Chapter 4

Justice As A Common Good: Socrates Against The Sophists And The Theoretical-Political Contributions To The Field Of Law

Jair Antunes
Professor of Philosophy and History at the State University of the Midwest/UNICENTRO-PR; Post-Doctorate in Philosophy from the State University of Campinas/UNICAMP; Bachelor of Law from the State University of Ponta Grossa/UEPG. Researcher of the Study Group on Philosophy and History of Law, and the Study Group on Cultural History, e-mail: jair1903@gmail.com. ORCID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6282-0827

Anderson Prado
Post-Doctorate in History by UFPR (Federal University of Paraná); Post-Doctorate in History from UEPG (State University of Ponta Grossa): Doctor in History from UNISINOS (University of Vale dos Sinos-RS);email: pradohistoria@yahoo.com.br. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0612-7382

Angela Caciano
Master in History Teaching from the State University of Ponta Grossa; Specialist in Philosophy from the Federal University of Paraná; Graduated in History from UNICENTRO; Bachelor's Degree in Law from UEPG; e-mail: 123angela.caciano@gmail.com. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1030-2689

ABSTRACT
This text discusses the foundations of democracy in ancient Greece. Classical Antiq-uity was the birthplace of politics as a form of consensus determined from the ration-alizing dialogue of public life. There, on the one hand, we have the Platonic philoso-phy defending ethical values based on universal principles, such as the value of the common good. On the other hand, there are the sophists, who argue that values are always particular and are expressions of power, as asserted by the sophists Thra-symachus or Protagoras. Socrates, on the contrary, affirms that ethics is a universal good, and can be learned and theorized by all men, even slaves, who can raise themselves morally. In this text, we will base ourselves on Plato's analysis expressed in The Republic on the concept of Justice (Dikê), where he argues with the sophists about its value and scope in the life of the polis and the relations between citizens.

Keywords: Jusphilosophy, Policy, Socrates, Sophists, Classic antiquity.

1 INTRODUCTION

We live in a very different world from the "classical period" of Greek antiquity in which the philosopher Plato lived. Despite this chronological difference, many aspects of his political philosophy can be incorporated into current thinking about democracy.

Representative democracy has been assuming more and more space and acceptance worldwide since the end of the Second World War, when the concepts of freedom and equality among men, regardless of sex, color, creed, or ethnicity, gained maximum recognition. legality and worldwide acceptance. In Brazil,

since the Federal Constitution of 1988, the democratic government regime has been adopted. At that time, the country had emerged from a dictatorial political regime and the Constitution sought to legally guarantee the maximum political rights to citizens.

Despite the benefits that are guaranteed in the constitutional scope, a democratic regime is only effective with the conscious participation of all citizens and when they recognize their representativeness in the figure of politicians. Currently, in Brazil, the expressions coming from the federal, state, and even municipal spheres, mainly those related to the misappropriation of funds from the public purse by political and private agents, trigger credibility crises in representative democracy.

The problems observed in contemporary democratic societies, despite the differences with the direct democracy of classical Greece, have similarities with the problems with Athenian democracy, as observed by Plato.

The very concept of politics, as currently employed, has its cradle in Athenian society. Politics was also an element that since the time of Socrates and Plato has been present in the perception that man has of the world, which is why these two philosophers problematized the political form assumed in their time and place, democracy. From that period until today, it promotes reflection.

One of the specificities of philosophy is that it promotes dialogue between people at different times. In this way, the dialogue proposed in this study is between the present and Plato about democracy, guiding us in two main aspects. The technê paradigm and the concept of justice.

2 THE INVENTION OF POLITICS AND DEMOCRACY IN CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

In Athens, between the 7th and 6th centuries BC. C., the reforms undertaken by the legislators Drácon, Solon, and Clístenes contributed to the emergence of politics and democracy. Before that, the "Greek world", composed of the Mycenaean and Cretan civilizations, shared with the civilizations of the East (Babylon, India, China, Persia) the existence of a despotic and patriarchal power. For the Hellenist historian Moses Finley (1985, p. 85), "political power" was invented by the Greeks and Romans, but this does not mean, however, that before the invention of politics, there was no power and authority, it just means that this power was not yet political.

