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CRISIS, STATE AND PEACE: EUROPE AT THE CYPRUS 'BORDER'

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Introduction by

Barbara Karatsioli

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Cédric Durand

What is Europe?

37 – 62

Never before has Europe been so present in public debate. From 2009 onwards, not a month has gone by without new twists in the melodramatic rifts and reconciliations between EU governments and institutions. As the region dips further into recession and social desperation, the showdown between supporters and opponents of austerity renders the macro-economic dispute the central issue, leaving the future of Europe and its people woefully unclear. But exactly what is 'Europe'? The concept is difficult to grasp, as 'Europe' is both multifaceted and unstable. In a bid to break open the 'black box' this article proposes to set aside the events to focus on the crisis behind the events. To engage in such a discussion, one must decipher the deceptively simple question of what Europe is. Which are the forces and the principles, from post-war to the euro crisis, which animate this politico-institutional process?

Keywords: European integration, supra-national institutional transformation, state, ortholiberalism, neoliberalism, internationalisation of capital, financial capitalism, austerity measures, class struggle

Christakis Georgiou

'Whatever it takes':

The Eurozone Crisis as a Catalyst of European Integration

63 – 80

There are two levels to the Eurozone crisis. At a more fundamental level, it is a crisis of capitalism spawned by a secular decline in profitability that has given rise to growing indebtedness in the advanced capitalist countries. But the shape that this crisis takes is determined by the European Union's political configuration, more precisely by the institutional imbalance between a centralised monetary policy and decentralised fiscal policies. This article traces the cause of this imbalance, through a brief examination of the political history of Europe's monetary union, to the strategic ambivalence of France's European policy. It concludes by arguing that the current crisis has created political conditions that should push French elites to reconsider their hostility to a more centralised fiscal policy framework for the Eurozone.

Keywords: political economy, monetary history, European integration

PART II:

GLOBAL ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING AND CAPITAL REPRODUCTION:
A VIEW ON CRISIS, AUSTERITY AND EMPLOYMENT FROM DIVIDED CYPRUS

Umut Bozkurt

Turkey: From the ‘Motherland’ to the ‘IMF’ of Northern Cyprus 83 – 105

The key argument of this article is that in the aftermath of the failure of the Annan Plan, Turkey assumed the role of the ‘IMF of northern Cyprus’, aiming to effect a deeper transformation in the economy and politics of the Turkish Cypriot community. Turkey imposed economic programmes that included austerity measures and the privatisation of state owned enterprises in order to tame the ‘cumbersome’ state in the north of Cyprus. Furthermore, AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi [Justice and Development Party]) opted for a strategy that defines northern Cyprus as an investment area. As a result of the deliberate attempts of the AKP government, Turkish capital has significantly increased its presence in state enterprises through privatisation along with infrastructure, education, construction and tourism sectors and commercial centres. The paper argues for an analysis that would locate this neoliberal restructuring in Cyprus in a global context as well as grasping the peculiarity of the state formation and the actual agency of local dynamics in the north of Cyprus.

Keywords: economic crisis, neoliberalism, austerity, privatisation, ‘TRNC’, AKP

Gregoris Ioannou

Employment in Crisis: Cyprus 2010–2013 107 – 126

This article discusses the conditions that prevail in the Cyprus labour market after the onset of the economic crisis. The analysis takes the form of a chronological narrative on the development of the crisis, its impact on employment relations and the attempts of the political elite to manage it through austerity measures. The article argues that the recession and the rising unemployment accelerated and exacerbated already existing tendencies of labour market deregulation and trade union marginalisation while in the context of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Troika and its aftermath, historical work rights and benefits as well as living standards were eroded, extending the condition of ‘precarity’ to broader sections of the Cyprus labour force. It is primarily a descriptive account which reports the recent developments in an attempt to map out the changes in the field of employment, situate them in their historical context and preliminarily assess their significance.

Keywords: crisis, employment relations, Cyprus labour market, Troika

Constantinos Constantinou

Heterotopias of Production:
Unveiling the Everydayness of the Cypriot Economy 127 – 143

In the representation of the Cypriot reality there are areas of social life, particularly in places of labour where a group of people act as a working class, which are not part of our symbolic universe, a universe which has suppressed under its glamorous appearance the reality of toil and harsh labour. The effects that these places have on the economy and the social relations are nonetheless real. To demonstrate the effects, two cases are examined: A fast food industry and a telephone survey firm. Through a workplace level analysis, these places of social production are examined as heterotopias, points of passage of economic and social ordering. The article aims to ‘show’ these places and furthermore to point that the heterotopias of production might hold the key to understanding what dominant strategies of dealing with the crisis through development might include as a future.

Keywords: Cypriot economy, heterotopia, services, fast food industry, call centres, labour, production, Post-Fordism, class

PART III:

CYPRUS 'ON THE BORDER': CRISIS, RADICAL POLITICS AND PEACE

Barbara Karatsioli

'What kind of state are we in when we start to think of the state?'

Cyprus in Crises and Prospects for Reunification

147 – 168

Partitioned Cyprus has known two major crises in the last ten years: first, the 1999–2001 Turkish Cypriot crisis, and second, the Greek Cypriot watershed since 2009. Both have significantly transformed the identity and imaginary of the state. Given that crisis is a field of subjectivation and changing forces, can social movements go so far as to challenge the division and create the conditions for reunification? The 2002 Turkish Cypriot protests have claimed reunification whilst affirming the Turkish Cypriot people's sovereignty. How does this movement spill over to affect the rapprochement 'on the border' and Greek Cypriots more generally? As the crisis strikes Greek Cypriots, and state sovereignty is rapidly contested through EU intervention, can Greek and Turkish Cypriots engage together towards reunification and the creation of a new state? Can we imagine a new state when in a state of crisis?

Keywords: crisis, identity, state, sovereignty, peace, austerity, rapprochement, Cypriotism, protests

Eirini Iliopoulou, Pafsanias Karathanasis

Towards a Radical Politics:

Grassroots Urban Activism in the Walled City of Nicosia

169 – 192

This article presents the emergence and development of grassroots and self-organised activism in Nicosia. Following the thread of crucial actions, including the Occupy Buffer Zone (OBZ) movement, within the UN controlled area of the old town of Nicosia, we elaborate on a transforming political subjectivity, exploring its timeline, composition, demands, practices and potentials. Through everyday practice and direct socio-political and cultural action, activists contest the dominant narratives and the institutionalised 'bi-communal' co-operation towards a 'communal' identity and a new radical politics. They manage to produce common space of demand in the old town, while localising the global call for action inspired by the recent global uprisings. Finally, we examine the rise of burgeoning new dynamics in times of capitalist crisis and the new tasks ahead.

Keywords: Buffer Zone, Occupy movement, grassroots activism, political subjectivity, walled city of Nicosia, community

Essay and Research Notes:

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Crisis, Critique and the Possibilities of the Political

An interview with Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou

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