

of the goddess of the Brazen House, the enclosure of which was near at hand, he succeeded in taking sanctuary before they took him, and entering into a small chamber, which formed part of the temple, to avoid being exposed to the weather, lay still there. The Ephors, for the moment distanced in the pursuit, afterwards took off the roof of the chamber, and having made sure that he was inside, shut him in, barricaded the doors, and staying before the place, reduced him by starvation. When they found that he was on the point of expiring, just as he was, in the chamber, they brought him out of the temple, while the breath was still in him, and as soon as he was brought out he died. They were going to throw him into the Kaiadas, where they cast criminals, but finally decided to inter him somewhere near.

25

Pericles' Funeral Oration: *An Idealized View of Athenian Democracy and Imperialism*

No finer expression of the ideals of democracy exists than the famous Funeral Oration delivered by Pericles in honor of the Athenians who fell fighting Sparta during the first year (431 B.C.) of the Peloponnesian War (Selection 27). Like Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, which resembles it closely and with which it is frequently compared, it is considered one of the greatest speeches in literature. Pericles appeals to the patriotism of his listeners, confronted by the crisis of a great war, by describing the superior qualities and advantages of their democracy as a heritage won for them by their ancestors and worthy of any sacrifice to preserve. He emphasizes as the outstanding feature of their democracy — and, we can add, of any democracy — the harmonious blending of opposite tendencies in politics, economics, and culture that it contains. This is perhaps the finest expression of the Greek ideal of a mean between extremes. All this is described in sharp contrast to the rigid totalitarianism of Sparta, which regulated every detail of the citizen's existence. It is to be noted that an outstanding example of this happy blending of control and freedom in all phases of life was the Athenian acceptance of the leadership of Pericles as the recognized superior individual voted into power by the people to "lead them," as Thucydides noted, "instead of being led by them."

Pericles extends the same argument, that order and liberty are compatible, to justify the existence of the Athenian Empire, which had emerged after the Persian Wars to fill the vacuum left by the failure of Spartan leadership in Greek affairs (see Selection 24).

From Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, tr. Alfred Zimmern in *The Greek Commonwealth. Politics and Economics in Fifth-Century Athens*, 4th ed. (Oxford: 1924), pp. 202-209. Reprinted by permission of The Clarendon Press.

Before a peace treaty with Persia was signed in 448 B.C., Athens and its allies had countered Persian expansionism by aiding anti-Persian uprisings in Cyprus and Egypt. Like the Americans in Vietnam, the Athenian-led Greeks failed in their mission. Bugged down in the Nile Delta after eight years of fighting and the loss of some two hundred ships and many men, Pericles had to withdraw the Greek forces. But he went on to complete the formation of the Athenian Empire, which unified and brought peace and prosperity to half of the Greek world. It was at present under attack by Sparta and its allies as the "tyrant city" that had extinguished the liberties of many Greek states and was now threatening the remainder. Pericles' reply to this charge is an idealized rationalization of the need to replace the anarchy of narrow city-state "nationalism" with an "international" organization of Greek states under Athenian leadership. The goal was peace and prosperity — or what can be called freedom from fear and want, two of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's stirring "Four Freedoms," the idealistic goals for which World War II was fought. Such also is the meaning of Pericles' inspired conception of Athenian imperialism: "We secure our friends not by accepting favors but by doing them. . . . We are alone among mankind in doing men benefits, not in calculations of self-interest, but in the fearless confidence of [bringing] freedom. In a word I claim that our city as a whole is an education to Greece. . . ."

We shall see that both Periclean ideals of democracy and international organization failed to be accomplished. This failure marks the beginning of the end of the Greek world.

THE SPIRIT, CONSTITUTION, AND MANNERS OF ATHENS

II, 36. My first words shall be for our ancestors; for it is both just to them and seemly that on an occasion such as this our tribute of memory should be paid them. For, dwelling always in this country, generation after generation in unchanging and unbroken succession, they have handed it down to us free by their exertions. So they are worthy of our praises; and still more so are our fathers. For they enlarged the ancestral patrimony by the Empire which we hold today and delivered it, not without labor, into the hands of our own generation; while it is we ourselves, those of us who are now in middle life, who consolidated our power throughout the greater part of the Empire and secured the city's complete independence both in war and peace.

