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A Study of the Policy of Peace in the Comedies of Aristophanes

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A STUDY OF THE POLICY OF PEACE
IN THE COMEDIES OF
ARISTOPHANES

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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VITA AUCTORIS

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In his Essay on Comedy George Meredith has a passage which has had a definite influence on the present thesis, with reference both to the origin and to the gradual development of this work. Treating of the comic spirit, Meredith says: "One most excellent test of the civilization of a country I take to be the flourishing of Comedy and of the Comic idea. And the test of true comedy is that it shall awaken thoughtful laughter."¹

What is implied in this passage is that one should laugh most heartily at the various antics portrayed by the Comic poet, and yet at the same time thoughtfully consider the point that is back of the jokes. Let us apply this to the works of Aristophanes. As we read his plays, time and time again we come upon allusions to the disorderly state of affairs, political and social, in Athens and in Hellas. We find our poet ridiculing the war-lords and lauding Lady Peace. Very naturally there comes to our minds the question: Why did Aristophanes treat of such a thing as war in comedy? For war is wont to arouse too many associations of fire, famine, and the sword. Why did he

¹ George Meredith, An Essay on Comedy, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1918, 141.

treat of the war in its causes or in its effects? Why speak of peace? Was Aristophanes merely trying to play the clown? Was he intent only on amusing the people of Athens? Was it a "laugh for a laugh's sake"? Or was he terribly serious about such affairs?

Aristophanes intended that his comedies should produce "thoughtful laughter". He wanted his plays to be both hilariously funny and at the same time definitely thought-provoking. A serious and extensive reading of his plays seems to prove this point. The poet considered himself to be the moulder of the public mind. That he actually said so can easily be proved by references to his plays. Quotations given in the body of the thesis will bring out this point more clearly.

It is not difficult to think of Aristophanes as the Drew Pearson of his day, forcibly giving utterance to his views on the weighty problems of Athens and Hellas. The analogy between the modern political journalist and the Comic Poet of ancient Athens is something that has caught the fancy of the eminent classical scholar, Sir Richard Jebb. In an essay on the Ancient Organs of Public Opinion, Jebb, after treating of Tragedy, has this to say about Aristophanes:

We now turn to that other form of Athenian drama, in which the resemblance to the power of the modern press is much more striking and direct—that which is known as the Old Comedy of Athens. When we think of the analogy between Aristophanes and the modern

political journalist, one of the first things that strikes us is the high and earnest view that Aristophanes took of his own calling. He had gone through every stage of a laborious training before he presumed to come before the Athenian public. He had seen his predecessors fall from favour. So in the Peace he calls on the people to note that he has banished the old vulgar tomfoolery from the stage and raised his art 'like an edifice stately and grand'. He saw the enormous force that his art might use. He resolved that this literary engine Comedy in his hands should be directed to more elevated and more important aims; and that instead of mere buffonery, in which virulent personality was often the only point, he would bring his wit to bear on the large aspects of politics and society.

This resolution to employ his wit on the large aspects of politics and society was one which Aristophanes amply fulfilled. No important facet of Athenian life or thought escaped his pen. He delved into the easy life of the Athenian politicians. He made a venture into sociology and economics. He tested his wit in the field of music and art. He borrowed from tragedy to enrich his own works, and thereby ennobled his productions. As Werner Jaeger says:

It was the inspiration of tragedy which raised comedy to its highest point by making it conscious of its noble educational mission. That consciousness pervades Aristophanes' whole conception of

² Richard Jebb, Essays and Addresses, Cambridge University Press, 1907, 144ff.

comedy and makes his work worthy both spiritually and technically of rivalling all the tragic poetry of his age.³

For the most part Aristophanes kept to his resolution and concerned himself with the large questions of the day. Certainly one of the most serious problems that confronted Athens during his lifetime was the continual series of wars with Sparta. On that historic struggle the poet focused his attention. He made a study of the politicians and watched the way in which they handled the government during these critical times. In common with his fellow-citizens he experienced the horrors of war. And there arose within him the strong conviction that he must begin to make in his comedies a strong plea that the war cease, that the destruction of Greek by Greek stop.

In the majority of the comedies that he wrote, the poet made a plea for peace. And in the study of that plea for peace lies the justification of the present thesis. The purpose of this work is not to present Aristophanes as desiring peace; that is patent to anyone who makes a thorough investigation of his works. Nor does this thesis aim to study the plea for peace in one work to the exclusion of the other comedies. Such, it seems, is the work of Hugill, who in his Panhellenism in Aristophanes⁴

³ Werner Jaeger, Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture, Trans. by Gilbert Highet, Oxford Press, New York, 1939, Vol. I, 358.

⁴ William M. Hugill, Panhellenism in Aristophanes, a published Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Chicago Press, 1936.

takes up the consideration of peace in the Lysistrata. The present thesis aims at something different. The author intends to show to the reader two things: First, that Aristophanes himself vehemently desired peace, which, as we have indicated, is quite a simple problem. The second and the important aim of the thesis is to ferret out Aristophanes' reasons for desiring peace. Just why did he want peace will be the important question that this thesis will attempt to answer.

That answer cannot and will not be given in one sentence or even one chapter. A man's views can and frequently do change and deepen as the years give him a more mature outlook on life and its problems. A reason that satisfies him at one time fails in its appeal at another. So it was, we shall see, with our poet. At first Aristophanes shows hatred for the war simply because it brings with it rationing and a thousand daily discomforts. But peace will mean happiness and a full stomach. Then Aristophanes realizes that war brings with it an opportunity for huge graft and evil government. Witness the present-day trials of some of our own statesmen for selling contracts during the past war! The poet sees in peace a time for saner judgements on the part of the people with regard to these unscrupulous men, whose underhanded acts escape the public eye in the upheaval which war brings.

During the early part of the war just concluded, it was the custom of some of the journalists favorable to England to

picture Russia as a Tartar horde, poised and waiting to swoop down upon the victor of the fight, be that the Allies or the Nazis. In like manner, as the years went on, Aristophanes desired peace because he saw the Persian armies ready to sweep across the Aegean and conquer the weakened victor, be that Athens or Sparta. Peace, he argues, must be had; otherwise total destruction and loss of political autonomy was inevitable.

The present thesis, then, is an attempt to study the works of Aristophanes and show the mind of the poet on the point of peace, indicating how and where his attitude changed with the passing of the years. Whether or not Aristophanes can be said to have opposed war on purely moral grounds, or whether he can be said to have had a philosophy against war as a downright moral evil is a point that we shall briefly discuss in our conclusion. Our own opinion is that he does not propose any moral principles as criteria in his judgement of the war and in desire for peace. That which is pleasing to the sensual man and that which is expedient seem to be his two norms of judgement.

In this work the chronological order of the plays will be employed. It is true that we possess fragments from several plays, but following the lead of two Aristophanic scholars - Victor Ehrenberg and Gilbert Murray - we will not use them.

Ehrenberg is quite right when he says:

That the story of a play cannot be satisfactorily reconstructed from the extant fragments is well illustrated by the Daitales of Aristophanes, which suggests that the conservative father and the good son are to some extent duplicates, though they can hardly have been so in fact.⁵

Concerning the few extant lines of this same play Gilbert Murray says: "These fragments come to us of course without their context; and one cannot be sure of interpreting them correctly"⁶ To avoid this difficulty, we have decided not to use these fragmentary plays.

At the very outset of our inquiry we are faced with a problem that must be answered before we can proceed to the main work of the thesis. That problem is the so-called elusiveness of Aristophanes. If the poet is so elusive that after our serious investigation of his reasons for desiring peace, we can not say what he held, then our work is really useless. For we will have been working on a false assumption: viz. that the mind of Aristophanes can be learned with some degree of certainty from a study of his plays. The importance of this minor problem of the thesis is patent, for it will affect the degree of certitude that we can claim for our conclusions. Hence we are justified in spending time on this problem.

5 Victor Ehrenberg, The People Of Aristophanes, Basil Blackwell, Oxford Press, 1943, 31.

6. Gilbert Murray, Aristophanes, Oxford University Press, New York, 1933, 22.

Is Aristophanes elusive? The eminent classicist, John Williams White, in his introduction to the English version of M. Croiset's Aristophanes and the Political Parties At Athens⁷ begins thus:

Aristophanes is an elusive poet. The main religious convictions of Aeschylus may be determined correctly from a study of his plays. Attentive study of the dramas of Euripides reveals his cardinal principles on politics, society, and religion and his philosophical attitude. But who can affirm with confidence that he has penetrated the comic mask of Aristophanes and knows his beliefs? The poet's mocking irony baffles his reader at every turn. One element of the poet's irony is his apparent frankness. He has at times the air of desiring to be taken seriously and seems to be expressing honest opinions, but the attempt to reduce his opinions to system soon reveals the illusion. We become very conscious that the great satirist is laughing behind his comic mask.⁸

Here lies the difficulty: If the above statement is true without any qualifications, then it would be well nigh impossible for anyone to say that he knew the mind of Aristophanes on any point whatsoever. For the poet would be but laughing behind his comic mask, and mean nothing serious by his statements about the need for peace and the reasons why peace can be had. But White does qualify the above statement when he says:

A proof of the deceptive quality of the

⁷ Maurice Croiset, Aristophanes and the Political Parties at Athens, Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London, 1909.

⁸ Ibid., ix.

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deceptive quality of the poet's humor is found in the diversity of the opinions that have been held as to his purpose in writing. It was once the fashion among the commentators to take him very seriously and the comic poet disappeared in the reformer. He was eugolized as a moralist and as a patriot whose lofty purpose was to instruct his fellow-countrymen on the problems of society and government and made comedy his vehicle of his ideas.⁹

Dr. White is here evidently quarrelling with those who make comedy in its conception "chiefly censorial and monitory".¹⁰ He goes on to mention that this extreme view of the moderns has been modified by the more exact knowledge of the times in which Aristophanes lived. The plays, he argues, have thus been regarded as trustworthy sources of information, especially in establishing the facts of Greek history. Such serious interpretation, he concludes, of a form of literature whose primary end must always be entertainment and amusement, ended by making of a jest a statement of fact, of a satire a document.¹¹

Discussing the matter further, White clarifies his position. If the plays are not meant to be chiefly censorial and monitory, are they then the work of a simple jester whose sole purpose is to provide entertainment and provoke laughter? Would this not be in agreement with White's previous statement that the comic poet is but laughing behind his mask? Apparently not, for White

9 Ibid., xiii.

10 Ibid., xiii.

11 Ibid., xiv.

goes on to say:

To regard Aristophanes as merely a jester is to mistake the man. Ridicule of contemporary persons that is generally good-natured, or systems or prevailing ideas is his main purpose...But while in the mad revels of unrestrained fancy it is difficult to lay hands on Aristophanes, nevertheless, we do discover probable indications of his attachments and his beliefs. He lived in an age of intellectual unrest when many vital questions pressed for solutions. That a man of his intelligence did not give them consideration and reach conclusions is impossible.¹²

Dr. White, then, would agree that we can attain "probable indications" of the mind of Aristophanes on various problems. Indeed, he says that "it is of prime importance to determine as far as may be done the opinions of the poet on the questions of his day; to these questions the reader may find for himself an answer by studying the plays."¹³

It would seem that White is arguing with those who hold that comedy is chiefly censorial and with those who insist that comedy is nothing but pure jest. He himself tells us that in the Acharnians¹⁴ Aristophanes did believe that war was an evil.

Other authors, though not treating the matter at such length, have come to the conclusion that a study of the works of Aristophanes does reveal the "probable indications" of the poet's

12 Ibid., xv.

13 Ibid., xiv.

14 Ibid., xiv.

mind on the questions of his day. In his scholarly work on Greek Comedy, Gilbert Norwood adopts the final conclusion of White when he says:

There is no doubt that in the play, The Acharnians, Aristophanes is to be taken seriously. For here as so often, beneath the surface of laughter and nonsense can be felt the most passionate appeal and strong opinion. He undoubtedly wishes that the war should end.¹⁵

Victor Ehrenberg in his People of Aristophanes notes that while he cannot consider the comedian as one giving expression to fixed pleas, political or social, he felt he would be entirely wrong to separate the poet from real life, which means the political life of Athens and deny the reality of the poet's background.¹⁶

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In Panhellenism in Aristophanes, Hugill takes it for granted that by a serious study of the comedies one can cull the views of the poet on war and peace. In like manner, Gilbert Murray,¹⁸ who sees the poet as a man devoted to three great subjects "Peace, Poetry, and Philosophic Criticism of life", constantly shows throughout his book that he believes Aristophanes is not so elusive that an inquiry into his views will be utterly fruitless.

15 Gilbert Norwood, Greek Comedy, Methuen and Co., Ltd., London, 1931, 205.

16 Ehrenberg, 7.

17 Hugill, ii.

18 Murray, x.

Treating of Aristophanic comedy in his book, Essays and Addresses, Sir Richard Jebb says that we must dismiss the notion that comedy could not make a serious impression because the occasion was a sportive festival. The poet, then, Jebb admits to be serious in the statements that he made concerning the war. "Can it be doubted that Aristophanes contributed powerfully to help the prejudice against everything that he considered as a dangerous innovation?"¹⁹ Lastly, Werner Jaeger tells us that: "Comedy was the deadly censorship of Athens and that is what makes Aristophanes' wit so deadly serious despite its mask of outrageous laughter."²⁰

All these commentators on the works of Aristophanes felt that they could gain an insight into the poet's mind on various questions. Time and time again they are definitive in their statements about what the poet felt or thought. For them Aristophanes is not so elusive that they cannot capture him. We, following the lead of these scholars, will make a diligent search to discover just why Aristophanes was opposed to the great struggle between Sparta and Athens. Misinterpretation is of course always possible; false conclusions can be drawn from acquired data. We shall do our best to avoid these pitfalls.

