

The First Year of the War

(Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, translated by Rex Warner, Penguin Books, 1972, pages 136-140.)

...the Peloponnesians considered that, if it had not been for the delaying tactics of Archidamus [the Spartan king and leader of the Peloponnesian forces], they might have made a rapid advance and found all this property still outside the walls [of Athens]. Thus,...there was a bitter feeling in the army against Archidamus.

...finally they [the Peloponnesian army] moved forward and invaded Attica...

...when they [the Athenians] saw the [Peloponnesian] army...only seven miles from Athens, they could no longer put up with the situation. Their land was being laid waste in front of their very eyes—a thing that the young men had never seen happen and that the old men had seen only at the time of the Persian invasion. Naturally enough, therefore, they felt outraged by this and wanted, especially the young, to march out and stop it... Thus the city was in a thoroughly excited state; they were furious with Pericles and paid no attention at all to the advice he had given previously; instead they abused him for being a general and not leading them out to battle, and put on him the whole responsibility for what they were suffering themselves.

Pericles was convinced of the rightness of his own views about not going out to battle, but he saw that for the moment the Athenians were being led astray by their angry feelings. So he summoned no assembly or special meeting of the people, fearing that any general discussion would result in wrong decisions, made under the influence of anger rather than reason. Meanwhile he saw to the defenses of the city and kept things as quiet as he could. He did, however, constantly send out cavalry in order to stop enemy patrols from breaking into the country near the city and doing harm...

...While they [the Peloponnesians] were still in Attica the Athenians sent off round the Peloponnese the fleet of 100 ships they had equipped... This expeditionary force set off on its voyage, and the Peloponnesians, after staying in Attica for as long as their supplies lasted, went back [to the Peloponnese]...

...They [the Athenians] also decided to set aside and keep intact a special fund of 1,000 talents [one talent equaled almost 60 pounds of silver] from the money in the Acropolis. The expenses of the war were to be paid out of other funds, and the death penalty was laid down for anyone who should suggest or should put to the vote any proposal for using this money in any other way except to defend the city in the case of their enemies coming to attack them with a fleet by sea. To go with this money they set aside a special fleet of 100 triremes [warships], the best ones of each year, with their captains. These, too, were only to be used in the same way as the money and to meet the same danger, if it should ever arise.

The Athenians [the expeditionary force of 100 ships] continued their cruise [around the Peloponnesian coast], laying waste...[to] places as they went.