

Klitos Symeonides and Godfrey Baldacchino (eds.), *Cyprus-Malta on the Threshold of Accession to the European Union. Challenges to Workers and Trade Unions*, Nicosia, Cyprus Adult Education Association/Workers' Participation Development Centre (University of Malta), pp.45, 1996, ISBN 9963-0-4245-7.

Internationally, trade unions face the complex and multiple challenges posed by rapid globalising tendencies. In the Mediterranean, such tendencies are given an added impulse by the development of the European Union. Whether or not Malta joins Cyprus in the next group of new entrants, all social groups face the consequences of decisions taken by the EU and its institutions; nor can they escape the wider processes of global economic integration in which the EU is both player and victim. This publication, which brings together papers presented at trade union education programmes in Malta and Cyprus, is therefore both timely and relevant.

The EU exercises a real influence over education and training, particularly in the small member states. As well as its action programmes for human resource development (SOCRATES, covering education, and LEONARDO, covering training), the EU directly controls much training spending in the member states through the European Social Fund, and there are significant education and training elements within the EU's research and technology development programme and in a range of other policy areas. And although the concept of social dialogue has lost ground since the retirement as President of the French socialists Jacques Delors, the EU continues to emphasise the integral role of trade unions in vocational training policy.

This collection includes a careful and detailed description by Theopholis Theophilou of the Cypriot government's negotiation with the EU following its 1990 application for membership. Two trade union leaders outline their reasons for supporting Cyprus' application, despite misgivings over the impact of deregulation and the opening up of homemarkets to EU competitors. By contrast, two Maltese union leaders take opposing views. While both Angelo Fenech of the General Workers' Union and Charles Magro of the Confederation of Maltese Trade Unions acknowledge the benefits (including access to the EU's education and training programmes), they also identify potential costs. Fenech, moreover, is sharply critical of the then government's secretive conduct of the negotiations. Leonardo Mizzi outlines the role of the small and medium sized enterprises in Malta and Cyprus, outlining possible strategies for successful competition within a single European market.

In a critical summary of issues raised during the seminars, Godfrey Baldacchino, from the Workers' Participation Development Centre, draws a

number of conclusions which, he argues, might apply to trade unions and workers in other small island states. Baldacchino emphasises the need for a broad and critical approach to worker education. Given the EU's narrow focus in its own programmes upon the contribution of training and education to economic competitiveness, Baldacchino's emphasis upon openness and breadth is highly welcome. It is also important to note that worker educators have created their own transnational networks within the EU, and indeed have received some limited support for their activities from both the SOCRATES and LEONARDO programmes.

Clearly, I found this a useful and stimulating collection, but I have two quibbles. In his otherwise masterly analysis, Baldacchino asserts that Malta and Cyprus will be "*the first ex-colonial territories to join the European Union*". Wrong. That honour belongs to Ireland; other ex-colonial states queuing alongside Cyprus for EU membership include Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. Secondly, the volume does not acknowledge that Cyprus is a profoundly divided society; the Cypriot participants were all ethnic Greeks, and the only recognition of the division is in the final joint declaration of the Cypriot and Maltese unions, which protests at the Turkish occupation; yet ethnic division and conflict would remain if the Turks withdrew tomorrow.

Nevertheless, the fundamental message of this volume should not be obscured. It is that (in the words of the joint declaration), worker and trade union education are of "*crucial importance*" in ensuring effective participation "*in programmes which promote both enterprise efficiency and competitiveness as well as serve as opportunities for developing skills and knowledge for workers.*" This message should resonate among existing EU members, as well as among other applicant nations where trade unions are, sadly, rather weaker than in the two nations represented here.

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