19 Jebb, 143.

20 Jaeger, 362, (Our Italics).

Before concluding this introductory chapter, we should like to treat of a minor problem. It deals with the manner in which we treat Aristophanes. Some authors think that we should treat Sophocles or Aristophanes only as artists, as dramatists. Our approach is somewhat different. Our interest in the Comic Poet is almost entirely biographical. Certainly many of the aforementioned commentators would agree with us that this is a legitimate treatment. Discussing this matter, A.W.Gomme in an article in the Classical Review says:

Assuming that we can find out the personal opinions of Aristophanes, of what importance is it for us to know them? Is it essential to an understanding of their plays? To me their interest is almost entirely biographical, with little relevance to his character as a dramatist. Now the biographical interest may be a strong one and it is certainly a legitimate one. The most austere of the Shakespearean scholars would welcome more facts about the bard of Avon, but for their own sake. And I feel the same about Aristophanes and the Greek writers, for such things help us to a better understanding of their plays.²¹

The ground is now fully prepared for a discussion of the central problem of our thesis. Our aim: What were the reasons why Aristophanes desired peace between Athens and Sparta? Our approach: One that is almost wholly biographical. Our treatment of the plays: Strictly a chronological order. Our certitude: At least "probable indications" of the mind of the poet on the

²¹ A.W.Gomme, Classical Review, 52, (1938), 97.

central theme of this thesis, perhaps much more than that. Let us then follow our Comic Poet throughout his literary life and see him making a plea for peace and seek ourselves to answer the question: What were his reasons for seeking peace?

CHAPTER II

FIRST ATTEMPTS AT PEACE

If we would try to understand the works of Aristophanes, at least in their political implications and in their allusions to the events of the day, we must seek some insight into the historical background of the times. Athens after the Persian Wars kept the position of preeminence that her military leadership and her naval power had won for her. She gradually acquired an empire. Casting covetous eyes on the trade of Egypt, she eagerly responded to a call for help from the leaders of that country when they in 459 B.C. tried to revolt from the dominion of Persia. The strategy of the Medes, however, soon forced Athens to retire. The defeat she used as a pretext for removing the Treasury of the Delian Confederacy from its original home to the Athenian Acropolis.¹ Megara and Boeotia were "acquired". Aegina and her navy were added to the list of Athenian allies. Achea became a dependent. And at last, when Athens made a treaty with Persia, she seemed to have an empire and with it security.

Peace and an empire were but a momentary illusion. Soon Boeotia fell away. In 447 B.C. Megara revolted and Euboea was

1 J.B.Bury, History of Greece, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1914, 354ff.

quick to follow her example. With unrest spreading among the allies and with a five-year truce with Sparta rapidly coming to a close, Athens thought it best to make a thirty-year treaty with Sparta.² The forties, then, were a decade of continual crises. The disasters of 447-6 B.C. made Athens accept what Mr. Wade-Gery terms "a solution to the ever-growing rivalry between Athens and Sparta, a solution that Pericles never meant to be more than provisional, the Sparta-Athens dualism."³

This was the setting of Athenian history into which Aristophanes was born. The date of his birth is not certain. Gilbert Murray jokingly says that babies are seldom famous. From the fact that Aristophanes exhibited his Daitales in 427 B.C. "when he was a virgin and could not bear"⁴; authors have concluded that he was at this time not more than seventeen and so have put his date of birth in the year 445 B.C. Such is the opinion of Couat and Norwood. Others hold for 450 B.C. Is the question of such importance to us? We think not. Suffice it to say that our poet was born about the time of the Golden Age of Athens, perhaps at the earlier part of this period. Whether or not he had as his parents people who were citizens of Athens is another doubtful point among

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- 2 Thucydides, Trans. by C.Foster Smith, William Heinemann, London 1919, Vol.I, 114-6.
 3 H.T.Wade-Gery, Journal of Hellenic Studies, 52, (1932), 213ff.
 4 Aristophanes, Clouds, Trans. by B.B.Rogers, George Bell and Son London, 1910, 530.
 5 Auguste Couat, Aristophane, Societe Francaise D'Imprimerie et De Librairie, Paris, 1902, 31.
 6 Norwood, 202.

authors of the poet's life.

Aristophanes was a youth when the Peloponnesian War began. What were the reasons for the start of the conflict we shall discuss later on in the thesis. Suffice it for the present to say that the two giants of the Aegean raised the war-cry and began to attack one another. In the beginning, the war was almost a game of tit for tat. Pericles, fully aware that the Athenians were no match for the Spartans on land, made it his aim to build a large navy and set forth this aim of his military strategy: The maintaining of a strict defensive war in Attica in order to break the spirits of the Spartans and wear them out by their continual failure to capture Athens. Secondly, the raiding of the coast of the enemy chiefly with the aim of giving the Athens some moral compensation for the annual destruction of their territory by the Spartan hordes. Lastly, constant naval patrol of the Corinthian Gulf.

The Spartans on the other hand had two designs: First, the invasion and the devastation of Attica, which would force the people of Athens either to come to terms or to fight the superior Spartan army in a pitched battle. Secondly, the control of the line of communications with Sicily and the West by means of defeating the Athenian naval power in the Corinthian Gulf and the establishment of a land route to Corcyra whereby that island might be turned from Athens.⁷

⁷ G.B.Grundy, Thucydides and the History of his Age John Murray C New York, 1911, 310ff.

At once the Lacedaemonians tried out their strategy. In 431 B.C. they invaded Attica and were back again in 430; in 429 the plague stopped them but they made their incursions once more in 428.⁸ In 426 they were prevented from making their annual attacks by earthquakes, but in 425 they devastated the territory of Attica.

For their part, the Athenians held to their original plan. They moved behind the long walls and allowed the enemy to ravage as he so desired. But there was one thing that neither Pericles or any other man of the Athenian Council could have foreseen - the plague! Twice it made its appearance; in 430 it attacked the population and again in 427. Of the latter appearance Thucydides has this to say:

The plague lasted no less than a year, the first having lasted two years. And nothing distressed the Athenians and reduced their power more than this. No less than four thousand heavy infantry in the ranks died of it and three hundred cavalry, besides a multitude that was never ascertained.⁹

Within the crowded walls the disease had a terrible effect and one can easily imagine how it must have lowered the morale of the Athenians. This then was our scene: Earthquakes, Plagues, Destruction, Suffering, and Death, when in 425 B.C. our

8 Thucydides, III, 89.

9 Ibid., III, 87.

poet produced the Acharnians.

The Acharnians, put out in the name of Callistratus,¹⁰ won the first prize at the Lenean Dionysia in February 425 B.C. In its main outlines the plot is very simple. A citizen of Athens, very disgusted with the privations of war and with the willy-nilly efforts of the Assembly regarding a peace pact with the enemy, takes it upon himself to make a private treaty with the Spartans. The play is an unfolding of the advantages that he derives from his private pact, while the rest of the city continues to suffer from the trials and the miseries of war.

As the play opens, Dicaeopolis, the main character, is found at the place of the Assembly, awaiting the opening of the session. He stands there quite disgusted, "loathing the town and sick for the village home".¹¹ Shortly the Assembly convenes and the everything is allowed to be discussed - but peace! "εἶρήνῃ δ' ὅπως ἔσται προτιμῶν οὐδέν"¹² mutters Dicaeopolis in disgust. In comes a heavenly messenger, Amphitheus by name, who announces that he has been sent by the gods to make peace for

¹⁰ Whether Aristophanes refused to put out the play in his own name from modesty, or whether he was in fact disbarred from so doing by a law requiring a certain age for producers of the plays, an age that he had not yet reached, is a point fully discussed by Benjamin Rogers, who doubts that any such law existed and holds that mere *σωφοροσύνη* prevented the play's being produced in the name of the actual author. For further information, Cf. The Comedies of Aristophanes, Edited, Translated, and Explained by B.B.Rogers, George Bell and Sons, London, 1910, Vol. I, vi.

¹¹ Aristophanes, Acharnians, 28, (The translations of Aristophanes are those of B.B.Rogers, Loeb Edition, W.Heinmann, Ltd., London, 1910)

¹² Ibid., 25.

Athens with Sparta, but that the Prytaness refuse to give him the journey-money. The assembled councilmen soon hustle him on his way. They want nothing to do with any person who talks of peace. Next to come before the Assembly for official business are some Athenian Ambassadors, who have taken eleven years to finish some business with Persia that might have been done in a few months.

Soon, fully disgusted with these useless expenditures and aware that the populace will not discuss peace, which is his one topic, Dicaeopolis calls the immortal messenger, Amphiheus, and gives him the money for the trip to Sparta, saying: "Ἐμοὶ σὺ ταυταγὶ λαβῶν ὀκτῶ δραχμᾶς, σπονδᾶς ποιῆσαι πρὸς Λακεδαιμονίους μόνῳ καὶ παιδίοσι καὶ τῇ ἡλίτιδι ."¹³

In a short time the messenger returns, bringing three kinds of treaties: One is of five years duration, but to Dicaeopolis it smells of tar and naval preparations. The second is for ten years, but this one is also rejected. The third is a treaty for thirty years, one that gives forth an odor of nectar and ambrosia. That is the one that is accepted.

Happy in his good fortune, Dicaeopolis celebrates the treaty with a solemn procession. Accompanied by his wife, his daughter, and some slaves, he marches, singing:

Φαλῆς, ἔταίρε Βακχίου
 εὐκῶμε, νυκτὸ περιπλάνη-
 τε, μοι χεῖ, παιδερῶστα
 ἔκτω, σ' ἔτει προσεῖπον ἔς

τὸν δῆμον ἔλθων ἄσμενος,
 σπονδὰς ποικάμενος ἑκαυ-
 τῷ, πραγμάτων τε καὶ μαχῶν
 καὶ Λακμάχων ἀπαλλαγίς 14

But the joy is short-lived. The Acharnians, the chorus, are maddened that anyone should treat with these terrible Spartans who devastated their vines. They come upon Dicaeopolis and accuse him of being a traitor to his fatherland. In defense, the latter pleads:

ὦ χαῖροι, τοὺς μὲν Λάκωνας ἐκποδῶν ἔκσατε,
 τῶν δ' ἐμῶν σπονδῶν ἀκούσατ' εἰ καλῶς
 ἐσπεισάμεν.
 οἷδ' ἐγὼ καὶ τοὺς Λάκωνας, οἷς ἄχαρ ἐγκείμεθα,
 οὐχ ἀπάντων ὄντας ἡμῖν αἰτίους τῶν
 πραγμάτων...
 οὐχ ἀπάντων, οὐχ ἀπάντων, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ
 λέγων ὅτι
 πολλὰ ἂν ἀποφύναμι' ἐκείνους ἐσθ' ἂ
 κάδικούμενος.
 κἄν γε μὴ λέγω δίκνικα, μηδὲ τῷ
 πλῆθει δοκῶ,
 ὑπὲρ ἐπιξάνου θελήσω τὴν κεφαλὴν
 ἔχων λέγειν 15

Commenting on this novel scene, Gilbert Murray remarks that such a spectacle is "astonishing and quite impossible in any country during the late (World War I) war, for no one, no matter

14 Ibid., 265ff. It is interesting to note that Benjamin Rogers explains ἐκτῷ ἔτει not by the fact that the war began in 431 while the play was enacted in 425, but by the fact that our poet Aristophanes reckoned by archonships. Thus, only four full archonships had elapsed, but to these is added the one in progress when the war began and the one during which the play was held. Cf. B.B. Rogers, Comedies of Aristophanes, Vol. I. 44.

15 Acharnians, 307ff.

how brilliant he was, would dare to make such a speech in behalf of the enemy before the average bourgeois audience."¹⁶ Further, he notes, one could certainly never make such an attack on the national policy in the midst of a performance in a national play-house. And Benjamin Rogers and other commentators have the same observation to make.

After some comic interplay Dicaeopolis is allowed to come forth and defend his stand on peace. He begins by shrewdly observing that "the good country people love to hear the city and themselves praised by some humbug, right or wrong."¹⁷ But now the situation can no longer be tolerated. The truth must be told and he is about to tell it, even at the risk of his life. Because of the importance of this speech in the thesis, it is needful to present it in full. Dicaeopolis says:

μη μοι φρονήσῃ, ἄνδρες ὦ θεύμενοι 18
 εἰ πτωχὸς ὦν, ἔπειτ' ἐν Ἀθηναίοις, λέγειν
 μέλλω περὶ τῆς πόλεως, τρυφῶδ' ἰστοῶν

16 Murray, 31ff.

17 Acharnians, 370ff. Dicaeopolis, according to Rogers, fears three classes: The country-folk, easily led by the demagogues, the dicasts who depend on their fee for their livelihood, and the powerful Cleon. Cf. Rogers, Comedies of Aristophanes, 56.

