

THE INSTITUTE FOR ANACYCLOSIS

EXCERPT FROM  
THE SUPPLIANTS  
BY EURIPIDES

423 B.C.

*Note: This text provides another example, in addition to that most famously provided by Aristotle, of Greek recognition of and praise for the sociopolitical stability promoted by the middle economic stratum.*

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... You were led astray by those young men who delight in gaining honour for themselves, and, without regard to justice, promote wars and corrupt their fellow-citizens. One aspires to the command of armies, another to win power and the license (hubris) that goes with it, yet another aims for personal profit, ignoring the harm that the plēthos may thus suffer. For citizens may be divided into three groups: the wealthy, useless and always longing for more: and the have-nots, living on subsistent level, dangerous men, overfull of envy, who, when beguiled by the tongues of common (ponēroi) prostatai, shoot out bitter barbs against the rich; but of the three, it is the middle rank that saves cities, by preserving the order which the city ordains.

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