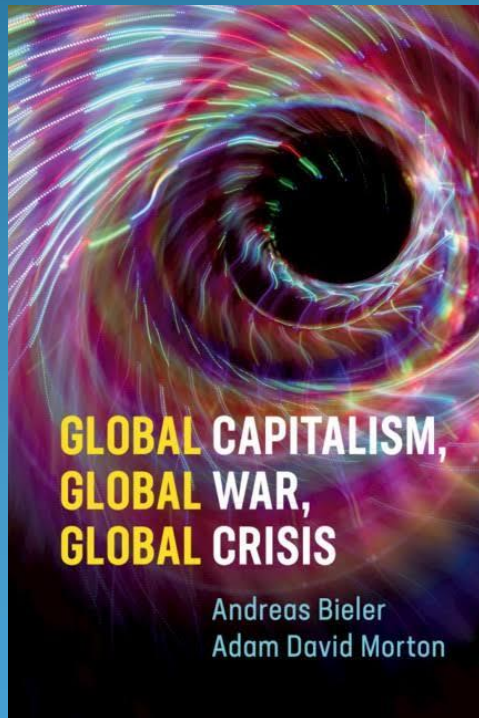


Global Capitalism, Global War, Global Crisis



Reflecting on Exploitation
and Resistance in the
Eurozone crisis.

Andreas Bieler

Introduction

1. A necessarily historical materialist moment;
2. Agency - Structure;
3. The material structure of ideology;
4. Class struggle in the Eurozone;
5. Conclusion: ongoing contestation of neo-liberalism;

1. A necessarily historical materialist moment

Understanding the historical specificity of capitalism?

- state vs. market; the economic vs. the political;
- focus on the social relations of production / ‘the hidden abode of production’ allows us to understand the internal relations between the economic and the political.

2. Agency - Structure

a) The structuring conditions of capitalism:

- Competitiveness;
- Crisis tendency;
- Outward expansion: uneven and combined development;

Agency - Structure

b) Structured agency:

- different class fractions;
- expanded understanding of capitalism including sphere of production and social reproduction;

3. The material structure of ideology

- ideas are not some kind of objective knowledge: e.g. economic theories;
- ideas are not simply discourses disconnected from agency;
- ideas are understood as ideology with an underpinning material structure: whose interests are served by certain ideas/ideology?

4. Class struggle in the Eurozone

a) Causes of the crisis?

- incorrect institutional set-up of peripheral countries;
- post-Keynesians: incorrect institutional set-up of Eurozone and EMU;
- structuring condition of uneven and combined development: countries like Greece and Portugal have been locked into labour intensive production from the moment they joined the EU in the 1980s;

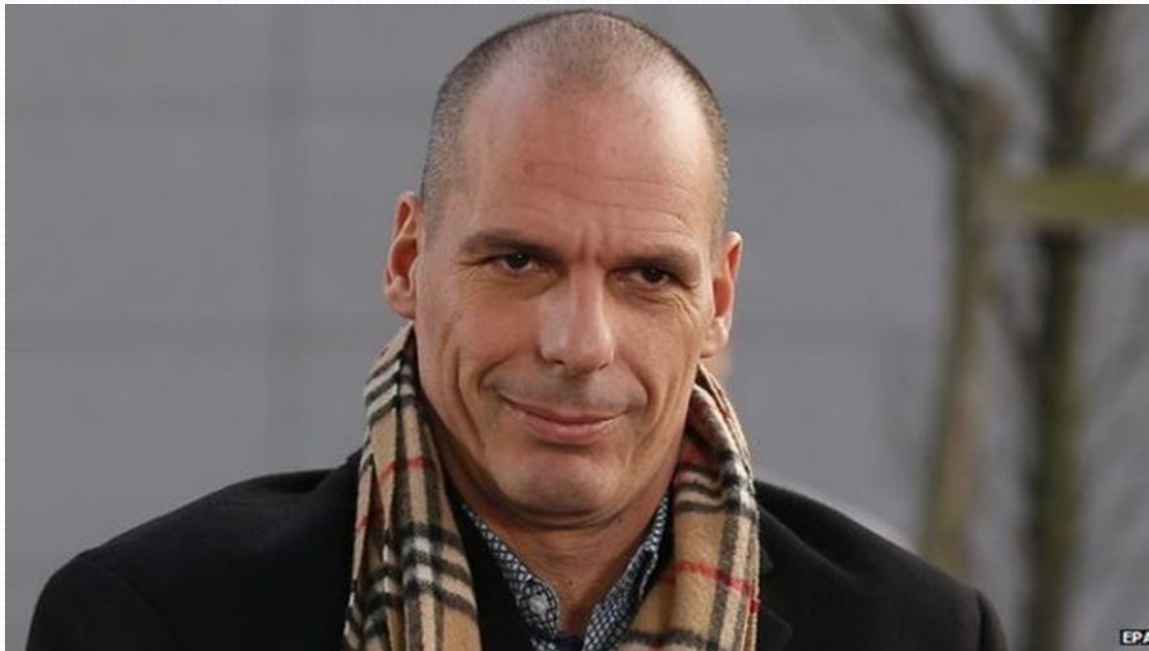
Class struggle in the Eurozone

b) Transnational capital and permanent austerity within the EU:

- crisis of overaccumulation (David Harvey);
- austerity imposed in bailout agreements on countries in Eurozone crisis as well as mechanisms of New European Economic governance across the EU more generally;
- austerity policies: employment cuts in public sector; cuts to welfare services; privatisation of national assets; deregulation of labour markets and cut-backs in trade union rights;

Class struggle in the Eurozone:

c) The material structure of neo-liberalism:



- the interests of transnational capital have become internalised within the EU form of state and its policies;

5. Conclusion: ongoing contestation of neo-liberalism

Historical materialist focus on class struggle: capitalist order is always contested.

- worker-occupied factories: Vio.me near Thessaloniki;
- healthcare clinics in Greece;
- focus on the commons and new forms of democracy in water management;
- ongoing resistance to pension cuts in HE in the UK;