athens about the leaders of the Athenian democracy in the same way as he is made to speak in Gorgias. In Meno, Socrates criticises Pericles and other leaders for their lack of the knowledge of the Good. The answer of Anytus to Socrates is that he should better not speak as such about the national heros. If we remember Socrates' condemnation by the restored democracy it will be quite evident that one of the reasons why he was brought to trial was possibly the way he used to speak about the leaders and government in Athens. Therefore it is likely that the judgements on the democratic leaders, in Gorgias, belongs to Socrates as well.

Later works of Plato. The later works of Plato such as Politics and the Laws written several years later than Socrates' execution are free from Socratic influence and this is one reason why in such later works of Plato we dont find any severe judgements on democracy. It is also true that in these later dialogues Plato even sympathises with democracy.

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