

Ὁ τόμος αὐτὸς κλείνει μὲ βιβλιοκρισίες σημαντικῶν ἐπιστημονικῶν ἔργων (σσ. 450-465), καὶ τὰ Χρονικὰ τοῦ ΦΣ Παρνασσὸς γιὰ τὸ ἔτος 1992 (σσ. 466-499).

Μανώλης ΜΑΡΚΑΚΗΣ

Georges MICHAELIDES-NOUAROS, *An Essay on the Philosophy of History and another two on the social Philosophy of the Ancient Greeks*, Athens, Kardamitsa Publications, 1992, 115 pp.

This book by the Academy member G.M.N., consists of two parts: The first one contains an essay on the Philosophy of History which was first published in *Philosophy* 17-18; the second part contains two essays on the social history of Ancient Greeks. This book examines some fundamental issues of Philosophy, as for instance the philosophical problem of the meaning of history of human kind, nations and peoples defined by many thinkers, as the aim to which all human activities are directed while others detect a logical structure thanks to which the future can be predicted; On the contrary, others limit themselves to the discovery of a logical structure governing history and avoid prophecy. This problem is the main focus of this work. Also, the demand for comprehension of separate historical periods and the problem of the meaning of history in the light of modern developments are taken into account.

The following basic queries are posed: i) Is the purpose of history governed by human thought, Divine Providence, Nature of Fortune? (ii) Do human nature and all its basic achievements remain unalterable as time passes? (iii) Should history be tackled globally, as a unique phenomenon pertaining to each different nation? An affirmative answer to the first query leads to affirmative answers to the first part of questions (i) and (iii). The following three theories are also relative to this subject: According to the first one the aim of history has been defined by God. On the contrary, according to the second, it is defined by human reason; while according to the third one there is no aim in history. These theories are related to the method applied to subjective causes (logical, psychological) and to objective causes (societal, historical) and all these causes pertain to general philosophical theories which often oppose and contradict each other.

The query whether the methods applied by physical sciences are the same or different from the one used by historians is quite fundamental. The princi-



pal theories are: 1) The idealistic theory whose main representative is W. Dilthey who distinguishes between the methodology of physical sciences dominated by the law of cause and that of human sciences; R. Collingwood, who also distinguishes physical from human research that examine human activities from the “inside” and from the “outside”, consequently they cannot be classified according to the laws, and B. Croce. 2) The “positivistic theory that considers the idealistic method promoted by idealists adopts the methodology of physical sciences, i.e. objective observation, deduction and the consequent generalisation leading to principles and laws. Further on, the author refers to modern and ancient theories and to their main representatives and attempts some assessment and evaluation. Within this context, the positivist thinker, C. Hempel and his interesting deviation is assessed, as he tries to explain history on the basis of some prototypes. It is properly pointed out that his theory is based on the equivalence between nature and history though in history there are no strict laws. It must be underlined, however, that the weaknesses of Hempel’s theory do not undermine the global value of his positivistic arguments.

The meaning of a historical event is also examined; its aim is certainly different from that of history in its globality. But if it has to be sufficiently explained, it should be classified according to the general group of psychological and social factors that have caused it. It is quite remarkable that the problem of the purpose of history is strictly connected to the latest current theories; this has greatly contributed to the renewal of the methods of Historiography which mainly depends on the so called French school of New History whose main representatives are M. Bloch, L. Febvre, F. Braudel and Ch. Morazé. The author goes through the advantages of this School that opens new paths as it makes use of sociological and other “auxiliary” sciences, as long as exaggerations are avoided and the importance of historical events as well as the work of some personalities in history are taken into account. Also it is underlined that the so called comparative history —plausible thanks to technological and scientific achievements— although different from Philosophy of history as to the methodology applied, still it has something in common as it does not only search into the “how” but also into the “why” of what is happening. The second part of the first essay examines the views of some very important thinkers regarding the meaning of history; such views and theories have been inspired by the Christian religion as well as by the Eschatology of some Israeli prophets preceding it.

Conversely, ancient Greeks, free from any eschatological prophecy contained in the New and the Old Testament, have created their own philosophy



of history which regards the fundamental issues of moral life, the relationship between Fortune, Divinity and human will but also the question of cause and effect in history. Therefore, as this study suggests, ancient philosophers, contrary to common beliefs, had dared express some philosophical theories regarding the meaning of history, as for instance, first of all the theory of recycling, which has inspired Plato, among others, secondly, the theory of influence of psychological factors of historical development as for instance Thucydides' theory, and thirdly, the Philosophy of history in Aristotle.