Of the battles which we and our fathers fought, whether in the winning of our power abroad or in bravely withstanding the warfare of barbarian or Greek at home, I do not wish to say more: they are too familiar to you all. I wish rather to set forth the spirit in which we faced them, and the constitution and manners with which we rose to greatness, and to pass from them to the dead; for I think it not unfitting that these things should be called to mind at today's solemnity, and expedient too that the whole gathering of citizens and strangers should listen to them.

37. For our government is not copied from those of our neighbors: we are an example to them rather than they to us. Our constitution is named a democracy, because it is in the hands not of the few but of the many. But our laws secure equal justice for all in their private disputes, and our public opinion welcomes and honors talent in every branch of achievement, not for any sectional reason but on grounds of excellence alone. And as we give free play to all in our public life, so we carry the same spirit into our daily relations with one another. We have

no black looks or angry words for our neighbor if he enjoys himself in his own way, and we abstain from the little acts of churlishness which, though they leave no mark, yet cause annoyance to whoso notes them. Open and friendly in our private intercourse, in our public acts we keep strictly within the control of law. We acknowledge the restraint of reverence; we are obedient to whomsoever is set in authority, and to the laws, more especially to those which offer protection to the oppressed and those unwritten ordinances whose transgression brings shame.

38. Yet ours is no work-a-day city only. No other provides so many recreations for the spirit — contests and sacrifices all the year round, and beauty in our public buildings to cheer the heart and delight the eye day by day. Moreover, the city is so large and powerful that all the wealth of all the world flows in to her, so that our own Attic products seem no more homelike to us than the fruits of the labors of other nations.

39. Our military training too is different from our opponents'. The gates of our city are flung open to the world. We practice no periodical deportations, nor do we prevent our visitors from observing or discovering what an enemy might usefully apply to his own purposes. For our trust is not in the devices of material equipment, but in our own good spirits for battle.

So too with education. They toil from early boyhood in a laborious pursuit after courage, while we, free to live and wander as we please, march out none the less to face the self-same dangers. . . .

40. We are lovers of beauty without extravagance, and lovers of wisdom without unmanliness. Wealth to us is not mere material for vainglory but an opportunity for achievement; and poverty we think it no disgrace to acknowledge but a real degradation to make no effort to overcome. Our citizens attend both to public and private duties, and do not allow absorption in their own various affairs to interfere with their knowledge of the city's. We differ from other states in regarding the man who holds aloof from public life not as "quiet" but as useless; we decide or debate, carefully and in person, all matters of policy, holding, not that words and deeds go ill together, but that acts are foredoomed to failure when undertaken undiscussed. For we are noted for being at once adventurous in action and most reflective beforehand. Other men are bold in ignorance, while reflection will stop their onset. But the bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding go out to meet it.

APOLOGY FOR ATHENIAN IMPERIALISM

In doing good, too, we are the exact opposite of the rest of mankind. We secure our friends not by accepting favors but by doing them. And so we are naturally more firm in our attachments: for we are anxious, as creditors, to cement by kind offices our relation towards our friends. If they do not respond with the same warmth it is because they feel that their services will not be given spontaneously but only as the repayment of a debt. We are alone among mankind in doing men benefits, not on calculations of self-interest, but in the fearless confidence of freedom. (41.) In a word I claim that our city as a whole is an education to Greece.

and that her members yield to none, man by man, for independence of spirit, many-sidedness of attainment, and complete self-reliance in limbs and brain.

That this is no vainglorious phrase but actual fact the supremacy which our manners have won us itself bears testimony. No other city of the present day goes out to her ordeal greater than ever men dreamed; no other is so powerful that the invader feels no bitterness when he suffers at her hands, and her subjects no shame at the indignity of their dependence. Great indeed are the symbols and witnesses of our supremacy, at which posterity, as all mankind today, will be astonished. We need no Homer or other man of words to praise us; for such give pleasure for a moment, but the truth will put to shame their imaginings of our deeds. For our pioneers have forced a way into every sea and every land, establishing among all mankind, in punishment or beneficence, eternal memorials of their settlement.

