Everything is falling down, now

In *Glänta*, Imogen Tyler deconstructs the asylum invasion complex; in *openDemocracy*, Thomas Fazi insists the troika saved the banks and creditors, not Greece; in *Belgrade Journal*, Étienne Balibar holds out hope for a new and plural Europe; *Blätter* examines the current craze for pinning everything on your enemy; *Dilema veche* speaks to Razvan Georgescu about how Romania traded Germans for money; *La Revue nouvelle* criticises the international justice system; *Springerin* looks back at 20 years of digital media culture; and *Varlik* remembers Osman Cetin Deniztekin.

*Glänta* editors Göran Dahlberg and Linn Hansén quote from Gatti’s book *Bilal* during the course of the conversation: "It’s easy to miss the very moment in which the world changes for the worse, the banality of evil, when they trick you with words." And ask, "Is this the moment?"

"We’ve already passed it", Gatti responds. "We passed it at the time the agreements were made with the North African dictatorships, which were signed without constitutional support, ten years ago, the so called..."
Euro–Mediterranean Association Agreements. Following which, Italy signed a bilateral agreement with Gaddafi in 2008, including among other things an intensification of the common war against 'illegal immigration'. There's no reason to be surprised that everything is falling down now."

(The interview adds to several texts by Gatti in Eurozine; but when will the Italian investigative journalist's book Bilal finally be translated into English?)

Also: A poem by Jazra Khaleed, translated from Greek, about the fantastic world of undocumented migration between the 24th and 28th meridians.

The full table of contents of Glänta 3–4/2014

openDemocracy, February 2015

Greece's new prime minister, Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras, put the write−off of a large portion of Greece's public debt and a moratorium on repaying the remainder at the centre of his electoral programme. The ensuing debate prompted Thomas Fazi, writing in openDemocracy, to argue for why Greece deserves debt relief.

Far from keeping the Greek state afloat, the lion's share of the loans that the troika convinced the Greek government to take went toward bailing out Europe's financial sector. Once lent, the "funds were then, to a large degree, channelled back to the creditor countries. This entailed a double shift in liabilities: from the banks of the periphery to the governments (and citizens) of the periphery; and from the banks of the core to the governments (and citizens) of the eurozone as whole, since most of the troika bailout funds came from EMU countries."

"This irrefutably puts to shame the claim that European taxpayers' money was used to save Greece and the other reckless, profligate countries of the periphery”, concludes Fazi: the troika saved the banks and creditors, not Greece. Which is why Greece "doesn't just need debt relief, it deserves it".

Greek geopolitics: Iannis Carras is mindful that the new Greek government refused to consent to a European Council statement condemning the killing of civilians during the indiscriminate shelling of the Ukrainian city of Mariupol on 24 January 2015: "Greece will leverage its position along a geopolitical faultline to maximize its bargaining power. This high−risk game may include not only Ukraine/Russia but also policies toward the Balkans and the Middle East" – pending Greece's economic survival.

Therefore, Carras concludes: "Before pulling the plug, the EU must think carefully about the precedents for debt renegotiation, and also whether it desires another failed state on the periphery of Europe: a Hungary+ situation, where the centre−left and centre−right are marginalized, with the nationalist right vying for power with the fascists over an impoverished, humiliated and angry population."

More on openDemocracy
Belgrade Journal of Media and Communications 6 (2014)

The European Union, writes Étienne Balibar in Belgrade Journal of Media and Communications (Serbia), "has deliberately stopped functioning as a space of solidarity between its members, of initiative vis-à-vis the risks of globalization. It has rather become an instrument of penetration of world competition at the heart of European space, forbidding transfers between territories and discouraging common enterprises, rejecting any harmonization 'from above' of rights and living standards, making each state into a potential predator of its neighbours."

In short, says Balibar, "the triumph of the principle of competition has generated a continuous aggravation of disparities".

The French philosopher takes "the obstinacy with which the dismantlement and the colonization of the Greek economy have been pursued under the pretext of 'structural reforms'" as a sign that "however negative the consequences of austerity and of monetarism with regard to general prosperity may be, they nonetheless prepare the conditions for increased profit at least in the case of some investments (or capital): those that, whether 'European' or not, have already been broadly deterritorialized and that could instantaneously delocalize their activities from one site to another."

Hence Balibar's "stubborn proposition of another Europe than the Europe of bankers, of technocrats and of political profiteers. A Europe of conflicts between antithetical models of society, not between nations in search of their lost identities."