The author enriches this essay thanks to the careful examination of Christian theory about the purpose of history, the theories of the philosophers of the eighteenth and twentieth century and last but not least the position of those who faced history with a negative way. As for Christian thought, the historical development follows the path a priori determined by God, leading to the salvation of the human kind. The most significant representatives of the Christian eschatological theories are the Fathers of the Church and mainly Augustine, who expresses the theory of the triumph of "Civitas Dei" that has influenced, among others, Bossuet and some modern philosophers as well. Also, G. Vico's and Voltaire's theories are taken into consideration; the former, in his effort to combine Christian faith with the scientific findings of his contemporaries, attributed the causes of the development of History to reason as well as to the human virtues and vices, whereas the latter, who used the term philosophy of History for the first time effected the separation of the philosophy from Theology.

Some of the thinkers of the eighteenth and twentieth century accept the rectilinear process of history and at the same time the idea of continuous progress towards an ideal goal. The author classifies them into two great groups: The first, is characterized by a liberal humanistic ideology and includes a great number of very serious thinkers; A. Condorcet, who, along with J. Turgot, are thought to be the first to suggest the idea of "natural law of progress", I. Kant, who, although completely aware of the destructive consequences provoked by the ambitious and selfish inclinations of man, believes however that they are mutually neutralized, J.G. Herder, who came to the conclusion that the final purpose of history is the attainment.. of *humanity*, F. Hegel, who maintains that the final goal of history is the realization of freedom, A. Comte, who adopts three evolutionary stages in History and believes that the ultimate issue of humanity will be reached in the third one, A. Toynbee, who believes that if the western European civilization collapsed a new culture would be born, organized on the basis of the combination of the four "higher religions". In the second group socialist ideologists are in-





cluded such as K. Marx, who forecasts that the process of History leads towards a classless communist society. Apart from the above mentioned theories, the author also refers to the contrary opinions of the twentieth century writers, O. Spengler and C. Popper. The former —a widely known pessimist— maintains that History is subjected to the inexorable law of destruction, while the latter adopts the view that the whole progress of History depends on “the future growth of our scientific knowledge” and not on “the by-product of material development”. As far as Spengler is concerned, the author remarks that his thoughts —partly true as they might be— are in the whole “rather exaggerated and groundless”. On the other hand, although Popper’s ideas concerning History and “historicism” are very interesting and correct, his view, however that History has no meaning is an exaggeration — a view which he himself tried to render milder, as the author indicates, by maintaining that it would be possible to set a goal to History by means of the open society.

In the third part of this essay the author makes two successful remarks on the views of the previously mentioned thinkers, which at the same time outline his personal views too. Firstly, the tendency of modern thinkers to search for a meaning in History is due to the influence of the Judeo - Christian eschatology. Thus “they arrive at unrealistic prophecies and arbitrary conclusions”. Secondly, he believes Feuer to be exaggerating in his criticism that “every philosophy of History basically follows, on the one hand, a protective system of personal values of the philosopher-historian...” and “on the other hand, it is... an incitement to others to enroll themselves in the triumphant forces of history”. According to the author, the main flaw of those views is that they emphasize only one historical factor and ignore the rest. The author therefore attempts a retrospective look into Aristotle’s political philosophy whose views offer a deeper and more successful solution to this problem; and he reminds us a fact usually overlooked, namely that the distinction between state and society was unknown in that era. Consequently Aristotle’s views about the goal of the city-state concern not only society but also history. Though Aristotle believes that the supreme aim in life is found in theoretical life he also deals with the man of every day life as a member of society, as well as with his actions, which all have a goal. Aristotle defined three goals for the social man: Firstly, man is “by nature a political animal”, a fact that compels him to accept certain restrictions of his egoistic tendencies. Secondly, it is necessary for the achievement of the social harmonious coexistence that certain moral and legal principles of conduct are respected and, among them, the principle of living well, “εὖ ζῆν”. Yet this latter princi-





ple is of relative nature. As a result, controversies arise and traditional ideologies are reviewed. Thus, history constitutes “a continuous experimentation” of various government systems and a reconsideration of modes of lives and views. Thirdly, this aim is “the common welfare”, meant as the progress of the citizens of every society as pursued by History. The author emphasizes here the important fact that Aristotle’s “common welfare” should be understood “in regard to the interest of the whole state” and not merely of a limited government system. Thus the philosopher gave a very broad content to the concept of welfare attributing it not only to the present but also to the future. In this way it can apply to the whole mankind and —mutatis mutandis— to our own post industrial civilization and its problems.