In despotic or patriarchal power, land ownership was exercised in two main ways: as kingly property or as communal property. In both forms, the king or patriarch collected taxes and exercised tight control over others, intending to avoid conflicts that threatened his hegemony. This was possible because he, in addition to exercising administration, also maintained military control of the region, his figure is considered the embodiment of the State. Furthermore, the embodiment or incorporation of the State in the figure of the king or patriarch acquired magical-religious symbologies, creating the deification of its figure and attributing transcendent characteristics that raised it to a level far above that of its subjects. It can be noted that this totality of characteristics was the basis for the centralization of power in the figure of the king (CHAUÍ, 2006, p. 350).

'

According to the scholar of Greek Antiquity, Jean-Pierre Vernant (1981, p.5), by deciphering the Linear B script, developed by the Mycenaeans, it was proved that Greece, around the year 1200 BC. C., also shared this form of power during the Cretan civilization and the Mycenaean civilization. However, when Homer's poems are analyzed, three hundred years later, Greek society no longer presents such characteristics that brought it closer to the East. Vernant claims that in the meantime there has been a profound rupture[1] resulting from the violent Doric invasions that occurred around the 12th century BC. C., whose impact uprooted all forms of social organization that existed in the Greek world until then.

After this profound break with the East, Greece gained peculiar social and state contours. Between the turn of the 8th to the 7th-century a. C., the first legislators, Draco, Solon, and Cleisthenes, respectively, instituted in Athens a set of measures that made it impossible to concentrate power and authority in the hands of a king and laid the foundations of a well-organized society. Ownership of the land was pulverized into the hands of families, who, unlike other regions, were not organized into closed castes, but remained open to new family incorporations. Here, it is worth making a comparison with the existing form of territorial property in the patriarchal despotic power, which facilitated the concentration of power. The peculiarity of Greece was that ownership of property granted considerable autonomy to families, who divided the territory among themselves.

In addition, the Greeks, when they expanded territorially, formed a huge contingent of slaves, thus, many peasants lost their former occupations and migrated to the cities, forming a large urban population. A portion of this population, mainly artisans, became rich and began to dispute power with aristocratic landowners, causing the class to struggle to gain strength. As a way of softening this conflict between classes, the legislators divided the city territorially. The objective was to reduce the power of rich families and satisfy the demands of the poor (CHAUÍ, 2006, p. 351). This occurred in Athens so the Polis (city-state) was divided into sociopolitical units called demos. After this division, every man, son of an Athenian, from a demo, regardless of whether he was rich or poor, had the right to participate directly in the decisions of the city. Thus, politics was born, along with "democracy" in Athens.

In the same period, something similar was happening in Rome and the rest of Greece. However, only in Athens did political power assume the characteristics of a democracy, that is, rule by many. Despite excluding women, slaves, and foreigners, the policy still allowed the participation of the poor. In Sparta, politics took on characteristics of an "oligarchy", a government by a few, as only a small portion of the population had political rights. Just like in Rome, since only patricians were allowed to participate in government decisions.

---

[1] According to Vernant (1981, p. 6), the size of the destruction and violence undertaken by the Dorians in the then-Mycenaean society that dominated the Greek territory was such that it excised the figure of the king from the history of the Greek world. From that moment on, there is no record of historical sources until Homer's poems, written approximately in the 8th century BC. C. This painful break between the Greeks and Eastern society caused the course of Greek history to break free from the despotic power characteristic of the East and found the foundations of political power and rational thought.

The etymological origin of the word politics is Greek, Tá politiká (coming from the polis). Polis, for the Greeks, does not only comprise the space of urban infrastructure but the civic environment, the organized society, formed by citizens (politikós). In Rome, citizen, politokós, is equivalent to civil, and polis to civitas (CHAUÍ, 2006 p. 349) Therefore, in Athens, every citizen was political, that is, there was no differentiation between civil rights and political rights, they were equivalent. For this to happen, they all had two fundamental rights: isonomia (equality before the law) and isegoria (equality in the right to expose and discuss in public opinions about what the city should or should not do).