18 μέλλω περὶ... καὶ τρυφῶδ' ἰστοῶν. The same idea is repeated in the Knights. Rogers notes that "not only was it possible for the Comic Poets to speak the truth, but that they were almost the only persons who ventured to do so. Their free and outspoken comments on passing events, their satire contributed largely to the creation of an atmosphere which crystallized into public opinion. Cf. Rogers, Comedies of Aristophanes, 75. Cf. also Isocrates, De Pace, Trans. by George Norlin, William Heinemann, Ltd., London, 1929, Vol. II, 16, (161d).

τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οἶδε καὶ Τρυχωδία,
 ἐγὼ δ' ἐλέξω δεινὰ μὲν, δίκαια δὲ
 οὐ γὰρ με νῦν γε διαβαλλεῖ Κλέων ὅτι¹⁹
 Ξένων Πυρόντων, τὴν πόλιν κακῶς λέγω
 αὐτοὶ γὰρ ἔσμεν οὐπὶ Ληναίῳ τ' ἐχῶν
 Κούπῳ Ξένοι παρῆσιν· οὔτε γὰρ φόροι
 ἤκουσιν οὔτ' ἐκ τῶν πόλεωσ' οἱ Ξυμῆχοι·
 ἀλλ' ἔρκεν αὐτοὶ νῦν γε περιεπτισμένοι
 τοὺς γὰρ μετοίκους ἄλλα τῶν
 ἄστων λέγω.

ἐγὼ δὲ μισῶ Λακεδαιμονίου, σφόδρα,
 καὶ τοῖς ὁ Ποσειδῶν οὐπὶ Ταϊνυρῷ θεός,
 σείσας ἄπασιν ἐμβάλοι τὰς οἰκίας·
 λάκοι γὰρ ἔστιν ἀμπέλεια κεκομμένα.
 ἀτὰρ, φίλοι γὰρ οἱ πυρόντες, ἐν λόγῳ,
 τί ταῦτα τοὺς Λάκωνας αἰτιώμεθα;
 ἡμῶν γὰρ ἄνδρες, οὐχὶ τὴν πόλιν

λέγω,
 μέμνησθε τοῦθ', ὅτι οὐχὶ τὴν πόλιν
 λέγω.

ἀλλ' ἀνδράρια μοχθηρὰ, παρακεκομμένα
 ἄτιμα καὶ παράσθημα καὶ παρά Ξένα
 ἐσυκοφαντεῖ Μεγαρέων τὰ
 χλευστικά;

καὶ ποὺ σίκουσι ἴδοιεν ἢ λαχῶδιον
 ταῦτ' ἢν Μεγαρικά καπέπρατ' ἀνθημερόν
 καὶ ταῦτα μὲν δὴ σμίκρα καπίχῳρια,
 πόρνην δὲ Σικαίαν ἴοντες Μεγαρὰ δὲ
 γενναῖα κλέπτουσι, μεθυσσοκότταβοι·
 καθ' οἱ Μεγαρῆς ὀδύνας πεφουσιγῶμένοι
 ἀντε Ξέκλεψαν Ἀσπασίας πόρνα δύο·
 Κέντεῦθεν ἀρχὴ τοῦ πολέμου Κάτερρα ἡ
 Ἑλλησι πᾶσιν ἐκ τριῶν Λαικιστρίων·
 ἐντεῦθεν ὄρχη Περικλῆς Ὀλυμπιος,
 ἡστραπὶ, ἐβρόντα Ξυνέκυκα τὴν Ἑλλάδα,
 ἐτίθει νόκους ὡσπερ σκόλια γεγραμμένους,
 ὡς χρὴ Μεγαρέας κατ' ἐπὶ κατ' ἐν ἀγορᾷ
 κατ' ἐν θαλάττῃ κατ' ἐν ἡπείρῳ μένειν·
 ἐντεῦθεν οἱ Μεγαρῆς, ὅτε δὴ κείνων δάδην,
 Λακεδαιμονίων ἐδέοντο τὸ ψήφισμ' ὅπως
 μεταστραφείη τὸ δὶα τῆς Λαικιστρίης,
 οὐκ ἠθέλομεν δ' ἡμεῖς δέομευων πολλακίς.
 Κέντεῦθεν ἡ δὲ πύκταγος ἦν τῶν
 ἀσπίδων. 20

19 The poet refers to the Babylonians, which led to a court action by Cleon.

20 Acharnians, 497ff.

This remarkable passage, which we have ventured to give in full, calls for explanation. It is pregnant with some of our poet's ideas on the origin of the war and on the need for ending the strife. At the start of the passage Aristophanes tries to make his audience "benevolos et attentos". "Bear me no grudge", he says. This direct apostrophe to the audience frequently happens in his plays. On this point Ehrenberg says:

Direct apostrophe of this type (where the audience is accosted directly) may be said to culminate in the great speech of Dicaeopolis in which he both informs the people about the situation and then criticizes them most sharply. Here the poet is clearly speaking in his own character. Like the tragedians, Aristophanes believes himself entitled to speak out about the state and criticize it...That a serious attack on politics and serious criticisms are intended is evident. In particular the lightheartedness with which Athens seized every opportunity for going to war with Sparta was the subject of bitter irony. On the other hand, Dicaeopolis had staked his head on his ability to convince the people of the justice of the cause of peace by telling them the unpleasant truth. When finally the warlike chorus is won over, the poet perhaps hoped that he had also convinced the greater part of his audience.²¹

The passage cited from the poet appears at first glance to be but a "comic view" of the war. Why should two cities spill each other's blood and devastate each other's land for the sake of three ill-famed women? And yet there is here the "thoughtful

21 Ehrenberg, 22. (Our Italics).

laughter". Laugh, says the poet, but do get the point involved. Gilbert Murray says that the Periclean Party, if indeed we may speak of such a thing as a particular party, would probably answer that the comic poet's view of the situation made the war seem to be absurd, which was not the truth. For the kidnapping and the embargoes were but occasions, while the real cause was the growing rivalry of Sparta and Athens. To this Murray surmises that Aristophanes would answer: "Well, if both you and Sparta went to war because you wanted to and just awaited an occasion, then you are both more foolish than I thought you were."²² And Rogers adds: "It must be remembered that the Megarians themselves looked on these lines as giving a substantially true account of the commencement of the quarrel, as Plutarch tells us in his life of Pericles."²³ Perhaps, the best interpretation of this passage from Aristophanes is given by Gomme, who says:

This is the comic picture of what was said in Athens. Megara was in the forefront among the causes of the war in the popular notion, however certain Thucydides and Pericles may have been that the real cause lay elsewhere; very likely she had been accused of harboring runaway slaves. Pericles was for the masses the lofty Olympian and had advocated resistance to the Spartan demand in 432 B.C., and 'Aspasia after all rules him as we well know'. Just combine all this and you have the popular view.²⁴

22 Murray, 33.

23 Rogers, 79. Cf. also Plutarch's Lives, Trans. by Bernadotte Perrin, William Heinemann, Ltd., London, 1916, Vol. III, xxix.

24 Gomme, 105.

If Aristophanes thought that the kidnapping of the court-
esans was the cause of the war, why did he not reiterate his stand
in later plays? It seems that he would have done so. But perhaps
he was giving the "popular opinion" as Gomme suggests. Now the
fact of the matter is that he does repeat the embargo on Megara in
later comedies and harps on it time and time again. To understand
the force of this embargo, we must go back to the year 445 B.C.,
in which a treaty was made with Megara. The noted Thucydidean
scholar, Cochran, has this to say about the treaty of that year:

It appears from the treaty that Athens
at least agreed that her own ports and
the ports of her empire should be open
to the shipping of the Peloponnesus, thus
abandoning the right to exert economic
pressure on her rivals, which means were
henceforth regarded as contrary to inter-
national law. At least this was the claim
advanced by the people of Megara in their
grievance against Athens in 431, though
Athens herself seems to have disputed their
right to access to her harbours under all
circumstances. At any rate, Megara affirmed
that the right must be reciprocal if it was
not to be meaningless, and existing restric-
tions against entrance to the Lacedaemon
constituted a standing violation of the rule.²⁵

The constant insistence on these decrees²⁶ and the impor-
tance that Aristophanes ascribes to them makes it imperative that
we consider them and try to show why these decrees could have
possessed the power to set the Hellenic world afire. We have

25 Charles Cochran, Thucydides and the Science of History, Oxford
Press, London, 1929, 115-6. Cf. also Thucydides, I, 67, 4; I, 144

26 Knights, 494; Lysistrata 1170; and especially the Peace, 246,
481ff, 605ff, as well as the Acharnians, especially in lines
530-34.

already noted that there was in the treaty of 445 B.C. a tacit agreement to allow the Megarians to use the ports of the Athenian empire. But taking this with the statement of Gomme that Pericles regarded the treaty as something temporary, something forced on him, we can see how he would at an opportune moment disregard its provisions.

But why so much importance ascribed to Megara? If we consider her, not so much in herself, as in her relation to Sparta, whose ally she was at the time, we discover several interesting facts that explain the power of the Megarian Decrees. Sparta, far inferior to Athens in the naval arm, but her superior on land, needed a land path to Attica; the one road that was then available was through Megara. Obviously Sparta could not stand by and see Athens dictate terms to Megara. For if Athens controlled Megara with its two important ports, Nisea on the Saronic Gulf and "almost within sight of Athens", and Paegae on the Corinthian Gulf, she could virtually blockade Corinth, and render that city helpless as an ally of Sparta.

The above explanation places emphasis on the strategic importance of Megara. There is also another weighty reason why Sparta and her allies could not allow Athens to force her will on Megara; that is the economic reason. To be excluded from all the sources of the corn supply in the Pontus meant for Megara, an industrial country, simply starvation. Athens, controlling the

corn supply line to the Pontus, could dictate her own terms to Megara and the latter would have to submit or starve. As Aristophanes shows, Megara chose the latter course and actually did starve. This is why Grundy says that:

For a State situated as Megara was, the Decree meant her starvation, while to her colleagues in the League, it all but said that Athens aimed at getting control of the Isthmus by forcing Megara into submission. Moreover, if Athens were allowed to mete out such measures to Megara, and this without impunity, she might extend that policy to the other Peloponnesian States.²⁷

From what has been said, it is clear how important were the Megarian Decrees. We shall treat of them again when we consider the Peace, and the connection that Pericles, according to our poet had with these Decrees. Meanwhile, to recall the argument of the play, the reasons that Dicaeopolis gives for his actions, such as they are, have the effect of splitting the chorus into two parties. Why, asks the hostile group, is he the one to tell the truth, if indeed he is telling the truth? To their support this group calls Lamachus, "the well-known leader of men". The appearance of the "Great Boaster" as Aristophanes calls him gives the poet an opportunity to complain of the woes of the war. Young noblemen, he says, secure for themselves lucrative positions as ambassadors, while the older men do the actual fighting. Croiset remarks that

27 Grundy, 77.

this was a jibe at the professional soldiers, who make a living by the pursuit of arms and would amount to nothing in a State where peace dwelt.²⁸

It is always the boast of the poet that he has the courage to tell the people the unpleasant truth. For this reason, he says people come from the distant parts of the Aegean to see the poet so fearless and witty, the poet who is ever λέγων τὰ δίκαια.²⁹

The play now takes a new turn. Aristophanes is represented as enjoying the fruits of his treaty. The woes of the blockade of Megara are again noted by the appearance of a Megarian who is forced to sell his only possessions, his two daughters. There is here a definite contrast between the affluence that Dicaeopolis displays by reason of his treaty along with the economic advantages that he alone enjoys and the pinching poverty of his fellow-citizens. The general theme of the play from this point till the close of the comedy is that peace will mean pleasures, wealth, and comfort. The chorus sings:

εἶδες ὦ, εἶδες, ὦ
 πᾶσα πόλι, τὸν φρόνιμον ἄνδρα, τὸν ὑπέροχρον,
 οἱ ἔχει σπεινὰ μένος ἐμπορικὰ χρήματα
 ἐμπολῶν,
 ὧν τὰ μὲν ἐν οἰκίᾳ χρήσιμα, τὰ δ' αὖ πρῆπει
 χλιερὰ κατεσθίειν.
 αὐτόματα πάντ' ἀγαθὰ τῷ δέ γε πορίζεται.³⁰

Others envy Dicaeopolis and would share in his good luck.

28 Croiset, 55.

29 Acharnians, 643.

30 Ibid., 975.

In a series of scenes Aristophanes gives us typical people and their reaction to this private treaty. In one scene, hardly to be expected in Comedy, a bride pleads for just a few drops of peace, that by using it on her spouse, she may be able to save him from the draft of men for war. Dicaeopolis gives the few drops and says: *ὅτι ἡ γυνὴ ἔστι, τοῦ πολέμου τ' οὐκ ἄξία*.³¹

The final scenes are a contrast. On the one hand is pictured the mighty Lamachus, the military man whose only interest is in arms, food, and strategy; on the other, Dicaeopolis, freed from the woes of war, is seen surrounded by his "darlings", his thrushes, his sweetmeats, and his cheese-cakes. Amid a gay Mardi-Gras spirit the play comes to an end with the chorus singing: *ἀλλ' ἐφόμεσθα σὴν χάριν τήνελλα κελλίνικον ἄδουτες δὲ καὶ τὸν ἄσκιν*.³²

Such is the first full play of Aristophanes on the war and peace theme. If we judge from the play and from the thoughtful laughter, we must say that the desire for peace arises from a general spirit of war-weariness, a loathing of the narrow quarters of the walled city, a desire for the home in the country, a deep disgust with those who were making the war a source of personal profit, or were using it to further their own personal military or political ambitions. The origin of the war is given as a trifle, the kidnapping of the courtesans. But the Megarian Decrees are of

31 Ibid., 1062.

32 Ibid., 1234.

real importance in the whole argument for peace. The effects of peace are given as material wealth with restored trade, and with that wealth, all the sensuous pleasures that money can buy. There does not seem to be any hint as to what should be done to secure peace. Simply, let there be peace. But the whole problem is not quite that easy. In later plays Aristophanes shows us practical ways of securing peace terms from the Spartans.

