

## *Prologue*

The times of crisis all have one thing in common – social strife, setting man against man and society against itself. The causes vary, but the theme is constant. And at the root of it is the very disputation not only of the very bond that holds men and society together, that is, common understanding and respect, but of law and order itself as the binding social norm. The ancient Greek concept of the measure, expressed in such wise sayings as ‘measure is best’ and ‘nothing in exaggeration’, is the foundation upon which all human conduct and all social intercourse should rest if peace and harmony are to be enjoyed. In the absence of measure men are led to extremes, and extremes involve preconception and dogmatism, ill-will, intolerance, hatred and ultimately force and strife itself. What is even more dangerous is the exploitation by such extremists of social conditions under the guise of populism in order to advance their views and policies by gaining popular support thereof. Instances are everywhere in history. In ancient Greece the tyrant was usually not a man who imposed himself by force but a man who, exploiting social crisis, emerged as the popular leader who was to remedy the situation and save the state from collapse. Once entrusted with supreme and absolute power, however, he proceeded to perpetuate his rule for his own benefit, repressing all who differed from him and forcing people to accept his ways. In modern times we have seen the same theme in Nazism and Fascism, with Hitler and Mussolini emerging as populist leaders through policies of hatred and strife and becoming absolute dictators causing pain and suffering to millions of people.

It is well to bear in mind that in our own days and in our continent, though populism has not taken over, conditions are such that in many countries it has known a resurgence unprecedented after the Second World War. Its fortunes have not always been uniformly advanced but the phenomenon is clearly there and awaits the proper moment for taking advantage. Though war in Europe has been excluded, there are other social crises which cause an intra-societal war to be waged leading to the aggravation of civic relations and cohesion and allowing to a great many populist movements to emerge and promote themselves. Taking advantage of, if not abusing, the liberal democratic process, they have taken root in political as much as in social life, causing inroads to the harmonious functioning of the social process, luring their supporters through deceptive covers appealing to the weaker and more selfish aspect of human nature. We must always remember the oft-said that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance.

In parallel with the need for tackling those conditions that cause the crises, particularly social injustice, discrimination and international immigration, there is the need for awareness, information and exchange of ideas, aiming at the exposition and understanding of populism and its multiple expressions and manifestations. The circumstances that allow populism to thrive ultimately refer to education. Education, that is, in the sense not of

learning itself but of acquiring wisdom as the foundation of virtue. The educated man will not allow prejudice and ill-will to take root in his mind and will resort to justice and reason for the resolution of social problems. That is why it is important, particularly in times of crisis, for those who have seen the light to try and enlighten others so as to bring them out of their cave of ignorance, for ignorance, as Socrates said, is what makes men act badly. The law, however, also has a crucial role in this respect. Given that whatever education may achieve there will always be men who remain in their ignorance, the law has a mission to perform by providing against extremist behaviour of the populist type in the interests of the rule of law as much as of those liberal and democratic principles which form the foundation of our civilization.

In this setting, academic lawyers have a special responsibility in taking the lead for the exposure, discussion and tackling of all aspects of populism, involving therein others concerned, including political scientists, sociologists, economists, politicians, the mass communication media, social groups and society at large, in the interests of informed, concerted and interacting study and action. The Interdisciplinary Journal of Populism in the framework of the Jean Monnet Module “European Union Law and Governance in Populist Times” which I have the honour to introduce through this prologue, aims at exactly that, and I feel that I must express my congratulations to the University of central Lancashire in Cyprus for running the Module and introducing this innovative Journal dedicated to the cause.

Judge Akis Hadjihambis (Ret'd)

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