Democracy, in this case, was direct, as it allowed every citizen to vote in an assembly on Polis decisions. In this sense, the greater good for an Athenian did not only aim at his individuality, but at the collective benefit of the city, that is, he did not seek individual freedom, in the mold of modernity, but the freedom of the Greek citizen was linked to the city, it was essentially a citizen. In this way, the State became the ethical horizon of Greek man, remaining so until the Hellenistic era, as citizens felt the ends of the State as their ends, the good of the State as their good, the greatness of the State as its greatness and the freedom of the State as its freedom (REALE, 1990, p. 21).

The root of the concept of politics, in the Greco-Roman case, lies in the mediation of class conflicts through convention, that is, it is a way of proposing solutions that satisfy the classes in their dispute dynamics. The objective is to prevent armed struggle, with politics being the legitimate way to resolve conflicts and this is how it is at its core until the present day, despite having assumed several connotations that have trivialized its meaning (CHAUÍ, 2006 p. 352).

To understand the impact caused by the policy in Greece, we will point out its main characteristics. The first was that there the separation between power and the personal figure of the king was affected, that is, political power is impersonal, not embodied, but belongs to the collectivity that elects or draws for positions in government. The sovereign, in a regime of political power, must be the collectivity, even if it is small, as in the case of the aristocracy or the oligarchy. Another element of political power was the creation of a civic space where the votes of citizens' assemblies were held in Athens, called Agora. The exercise of citizenship – and citizenship is understood as the exercise of politics – was done in the Agora. There, more than anywhere else, the right to equality and isegory was used, that is, where everyone was considered equal and had the right to speak.

This collective form of government gave birth to the notion of an autonomous individual (authonomós), of a citizen who can deliberate in the public square on the affairs of the Polis. Of course, this freedom of autonomy was not exercised by all the inhabitants of Greece, or of Rome, but at least it was exercised by this small number of citizens. And that, in that period, raised them to a cultural and civilizational sea level far above the rest of the world.

3 ATHENIAN DEMOCRACY AND ITS CRITIQUE: PLATO AGAINST THE SOPHISTS

The greatest critic of Athenian democracy was Plato, one of the most influential philosophers in the history of philosophy. Together with his teacher, Socrates transformed the thinking of his time to paradigmatic proportions, bringing philosophy from the physical world to the rational human dimension.

Plato lived from 428 to 348 BC. C., the golden age of democracy in classical antiquity, shortly before the Macedonian conquest and the overthrow of the democratic political regime in Athens. In that context, Athenian politics brought together the largest number of individuals considered citizens of the Greek world, among which both the rich and the poor of each of its demes participated. Even so, "of the four hundred thousand inhabitants of Athens, 250 thousand were slaves, without political rights of any kind, and of the 150 thousand free men or citizens, only a small number attended the Ecclesia, or general assembly" (DURANT, 1996, p. . 31).

Even with the right to express themselves verbally in assembly, not all citizens had recourse to oratory, beautiful and pleasant speech, associated with knowledge of public affairs. Now, nobody was born knowing how to pronounce beautiful speeches, that came from a good and long apprenticeship. In general, those who underwent such education were the rich and the aristocrats, as they had the resources and the necessary idle time, as they owned a large number of slaves.

In Athens, discourse played an important role in the democratic political system, with oratory and rhetoric being highly valued. As a consequence of this aspect assumed by political power, a new type of thinking began to take shape, which was called sophistry and arrived to meet the real political needs of that moment: teaching convincingly. The sophists were, according to Danilo Marcondes (2007, p. 42), "masters of rhetoric and oratory, often itinerant masters, who roamed the city-states providing their teachings, their techniques, their skills to rulers and citizens. politicians in general". Sophist is a term that means "wise", and "knowledge specialist" (REALE and ANTISIERI, 1990, p. 73). This wisdom was generally attributed to the power of persuasion possessed by a sophist. They instructed aspirants to public office in Athens and, as they charged for their services, taught the art of "speaking well" only to those who could pay. In this way, those who learned oratory from the sophists were more likely to convince citizens in assembly. Plato's greatest criticism of Athenian democracy is based on this practice of persuasion and the use of words as a means to a certain end.