Indeed at this stage this concept of Aristotle should be embraced by the whole human race. In conclusion, according to E. Michaelides-Nouaros, History is shaped not only by the intentions of men, which of course play the most important role, but also by a number of other factors —such as geographic, climatic, biological, historical— and even chance. The author suggests that during his strive for a better way of living, man tried “to combine his logical claims with the semi-logical trends...” and “succeeded in attaining the present high level of material and intellectual civilization. These achievements, however... have also brought about many adverse results... exposing, mankind to great dangers...”. Therefore the author proposes —and at the same time reveals his deep concern in human activities, without however being pessimistic, that it is necessary for man, who has accumulated a serious experience from the sufferings of wars and antagonism, “to replace such a scourge with activities of sincere international cooperation, with deeds of courteous emulation...” and “to adjust all his actions... in accordance with a deep feeling of social responsibility... not only for his own temporary interest, but also for the long-term welfare of future generations, gazing (as Aristotle would have said) at one benefit which works for the whole life of humanity, “εἰς ἅπαντα τὸν βίον”.

In the first essay of the second part, Aristotle’s views “on the causes of political revolution and the origin of civil strife” are examined. The writer emphasizes Aristotle’s contribution to Ethics, the Science of Politics, Public Law, the Philosophy of Law and Sociology, issues which have mainly been examined in *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, *Athenian Constitution*, e.t.c. The main purpose of Aristotle is to uncover the principles of the Ideal State. Consequently he sets out a programme to evaluate the political theories of preceding writers and to study the systems by which the ancient city-states are governed and tries to find out the causes of prosperity or failure of the various governing systems.





This programme is carried out in *Politics*. The author reminds us that in the fourth, fifth and sixth books the empiric method prevails, whereas in the remaining books, on the contrary, the theoretical and ethical topics are examined. Though there is this division the “spirit” of all books is consistent with the main purpose of *Politics*, namely Aristotle’s remarks on the cause of revolutions as well as his theories demonstrating a very profound understanding of human nature.

The causes of political revolution are divided into general and particular. The general causes include the struggle for superiority aiming either at an overthrow or, at a more limited substitution of certain parts of the constitution. In both cases the real initiative, is the “deep desire for equality”. Yet although men agree that justice and equality are according to worth, «κατ’ ἀξίαν», they disagree as to their application, because some of them consider themselves equal in all points and others, who are better at one point claim that they excel in all points, a fact which leads to revolutions.

After that Aristotle criticises the theory of Phaleas of Chalcedon, who is a rather peculiar socialist of antiquity, supporting the equal distribution of estates. Aristotle rejects his theory arguing that if an estate is divided among the children of a family, these would get pulverized in next generations. According to him, the proper person to find a compromise solution is the law-giver. Yet the permanent remedy would be only an adequate system enforced by Law and providing for property and education.

In general the causes of political disturbances are due, according to Aristotle, to the wish for wealth of honours. Apart from them, the philosopher also refers to some cases in which the socio-psychological elements predominate, such as dishonours and confiscation of properties, as well as, insolence «ὕβρις», unjust distribution of honours, excessive predominance, fear and contempt. He furthermore mentions four more reasons, namely, disproportionate growth of classes, racial causes, geographical reason and revolts by chance or coincidence. Of course there is also a series of less important causes of social disturbance, as for example, love affairs, right of succession, interest in a daughter’s heirloom.

The specific cause of political revolutions include the insolence of demagogues, revolutions against oligarchies but also against aristocracies, deviation from justice and the excessive grasping for enrichment of the “notables”. Generally speaking, Aristotle believes that the causes of revolutions are of many forms—in contrast to Plato, who maintains that there is only one, the impoverishment of aristocracy—an opinion which renders him the forerunner of the doctrine of “pluralism” in the causes of social disturbances. All





the above lead the author to remark that Aristotle's conclusions, though drawn from his contemporary social situation, the "can be acknowledged as complete, profound and closer to objective actuality than those teachings of contemporary thinkers who attribute social changes and evolutions to just one prime cause, be it biological, geographical, economic or political".

