

BRAD BOYLE

HONORS 101

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### SPARTA: A DISCUSSION

SPARTA WAS A VERY DISCIPLINED AND MILITARISTIC STATE; INDEED NOTHING MUCH ELSE MATTERED TO THE SPARTANS EXCEPT PRESERVATION OF THEIR STATE. IN FACT, A SPARTAN'S ENTIRE LIFE WAS TO BE LIVED FOR THE MILITARY IDEALS OF SPARTA. WHEN A CHILD WAS BORN, IT WAS NOT UP TO THE FATHER TO DETERMINE IF IT WOULD LIVE OR DIE <sup>AS</sup> ~~LIKE~~ IN OTHER GREEK STATES. RATHER IT WAS UP TO A BOARD. IF THEY DECIDED THAT THE CHILD WAS NOT UP TO THE STANDARDS OF THEIR RACE, THE CHILD WOULD BE LEFT TO DIE FROM EXPOSURE ON MOUNT TAÏGETUS. WHILE NOT MANY MODERN CULTURES HAVE RESORTED TO SUCH BRUTAL METHODS OF KEEPING 'INFERIORS' FROM POLLUTING THEIR RACE, THE MOST NOTABLE EXAMPLE, IS OF COURSE, NAZI GERMANY OF THE EARLY 1940'S. TRUE NAZIS THOUGHT NOTHING OF 'EXTERMINATING' PEOPLE THAT DIDN'T FIT INTO THEIR PLANS FOR A MASTER RACE, WHILE 'EXTERMINATE'

IS A VERY DEHUMANIZING WORD TO DESCRIBE THE DEATH OF HUMANS, IT IS EXACTLY WHAT THE GERMANS DID. THE NAZIS DID MURDER AT LEAST SIX MILLION PEOPLE THAT DIDN'T FIT INTO THEIR PLANS.

ACH!

PERSONALLY, I FIND THIS NUMBER SO IMMENSE THAT I REALLY CAN'T IMAGINE IT. SIX MILLION PEOPLE! THAT IS ROUGHLY THE EQUIVALENT OF PUTTING THE POPULATIONS OF UTAH, NEVADA, COLORADO, WYOMING, IDAHO, MONTANA, AND SOUTH AND NORTH DAKOTA TO DEATH. THIS JUST DOES NOT SEEM LIKE IT REALLY HAPPENED. PERHAPS IF I HAD LIVED AT THE TIME IT WOULD SEEM LIKE REALITY. OH, I ACCEPT IT AS A FACT, THOUGH. AND WHO COULD IMAGINE

Good

SOMETHING SO HORRIBLE? TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION WILL EVER BE.

THE SPARTAN STATE ENCOURAGED MATING AND BREEDING BY THE BEST OF HUMAN SPECIMENS. COPULATION IN PUBLIC WAS NOT A RARE SIGHT. CELIBACY WAS ACTUALLY PUNISHED! WHILE LIVING IN THIS CULTURE MIGHT HAVE BEEN ENJOYABLE FOR A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME, I MUCH RATHER PREFER TODAY'S MORAL SYSTEM.

A SPARTAN CHILD WAS RAISED BY IT'S MOTHER UNTIL IT REACHED THE AGE OF SEVEN, AT WHICH TIME IT WAS

TURNED OVER TO THE STATE. ALL MEN WERE SOLDIERS BY VOCATION. A MAN'S LIFE COMPLETELY REVOLVED AROUND THE STATE. WHEN A YOUNG MAN REACHED THE AGE OF TWENTY, HE WAS ALLOWED TO MARRY, BUT EVEN THEN HE DIDN'T LIVE AT HOME. INSTEAD HE LIVED IN MILITARY BARRACKS. AND HE ATE IN A MESS HALL ON PRESCRIBED RATIONS SUPPLIED BY HIS OWN ESTATE. IN FACT, CAMPAIGNS MUST HAVE SEEMED A RELIEF FROM "THE LABORS OF PEACE TIME."

STEALING WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE SPARTANS AS AN EXERCISE IN AGILITY AND CLEVERNESS BUT THOSE CAUGHT WERE PUNISHED. WHILE THIS MIGHT SEEM HYPOCRITICAL, WE CAN FIND PRETTY MUCH THE SAME THING GOING ON IN OUR CULTURE TODAY. THE DARING AND WITTY CRIMINAL OFTEN BECOMES A SORT OF HERO. A GOOD EXAMPLE CAN BE FOUND IN D.G. COOPER, THE STUDENT WHO HIJACKED AN AIRLINER AND PARACHUTED OUT OVER THE FORESTS OF THE NORTHWEST UNITED STATES, WITH SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS. D.G. HAS BECOME A CULT HERO AND A PRIVATE CLUB CAN EVEN BE FOUND BEARING HIS NAME RIGHT HERE IN SALT LAKE CITY

IN THIS ASPECT, WE DON'T DIFFER THAT MUCH FROM THE SPARTANS.