Despite Plato's criticisms, it was with the sophists, before Socrates, that philosophy shifted its axis of reflection from the physical world to the field restricted to man. This is largely due to the work carried out by them during the period of strengthening democracy when the old aristocratic values collapsed and began to compete for space with the new democratic values. The sophists showed that what was thought to be eternally valid has no value in other ways and under other circumstances. Taking advantage of this, they mainly attracted young people, who were more eager for the new values attributed to democracy and formed a large number of disciples.

The sophists did not manage to form a single philosophical school, but in the set of their representatives, it can be seen that they are relativists, and their knowledge is based on the famous phrase of the sophist Protagoras "man is the measure of all things". This phrase can be understood as being the individual man who determines what is true or false. Relativism does not admit a single universal truth, as it claims to be the truth relative to each individual.

In this way, the impossibility of reaching a universal truth due to the existence of several different truths, all related to the subject who pronounces the speech, makes the Agora the stage of political disputes in the discursive field increasingly immersed in relativism. For every true statement made, there can be a counterpoint to annul it. This was the secret of the success of the sophists, they taught techniques to criticize and argue, to organize a tournament of reasons against reasons where the one with the greatest power of persuasion won (REALE and ANTISIERI, 1990, p. 76-77).

Relativity extended to all things, including the field of morals. Just as there was not one truth, but several truths, just as there is not one morality, but several. This means that there are no absolute moral values, there is only something more useful and more convenient, that is, a utilitarian morality. Therefore, just as man is measured to determine truth and falsehood, he is also measured in terms of his usefulness to others. It is from this perspective that the sophists elaborate their thoughts about justice, good and evil.

All the contributions made to philosophy by the sophists, according to Plato, did not add anything to concrete knowledge. The man was thought of by them only for his biological and animal nature, subduing and silencing his spiritual nature. The sophists were concerned with deconstructing aristocratic values, as well as their model of man, present in Homer's poetry. But they didn't know how to create anything from that (REALE and ANTISIERI, 1990, p. 76).

Socrates, and in his entire life wrote nothing, his philosophy consisted of his "dialectical" orality. However, his thought was synthesized in texts, written in the form of dialogues by Plato, in addition to quotations made by his other disciples. Socrates lived a troubled relationship with Athenian democracy. He was born around 470 BC. C., in Athens, and died in 399 BC. condemned by the citizens of that city to drink hemlock. The reason for the conviction had been the accusation of not believing in the gods of the city and corrupting the youth (REALE and ANTISIERI, 1990, p. 85), but behind this accusation were other motives and political maneuvers. He was known as the one who bothered, from there, one can get an idea of the real reason for his condemnation. The death of Socrates, sentenced by the democrats, provoked in Plato a deep dislike for the policy undertaken by the Athenians in that period. It is from there that he starts his dialogues and the criticism of democracy, sometimes very fierce, is constantly present.

Socrates was the son of a sculptor and an obstetrician (midwife), it is known that he lived a simple and humble life, and attracted disciples from the lower classes to members of the aristocracy thanks to his genius. His philosophy exerted such weight in the development of Greek and Western thought that it parallels a spiritual revolution. This is because by specifying the nature and essence of man, he concluded that the human essence is his soul. Soul meant conscience, reason, the core of thinking activity, and

morality. In this way, Socrates breaks with the sophists, since he disregards the external good (wealth, external beauty, social prestige) and values the internal good, that is, the good related to the soul. Thus, Plato's master creates the moral and intellectual tradition to which the West is the heir. To seek the essence of things linked to human activities, such as justice, beauty, virtue, and happiness, Socrates created a method known as the dialectical method, which consisted of a dialogue between two people.

Socrates' main criticism of the Sophists concerns the essence of words, or "logos". For Socrates, the sophist used words as a means to attract and convince the crowd, without, however, worrying about their true meaning (ROGUE, 2005, p. 27). Unlike the sophists, his goal is to seek the essence of words, as he believed that this would lead to a unique and universal knowledge, which would find the essential meaning of words and relate the "logos" to the true "being". Thus, as Plato writes the Socratic dialogues, the construction of some concepts becomes evident, that is, Socrates, through the dialectical method, arrives at the universal meaning of some words, such as justice, freedom, virtue, and happiness. The evolution of this Socratic quest between logos and being will culminate in the "Theory of forms"[2].