In the second essay of the second part, a new evaluation of the dialogue between Thrasymachus and Socrates is attempted. Thrasymachus, known from Plato's *Republic*, has often been misunderstood and is considered as "upholding the right of the stronger", as a follower of legal relativism or as an ethical nihilist. Therefore the author undertakes the task to reexamine Plato's picture of Thrasymachus, namely that of an angry, sarcastic and fanatic man. From the author's analysis it is clear that Thrasymachus —aware of the antithesis between nature and law— tries to draw the listener's attention to the difference existing between the injustice found in life and the ideal of justice, that is the abstract commands of justice and morality. According to Thrasymachus' position, Justice coincides with the positive law currently in force (I), positive law is established by the power (II), true governors in attempting to secure their real interests do not err (III) and righteous men suffer when the unrighteous succeed, a fact which sometimes leads them to unjust methods which are not "a brave simplicity" but wisdom, «εὐβουλία». Thus, thanks to this analysis one can now understand why Thrasymachus has been misunderstood and his value as a realist and empirical sociologist —one of the first founders of state positivism— has until recently been ignored. Indeed, in the first principle he correctly insists that justice coincides with the existing law, since all rulers declare that laws realize justice. Yet Thrasymachus' originality is that he not only justified state positivism but also tackled its philosophical and sociological foundations. This justification, the author remarks, is valid yet today. His second position, namely that positive law expresses the interests of the governing class is in advance of its time and is today represented by Marxists, the followers of social Darwinism, as well as the historical-sociological school.

In contrast to Thrasymachus, Socrates, as a philosopher, is interested in what should happen in an ideal state. Of course his view is of great importance, because each political group should not rely only on strength but also on ideology. One weak aspect of Thrasymachus' theory, shown by Socrates, is that the rulers cannot judge where their real interests lie and they decide against their own interests. It is obvious, however, that the evaluation of what is advantageous is determined not only by economics but also by many other factors, namely the personality of the leader, ethics, psychology e.t.c. Thus





Socrates, by this remark, points out the insufficiency of the theory of economic determinism, a fact that has a great impact on human history and sociology. Socrates, on the contrary, believes that the governor should be infallible. Yet Thrasymachus' image of a bad governor, e.g. a tyrant, is found quite often in society. These two opposing types of governor reflect Socrates' and Thrasymachus different philosophical views: Socrates is an optimistic philosopher, who believes in the human goodness, in the restoration of the state by means of man's amelioration and adopts the idea of an agreement between the rulers and the ruled —a view adopted later by many modern thinkers— whereas Thrasymachus is a pessimistic thinker, who knows well that it is the "right" of the stronger which most often prevails and therefore emphasizes the element of struggle in social life. Yet this very struggle presupposes the adoption of certain generally accepted values. Consequently, as the author remarks, the positions of Socrates and Thrasymachus are complementary, because the combination of their theories —social contract and social strife correspondingly— explains the functioning of the state better. Moreover, Thrasymachus is an idealist too, who believes in Justice but at the same time he discerns the human hypocrisy and egoism. And the author concludes that man in his persistent striving for the basic goal, namely the improvement of human and social life must combine both "the optimistic Socratic belief in the power of logic" and "the realism of Thrasymachus".

Criticizing the whole work, we would like to remark that the author in this book displays clarity of thought, profound knowledge of the subject, systematic classification of content as well as a daring approach of certain problems. Thus he not only gives us a panoramic view of the philosophy of history but also focuses our attention to some very important problems of our time which now concern humanity much more than ever. Furthermore he tries to provide politicians, legislators, but also every man with the knowledge which is necessary for the correct and just exertion of government, because only under such conditions the goal of aristotelian prosperity of all mankind can be attained.

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Ἀγγελικῆς ΧΡΙΣΤΟΔΟΥΛΙΔΗ-ΜΑΖΑΡΑΚΗ, *Ἡ φιλοσοφικὴ ἰδιότητα τοῦ Herbert Marcuse*, Ἀθήνα, Ἐξάντας, 1993.

Κύριος στόχος τῆς κυρίας Χριστοδουλίδη-Μαζαράκη στὸ ἔργο αὐτὸ