Summing up this play, Gilbert Norwood says that the Acharnians is more like a political pamphlet in which Aristophanes puts forth all his powers and tries to turn his fellow-countrymen to an attitude of and a desire for peace, as he shows " that there is a jingoism of peace as well as a jingoism of war". Norwood continues:

As for the main topic, the first reflection of every reader since Aegospotami must be amazement that the Athenian Republic allowed the play to be presented at all. Despite the minorities of the Fifth Century, of which so much is heard, no State save Athens would have endured in the midst of a war any play so definitely criticizing the author's fellow-countrymen, so openly stating the case for the enemy. And there is no doubt that here Aristophanes is to be taken seriously. Here beneath the surface of laughable or bitter nonsense can be plainly felt a strong opinion and a passionate appeal that the war should end but the agony of later years had not yet entered his soul.³³

CHAPTER III

ATTACKS ON CLEON'S RULE

The Peloponnesian War was not interrupted by Aristophanes' plea for peace, by his plea for an honest consideration of the woes that war brings. When Pericles finally died in the year 429 "having survived the commencement of hostilities two years and six months"¹, there was a general scramble for power by the lesser political lights of Athens. If we can believe what Thucydides says, we learn how these men differed from Pericles. The historian tells us:

He (Pericles) deriving authority from his capacity and acknowledged worth, being also a man of transparent integrity, was able to control the multitude with a free spirit. He led them rather than was led by them. For not seeking power by dishonest arts, he had no need to say pleasant things, but on the very strength of his own character could even venture to oppose them and anger them... Thus Athens, though still in name a democracy, was in fact ruled by her greatest citizen. But his successors were more on an equality with one another, and each struggling to be first himself, they were ready to sacrifice the whole conduct of affairs to the whims of the city. Such weakness led to many errors, the greatest among them the Sicilian expedition.²

In the year 425 B.C. Cleon the Tanner held the power by

1 Thucydides, II, 65.

2 Ibid., 65.

reason of his oratorical powers and his unscrupulous methods. Now since the Demos had assumed the power to increase or lower the tribute of the subject-cities, the man who swayed the Demos was the one to be feared by the so-called allies, who were in actual fact dependent cities. In 425 B.C. that man was Cleon. This was the man who had proposed the mass execution of the rebelling Mityleneans. This was the man who had said to the Athenians: "Your rule is a tyranny; use then a tyrant's methods and massacre these men that the rest may fear you. To be lenient and show pity are the greatest dangers to your empire."³

It was but natural that this fire-brand of the Assembly should come into conflict with Aristophanes. But Cleon was a powerful man to oppose and his power increased by his fulfillment of his famous boast to bring back the Spartans who were besieged on Pylus. The story is well-known. The Athenian, partly by chance and partly by reason of their Messenian allies were in a position to capture by siege and starvation a number of Sparta's best troops. But the Spartans, eager to deliver their soldiers, sent an embassy of peace to Athens. The legates did not minimize the seriousness of their situation, but offered peace, telling Athens that she could keep all that she had won and earn besides the undying gratitude of Sparta. It would seem that now the great Athenian empire was safe. Why continue fighting, unless Athens

³ Ibid., III, 37ff.

desired not safety but rather the control of all Hellas?

Rogers tells us that to this proposal Pericles, had he been alive, would have given an affirmative answer.⁴ But the fire-brand Cleon was then in control of the Assembly. Peace must not be had for peace meant to this demagogue, if we hold with Thucydides, "a time in which his dishonest practices would come to light."⁵ Peace, then, must not be concluded. To be sure that it was not, he demanded that Sparta give up what was not hers to give: Troezen, Pegae, Nisea, and Achea. The result of this intolerant demand was that the legates departed, or rather were sent away. Cleon then boasted that in twenty days he could go and capture the Spartans on Pylus. The people accepted his boast and gave him the command. Capitalizing on the previous strategy of the Athenian leader, Demosthenes, Cleon actually did capture the position and with it the hapless Spartans. He returned a hero and was accorded a heroic crown and the *προεδρία*. He became the most important man in Athens if not in all Hellas.

Aristophanes bided his time. Six months after the capture of Pylus he brought out his Knights, a play which was a "straight-forward attack on the demagogue then at the zenith of his power, an open defiance always regarded by the poet as the most fearless incident in his career."⁶

4 Rogers, Knights of Aristophanes, William Heinemann, Ltd., London 1938, xxv.

5 Thucydides, V, 16.

6 Murray, 51.

Again, as in the Acharnians, we have a simple plot. Two slaves, made to resemble Nicias and Demosthenes, being unable any longer to bear the attitude of the favorite slave, Paphlagonian, who represents Cleon, conspire to introduce a rival who is an "offal-monger". The offal-monger is "more dishonest, more universally a guttersnipe, more foul-mouthed; and he plunges at once into a long and eventually successful fight with Paphlagonian for the hand of the master, Demos."⁷ But when once he has the master Demos in his power, the offal-monger becomes a man of a different character, and far from being a twin of Paphlagonian, he reveals himself as the "reformer and the saviour of the State."

The play is an attack on Cleon that has no note of pity. The demagogue is pictured as a man with one foot in the Assembly and the other on Pylus, as a person whose mind is set on theft, as a deceiver of the people. Nor did the Comic Poet forget to ridicule the "tribol clan" who looked to Cleon for more pay for jury service and who in return gave staunch support to the warlike desires of their leader.

In the play Aristophanes refers to the miseries that the war has inflicted:

Καὶ πῶς σὺ φιλεῖς, ὅς τοῦτον ὄρων οἰκῶντ' ἐν πιθῶκναισι
 καὶ χυπαρίου καὶ πυργιδίου ἔτος ὄρδον οὐκ ἐλκείρεις,
 ἀλλὰ καὶ θείρας αὐτὸν βλίττεις ἄρχετολέμου δὲ φειρότος
 τὴν εἰρήνην ἔξεσκεδάς, τὰς πρὸς βείας τ' ἀπέλαύνεις
 ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ραθυπυχίστων, αἱ τὰς σπονδάς προ-
 καλοῦνται.⁸

⁷ Murray, 51.
⁸ Knights 790ff.

As though anticipating the reply from Cleon that the latter had ever in view only the interests of Hellas and wished only that Athens might rule Hellas for its own good, the poet says:

οὐχ ἵνα γ' ἄρχῃ μὰ Δί' Ἀρκαδίας προνούμενος,
 ἀλλ' ἵνα μέλλῃ
 σὺ μὲν ἀρπάζῃς καὶ δωροδοκῆς παρὰ τῶν πόλεων·
 ὃ δὲ δῆμος
 ὑπὸ τοῦ πολέμου καὶ τῆς ὀμίχλης ἀπανουρθεῖς μὴ
 καθορᾶσθαι,
 ἀλλ' ὑπ' ἀνάγκης ἄμα καὶ χρείας καὶ μίσθου
 πρὸς σὲ κεχῆναι.
 εἰ δέ ποτ' εἰς ἀγρὸν οὗτος ἀπελθὼν εἴρηναιος
 διατρίψῃ...
 γνώσεται οἴων ἀγαθῶν αὐτὸν τῆ μισθοφορᾶ
 παρεσκόπτου,
 εἴθ' ἢ ξεῖ σοι δριμύς ἀγροίκος, κατὰ σοῦ τὴν
 ψῆφον ἰχνεύων.
 ἂ σὺ γιγνώσκων τούτ' ἔξαπατῆς καὶ ὄνειροπολεῖς
 περὶ σαυτοῦ

Cleon, if we accept Murray's view of the man, had two aims in his rule of Athens: To win the war and to keep the Athenians from starving while accomplishing complete victory over Sparta. However much the poet may impugn the demagogue's methods, the fact remains that the unscrupulous leader did succeed in advancing the cause of Athens and feeding the Athenians more or less well. But Aristophanes could see in this policy of war for conquest and for empire only constant strife, continual revolts, steady privations, and the control of power of the State by such men as Cleon. The latter he castigates as a corrupt politician, but Murray¹⁰ believes that Cleon remained a poor man in spite of all his opportunities

9 Knights, 803ff.

10 Murray, 42.

for ill-gotten coin. But Auguste Couat commenting on the poet's description of Cleon has this to say:

Il est le maitre de tout; il regne sur l'agora, sur les ports, sur le Pnyx; il a le Senat sous ses pieds; il brise les strateges, les arrete, les jette en prison et se goberge au prytanee. Son unique pensee est de s'enricher; la est le secret de son activite. Il pousse a la guerre qui lui rapporte de bons profits. Par la ruse et par la force, il arrache de l'argent aux villes et aux particuliers. On sait que pour n'avoir pas a payer des amendes ruineuses, il faut d'abord remplir la bourse de Cleon.¹¹

It is rather difficult to comment on this play with reference to Aristophanes' desire for peace and his reasons for wanting peace. Commentators are by no means in agreement among themselves as to the true significance of the play. Ehrenberg holds that the play is a satire on the people's fear of tyranny.¹² Norwood, calling the Knights "a bad and stupid play", says that we cannot help asking whether or not the poet was directly suborned by the oligarchs to make this attack on Cleon.¹³ Croiset says:

Now the play gives the outline of a policy of immediate application which may be formulated as follows: Make peace with the Spartans; reform the education of the young. Diminish the importance of oratory by reducing the number of lawsuits. Stop the livelihood of several thousands of useless judges. To this end send the people back to the country and let them take up once again their old

11 Couat, 143.

12 Ehrenberg, 241; 35ff.

13 Norwood, 207.

habits of regular life. In a word, remove them from the baneful influence of the city and the domination of the politicians.¹⁴

Croiset, then, sees as the first point of the play: Make peace with Sparta. Then attend to the domestic problems that the war had brought. Were there no incursions to be expected from Spartan troops, there would be no crowding of Athens and there would be far fewer evils than now made themselves apparent in Athens.

Jaeger says that Aristophanes was not fighting against the State; he was fighting for the State against its temporary despot. "Aristophanes scourged the people and their leader (Cleon) and pilloried the alliance of the two as unworthy of the Athenian State and its illustrious past."¹⁵ Jaeger, then, so it seems, would contend that the poet in the policy he pursued in this play was not fighting Cleon because the latter was responsible for the continuation of the war, but because the latter was an unworthy successor of Pericles. And Bernard Henderson says of Cleon:

This is Cleon's importance in the war. To him was war anything but war? No! It is his supreme merit as War Minister that he set out to hit the enemy hard and often. No more defensive passivity, no more offensive pin-pricks, no more half-hearted feeble advocacy of peace or negotiation with the enemy for him. To any general who failed he would be merciless.¹⁶

¹⁴ Croiset, 86.

¹⁵ Jaeger, 364.

¹⁶ Bernard W. Henderson, The Great War between Athens and Sparta, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1927, 178.

Our analysis of the plea for peace in this play is in so many ways the same and in so many ways different from the conclusions that the above commentators reached. With Croiset we agree that Aristophanes desired peace with the Spartans. But why should he want peace? That is our main interest. In the Acharnians the poet sought peace because it meant personal happiness, material comforts, and a full stomach. Here, in the Knights, we feel that a more serious view of the need for peace can be discerned. Who was in absolute power in Athens at this time? Cleon. Who stood to gain most from the war from a political point of view? Cleon. Who stood to see his evil government and his nefarious policy brought to light in time of peace as Thucydides and Aristophanes both point out? Cleon. And who, according to these two writers, was most responsible for the continuation of the war and therefore for the evils that war brings? Cleon.

Aristophanes therefore desired peace because he saw in power a man who stood to gain by the war, a man whose advocacy of war had brought political and social crises to Athens. It may be justly asked whether or not this is an unfair interpretation of the play. Perhaps, in time of peace Athens would have served gladly another Cleon. It may be that she would have done so. But in time of peace there is usually a more sober view of men and of social and political conditions. Nor would there then be the constant crowding of Athens and the continual dependance on Cleon. It is hard to believe that Athens in time of peace would willingly and

knowingly give herself to the full charge of another Cleon. Our poet, we hold, thought so too. That is why in this comedy he makes his plea for peace revolve about the man who is most responsible for the absence of peace-Cleon!

The next extant play of Aristophanes that we possess is the Clouds, which was aimed at the "sophistical education of the young."¹⁷ Direct reference to the war or any plea for peace do not occupy a prominent place in this play, though the poet does ridicule the dicast fever and blames the people for their firm adherence to the war-minded demagogues, among whom Cleon had the first place. This comedy is rather a call to return to the former customs that made Athens a leader in the days of the Persian Wars. Rogers says:

Aristophanes is sometimes represented as a mere 'laudator temporis acti', but the gibe is pointless unless those who make it are prepared to deny that the Athenians of the Peloponnesian War had degenerated in uprightness, in generosity, in Pan-hellenic patriotism; and this is a proposition which few, I imagine, would venture to deny.¹⁸

The same month that saw the production of the Clouds, March 423 B.C., witnessed a truce of a year's duration between Athens and Sparta. If we believe Thucydides, we learn that

¹⁷ Benjamin Rogers, Clouds of Aristophanes, George Bell and Sons London, 1930, xviii.