According to Marilena Chauí (2006, p.359), "for the Greeks, ethics outside the political community was inconceivable – the polis, as Koinonía or community of equals -, in which nature or human essence found its highest realization". Thus, the qualities of laws and the exercise of power depended on the moral qualities of the citizen. We can understand this characteristic by the fact of the inseparability between the civil and the political, because in Athens, every citizen was political and, therefore, personal ethics should be linked to political ethics. Although the sophist discourse is, in some cases, related to the proliferation of immorality, due to the ethical value attributed by the Greeks to politics, it will always be covered with the appearance of morality.

In general, Chauí (2006, p. 356-357), characterizes the notion of justice for the sophists as being the use of laws created by citizens through consensus, and the purpose of political life is to enable and perpetuate this consensus. This occurs because they conceive the polis as born of convention among men when they realize that life in the community is more useful to them than in isolation. Justice must also assume a protective character, taking care that changing the laws does not destroy the political community. Therefore, the dispute is essential to reach an agreement through a majority vote, with the victory, in a public debate, being up to the interests with the best argumentation and conviction.

In Plato's Republic, the debate between sophist thought and platonic thought, represented by Socrates, regarding justice (Dikê) can be analyzed in its basic foundations. In this work, between its books

---

[2] It is a consensus among most scholars in classical philosophy to attribute the authorship of the "Theory of forms" to Plato. Platonic dualism proposes the existence of two parallel dimensions, that of the "sensible world", which is the reality we inhabit, and that of the "intelligible world" or "world of ideas", in which all things are perfect and incorruptible. For Plato, true knowledge, of ideas, is outside the sensitive world, as this is full of illusions. We cannot be sure that what we see, hear, or feel reflects the truth, the senses are deceiving and are not reliable sources of knowledge. The knowledge of universal truths is found in the world of ideas and this is only achieved through dialectic, the constant exercise of doubting, refuting, and seeking the truth within oneself.

I, II, and IV, one observes the construction of justice for the understanding of the sophists, who defend it in connection with the values of the democratic political form, which are contested by Socrates, whose definition of justice appears in Book VI, where he bases the concept of justice as universal, arguing through criticism of democracy. The entire work takes place in the form of a dialogue, in which Socrates appears, sometimes as an interrogator, sometimes as an interlocutor, and other characters who participate in a banquet.

The character Thrasymachus, representing the sophist discourse, presents the concept of justice as being in the interest of the strongest. By stronger it meant the strongest, most powerful sector of each city, this is who holds the power[3]. In this way, in all cities, what is advantageous to the government is just. Therefore, justice is in the interest of the strongest. For him, justice is not a common good, but an alien good. In this understanding, injustice is exalted and justice despised.

Thrasymachus goes further and shows the advantages of injustice. He says that the unjust rule over the just and simple-minded, these work for the interest of the stronger and make him happy by serving him to the detriment of their happiness. Thus, he concludes that unjust people, covering themselves with the appearance of justice, commit immorality and their acts go unnoticed in the eyes of the crowd, without paying for it. On the other hand, knowing the suffering of injustice, everyone is afraid of suffering from it. Therefore, people are not afraid of committing injustice, but of suffering it, and thus, united in society, they establish laws to contain the action of the unjust.

This argument reinforces the positive character of the laws against human (selfish) nature. It is following the characteristics of the notion of justice previously exposed by Marilena Chauí and which are connected with the democratic government system since this is based on the consensual approval of laws. Another factor that adapts this notion of justice to democracy is the character of a power dispute, where the strongest prevails, or who has the best argumentation and conviction. Despite this, Thrasymachus' discourse on justice is powerful and difficult to refute.

In Book VI of The Republic, Socrates begins the refutation of the sophistic concept of justice, starting by contesting its character of last resort. From this perspective, just as justice is the only mechanism that prevents citizens from practicing or suffering injustice, it is also something imposed and painful. The law is never willed for its own sake. For Plato, such a political order, accepted with sighs and lamentations, is very unstable and tends to fail. In the search for the ideal of justice, Plato tries to do the opposite, showing how human nature and the law can work harmoniously in a political order that makes justice possible (ROGUE, 2006, p. 60).

