

### G. Sparta: Ancient Communism

1. Sparta is the second most important city-state in Greek history because of its famous warriors.
2. Sparta was located on the Peloponnese (the peninsula that sticks out from mainland Greece).
3. 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.
4. The main responsibility of the king was to lead Sparta in times of war. (One king stayed at home, while the other went to war.) Both kings had to agree before Sparta would officially go to war.
5. 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.
6. The “separation of powers” in Sparta was similar to the aristocracy of Athens, but the reason why America’s founding fathers did not like the Spartan mode was that *even the aristocracy did not have the “right to life” in Sparta!*
7. 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) Their training became gradually more intense, until the final two years, when the young men were taught the art of war and they prepared to join the army.
  - c) At age 20, a Spartan male “graduated.” He then joined a platoon of Spartan soldiers, with whom he would spend most of his life with for the next ten years.
  - d) 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.
  - e) 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. They too lived in service to the whole community.
8. Any system of government in which the individual is controlled by the government so completely in the name of the “common good,” is known as “communism.” (It is not necessary to have a philosophy like Marxism or Leninism to make it so.)

### H. Greece Stands Together

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 coordinate

their resistance to the Persian onslaught, and positioned Athens to lead the Greeks in a largely naval victory at the later *Battle of Salamis*.

### I. Greece Falls Apart

1. In order to continue attacking Persia after the invasion, Athens formed an alliance called the Delian League. Sparta, however, was not invited to participate and it formed its own competing Peloponnesian League.
2. The rivalry between the two city-states sparked the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC), in which Sparta defeated Athens.
3. All of Greece had exhausted itself, however, and became more susceptible to conquest from without. Indeed, Sparta was only temporarily able to achieve primacy. Another city-state, Thebes, became temporarily dominant after it, in a shifting configuration of rivalries based on the presence of charismatic leaders. Soon weakened Greece was conquered by neighboring Macedonia, under Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander “the Great.”
4. Although Alexander commanded the Greeks on a fantastic invasion of the Persian Empire, which was briefly successful, he died during his famous exploit of some mysterious cause, and the Greeks were not numerous enough to maintain such an empire. It broke into competing kingdoms, and soon they would collide with an even greater power...