¹⁸ Ibid., xix.

the Athenians wanted to prevent Brasidas from gaining any more victories; while the Spartans, sensing the fears of the Athenians, hoped that by an intermission of trouble and the hardships of war the Athenians would come to desire permanent peace and thus leave the Spartans in the favorable position in Greece that they then held.¹⁹

Thucydides notes that at this period in the war there was a sound hope for something more than a mere truce. The war had now been in progress for about ten years, and in the truce men saw the opening for a lasting peace. Discussing the terms of the truce, Thucydides says of the Athenian decree that it was agreed:

The truce shall last for a year, and during the year of truce ambassadors and heralds shall go from one state to another and discuss proposals for the termination of the war. The generals and the prytanes shall proceed to hold another assembly at which the people shall discuss first of all the question of peace, whatever proposal the Lacedaemonian embassy shall offer about the termination of the war.²⁰

As this brief respite from the war came to a close, our poet put on the Athenian stage another play, the Wasps, at the Lenaeon festival. Commentators are here also in discord regarding the purpose of the play. Is it a comedy whose one purpose is to ridicule the Athenian passion for legal business? Does our poet

¹⁹ Thucydides, IV, 118.

²⁰ Ibid., IV, 118ff.

intend to picture the dicasts as "monsters of caprice and injustice?" Is Ehrenberg right when he says:

The play is an attack on the popular courts. It is essential for us to remember that neither the courts as such nor democracy are the real objects of the attacks. No reforms are advocated. Aristophanes merely endeavours to show how the courts and the people are being debased in the hands of a few self-seeking men...The passion for judging was a dangerous political instrument in the hands of the rulers.²¹

Aristophanes attacks Cleon in the play and accuses him of filling his own purse with the public money. The poet says by means of one of his characters that if the Athenian people were to compute the money that they receive from the "fees, and fines and silver mines,"²² as well as from other sources, they would discover that their annual revenues are about two thousand talent. Now the six thousand dicasts receive only one hundred and fifty talents. Who gets the rest? Aristophanes says:

Ἐς τούτους τούς, οὐχὶ προδώσω τὸν Ἀθηναίων
 Κολοφυρτόν,
 ἄλλὰ μαχοῦμαι περὶ τοῦ πλήθους αἰεὶ. Σὺ γὰρ,
 ὦ πάτερ, αὐτούς
 ἄρχειν κίρει σαυτοῦ, τούτοις τοῖς ρημητίοις
 περιπέφθεις.²³

To the superficial reader this comedy may appear as a mere ridicule of the "dicast-fever", but a consideration of the times and the circumstances of the play will also reveal a much more serious meaning to the comedy. A truce had been made, but

21 Ehrenberg, 39ff. Cf. also Couat, 142-56.

22 Wasps, 658.

23 Ibid., 664ff.

no peace was apparent. There was no reconversion in Athens from the status of war to the life of peace. Frankly, the war and the war-spirit was still the main activity of Athenian life.

If Aristophanes wanted peace because war brought physical discomforts, he desired it much more because war brought a moral decline. Gilbert Murray gives us a keen analysis of this when he treats of the Wasps. He says that a system that functions more or less well in normal times tends to break down in times of crises such as war or poverty. The jurymen, he notes, were the old men of Athens, men who could no longer fight and were probably bitter in consequence. To make matters worse, the pressure of poverty and even of actual starvation on the part of the Athenian people made all trials for offenses involving confiscation into terrible temptations.²⁴

At the risk of reading too much into the play, we would say that in this comedy Aristophanes gives us another reason for his keen desire for peace. He sees old men dependent on the State for their pittance, cut off from their normal life and means of employment, tools in the hands of those who control the treasury. Murray sums this up well when he says:

The truth is that the juries were for the most part composed of men that Aristophanes liked and championed: the old men from the country, prevented by their

24 Murray, 69ff.

age from going on military expeditions, since military service normally ceased at sixty years of age, and consequently left in Athens, old, respectable, very poor, embittered, and angry, able to sit on juries or in the ecclesia, and - according to Aristophanes - offering an easy prey to any smart and unscrupulous speaker who chose to gull them.²⁵

25 Ibid., 82.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PEACE

The truce of 423 B.C. lasted but a year. At the end of that time hostilities were again renewed. Cleon with the consent of the Athenians sailed against the Spartan commander who held sway at Amphipolis. The Tanner however proved to be less a general than he was an orator. In the battle which ensued the Athenian forces suffered defeat and their leader was killed as he fled from the field. Of the seven Spartans who fell in that battle, Brasidas was one. Thus, in the same fight the two fire-brands of Greece died.¹

After the battle of Amphipolis both the Athenians and the Spartans desired peace, the former because the recent disasters had unnerved them and made them fear revolts; the latter, because the war had disappointed their expectations. While these hopes were on the way to fulfillment, Aristophanes brought out his Peace at the city Dionysia in March 421 B.C. And in that very month or perhaps in April the famous peace of fifty years was signed between Sparta and Athens. Yet it was not an unanimous peace pact because as Thucydides writes the "Boeotians, the Corinthians, the Eleans, and the Megarians dissented from

1 Thucydides, V, 10-14.

signing the treaty."²

Discussing this play, Benjamin Rogers says that the comedy is the most un-Aristophanic of all the poet's plays. He points out that:

There is little of the inexhaustible merriment that all the other plays have. The restoration of peace and good-will among Hellenic peoples was almost too serious and too real for the light-hearted raillery in which at other times the poet indulged.³

The Peace is in some sense a review of the whole war. There is mention of the cause of the war, of the trials that the war has brought. The advantages of peace are outlined, and then a warning is given to the Hellenes that further bloodshed will imperil the whole of Greece and make it helpless to ward off an attack by the Persians, should the Mede decide to invade Greece. In this play we see time after time mention of this point: more war will endanger the whole of Hellas by sapping its strength.

In the Acharnians Aristophanes gave the stealing of three common women as the cause of the war, along with the resulting Megarian Decrees. In the Peace he changes his story somewhat. Through the character Hermes he says:

2 Ibid., V, 17. Though these four said that they would dissent, Thucydides says that the Athenians and their allies and the Spartans and their allies signed the treaty; these latter were the allies of the Spartans.

3 Benjamin Rogers, The Peace of Aristophanes, George Bell and Sons, Ltd., London, 1913, xxi.

ὡ σοφώτατοι γεωργοί, τὰ μὰ δὴ Ξουίετε
 ῥήματ' εἰ βούλεσθ' ἀκούσαι τὴν δ' ὅπως ἀπώλετο.
 πρῶτα μὲν γὰρ ἤρξεν αὐτῆς φειδύς πράξης κακῶς.
 εἶτα Περικλῆς φοβηθεὶς μὴ μετέσχοι τῆς τύχης,
 τὰς φύσεις ὑμῶν δεδοικῶς καὶ τὸν αὐτοδὶξ τρόπον,
 πρὶν παθεῖν τι δεινὸν αὐτὸς ἐξέφλεξε τὴν πόλιν,
 ἐκβυλῶν σπινθῆρα μικρὸν Μεγαρικῶ ψηφίσματος 4

The Megarian Decrees are said to be the cause of the war. We have already seen that the Megarians consented to the treaty of 445 B.C. and thus considered themselves free to enter any port of the Athenian Empire. But now the Megarian Decrees meant starvation or economic strangulation to Megara. But the important question is WHY were these Decrees put forth? The affair of the harlots seems foolish as the cause of the war. Plutarch tells us that it is no easy matter to determine the original grounds of the Decrees: " τὴν μὲν (τοῦ ψηφίσματος) οὖν ἀρχὴν ὅπως ἔσχεν, οὐ ῥᾶδιον γινῶναι. " 5 But he indicates that the Decrees, like the stealing of the courtesans, were not the cause of the war but rather the pretext for war.

If we can trust Plutarch's account, we have this explanation: Regarding the Megarian Decrees, whatever their cause, Pericles would not have them rescinded, either because he wanted to display his power, or because he feared that such an act might be a sign of weakness on the part of Athens. But the worst charge, Plutarch tells us, was this: The enemies of Pericles wanted to test his power over the people. To do this,

4 Peace, 60lff.

5 Plutarch, Vol. III, xxxi.

they accused Pheidias, a dear friend of Pericles, of embezzlement of gold from the statue of Athene. Then Aspasia and Anaxagoras were the objects of attack. Pericles, seeing the danger to himself, kindled into flame the smouldering war, hoping thereby to dissipate the charges against himself and to allay the jealousy, since in times of great peril the city entrusted herself to him alone.⁶ Such was the reason alleged for his failure to yield to the Spartan demand for the abrogation of the Megarian Decrees. But Plutarch adds: τὸ δ' ἄληθές ἄδολόν ἐστίν."⁷

If we confer Thucydides, we find that these Decrees play the major role in the war. An embassy came from Sparta, says Thucydides, demanding that the siege of Potidea be lifted, the Aeginetan independence be guaranteed, and the Megarian Decrees be revoked. Pericles came forward and said that he held to one point: There should be no concession to the Spartans. He stated and insisted that the war which would then come would not have been started over a trife. The Spartans, he argued, say that if the Decrees are rescinded, war will be averted and we will have peace in our day. But give in now, and then there will come from them greater demands. Nothing but a firm refusal can be our stand in this matter. He concluded his speech by saying that the people should make up their minds to give way while still unharmed or resolve not to yield at all, and he advocated the latter.⁸

6 Ibid., xxxi, xxxii.

7 Ibid., xxxii.

8 Thucydides, I, 140-41.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to discover the cause of the Peloponnesian War. Perhaps jealousy on the part of Athens or Sparta is the answer. But it is important to the thesis to note how both Thucydides and Aristophanes make the Megarian Decrees the focal point in the whole discussion about the origin of the war. Rogers is ever insisting on this harmony telling us in his introduction to the Peace:

The first half of the play assumes at times almost the character of a didactic poem and becomes a most interesting supplement and illustration of the far graver history of the Peloponnesian War. The harmony which exists in all substantial points between Thucydides and Aristophanes is only rendered more valuable from the circumstance that both writers are regarding the same events from totally points of view. The historian records accomplished facts; the poet for an instant lifts the veil and gives us a glance at the same events while yet in the process of accomplishment, a momentary but complete and vivid glimpse of the underlying forces, of the hopes, of the fears, of the suspicion, the doubts that were cooperating in their making...So much more is the similiarity striking in the accord which we find in the light, off-hand touches of the poet, and in the well-considered judgement of the noted historian.⁹

The poet emphasizes the Megarian Decrees and Thucydides does likewise; the poet blames Pericles for failure to have the Decrees rescinded and Plutarch agrees with him in this. And it is noteworthy that Plutarch prefaces his account of Pericles' desire for war in order thereby to escape any action by his

9 Rogers, The Peace, xxi, xxii.

enemies by saying: "ἢ δὲ χειρίστη μὲν αἰτία πασῶν, ἔχουσα δὲ πλείστους μέρτυρας οὕτω λέγεται."¹⁰

In his plea for a vote against the revocation of the Megarian Decrees Pericles told the people that war would bring woes to the Athenians. In the Peace Aristophanes parades before the eyes of the audience the many food shortages, the poverty, the cheating of the muster-rolls, the ruin caused to the farmland by the annual devastation, the war-profiteers, the flights of the slaves, etc.¹¹ The munition-makers are a special object of his pen when he says:

εἴ τις δορυξὸς ἢ κάπηλος ἀσπίδων,
ἢ ἐμπολὴ βέλτιον, ἐπιθυμῆι μαχῶν,
ληφθεῖς ὑπὸ ληστῶν, ἐσθίοι κριθᾶς μόνας.¹²

But peace is depicted as the source of a thousand sensual pleasures:

ἀλλ' ἀναμνησθέντες, ὦνδρες,
τῆς δικαίης, τῆς παλαιᾶς, ἣν παρεῖχ' αὐτὴ ποθ' ἡμῖν,
τῶν τε παλαιῶν ἐκείνων, τῶν τε εὐχῶν, τῶν τε κούρτων,
τῆς τροχός τε τῆς χλυκείας, τῆς ἰωνίας τε τῆς πρὸς
τῷ φρέατι, τῶν τ' ἐλαῶν, ὧν ποθοῦμεν
ἀντὶ τούτων τήνδε νυνὶ τὴν θεὸν προσείπντε.¹³

The above quotations might lead us to believe that the poet is interested only in the materialistic aspects of peace. That he does talk of peace in terms of food and sensual pleasures cannot be denied; war deprived the Athenians of those things just as World War II did to us in our own times. But the poet is

¹⁰ Plutarch, xxxii.

¹¹ Peace, 201, 402, 1179-86, 635-48.