Socrates, in this way, begins his long path until he arrives at the definition of justice in Book VI. To make himself understood and seek to follow the prerequisites mentioned above – the harmonious

---

[3] Therefore, in a tyranny, the strongest is the tyrant; in an aristocracy, the group of aristocrats; in a democracy, the strongest sector is the people. In each of these forms, the stronger is the one who governs and makes the laws for his benefit, declaring his interest just as he criticizes those who commit transgressions.

connection between human nature and political order – he creates a model of an ideal city. This is necessary, because Socrates, in the words of Plato, compares the just city with the just human being. It is inconceivable for the two philosophers, a just human being outside the just city. The individual must be shaped by the environment, thus, the unjust environment would corrupt him, and the fair environment, molds the individual to justice, and equally the individuals perpetuate the fair or unfair city. As he builds his ideal city, he creates the universal concepts of courage, wisdom, and moderation, to finally talk about justice.

To illustrate, the ideal city is ranked in three castes. Like her, the human being has three souls (PLATÃO, 1997, p. 134). As far as the city is concerned, its base is the economic class – landowners, merchants, craftsmen –, guaranteeing the economic sustenance of the city; above them is the caste of warriors – military –, which guarantees the defense against external and internal threats; superior to these two, is the caste of magistrates, enabling the government of the city under the laws. This same logic applies to human beings, everyone has three souls, the concupiscent soul – located in the entrails – constantly seeks the satisfaction of desires, both necessary and those that cause only pleasure; the irascible or choleric soul – located in the chest – defends the body against external aggressions, sometimes overcoming pain to protect life; finally, the rational or intellectual soul – located in the head –, which is dedicated to knowledge, both coming through the perception of the senses, and in the form of ideas, through pure thought (CHAUÍ, 2005, p. 357).

Justice occurs to human beings when they have a rational soul dominating the irascible and concupiscent, the first imposing the virtue of moderation and the second the virtue of courage, that is, rational self-control of human instincts. But when one of the other two possesses more strength than the rational soul, that individual becomes unjust. The virtue of human beings is justice, therefore, ethical action must prevail over selfish action, aiming at the common good.

The just city follows the same principle. Justice occurs when all its parts fulfill their function. However, this social harmony, which characterizes justice, is threatened when some other class, other than the magistrates, takes control of the city since the only ones who will be able to govern justly and ensure the common good are the philosophers.

Plato conceives the possibility of governing only philosophers based on the educational system that will be installed in the ideal city. Education has a capital role in the formation and maintenance of this city. The people who will integrate the classes will do so according to their natural aptitudes. According to him, we all possess the three souls, but not all of them in the same proportion, that is, some have the strongest concupiscent soul, others the irascible soul, and others the rational soul. All the children will attend the school and the selection for each one to integrate into the class that fits their soul will be made there. Therefore, it does not matter if the parents are from the economic class, if the child shows aptitude to become a philosopher, he will be sent to higher education and that will be done.

This is the definition of justice that Plato formulated, with which he managed to assimilate law, human nature, and political order. The ideal city manages to assign the role to each person according to

their nature, enabling political order, which is possible through education[4]. The impetus given by education will determine everything that follows, leading to a great and perfect result, both for good and for evil (PLATÃO, 1997, p. 122).

In this brief study on justice for the sophists and Plato, we can see that, for the latter, it is intrinsically linked to rational self-control over the passions linked to the sensitive aspect, with a view to the common good. In this way, we can understand why Plato proposes that rulers be philosopher kings, since they reach the apex of human knowledge and rationality, as they understand the universal principles of justice and would be the aptest to govern for the common good, thus disregarding democracy as a political power and promoting aristocracy, government of the fittest. On the contrary, the sophists, starting from justice as the reign of laws over the human will, base justice as being the victorious consensus, coming from the strongest, over the various wills, as it gives rise to particular interests to the detriment of the general interest, of the very common.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is extremely important to point out that we no longer live in the context of classical Greek antiquity, but we are its heirs, therefore, much of what was said or developed to improve the way of political life can still be useful today. The study of the Athenian polis and its peculiarities also brings us current discussions. We cannot compare ourselves with the citizens of that city-state without first making some reservations.

