

The Breaking of the Family's Social contract

Interview of Christoforos **Vernardakis**, Ph.D., Political Scientist, by journalist Costas Raptis, 21/12/2008, SKAI.gr*

"It was a great surprise of mine when I was confronted with an amphitheatre full of 350 people, determined to dedicate their Saturday to such a procedure", states the political scientist of the University of Crete Christoforos **Vernardakis**, who participated, among many other invited speakers from a great range of specialties and approaches, in the one-day scientific meeting of HELASYTH, on the 6th of December, in order to contribute his special viewpoint on the subject of new work relations."

"I confess that all my images from conferences of the organized scientific community usually refer to gatherings of 40 to 50 people. On the contrary: **here you saw another world which meets the social problem through the particularity of its own professional undertaking which is psychotherapy.** I imagine that something like that follows objectively from all that goes on during group and individual sessions, since we have a massive turning of young people towards psychological support. People that obviously bring with them, the especially hard conditions that have developed in work relations with respect to working hours, salaries, insurance etc., especially in the private sector."

"It's interesting", he continues "that this fact leads a scientific field to measure itself up against social facts without turn to technocrats but mainly to people with mostly an alternative viewpoint. In this effort it meets a very warm public, in which – it is worth noting -the majority are women."

"Without being activists, without belonging to political organizations, simply obeying to their own norms and their own experience, as they daily face the psychosocial stress of their clients, **psychotherapists seem to develop a critical way of thinking, which is quite present in society at many different places, yet is totally absent from public speech.** They become aware of a reality which totally escapes the television/media market."

"This, as I conclude from my discussions, gradually makes them less vulnerable to the status quo logic. For example the other day I was talking with a psychiatrist, whose political views I did not know, and I was surprised by her observations that destructions were targeted and were not random vandalisms as they were referred around."

With respect to the events themselves, what Christoforos Vernardakis mainly remembers has to do with their Pan-Hellenic spreading: "It's quite impressive to see that such par excellence metropolitan phenomena happen in small towns as well, where, evidently, life is easier in comparison to the great urban centers and where, furthermore, everyone knows almost everyone. **It's obvious that a lot has escaped our attention with respect to the pressures that pile up in Greek society-** without exempting rural areas."

"The state seemed, from a point on, to rely for the expansion of riots on the restraining power by the name "Greek mother", who this time did not intervene; did not want or could not intervene, and this is characteristic. I would say that **the social contract of the Greek family has been broken.** Let us think: what does today's Greek family provide and promise to its members? And when do

parents see their children when they have 2 to 3 jobs? What spending money can they give them and what can a child do with it any more?"

"In the vagueness of the future lies the source of youth rage or perhaps in what happens in the present? **The future is already present.** A family that lives only out of 2 salaries cannot provide to its (one) child – student the minimum of 800 Euros monthly and this with difficulty. Inevitably more and more students need to work in conditions of "black work". Pass through Rethymno or any other such town to see how whole sectors of local economy (hotels, restaurants etc.) rely on the under-paid, uninsured and temporary student work. **Young people are today's new "immigrants".**

(translated by M. Todoulou)*