¹² Ibid., 450.

concerned with something more important than food. In the Peace can be discovered very definite Pan-Hellenic sentiments. It might be said that this play was the outward expression of what was in the hearts of the majority of the Hellenes, especially of the Spartans and the Athenians. The poet tells us through one of his characters, Trygaeus, that he is going to take a trip to Zeus and ask him why he does nothing about the war. If he will not tell me, says Trygaeus, I'll indict him as giving Hellas over to the Medes. On this last statement Rogers says:

Doubtless there were many beginning to feel that the internecine dissensions of the Hellenic cities would prove of advantage to the Great Monarch. The repetition of this in lines 408ff seems to show that the mind of Aristophanes at all events was growing uneasy on this score. Now the Lacedaemonians had already sent embassies to the Persians, inviting them to intervene in the war and in the affairs of Hellas. Apart from the pure Pan-Hellenic sentiments, the Athenians might well feel anxious at the thought of the might and the maritime resources of the Persians being on the side of the Spartans.¹⁴

Since this play occurred shortly after the battle of Amphipolis, in which both Brasidas and Cleon were killed, the poet does not forget the "pestles" who raised such havoc among the Greeks. Now, he says, men of Hellas, now is the time to throw away our woes and troubles and pull out Peace ere another pestle arise to stop us.¹⁵

14 Rogers, The Peace, 15.

15 Peace, 292ff.

Aristophanes has described the origin of the war, the woes of the strife, and the pleasures of peace. But does he indicate any practical way to achieve peace? Is his stand just this: Let's have peace because of the pleasures that it brings? Certainly he denounces the two "pestles" and calls on Athens to avert the rise of another such man as Cleon. He throws a shaft at a possible successor to Cleon, the lamp-maker Hyperbolus. "Peace averts her eyes from the people for taking to itself so vile a leader."¹⁶ He is quick to reprimand Athens for her policy of tyranny over the subject-cities.

There is a new idea regarding peace in this comedy. The poet's views seem to have matured during the years. No longer does Aristophanes simply plead for a cessation of hostilities, but he says: "Are we never to cease from battle? Always try to enfeeble one another, when we might join hands and share the dominion of Hellas?"¹⁷ These lines *κοινῆ τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἄρχειν* are, if we follow Rogers' comment, "no mere comic suggestion. It was much in men's minds that at this time Athens and Sparta were in reality coalescing to obtain joint rule of Hellas."¹⁸

Thucydides gives us additional information about the same point when in discussing the twelfth article of the treaty of 421 B.C. he says:

16 Ibid., 681.

17 Ibid., 1080.

18 Rogers, The Peace, 135.

If anything whatsoever shall be forgotten on one side or the other, either party may without violation of their oaths take honest counsel and alter the treaty in such a manner as shall seem good to the two parties, the Athenians and the Lacedaemonians...For this reason the Mantineans revolted to the Argives chiefly on account of that clause, which aroused great uneasiness among the Peloponnesians and made them easily suspect that the Lacedaemonians meant to unite with the Athenians and enslave them.¹⁹

Such is the Peace of Aristophanes. In the light of the peace of 421 B.C. one may read much into the lines: "I fought for the safety of you and the Isles, I gallantly fought and I prevailed."²⁰ Aristophanes claimed that he gave good advice to the city in matters of practical politics. In the present play he has justified that claim to some degree. Peace could not mean unconditional surrender for either side, at least not at this time. Yet, there must be some settlement of the constant battle for supremacy among Athens and Sparta. Can the two rule side by side? The poet thought that it could be worked out, but the politicians thought otherwise. Ehrenberg says:

For the individual man, and in a sense, for the individual state, peace was still identified with the ideal of quiet existence, as it was painted in the Acharnians, a quiet existence almost out of touch with politics. Men still thought that ten years of war had left no marks and life could continue just where it had been interrupted in 431. Nor did the politicians think otherwise, especially when they attempted the

¹⁹ Thucydides, V, 18;29.

²⁰ Peace, 759-60.

Peace of Nicias entirely on the basis of the Status Quo. In this self-deception of the leaders and the led is found the ultimate reason why the peace of 421 B.C. was no lasting peace.²¹

The Peace then is the first plea for some practical solution to the problems of Athens and Sparta. It is the first proposal of a "Big Two" rule of Hellas, of a union to offset the power of Persia, to make the political situation less inflammable, to bring back cooperation and with it prosperity. But it will take the dark days of the failure of the Sicilian Expedition to make the poet really emphasize this point of Panhellenism.

²¹ Ehrenberg, 42-3.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SHADOW OF DEFEAT

For the period of the next seven years, from 421 B.C. to 414 B.C., Aristophanes continued to write, to counsel the people of Athens, to admonish them for their faults. Unfortunately, we have no extant plays from this period. It was a time of intermittant war and peace. And what a disappointment it must have been to the poet! The great hopes stirred up by the fifty year pact were soon to know an unhappy end. "For six years and ten months (after the pact was signed) the two powers did not invade each other's territory, but abroad they did each other all the harm they could."¹

In the year 423 B.C. a town by the name Scione had revolted from the power of Athens. Now that the pact had given the people of Athens some respite from the incursions of the Spartans, they looked to such towns as this one in order to teach them what it meant to rebel against the power of Athens. The Athenian forces besieged the town and finally captured it. Then by reason of a decree which Cleon had passed in 423 B.C. all the men were put to the sword while the women and the children were sold into slavery. The land itself was given to the Plateans.²

¹ Thucydides, V, 25.

² Ibid., IV, 120; V, 32.

In 416 B.C. Athens again made an example of a subject city. The ancient town of Melos was the object of the attack. If we can believe Thucydides, we learn that the leaders of Athens came with this message: We have come here in the interest of our Empire. We desire that you be subject to us. Submit and you will avoid greater evils.³ But the Melians would not submit and awaited help from Sparta. By means of traitors in the city the Athenians took Melos and then slaughtered the men, while the women and the children they sold into slavery.

The year 415 B.C. saw the mutilation of the Hermes at Athens. In July of that same year the great expedition left for the conquest of Sicily. Thucydides says:

No armament so magnificent, or so costly had ever been sent out by any single Hellenic power...Never had a greater expedition been sent to a foreign land. Never was there an enterprise in which the hope of future success seemed justified by the actual power.⁴

Athens had listened to the words of Alcibiades: We cannot set down an empire as we might a household. Since we have now gained our present position, we must hold it at all costs. We must rule with a firm hand and look for occasions to attack our enemies. "For if we are not rulers, we shall be subjects."⁵

Consequently, Athens sent out her vast fleets and the flower of

³ Ibid., V, 116.

⁴ Ibid., VI, 31.

⁵ Ibid., VI, 18.

her manhood.

In 414 B.C. Aristophanes produced the Birds. Many of his commentators have tried to tie this play up with the Sicilian Expedition. But Gilbert Norwood rightly points out that whenever the poet sets out to satirize anyone, he leaves no doubt in the mind of his audience as to his purpose.⁶ Now the ill-fated expedition comes in for little mention. Benjamin Rogers thinks that the play has at best the aim of "a comic representation of the high schemes and the great ambitions that were in the air."⁷ That the play is an escape from reality is the conviction of Ehrenberg, who says: "The Birds, however it may be interpreted in relation to contemporary events, is an escape from reality into the least material of all regions, the air, the realm of the birds."⁸ Gilbert Norwood gives us the clue for understanding this flight from reality when he says:

Perhaps the refusal to write on politics is but a sign that Aristophanes is only too conscious of them; that during these years the growing villiany and the recklessness induced by the war or the very treacherous peace had sickened him of all humanity and he deliberately turns to a castle in the air for relief.⁹

Aristophanes could not long remain in the realm of fancy. The realism of actual life was too close to him and he could not

6 Norwood, 239.

7 Benjamin Rogers, Birds of Aristophanes, George Bell and Sons, London, 1906, xv.

8 Ehrenberg, 43.

9 Norwood, 241.

escape it. The magnificent fleet that had sailed in July of 415 B.C. had met with complete destruction. "Fleet and army perished from the face of the earth; nothing was saved; of the many who went forth, few returned home."¹⁰ Sparta was again on the march. but this time she had the help of the King of Persia. However, the mighty ruler of the Medes was looking out for his own interests. His alliances with the Spartans, and his dealings with Alcibiades; his promises to help the Athenians if they would overthrow the democracy; his constant shifting from one side to the other, all these things made men wonder just what were the real intentions of the Grand Monarch. Thucydides and Aristophanes, it would appear, had the same explanation for the actions of the King of Persia. The historian says:

I believe beyond all question that he (King of Persia) wanted to wear out and neutralize the Hellenic forces; his object was to damage them both...If he had chosen to finish the war, he would have brought up all his ships and in all probability would have given the victory to the Lacedaemonians who lay opposite the Athenians.¹¹

It was at a moment when Athens was in bad straits, striving if not to save her whole empire, at least to make sure of the more important parts of it, gathering resources wherever she could, hoping against hope that something would stop the

10 Thucydides, VII, 87; VIII, 37.

11 Ibid., VIII, 87. The historian is here referring to the incident in 411 B.C. when Tissaphernes failed to aid the Spartan fleet.

Spartan avalanche, that Aristophanes brought out his Lysistrata. Concerning this play one must especially note that at a time when Athens was straining every effort to build up a navy, the poet put on a play of peace! It was not just another comedy, but rather was, if we follow Hugill, "the most serious of the poet's plays."¹²

The plot of the play is simple enough. A group of women gathered from all parts of Greece under the leadership of a certain Lysistrata take an oath that they will not allow their husbands the marital rights until the latter agree to cease the internecine battles of the Greeks. The introduction of women into the principal roles at a time of such political crisis was certainly astounding, but perhaps the poet thought that now only the weaker sex could bring the men to their senses and make them see that the slaughter of Greek by Greek, or what was worse, by hired barbarians, was a source of keen delight to the Medes.

The comedy offers no reason for the war. It was as though the poet now felt that whoever was responsible for the start of the conflict, the important thing was that peace must now be established. Aristophanes once more complains that many are using the war as a means of feathering their own nests, and this at the expense of the city. Lysistrata plans to get control of the treasury. Her only reason: She does it for the sake of

¹² Hugill, 25.

the city itself. Why, she asks, does Peisander along with his captains feel pleasure in strife and disturbance? Simply because it gives them an opportunity to steal and fill their own pockets in the unrest of war-times.¹³ We see our poet again harping on the theme that in wartime men can easily get away with thefts from the city, thefts that in time of peace would easily be discovered and quickly punished. We do not imply that in peace-times Athens was not bothered by corrupt politicians. She had her share of them. But in time of war the smooth gentlemen could pursue the work of fleecing the city under the guise of honest work for the war effort.

Why did Aristophanes introduce women in the principal roles? Mere play on the sex angle? We think not. We do not deny that the poet makes full use of the charms of the female sex, so much so that certain of his plays are in spots considered "smutty". But in the Lysistrata there is something much deeper than mere sex appeal. Hugill seems to have indicated just what that deeper thing is when he says:

The choice of a woman as the protagonist is significant in a number of ways. It emphasizes the lack of leadership in state policy. It places the project above and beyond party entanglements. It smooths the way for a rapprochement among the warring Greeks by disregarding the government which was committed to war. It introduces a motive used with telling effect in the Acharnians, the humanitarian sentiment.¹⁴

13 Lysistrata, 488ff.

14 Hugill, 15.

One may possibly argue with Hugill on the lack of state leadership. Perhaps that is true. But the last point, the humanitarian element seems to us to be the point at which the poet aimed his play when he employed women in the star roles. If we but stop and consider that for over twenty years Athens had been engaged in war, we begin to fathom what the poet had in mind. What does war mean from a personal point of view? It means separation of husband from wife, of son from mother, of sweetheart from his beloved. And in the days of the Peloponnesian War there were the lists of dead, wounded, missing, captives. There were the fears, the anxieties, the hopes, the black despair. Somebody has said that a woman's heart is made to suffer; and in the days of the Peloponnesian War women had their full of sorrow. Here was a telling motive for peace; the human heart of the woman had bled enough. And unless men could see the folly of war, that heart would go on for years bleeding over dead husbands, wounded sons, and missing sweethearts.