THE WORTHY DEAD

Such then is the city for whom, lest they should lose her, the men whom we celebrate died a soldier's death: and it is but natural that all of us, who survive them, should wish to spend ourselves in her service. (42.) That, indeed, is why I have spent many words upon the city. I wished to show that we have more at stake than men who have no such inheritance, and to support my praise of the dead by making clear to you what they have done. For if I have chanted the glories of the city it was these men and their like who set hand to array her. With them, as with few among Greeks, words cannot magnify the deeds that they have done. Such an end as we have here seems indeed to show us what a good life is, from its first signs of power to its final consummation. For even where life's previous record showed faults and failures it is just to weigh the last brave hour of devotion against them all. There they wiped out evil with good and did the city more service as soldiers than they did her harm in private life. There no hearts grew faint because they loved riches more than honor; none shirked the issue in the poor man's dreams of wealth. All these they put aside to strike a blow for the city. Counting the quest to avenge her honor as the most glorious of all ventures, and leaving Hope, the uncertain goddess, to send them what she would, they faced the foe as they drew near them in the strength of their own manhood; and when the shock of battle came, they chose rather to suffer the uttermost than to win life by weakness. So their memory has escaped the reproaches of men's lips, but they bore instead on their bodies the marks of men's hands, and in a moment of time, at the climax of their lives, were rapt away from a world filled, for their dying eyes, not with terror but with glory.

43. Such were the men who lie here and such the city that inspired them. We survivors may pray to be spared their bitter hour, but must disdain to meet the foe with a spirit less triumphant. Let us draw strength, not merely from twice-told arguments — how fair and noble a thing it is to show courage in battle — but from the busy spectacle of our great city's life as we have it before us day by day, falling in love with her as we see her, and remembering that all this greatness she owes to men with the fighter's daring, the wise man's understanding of his duty, and the good man's self-discipline in its performance — to men who, if they failed

in any ordeal, disdained to deprive the city of their services, but sacrificed their lives as the best offerings on her behalf. So they gave their bodies to the commonwealth and received, each for his own memory, praise that will never die, and with it the grandest of all sepulchers, not that in which their mortal bones are laid, but a home in the minds of men, where their glory remains fresh to stir to speech or action as the occasion comes by. For the whole earth is the sepulcher of famous men; and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth, but lives on far away, without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives. For you now it remains to rival what they have done and, knowing the secret of happiness to be freedom and the secret of freedom a brave heart, not idly to stand aside from the enemy's onset. For it is not the poor and luckless, as having no hope of prosperity, who have most cause to reckon death as little loss, but those for whom fortune may yet keep reversal in store and who would feel the change most if trouble befell them. Moreover, weakly to decline the trial is more painful to a man of spirit than death coming sudden and unperceived in the hour of strength and enthusiasm.

ADVICE TO THE SURVIVORS

44. Therefore I do not mourn with the parents of the dead who are here with us. I will rather comfort them. For they know that they have been born into a world of manifold chances and that he is to be accounted happy to whom the best lot falls — the best sorrow, such as is yours today, or the best death, such as fell to these, for whom life and happiness were cut to the self-same measure. I know it is not easy to give you comfort. I know how often in the joy of others you will have reminders of what was once your own, and how men feel sorrow, not for the loss of what they have never tasted, but when something that has grown dear to them has been snatched away. But you must keep a brave heart in the hope of other children, those who are still of age to bear them. For the newcomers will help you to forget the gap in your own circle, and will help the city to fill up the ranks of its workers and its soldiers. For no man is fitted to give fair and honest advice in council if he has not, like his fellows, a family at stake in the hour of the city's danger. To you who are past the age of vigor I would say: count the long years of happiness so much again to set off against the brief space that yet remains, and let your burden be lightened by the glory of the dead. For the love of honor alone is not staled by age, and it is by honor, not, as some say, by gold, that the helpless end of life is cheered.

45. I turn to those amongst you who are children or brothers of the fallen, for whom I foresee a mighty contest with the memory of the dead. Their praise is in all men's mouths, and hardly, even for supremest heroism, you will be adjudged to have achieved, not the same but a little less than they. For the living have the jealousy of rivals to contend with, but the dead are honored with unchallenged admiration.

