

G. Sparta: Ancient Communism

1. Sparta is the second most important city-state in Greek history because of its famous warriors.
2. Early in their history, the conquering aristocracy had belonged to two ruling tribes who chose to cooperate and have one king from each tribe at the same time.
3. This could be called a “duarchy,” but like most kinds of kingship, it was really an aristocracy. The two Spartan kings were monitored by five officials known as “ephors,” who could arrest a king, if he broke the law.
4. Every Spartan belonged to the government.
 - a) At age seven, they were taken from their families and lived in a public school until they were twenty.
 - b) At age 20, a Spartan male “graduated” and joined the army *for life*.
 - c) Only when a Spartan soldier had served in the military for ten years, he earned the right to join the government, and participate in the making of laws for Sparta.
 - d) Spartan girls were also educated by the government, however they did not train to become soldiers. Spartan women had one role only: to manage the land of their families. The choice of a husband was made by a woman's father, or, if the father was dead, by the government.
5. Any kind of government in which the individual is controlled by the government so completely in the name of the “common good,” can be called “communism,” even if it is not based on Marxism.

H. Greece Stands Together, but then Falls Apart

1. Soon after the birth of democracy in Athens, Greece was attacked by the massive Persian Empire the ancient Greco-Persian War.
2. Even though they were separate city-states, in order to win this war, the Greeks had to work together according to the rule “the enemy of my enemy is my *temporary ally*.” The most famous episode of this cooperation was the sacrifice of king Leonidas and his famous 300 Spartans warriors who delayed the Persian invasion at a mountain pass in the *Battle of Thermopylae*. This allowed the rest of the Greeks to better prepare to better prepare to defend the rest of Greece.
3. When they defeated Persian, however, Athens and Sparta stopped being temporary allies.
4. They both wanted to rule Greece, so they fought in the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC), in which Sparta defeated Athens.
5. All of Greece was weaker because of it, and was soon conquered by neighboring Macedonia, under Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander “the Great.”
6. Although Alexander commanded the Greeks on a fantastic invasion of the Persian Empire, which was briefly successful, he soon died, and the Greeks could not hold his empire together. Soon they would collide with an even greater power...