The humanitarian sentiment, powerful though it was, yet was not all that the poet had to offer in this play. Aristophanes was not a mere idealist. His stand was not this: "Stop the war because war brings suffering and death, sorrow and bitterness to man and women." For the answer quickly comes. Yes, the war shall be stopped when the cause of the war has been eradicated, when just complaints have been satisfied, when desires have been fulfilled. No, Aristophanes is a practical man as well as a

magnificent poet. He presents a definite policy of peace. What was that policy? If we read the play carefully, says Hugill, we discover three means of achieving peace: Common Action, Reconciliation, and Compromise.¹⁵

Common Action is seen from the fact that the women at Athens, Corinth, Sparta, and Boeotia are to unite and by their concentrated action Κοινῆ accomplish the salvation of Hellas. And through Lysistrata Aristophanes is quick to recall that at the time of the Persian Invasions common action saved all Hellas from the domination of the Great King. To the Athenians and the Spartans alike the heroine says:

λαβούσα δ' ὑμᾶς, λοιδορῆσαι βούλομαι
 Κοινῆ δικαίως, οἱ μὲν ἴκ' Χέρνιβος
 βώμους περιβραίνοντες, ὡς περ Συγκνεῖς,
 Ὀλυμπιάσιν, ἐν Πύλαις, Πυθοῖ...
 ἔχθρῶν παρόντων βυρβύρων στρατεύματι
 Ἑλλήνας ἀνδρας καὶ πόλεις ἀπόλλυτε...
 εἰτ' ὦ Λάκωνες, πρὸς γὰρ ὑμᾶς τρέφομαι
 οὐκ ἴσθ' ὅτ' ἐλθὼν δεύρο Περικλείδας ποτὲ
 ὁ Λάκων Ἀθηναίων ἰκέτης, καθέζετο
 ἐπὶ τοῖσι βωμοῖς ὄχρος ἐν φοινικίδι,
 στρατιᾶν προκλιτῶν; ἢ δὲ Μεσσηνίη τότε
 ὤμην ἐπέκειτο, ἕω θεὸς βεῖων ἄμα.
 ἐλθὼν δὲ σὺν ὀπλιταῖσι τετρακισχιλίοις
 Κίμων ὄλην ἔσωσε τὴν Λακεδαιμόνα...
 ὑμᾶς δ' ἀφίσειν τοὺς Ἀθηναίους μ' οἶεις;
 οὐκ ἴσθ' ὅθ' ὑμᾶς οἱ Λάκωνες αὐθις αὖθις
 κτυπνὰ κας φοροῦντας ἐλθόντες δορὶ
 πολλοὺς μὲν ἀνδρας θετταλῶν ἀπώλεσαν.
 πολλοὺς δ' ἐταίρους Ἰππίου καὶ Συμημάχους;
 ἔνεκμαχούντες τῇ τόθ' ἡμέρᾳ μόνοι,
 κάλυθ' ἔερωσαν κἀντὶ τῆς Κατωνάκης
 τὸν δῆμον ὑμῶν χλαῖναν ἡμπισκὸν πάλιν;¹⁶

15 Ibid., 15.

16 Lysistrata, 1127ff. The word Κοινῆ is frequently repeated in the play: 41, 525, 579, 1111, 1129.

The fundamental point of the passage is the oft-repeated theme: The destruction of Greek by Greek is a delight to the babbarians who alone stand to gain from this internecine war. The poet, we have said, was a practical man. Consequently, he realizes that there are claims on both sides that must be settled if peace is to be had, if there is to be a Reconciliation. We have seen that in a previous play he advocated a "Big Two" rule of Hellas. Now he brings forth that idea again. Lysistrata turns to the two parties and pleads: "Why can't you two come to terms?"¹⁷

Answering the plea of Lysistrata, the Laconian party says that they are willing to come to terms if Athens will cede to them Pylus. The Athenians in their turn demand Melis and the "Megaric limbs". There is a double meaning to the words, as frequently enough in the poet; by Rogers they are accepted only in the bad sense.¹⁸ But Hugill accepting the words in a good sense points out that there is a serious idea involved. Athens must realize that she can no longer rule Hellas by herself. For now Sparta is powerful enough to demand a partnership in the rule of the Aegean. Certainly these words in the light of the actual conditions must have made the Athenians stop and consider the need for a Reconciliation.¹⁹

17 Lysistrata, 1163ff.

18 Rogers, The Lysistrata, Loeb Edition, 110.

19 Hugill, 23. He mentions that the word διαλλαχῆ and its cognates occurs over eleven times: 628, 900, 932, 984, 1009, 1092, 1101, 1104, 1114, 1161, 1175, etc.

It is noteworthy that only Sparta and Athens are here mentioned, as though they alone could dispute about the control of Hellas. What about the others, Corinth, Argos, Boeotia? It seems as though the poet is still thinking in terms of Athenian naval hegemony and Spartan land supremacy. "With this point settled, the other members of the Peloponnesian League and the Island cities must inevitably agree; their agreement is taken for granted."²⁰

In previous plays Aristophanes attacked those who made it their end and aim in political life to keep strife alive in the Hellenic world. Especially did he send his shafts against Pericles and Cleon among the Athenians and Brasidas among the Spartans. Practical man that he was, he must have known that any reforms would have to start at Athens herself. Hence to his plea for Hellenic unity and peace, he added a reminder to the home folks to set their domestic house in order. "Beat out the rascals from the city. As for those who band together to control the offices, card them thoroughly and pluck off their heads."²¹

This then was the poet's plea in a time of real danger.

Victor Ehrenberg is correct when he says that even though we may

²⁰ Ibid., 30.

²¹ Ibid., 40ff, 94ff. Dr. Huggill has explained the allegory of the guarded fleece, from which these lines are taken, as signifying domestic reform, "elimination of the imperialistic irritant," the chief obstacle to Panhellenic peace; and imperial reform, which will bring contented autonomous allies rather than irritated ones." Cf. Huggill, 55ff.

not know what place the play merited in the contest, certainly the Athenian people stand out in a brilliant light, "if the words and the thoughts as those in the Lysistrata could be said and thought at a time of overwhelming danger and great political trouble."²² And as we read the ending of the play, in which the poet portrays a Spartan singing and dancing a Doric step in honor of the Spartans and Athenians who repelled the Persians, a play which comes to an end with a hymn as Athenian men and Spartan men each walk off with their respective wives, we see what Ehrenberg means. To talk of peace in such times, to treat the avowed enemy with a note of equality, to be allowed to write and present this play shows the brilliant light in which the Athenian people stood out.

A few weeks later, Aristophanes produced yet another comedy, The Thesmophoriazusae,²³ a brilliant masterpiece which treats of Euripides and his art. The political references are few. There is for example little else than a slight attack on Hyperbolus.²⁴ It is strange that at such a time of hardships the poet could lend himself to a literary question. No one, as far as we know, treats the play as another flight from reality, an escape from the hard conditions of daily life. It was simply a play with a literary point as the Lysistrata was one with a

²² Ehrenberg, 47.

²³ Sc. Norwood. Some authors place the date in 410 B.C.

²⁴ The Thesmophoriazusae, 840ff.

definite political aim.

From 410 B.C. till 405 B.C., when the next extant play was produced, Athens had many things to suffer. In the winter of 410 B.C. Sparta finally recovered Pylus and Megara regained Nisea. But the most important event was the battle of Arginusae in 406 B.C. Conon, leader of the Athenian fleet, had allowed the Spartan commander Callicratides to blockade him in the harbour of Mitylene. One hot day a ship arrived at Athens with this disastrous news. At first panic-stricken, the city soon recovered its usual calm and went to work. In one month one hundred and ten ships and twenty thousand men set out to relieve the besieged fleet. Citizens, aliens, and slaves manned the oars. The Athenian navy found and engaged the Spartan fleet. "Nearly fifty thousand men and two hundred and eighty ships participated in this, the greatest naval engagement of the war."² The result was a victory for the Athenian fleet. The cost in men and in ships was terrible. Sparta sued for peace, but the people, led it seems by Cleophon, rejected the overtures for peace and the war went on.²⁶

It was between this last battle and the fatal encounter at Aegospotami that Aristophanes produced his Froga. The play is threefold in purpose: Literary, Religious, and Political. It

25 Bernard Henderson, Great War between Sparta and Athens, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., London, 1927, 457ff.

26 Ibid., 475.

is as Ehrenberg says "a long way from the Thesmophoriazusaë to the Frogs."²⁷ The former was an artistic literary piece after the serious Peace. But the intervening years had seen reverses both abroad and at home. The democracy had given way to the "Four Hundred", who in turn made way for the "Constitution of the Five Thousand."²⁸ The impression that one gets from reading this play, prescindng from the literary allusions and applications, is that Aristophanes is pleading in the moment of victory for a united Athens. He says:

πρῶτον οὖν ἡμῖν δοκεῖ
ἔξιπῶσαι τοὺς πολίτας κ' ἀφελεῖν τὰ δαίματα.
κέῃ τις ἤμυρτε σφαλεῖς τὶ φρινίκου παλαίσμασιν,
ἔχγενέσθαι φημι χρεῖναι τοῖς ὀλισσοῦσι τότε
αἰτίαν ἐκθεῖσι λῶσαι τὰς πρότερον ἀμυρτίας²⁹

But Athens would not listen till she had suffered the defeat of Aegospotami in September of the year 405 B.C.³⁰ Then it was too late. From 405 B.C. till 395 B.C. Athens remained in subjection to Sparta. At the end of that period Athens entered into an alliance with the Boeotian Confederacy, which battled Sparta at Corinth in 394 B.C. and again at Coronea in 393 B.C. In both battles Athens suffered severe losses of men.³¹ At this juncture, according to Rogers, the poet put on his Ecclesiazusaë. Referring to the anti-Spartan League, the poet

27 Ehrenberg, 48.

28 Henderson, 418ff.

29 Frogs, 690ff.

30 Henderson, 480ff.

31. Bury, 543ff.

says through his chief character, Praxagora:

τὸ συμμαχικὸν αὖ τοῦθ' ὅτ' ἔσκοπούμεθα,
 εἰ μὴ γένοιτ' ἀπολεῖν ἔφασκον τὴν πόλιν.
 ὅτε δ' ἡ δ' ἐγένετ' ἤχθοντο, τῶν δὲ ῥητόρων
 ὁ τοῦτ' ἀναπείσας εὐθύς ἀποδράς ἔψατο.
 ναῦς δεῖ καθελεῖν· τῷ πένητι μὲν δοκεῖ,
 τοῖς πλουσίοις δὲ καὶ γεωργοῖς οὐ δοκεῖ.
 Κορινθίοις ἤχθεσθε, καὶ κείνοί γε σοὶ
 νῦν εἰσὶ χρηστοί, καὶ σὺ νῦν χρῆστὸς γενοῦ.³²

The poet complains about the lack of good leaders. As in the Lysistrata he looked to the fairer sex to do something to save the city from ruin, so here he intrusts the city government to the women "as the more stable and conservative sex."³³ Nor does the poet refrain from his usual jibes at those who make money from the war or are unwilling to defend the city in time of need. But on the whole the play is a social comedy.

³² Ecclesiazusae, 193ff. Rogers notes that "Praxagora is here beyond all doubt referring to the momentous anti-Spartan League of 395 B.C. which was inaugurated by the battle of Haliartus and the death of Lysander, which at once raised Athens from the position of a mere dependency of Sparta to that of a free and leading Hellenic state; and which in its result altered the whole current of Hellenic history. Originally struck between Thebes and Athens, it was very quickly joined by Argos, Corinth, and the other important states, and became so powerful that the military leaders proposed at once to march on Sparta and 'destroy the wasps in their nests.' But in the following summer the great battle of Corinth resulted in a Lacedaemonian victory; and no contingent suffered so severely as the Athenian one, assailed in front and on the flank by the Spartan troops. And shortly afterwards Agesilaus won another victory in the well-contested battle of Coronea. No wonder that the Athenians were disgusted with the League from which they had expected so much." Cf. Rogers, Ecclesiazusae, Loeb Ed., commentary to lines 193ff. Cf. also Demosthenes, In Lept., 59.

³³ Ibid., 245.

The old fire is gradually dying out; and this is the work of a tired man. "The bold speech, the personal attacks are now diminished in tone."³⁴ And in the Plutus we have Aristophanes producing a social comedy for an audience that could no longer "stomach Old Comedy with its reckless language, personal abuse, its concentration of great public issues, and its passionate idealism."³⁵

34 Murray, 182.

35 Ibid., 269.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

With the Plutus Aristophanes, as Murray says, "finished his public work, ending so to speak in a diminuendo, in a play with less noise in it, less passion, less vitality."¹ He has definitely turned his back on the political world of Athens. Fighting passion, spirited wit, and creative intuition have grown weak.² Perhaps Croiset has analyzed the poet correctly when he says that in both the Ecclesiazusae and in the Plutus Aristophanes faced a state of affairs "which he did not relish but which from this time forward it appeared impossible for him to change; it was then a tacit acceptance of things."³

With the Plutus then our thesis comes to an end. We have traced the historical background of the times in which the plays were produced and we have followed Aristophanes in his plea for peace for thirty-nine years, from 427 B.C., the date of the Acharnians to 388 B.C. at which time the Plutus was produced. It is true that the plea for peace does not really extend to the last two plays except in a wide sense. But their inclusion in the thesis shows the gradual tapering off from political

1 Murray, 207.

2 Ehrenberg, 53.

3 Croiset, 183.

subjects to social topics, a change of emphasis from politics to sociology.

From what has been said in the body of the thesis, it should not be difficult to glean some idea of just why the poet desired peace. We have seen him in the Acharnians pleading that war is senseless and brings with it only misery. Let us have peace that we may go home to our fields and to our small cottages. This war is after all the result of a trifle, the stealing of two worthless women. The plea in this comedy is made from the humanitarian angle. Peace at this time means only surcease from the woes of war and a resumption of the old country life with its material comforts and its annual festival days. At the risk of reading something into the play, we would say that in the Acharnians the poet has made his own the attitude of the common people, irregardless of what side they were on. Even in our recent conflict, the average man wanted only to "finish the war", to "go back home" as soon as possible. Peace then in this play means a mere cessation of the war and a return home.

At every point in history there have been men who promoted war for some reason or other. Either battles meant more money to them if they were in the armament field; or war was a part of their philosophy, because they and their country were by some divine or evil genius destined to rule over other countries

of the world; or war held for them an opportunity to gain political power or strengthen authority already held. Now Athens had men of the first and second class, and perhaps a few of the last class. Cleon belonged to the last division, if we can trust Aristophanes and Thucydides. War meant to him simply an opportunity for theft; war therefore must go on. Aristophanes could see how such a man, clever speaker that he was, would lead the people astray and he warned them about the Tanner.

In the Knights and in the Wasps the poet earned for himself, at least in his own estimation, the title of a "second Hercules" by his vehement attacks on Cleon and men of the latter's sort. Assuming that he wanted peace, we can see how these plays have as it were a negative note: Remove the many obstacles to peace; give the leadership of the State back to the people and they will soon see that peace and quiet return. At any rate, out with the war-mongers! And in the Clouds the cry was: Let us return to the ancient "Mores" that once made us the liberators of Greece and the toast of Hellas.