If I must also speak a word to those who are now in widowhood on the powers and duties of women, I will cast all my advice into one brief sentence. Great will be your glory if you do not lower the nature that is within you — hers greatest of all whose praise or blame is least bruised on the lips of men.

46. I have spoken such words as I had to say according as the law prescribes, and the graveside offerings to the dead have been duly made. Henceforward the city will take charge of their children till manhood: such is the crown and benefit she holds out to the dead and to their kin for the trials they have undergone for her. For where the prize is highest, there, too, are the best citizens to contend for it.

And now, when you have finished your lamentation, let each of you depart.

26

The Old Oligarch: *A Realistic View of Athenian Democracy and Imperialism*

Some years after the death of Pericles (429 B.C.), an unknown Athenian oligarch delivered a political speech (we have what appears to be a stenographic copy) called *On the Constitution of Athens*, which contains a sarcastic attack upon the Athenian democracy and its empire. It balances the idealized picture given in Pericles' Funeral Oration with a realistic and penetrating description of the shortcomings of Athenian democracy and the self-interested economic basis of its imperialism. The Old Oligarch's views are in some part valid for the Periclean age, but are especially pertinent to the decade following the death of Pericles when, due largely to the crisis of the war, passion triumphed over wisdom in the making of policy and demagogues, who played on the emotions and cupidity of the masses, replaced the courageous and far-sighted statesmen of the stamp of Pericles as leaders of the democracy. (A vivid example of this development that may have been witnessed by the Old Oligarch in person is given in Selection 27A.) Although he wrote with the bitterness and exaggeration of a narrow partisan, much of the Old Oligarch's criticism of the character of the Athenian masses and the motives of their imperialism seems justified.

More than twenty centuries later, another aristocrat, the Frenchman Alexis de Tocqueville, visited the United States to observe its new democracy in action. Some of the conclusions in his *Democracy in America* (1835), though expressed with far more reserve, are similar to those of the Old Oligarch:

Are you concerned with refining mores, elevating manners, and causing the arts to bloom? Do you desire poetry, renown and glory? . . . If in your view that should be the main object of men in society, do not support democratic government; it surely will not lead you to that goal. But if . . . in your view the main object of government is . . . to provide for every

From *The Old Oligarch, Being the Constitution of the Athenians Ascribed to Xenophon*, tr. James A. Petch. Reprinted by permission of Basil Blackwell & Mott, Limited, Oxford, England.

individual therein the utmost well-being, protecting him as far as possible from all afflictions, then it is good to make conditions equal and to establish a democratic government.

RASCALS FARE BETTER THAN GOOD CITIZENS

1. As for the constitution of the Athenians, their choice of this type of constitution I do not approve, for in choosing thus they chose that rascals should fare better than good citizens. This then is why I do not approve. However, this being their decision, I shall show how well they preserve their constitution, and how well otherwise they are acting where the rest of Greece thinks that they are going wrong.

2. First of all then I shall say that at Athens the poor and the commons seem justly to have the advantage over the well-born and the wealthy; for it is the commons which mans the fleet and has brought the state her power, and the steersmen and the boatswains and the shipmasters and the lookout-men and the ship-builders — these have brought the state her power much rather than the infantry and the well-born and the good citizens. This being so it seems just that all should have a share in offices filled by lot or by election, and that any citizen who wishes should be allowed to speak. (3.) Then in those offices which bring security to the whole commons if they are in the hands of good citizens, but if not ruin, the commons desires to have no share. They do not think that they ought to have a share through the lot in the supreme commands or in the cavalry commands, for the commons realizes that it reaps greater benefit by not having these offices in its own hands, but by allowing men of standing to hold them. All those offices however whose end is pay and family benefits the commons does seek to hold.

4. Secondly, some folk are surprised that everywhere they give the advantage to rascals, the poor, and the democrats rather than to good citizens. This is just where they will be seen to be preserving the democracy. For if the poor and the common folk and the worse elements are treated well, the growth of these classes will exalt the democracy; whereas if the rich and the good citizens are treated well the democrats strengthen their own opponents.