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Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik 2/2015

"Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the West": this is the group known as Pegida (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes), founded in Dresden in October 2014. At weekly marches attended since then by thousands, Pegida leaders have demanded tougher restrictions on immigration, particularly where Muslim immigrants are concerned. Angela Merkel has issued statements advising citizens not to join the movement, referred to colloquially as "pinstripe Nazis".

Those forming counter-demonstrations in support of an open society have lately begun to considerably outnumber Pegida marchers in Dresden, as well as participants in offshoots of the movement in German cities nationwide. Nonetheless, in an article in Blätter (Germany), Albrecht von Lucke expresses alarm at the fragile political landscape that has allowed the movement to emerge.

Von Lucke considers acts of Islamist terror in Paris to have provided the chaotic movement with an "ideal screen" upon which it can focus insecurities
felt across broad swathes of the population. And yet, the frustrations and anger of both Islamists and their radical critics, as divergent as these may be, ultimately converge in illusions of one kind or another that are not entirely unalike: whether fantasies of omnipotence in this life or the next on the side of the Islamists, or a desire for an authoritarian leader on the part of Pegida activists (whose demo-slogans have appealed to Vladimir Putin among others):

"They consider themselves the victims of circumstances and of their enemies, whether these be the decadent West or the supposedly spoilt 'fraudulent asylum seekers'; and what aggravates the situation further is the manner in which neoliberal capitalism loads the burden of indebtedness and responsibility upon the individual alone — 'Each being the architect of their own destiny' — thus dramatically intensifying the need for scapegoats." Finally von Lucke quotes the German cultural theorist Byung-Chul Han: "The Other as enemy relieves too the neoliberal achiever, who would otherwise have been his own enemy fighting a war against himself."

Also: Following on from Katajun Amirpur's warning about equating Islam with violence, covered in the first Eurozine Review of 2015, the Palestinian–Israeli psychologist Ahmad Mansour insists that Islamic anti-Semitism finally be taken seriously; and Bernhard Pötter fears that, ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris at the end of 2015, the challenges that climate change poses will be lost sight of against a background of critical conflicts around the world.

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In his documentary Trading Germans, Razvan Georgescu explains how, during the Cold War, Romania sold around 250,000 ethnic German Romanians to West Germany. Georgescu's previous investigatory film work examined the effects of Ceausescu's "Decree 770", which aimed to grow the Romanian population by prohibiting abortion and contraception. His latest film turns to the trading of destinies, between 1968 and 1989, of the Banat Swabians and Transylvanian Saxons.

In interview with Roxana Calinescu in Dilema veche 566 (Romania), Georgescu talks about the difficulty he had getting the politicians and lawyers who were involved in the transactions to talk. However, his thesis is clear:

"The episode of the sale and purchase of the Germans of Romania represents the culmination of a much longer process of erosion of these people's trust in a bright future living in Romania. If we look with lucidity at this phenomenon, I'm convinced that we can win some self-knowledge. The fact that the greatest single emigration of Germans happened in exchange for payment, without bills, after a secret agreement and in the middle of the Cold War, when Europe was divided by an impenetrable Iron Curtain, is a unique historical curiosity."

Romania's brave generation: Seven years after Romanian media foregrounded particularly dramatic cases, Lina Vdovii (in Dilema veche 571) portraits young people and children whose parents left them with relatives and
emigrated from Romania for economic reasons.

Despite some isolated tragedies, a lot of young people understand their parents' escape from extreme poverty, which enabled them to study and live a better life supported by their parents from abroad. However the price that both generations paid is high.


La Revue nouvelle 1/2015

La Revue nouvelle (Belgium) marks 20 years since the setting up of the international tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and 15 since the founding of the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Diane Bernard and Damien Scalia's critical introduction points to multiple flaws in these apparatuses: delayed first verdicts; ineffective responses to the Srebrenica massacre and the Rwandan genocide; how realpolitik hampers arrests; and how post–9/11 responses to international terrorism (torture, secret agreements, military intervention, drones) cast a shadow over ideals of international justice.

Collective guilt vs individual responsibility: The issue raises serious doubts about whether western criminal justice was ever the right model for international tribunals. Lawyer Vincent Lurquin adds weight to the sceptical tone:

"The difficulties, failings and silences of international justice are the result, not of the unsuitability of international intentions for dealing with the evil represented by genocide and crimes against humanity, but of a failure to pursue criminal justice to its logical conclusion. [...] One of the most terrible weapons in the hands of the perpetrators of genocide is their ability to make people believe in a form of collective guilt that does away with individual responsibility for these crimes, rapes and murders. If everyone is guilty, then nobody is."