In the Peace the plea is definitely: Let us make peace now! Aristophanes recounts the origin of the war, the desire of Pericles to strengthen his own position. He still insists on the humanitarian element: War brings suffering and death to thousands of men and women on both sides. In this play he now brings forth a new point: This war is ruining not just Athens

but Sparta as well and only Persia stands to gain from it. Let us stop the quarrel and together we can stand off the Medes and rule all Hellas. Here peace has a practical side and so the poet deals with it, trying to sell both definite assurances that the problem of jealousy over spheres of influence in the Aegean area can best be settled by a "Big Two" rule of Hellas.

The Birds, if we follow Norwood and Ehrenberg, was a flight into the land of fancy, a respite from the political plays. But following the military disasters, there is a return to reality. In the Lysistrata the Comic poet preaches "bold defeatism" with his demand that the war stop. "Where are the sons that we sent to your battle-fields"⁴ is an echo indeed of the humanitarian element in the play. But here too, the poet realizes that a discussion of peace must take into account the demands of both sides. He advocates: Common Action, Reconciliation, and a Compromise, as we have noted.

The Thesmophoriazusae is a journey into the literary field with an attack on Euripides and has little to do with politics and contains few political allusions.⁵ In the Frogs Aristophanes pleads for unanimity among the citizens at a time when the very shadow of defeat hung over Athens. But there can be discerned that a different tone has taken hold of the poet. The time of

4 Lysistrata, 588.

5 Croiset, 143.

the full plea for peace is past; one can only do what one can in difficult circumstances, even if one accomplishes nothing but a little better order among the citizens. And really, when chaos rules at Athens itself, there is little hope of peace, especially with the Spartans. This would appear to the serious reader to be the attitude of Aristophanes at this time. And in the play Ecclesiazusae the poet again hits those who use the war for their own advantage at the expense of the rest of the citizens. But even in this play the practical poet pleads with an understanding with Carinth, one-time enemy, and now the ally of Athens. In the Plutus the poet turns his back on the political world and becomes a writer of social comedies.

This brief summary enables us to see in some way the view of the poet on the subject of peace as he wrote about it during the Peloponnesian War. It seems that he held Pericles responsible for the start of the war. The importance that he gives to the Megarian Decrees seems to confirm this, especially when we recall the testimony of Thucydides. But on the other hand, these Decrees may have been in his view of the war merely an occasion of a conflict that was inevitable. The plea that both Athens and Sparta can rule Hellas supports this view. Thus, he blames Pericles for bringing on the war by failing to rescind the Megarian Decrees but sees that in any solution of the conflict the "Big Two" must hold sway over Hellas, and that Athens can no longer rule the Aegean by herself, if indeed she ever did.

Can Aristophanes be said to have had a philosophy of war and of peace? Why did he want the war to cease? He certainly had his reasons; and we have seen many, if not all, of them. The poet was by no means a militarist. Can he be said then to have been a pacifist? Did he deny that war had any lawful function in a state? Did he believe that war in itself was wrong? Did he think that the defense of a country against an enemy was to be blamed? The answers to these questions are not so easy, and the philosophy of the one who tried to give an answer to them may perhaps color the response.

In the first place, Aristophanes did not have a system of philosophy set down in the manner of an Aristotle, clear and concise. What philosophy he did have then is to be gathered from what he actually says in his plays. But what does he say? He tells us that war must cease because it has brought a number of evils. In other words, he argues from the effects of the war to the necessity for the cessation of the strife. The evils of war he enumerates throughout his plays, as we have noted in the body of the thesis: Material discomforts, crowded cities, rationing, etc; Moral evils, cheating, theft, delinquency, war-profiteering, etc.; Political upheaval, false leaders, war-mongers. Humanitarian aspect, suffering, captivity, death. Put them all together and you have what might be called Aristophanes' own philosophy of war and peace. The poet, in our own opinion, looked upon war as an evil, not from an ethical point of view, but rather

from the point of view of the actual results that accrued from the war.⁶ He knew that to end the strife, both sides must be satisfied and consequently, he preached compromise. He considered peace not just as a time for the complete enjoyment of sensual pleasures, but rather as an opportunity for more serious living. War at the most could bring only material, political, and social chaos, so he thought, however justified the war might be. But peace, which was possible, should and could be made a time of moral and political regeneration.

Such is Aristophanes' policy of peace as we understand it from a study both of his plays and of the commentaries on those plays. The poet knew Athens at her greatest and saw her fall into subjection and ruin; and war was the most important cause of that decline. Louis Lord has vividly portrayed the events of the poet's life and the fall of Athens:

When Aristophanes produced his first play, Athens was all but undisputed mistress of Northern Greece and the Islands of the Aegean. Her navies came and went without challenge from Egypt to the Crimea, from Byzantium to Marseilles. The city's power was almost unlimited. The long walls that joined Athens to its ports, Phaleron and Piraeus, were completed only ten years when he was born. He lived to see his city shorn of all her power, her fleets scattered, her commerce ruined, her people reduced to dire starvation, her olive orchards cut down, the symbol of her greatness demolished to the

⁶ Hugill says that the poet was opposed to the militarist government but that this opposition was based not on any theory of pacifism, but rather on the actual results of the war. Cf. Hugill, iii.

tune of the flutes. He had been a member of the first and most complete democracy that the world has ever seen. He lived to see this succeeded by the Oligarchy of the Four Hundred. He witnessed the final destruction of the walls. And the very year after the production of his Plutus he saw the lord of Persia impose the peace on the Greek cities. His life began in the greatest period of Athenian history; it coincides with her decline during the Peloponnesian War and ends just before the humiliation of Sparta at the hands of Thebes, when Athens was beginning to rise again and reestablish her leadership among the members of her old confederacy.

It was this destruction that war brought to Athens, yes, and to the rest of Hellas. Small wonder that the poet could sing:

νῦν ἔστιν ἡμῖν, ἄνδρες Ἕλληνας, κάλον,
 ἅπαν λαχοῦσι πραγμάτων τε καὶ μαχῶν
 ἔξελκύσει τὴν πᾶσιν εἰρήνην φίλων.

For to Aristophanes, Peace was just that, the joy of all mankind; and that was a powerful motive in his plea for peace throughout his long career of counselling the city of his heart, Athens.

7 Louis Lord, Aristophanes, Marshall Jones and Co., Boston, 1925
 23.

8 Peace, 293ff.

APPENDIX

(Translations of the texts of Aristophanes cited in the thesis.)¹

Chapter II:

Quote(12) "But as for making peace, they do not care one jot."

" (14) "O Phales, comrade revel-roaming of Bacchus, wanderer
of the gloaming,
Of wives and boys the naughty lover, here in my home
I gladly greet you,
Six weary years of absence over; for I have made a
private treaty,
And said good-bye to toils and fusses and fights and
fighting Lamachuses."

" (15) "Worthy fellows, for the moment those Laconians preter-
mit.
'Tis a question of my treaty, was I right in making it.
Yet I know that these our foemen, who our bitter wrath
excite,
Were not always entirely wrong, nor ourselves entirely
right.
I can prove by reasons strong that in many points the
Spartans at our hands have suffered wrongs.
Aye, and if I plead not truly, or the people doubt
display,
On a chopping-block I'm willing, while I speak, my
head to lay."

" (19) "Bear me no grudge, spectators, if a beggar
I dare to speak before the Athenian people
About the city in a comic play.
For what is true, even comedy can tell.
And I shall utter startling things but true.
Nor now can Cleon slander me because
With dear strangers present I slander the state.
'Tis the Lenea and we're alone;
No strangers have yet come; nor from the states
Have yet arrived the tribute and the allies.
We're quite alone, clean-winnowed; for I count
Our alien residents the civic bran.
The Lacedaemonians I detest entirely

¹ The above translations are those of Benjamin Rogers in the Loeb Edition of Aristophanes, William Heinemann, Ltd., London, 1938.

And may Poseidon, Lord of Taenarum,
 Shake all their houses down upon their ears.
 For I like you have had my vines cut down.
 But after all-for none but friends are here-
 Why the Laconians do we blame for this?
 For men of ours, I do not say the State,
 Remember this, I do not say the State,
 But worthless fellows of a worthless stamp,
 Ill-coined, ill-minted, spurious little chaps,
 Kept on denouncing Megara's little coats.
 Or if a cucumber or hare they saw,
 All were Megarian and sold off-hand.
 Still these were trifles, and our country's way.
 But some young tipsy cottabus-players went
 And stole from Megara-town the fair Simaetha.
 Then the Megarians, garlicked with the smart,
 Stole in return two of Aspasia's hussies.
 From these three wantons o'er the Hellenic race
 Burst forth the first beginnings of the War.
 For then in wrath the Olympian Pericles
 Thundered and lightened and confounded Hellas,
 Enacting laws which ran like drinking-songs,
 That the Megarians presently depart
 From earth and sea, the mainland and the mart.
 Then the Megarians, slowly famishing,
 Besought their Spartan friends to get the law
 Of the three wantons cancelled and withdrawn.
 And oft they asked us, but we yielded not.
 Then instantly followed the clash of shields."

Quote(30) "Have ye seen him, all ye people, seen the man of match-
 less art,
 Seen him by his private treaty, traffic gain from ever-
 mart, goods from every neighbor.
 Some required for household uses; some 'twere pleasant
 warm to eat.
 All the wealth of all the cities lavished here before
 his feet."

" (31) "She is a woman, unfit to bear the burdens of the war."

" (32) "O Yes, we'll follow for your sake your wineskin and
 yourself, I trow.
 Sing ho! for Victory won, sing ho!"

Chapter III

Quote(8) "You love him quite well who permit him to dwell
 eight years in the clefts of the city,
 In the nests of the vultures, in turrets and casks,
 nor ever assist him nor pity,
 But keep him in durance to rifle his hive.

And that is the reason no doubt
 Why the peace which unsought Archeptolemus brought
 you were most quick to scout from the city.
 And as for the embassies coming to treat,
 you spanked and chivied them out."

" (9) "No, not that o'er Arcady Demus might rule,
 but rather that you might essay
 To harry and plunder the cities at will
 while Demus is looking away,
 And the war with the dust and the haze that you raise
 is obscuring your actions from view,
 And Demus, constrained by his wants and his pay,
 is a gaping dependent on you.
 But if once to the country he returns,
 away from the fighting and the fusses,
 He'll know to your cost what a deal he has lost.
 And then like the hunter, irate he will come
 on the trail of a vote against you.
 You know it and Demus you swindle with dreams."

" (23) "Why bless you, it goes to the pockets of those,
 'Ror to the rabble of Athens I'll ever be true,
 I'll always battle away for the mob.'
 O Father, my father, 'tis owing to you:
 By such small phrases as these cajoled,
 You lift them over your heads to reign."

Chapter IV.

Quote (4) "O most sapient farmers, listen now and understand,
 If you fain would learn the only reason why she left
 the land.
 Pheidias began the mischief, having come to grief and
 shame,
 Pericles was next in order, fearing he might share the
 blame,
 Dreading much your hasty temper and your bulldog ways,
 So began he by his Megara-enactment setting all the
 world ablaze."

" (5) "But the truth about it is not yet clear."

" (12) "If any merchant, selling spears and shields, would
 fain have battles to improve his trade,
 May he be seized by theives and eat raw barley."

" (13) "Think of all the thousand pleasures, Comrades,
 which to peace we owe,
 All the life of ease and comfort which she gave us
 long ago.
 Figs and olives, wine and myrtles, luscious fruits

Preserved and dried; banks of fragrant violets,
 blowing by the crystal fountain's side: scenes for
 Which our hearts are yearning, for joys we've missed
 so long.
 Comrades, here is peace returning; greet her back
 with dance and song."

Chapter V.

Quote (16)

"And now, dear friends, I wish to charge you both,
 That ye, all of one blood, all brethren sprinkling
 The selfsame altars from the same laver,
 At Pylae, Pytho, and Olympia,
 That ye Hellenes-with barbarian foes onlookers-
 Fight and destroy Hellenes...
 And ye Laonnians, for to you I'll turn,
 Do ye not mind how Pericleidas came and sat a
 Suppliant at Athenian altars and begged for help?
 'Twas when Messene pressed you down, and the god's
 Earthquake; and Athenian Cimon went with his four
 Thousand men and saved your State.
 And you, Athenians, think ye that I mean to let you go?
 Do ye not mind how when ye wore skirts of hide, these
 Laconians came and stood beside you in the fight and
 Slew many a stout Thessalian trooper, full many of
 Hippias' friends and helpers; and freed the State and
 Gave your people back the civic mantle?"

Quote (29) "This we advise: End the townsmen's apprehensions.
 Equalize the rights of all; if by Phrynichus' wrestl-
 ing, some perchance sustained a fall, yet surely to
 These it is open, having put away their sin, to win
 Pardon at your hands."

(32)

"This League, when we talked it over, seemed the only
 Thing to save the State. Yet, when they got it, they
 Disliked it. He who pushed it through was forced to
 Cut and run. Ships must be launched; the poor approve,
 But the wealthy and the farmers disapprove. You used
 To hate the Corinthians and they you; they are now
 Friendly; do you be friendly too."

Chapter VI.

Quote (8) "Now, men of Hellas, the hour has come
 To throw away our troubles and our wars;
 And ere another pestle arise to stop us,
 To pull out Peace, the joy of all mankind."

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