THE WOMEN, HOWEVER, ENJOYED LEISURE AND LUXURY FOR THE MOST PART. THE WOMEN OF ANCIENT SPARTA WERE EVEN ALLOWED TO OWN LAND. IN FACT, THEY OWNED QUITE A SIZABLE AMOUNT, TOO. IN BOTSFORD AND ROBINSON'S BOOK, HELLENIC HISTORY, IT IS ESTIMATED THEY POSSESSED AS MUCH AS  $\frac{2}{5}$  OF THE OWNABLE LAND AT THE TIME OF ARISTOTLE.

AT THIRTY, THE MEN OF SPARTA BECAME "A MATURE MAN," HE WAS GRANTED THE PRIVILEGE TO ATTEND THE ASSEMBLY. BUT HE WAS STILL A MILITARY MAN.

SPARTA ATTEMPTED TO CLOSE OFF THEIR LAND TO FOREIGNERS IN FEAR OF DISRUPTING OUTSIDE INFLUENCES. IT WAS FEARED THAT SUBVERSIVE THOUGHTS AND IDEAS WOULD UPSET THE DELICATE INTERNAL BALANCE OF THE SPARTAN STATE. MANY COUNTRIES STILL FEAR THIS IN THESE MODERN TIMES. THOMAS GREER, IN HIS TEXTBOOK A BRIEF HISTORY OF WESTERN MAN, PUTS IT BEST: "THE SPARTANS WERE NOT THE FIRST-OR THE LAST- TO FEAR THE POWER OF IDEAS" THE SPARTANS EVEN HAD A SECRET POLICE (THE CRYPTeia) TO HELP CONTROL "SUBVERSIVE" IDEAS. THE OBVIOUS EXAMPLE OF THE CRYPTeia IN MODERN

TIMES IS U.S.S.R.'S K.G.B. I THINK ANY COUNTRY OR STATE WHICH MUST RESORT TO SUPPRESSION OF PEOPLE AND THEIR IDEAS TO KEEP THEIR 'WAY' OF LIFE GOING IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. THEY MAY LIVE IN 'GLORY' FOR A PERIOD, BUT SOONER OR LATER THE SYSTEM WILL FAIL. MODERN COMMUNISM WILL NOT SURVIVE TO SEE THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY IN MY OPINION. THE MORE MODERN THEIR STATE BECOMES, THE BETTER COMMUNICATIONS WILL BE. AND IT WILL BECOME IMPOSSIBLE TO KEEP THE CITIZENS IN IGNORANCE, AS THEY ARE TODAY.

BUT WE STILL LOOK UPON THE SPARTANS WITH SOME ADMIRATION. THE VERY WORD "SPARTAN" IS DEFINED AS "A PERSON OF GREAT COURAGE AND FORITITUDE." THESE ARE TWO TRAITS WHICH WE STILL VALUE HIGHLY.

SPARTA DID NOT EXPERIENCE MUCH IN THE WAY OF POLITICAL GROWTH, MAINLY BECAUSE OF THEIR FEAR OF CHANGE. THEY KEPT KINGS IN POWER LONG AFTER OTHER GREEK STATES HAD GIVEN UP ON THEM. THE SPARTANS DID LIMIT THEIR KINGS POWERS TO MAINLY COMMANDING BATTLES. THE MAIN GOVERNING BODY CONSISTED OF THIRTY MEN (AND THE KINGS), OF WHICH SERVED FOR LIFE. THEY WERE USUALLY PICKED FROM IMPORTANT FAMILIES, AND HAD TO BE OVER 60 YEARS OLD. THIS LEGISLATIVE BODY WAS KNOWN AS

THE GEROUSIA. FIVE MEN CALLED EPHORS WERE ALSO ELECTED ANNUALLY. THESE EPHORS WERE ALSO USUALLY ELDER GENTS, AND WHILE IN OFFICE, WERE THE MOST POWERFUL MEN

How about today?

IN SPARTA. BECAUSE SPARTA'S AFFAIRS WERE CONDUCTED BY CONSERVATIVE, OLDER MEN, THIS WAS ANOTHER REASON SPARTA RESISTED CHANGE. THERE WAS ALSO AN ASSEMBLY OF ALL MALE CITIZENS OVER THIRTY (CALLED THE APELLA.) THIS GROUP DID NOT HAVE MUCH SAY, THOUGH, AS THEY JUST VOTED (ORALLY) ON PROPOSALS DRAWN UP BY THEIR ELDERS. THEY WERE NOT EVEN ALLOWED TO DEBATE.

IN CONCLUSION, I'D LIKE TO SAY SPARTA HAS CONTRIBUTED TO MANY OF MODERN TIMES PRACTICES. IT WAS A VERY UNIQUE POLEI, AND A VERY INTERESTING ONE AT THAT. I HOPE YOU HAVE ENJOYED MY THOUGHTS.

I HAVE MOVED! THANK YOU, BRAD.

(A)

READINGS

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