5. In every land the best element is opposed to democracy. Among the best elements there is very little license and injustice, very great discrimination as to what is worthy, while among the commons there is very great ignorance, disorderliness and rascality; for poverty tends to lead them to what is disgraceful as does lack of education and the ignorance which befalls some men as a result of lack of means.

6. It may be said that they ought not to have allowed everyone in turn to make speeches or sit on the Council, but only those of the highest capability and quality. But in allowing even rascals to speak they are also very well advised. For if the good citizens made speeches and joined in deliberations, good would result to those like themselves and ill to the democrats. As it is, anyone who wants, a rascally fellow maybe, gets up and makes a speech, and devises what is to the advantage of himself and those like him. (7.) Someone may ask how such a fellow would know what is to the advantage of himself or the commons. They know that

this man's ignorance, rascality and goodwill are more beneficial than the good citizen's worth, wisdom, and ill will.

8. From such procedure then a city would not attain the ideal, but the democracy would be best preserved thus. For it is the wish of the commons not that the state should be well ordered and the commons itself in complete subjection, but that the commons should have its freedom and be in control: disorderliness is of little consequence to it. From what you consider lack of order come the strength and the liberty of the commons itself. (9.) If on the other hand you investigate good order, first of all you will see that the most capable make laws for them; then the good citizens will keep the rascals in check and will deliberate on matters of state, refusing to allow madmen to sit on the Council or make speeches or attend the general assemblies. Such advantages indeed would very soon throw the commons into complete subjection.

"LICENSE ALLOWED TO SLAVES AND ALIENS"

10. The license allowed to slaves and aliens at Athens is extreme and a blow is forbidden there, nor will a slave make way for you. I shall tell you why this is the custom of the country. If it were legal for a slave or an alien or a freedman to be beaten by a freeman, you would often have taken the Athenian for a slave and struck him; for the commons there does not dress better than the slaves and the aliens, and their general appearance is in no way superior. (11.) If anyone is surprised also at their allowing slaves, that is some of them, to live luxuriously and magnificently there, here too they would be seen to act with wisdom. In a naval state slaves must serve for hire, that we may receive the fee for their labor, and we must let them go free. Where there are rich slaves it is no longer profitable that my slave should be afraid of you. In Sparta my slave is afraid of you. If your slave is afraid of me there will be a danger even of his giving his own money to avoid personal risks. (12.) This then is why we placed even slaves on a footing of equality with free men; and we placed aliens on a footing of equality with citizens because the state has need of aliens, owing to the number of skilled trades and because of the fleet. For this reason then we were right to place even the aliens on a footing of equality. . . .

"THE ALLIES ARE IN THE POSITION OF SLAVES"

14. As for the allies, that the Athenians leave home and, as it is thought, bring false accusations against the good citizens and hate them — they know that the ruler cannot help but be hated by the ruled, and that if the rich and the good citizens in the various cities have control the rule of the commons at Athens will be very short-lived. This then is why they disfranchise the good citizens, rob them of their wealth, drive them into exile, or put them to death, while they exalt the rascals. The good citizens of Athens protect the good citizens in the allied cities, realizing that it is to their own advantage always to protect the best elements in the various cities. (15.) It might be suggested that the ability of the allies to pay tribute is the strength of Athens. The democrats think it more advantageous that each individual Athenian should possess the wealth of the allies and the allies only enough to live on, and continue working without having the power to conspire.

16. The commons of Athens is also thought to be ill-advised in compelling the allies to travel to Athens to have their law-suits tried. They meet this criticism by reckoning up all the benefits to the Athenian commons that this involves: first of all the receipt of pay out of the court fees all the year round; then while remaining at home without sending out ships they manage the allied cities, and protect the party of the commons while they ruin their opponents in the courts. If each of the allies tried their law-suits at home, out of hatred for Athenians they would have destroyed those of their own people most friendly to the Athenian commons. (17.) In addition the commons of Athens gains the following advantages from having the allied law-suits tried at Athens. First the five per cent duty levied at the Peiraeus brings more in to the state; (18.) next, anyone who has a lodging-house is more prosperous, and so is the man who has a couple of hacks or a slave for hire; then the heralds are more prosperous as a result of the visits of the allies. Above all this, if the allies did not come to Athens for their law-suits they would honor only those Athenians who leave home — the generals, the naval commanders, and envoys. As it is, all the allies individually must fawn upon the Athenian commons, realizing that they must come to Athens and appear as defendant or prosecutor before the commons and the commons alone, for that forsooth is the law at Athens; and in the law-courts they must make supplications and grasp so-and-so by the hand as he enters. This then is why the allies are rather in the position of slaves of the Athenian commons. . . .