The question of the discourse of appearances, much emphasized by Plato, oratory, and rhetoric are used today in great proportions, even on a global scale. We still behave like the mob criticized by Plato, in preferring beautiful pleasant speech to seek out the machinations and appearances they contain. Therefore, it is valid, even after two thousand years, to continue reading about Socrates and Plato.

Another discussion present in our study is the clash between the notions of justice exposed by Thrasymachus, representing the sophists, and by Socrates, in the words of Plato. There we perceive a fierce battle in the field of discourse, where Thrasymachus, stripped of morality, exhorts justice as the good of the strongest and evil of the weakest. Although Plato fights this notion, he recognizes the courage of Thrasymachus for not hiding under the appearance of morality, this is a strong argument, however, Plato manages to get around it.

Justice is still debated today, it is no longer the same as that of the sophists, nor of Plato, it is up to us to arrive at the concept. However, the discussions incited by Plato are relevant. It enables a series of questions, among which democracy plays a central role. Plato did not believe that it was beneficial to everyone and that it was capable of the worst injustices, among them, condemning to death a man as just

---

[4] Throughout his work, Plato speaks of education as shaping and preserving this society. He attributes to her the power to shape, select, and create beliefs and customs that will make it possible for justice to reign. The formation of the philosopher king is also an attribute of education, which begins with the teaching of the guardians and, those who stand out, pass to the class of philosophers and, only exercise the magistracy, after completing all the stages of the education reserved for them.

'

and wise as his teacher Socrates. That's where his disbelief comes from, his criticism of the crowd who are malleable as their passions are stirred.

Despite all the criticism, we cannot label Plato as anti-democratic or an enemy of freedom, his life shows that he was a lover of politics. His city model developed in the book The Republic was the result of accurate observation of Athenian politics, and his criticism is explicit in it.

As a result of this study, we can conclude that democracy is full of flaws and, as Plato states, when men carry out reforms or political improvements, they are cutting off only one of the heads of the Hydra. It sounds like a heavy criticism, but it is true in the sense that Plato was a keen observer of that government, so we must take seriously what he said.

It was evident that Socrates did not believe in the system of government in Athens, however, he never dared to disobey its laws and was the most exemplary citizen of that city. We can say that he was the most democratic of citizens because the only weapons he used were his reason and "persuasion" to try to acquit himself in the trial, in which he was condemned. As he was unsuccessful, he accepted the sentence. He did not use violence or flight, as he believed these to be impious things. For him, persuasion was the only way for a just man to dispose of.

REFERENCES

BENOIT, H. Sócrates – o nascimento da Razão negativa. 2ª edição. SP: Moderna, 1996.

CHAUÍ, M. Introdução à História da Filosofia. 2ª ed. 12ª reimp. São Paulo: Cia das Letras, 2002.
_____. Convite à filosofia. 13° ed. São Paulo: Ática, 2006.

COL. OS PENSADORES. Platão: vida e obra. São Paulo: Nova Cultural, 1996.

DURANT, W. A história da filosofia. In. Os Pensadores. Trad. Luís Carlos do Nascimento e Silva. São Paulo: Nova cultural, 1996.

FINLEY, I. M., Política no mundo antigo. Tradução Álvaro Cabral. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar Editores, 1985.

MARCONDES, D. Iniciação à história da filosofia: dos pré-socráticos a Wittgeistein. 2° ed. Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 2007.

PLATÃO. A República. São Paulo: Nova Cultural. Coleção Os Pensadores, 1997. Tradução de Enrico Corvisieri.

REALE, G. & ANTISIERI, D. História da Filosofia. Três Volumes. 3a edição. São Paulo: Paulus, 1990.

ROGUE, C. Compreender Platão. Tradução Jaime A. Clasen. Petrópolis, RJ: Vozes, 2005.

VERNANT, J. P. As origens d pensamento grego. 3° ed., tradução de Ísis Borges B. da Fonseca. São Paulo: Difusão Editorial S. A., 1981.

VIDAL-NAQUET, P. Os gregos, os historiadores, a democracia: o grande desvio. Tradução Jonatas Batista Neto. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2002.