The status of victims: Marie-Laurence Hébert–Dolbec and Julien Pieret contrast the International Criminal Court's practice regarding the role of victims and the virtual absence of victims in, for example, the Nuremberg trials. The Jerusalem trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 was perhaps the first occasion when victims played a major role as witnesses.

A crucially important feature of the ICC's decision to judicially formalize the status of victims is, Hébert–Dolbec and Pieret argue, that it helps to depoliticize the process in a world context in which the political legitimacy of the ICC is frequently called into question.

The full table of contents of La Revue nouvelle 1/2015

Springerin 1/2015

An article from www.eurozine.com
At the beginning of this year, the editors of Springerin (Austria) teamed up with representatives of the World–Information Institute to present their latest issue "Critical Netpractice" at Vienna's Museum for Applied Arts (MAK). The issue contains a roundtable discussion on developments in the field of digital culture, featuring founding members of Eurozine partner journal Mute (UK), together with Felix Stalder and Konrad Becker.

*Mute* editor Pauline van Mourik Broekman recollects: "When we founded the platform *OpenMute* in 2003, there was no MySpace and no Facebook. As these got big though, we asked ourselves what exactly we were thinking back then. Were we mad?! How could we have believed that with just a few people we could create a durable infrastructure for hundreds if not thousands of people? We were unbelievably naive as regards the time reserves and technical resources required for an alternative network. Once one has done that once, one never does it again!"

Looking ahead, fellow *Mute* editor Josephine Berry Slater concludes: "they are inseparable: the power that lies in technology and the manner in which capitalism drives the development of certain tools and creates new realities. It might therefore be so that we must concentrate once again more on the social end of the spectrum and less on the technological, like we did in the 1990s."

**Do–it–yourself–culture:** Alessandro Ludovico calls for the intensified use and development of alternative sharing projects and methods involving personal content and personal collections, instead of relying on remote services.

**Computerized gaze from above:** What does the film *Powers of Ten* evoke today? asks Vera Tollmann, referring to a short American documentary film by Charles and Ray Eames from 1977, the subtitle of which is *A Film Dealing with the Relative Size of Things in the Universe and the Effect of Adding Another Zero*.

Tollmann examines how space has gained a new cultural, economic and political significance. Projects such as Google Earth and sponsoring–events like Felix Baumgartner's space dive can be regarded as tools conditioning users to actively look at the world from above on the one hand and to accepting 24/7 surveillance on the other.

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**Varlik 1/2015**

Filiz Nayir Deniztekin opens the January issue of *Varlik* (Turkey) mourning the loss of "my partner who used to write this very page, my colleague, my husband, my dear friend Osman Cetin Deniztekin." The death of the journal's publisher at the age of 65 from complications following a leukemia diagnosis was "a rapid and implacable course we never expected, and the pain is equally deep", she says. Carl Henrik Fredriksson's memory of Deniztekin as "a master of the daily grind" and a pivotal figure in the Eurozine network, appears in Turkish translation.
Hüseyin Yurttas recalls his heavy heart as he surveyed the December issue of *Varlık*, which arrived in the post the morning after he learned of Deniztekin’s passing. Poet Cemal Süreya once observed that "every death is an early death", but Deniztekin’s "truly was an early death", Yurttas says. "The flagship of Turkish magazine publishing will live on. It must live on", because there will always be people who follow its progress.

**My death:** *Varlık* also publishes a poem by Orhan Veli not seen for 57 years. "My death" escaped the notice of the editors of the 2014 edition of Veli’s Complete Poems, perhaps because it was published in 1958, eight years after the poet’s death, in the small arts newspaper *Köprü*. Efdal Sevincli is convinced it displays the "sensitivity and irony” we associate with a writer who "completely changed the structure and content of our poetry". In lieu of a close reading of the poem Sevincli excavates what he can find of the life of Tarik Erman, the editor of *Köprü* who published the poem along with his memories of Veli’s last days.

**Also:** Mehmet Rifat digests a pre-publication "sampler" of the first section of Orhan Pamuk’s new novel *A Strangeness in My Mind*, due out in English translation this autumn; and Tozan Alkan celebrates Turkish linguistic creativity with a reading of Sermet Sami Uysal’s 1965 study of *French Words Created in Turkish and French Words that Changed Their Meanings in Turkish*.

The full table of contents of *Varlık* 1/2015