CONTROL OF THE SEA

II,3. Of such mainland states as are subject to Athenian rule the large are in subjection because of fear, the small simply because of need; there is not a city which does not require both import and export trade, and it will not have that unless it is subject to the rulers of the sea. . . .

7. If there is any need to mention less important facts too, command of the sea and contact with the different people of different countries were the first means of introducing luxurious ways of living. The delicacies of Sicily, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, Lydia, Pontus, the Peloponnese, in fact of any country, all converge upon one point as a result of the command of the sea. (8.) Then hearing every tongue they adopted a phrase from this tongue and a phrase from that. The Greeks as a whole enjoy a language, a way of life, and a general appearance which is rather their own, the Athenians a hotch-potch of those of all the Greeks and foreigners. . . .

II. They alone can possess the wealth of Greeks and foreigners. If a city is rich in shipbuilding timber where will it dispose of it unless it win the consent of the ruler of the sea? What if some city is rich in iron or bronze or cloth? Where will it dispose of it unless it win the consent of the ruler of the sea? These however are just the very things of which my ships are made — somebody's wood, somebody's iron, somebody's bronze, somebody's cloth and somebody's wax. (12.) Moreover they will not allow our rivals to take their goods elsewhere or (if they try) they will not use the sea. I pass my time in idleness, and because of the sea I have all these products of the earth, whereas no other single city has two of these commodities: the same city does not possess both timber and cloth, but

where cloth is plentiful the country is flat and treeless, nor do bronze and iron come from the same city, nor does one city possess two or three of the other commodities, but one has one, another has another. . . .

DEMOCRACIES ARE IRRESPONSIBLE

17. Again oligarchical states must abide by their alliances and their oaths. If they do not keep to the agreement penalties can be exacted from the few who made it. But whenever the commons makes an agreement it can lay the blame on the individual speaker or proposer, and say to the other party that it was not present and does not approve what they know was agreed upon in full assembly; and should it be decided that this is not so, the commons has discovered a hundred excuses for not doing what they may not wish to do. If any ill result from a decision of the commons it lays the blame on a minority for opposing and working its ruin, whereas if any good results they take the credit to themselves.

18. They do not allow caricature and abuse of the commons, lest they should hear themselves evilly spoken of, but they do allow you to caricature any individual you wish to. They well know that generally the man who is caricatured is not of the commons or of the crowd, but someone rich or well born or influential, and that few of the poor and democrats are caricatured, and they only because they are busy-bodies and try to overreach the commons; so they are not angry when such men are caricatured either.

19. I say then that the commons at Athens realizes which citizens are good citizens and which rascals. With this knowledge they favor those who are friendly and useful to them, even if they are rascals, whereas they hate rather the good citizens. For they do not believe that their worth exists for the good but for the ill of the commons. Conversely, certain men who in fact belong to the commons are not democratic by nature. (20.) I pardon the commons itself its democracy, for it is pardonable that everyone should seek his own interest. But the man who is not of the commons yet chose to live in a democratic rather than in an oligarchical state sought opportunity for wrongdoing, and realized that it was more possible for his wickedness to go unnoticed in a democratic state than in an oligarchical.

RECAPITULATION

III. 1. The type of the constitution of the Athenians I do not approve, but as they saw fit to be a democracy in my opinion they preserve their democracy well by employing the means I have pointed out. . . .

10. The Athenians are also thought to be ill advised because they take sides with the worst elements in cities divided by faction. They do this with good reason. If they sided with the better elements they would not side with those who hold the same opinions as themselves, for in no city is the better element well inclined to the commons, but in each the worse element is well inclined to the commons; like favors like. This then is why the Athenians side with the elements akin to themselves.