Crisis, it seems, is the order of things. Today not only the economy, but climate change, failed states, and moral panics over crime, race and gendered deviance are all increasingly framed in terms of crisis. As the neo-liberal ‘end of history’ utopia falters, we are threatened once again with the spectre of the Hobbesian state of nature. Just as this spectre has always served to justify the power of the state and its laws, the rhetoric of crisis brings about a relentless desire for law—from Time Magazine’s declaration that ‘We are all Keynesians now’ to green groups calls for wartime measures in the face of a warming planet.

The desire for resolving crisis through law however, raises questions about law as ‘solution’, and about the language of crisis that precipitates such a desire. In recent years, attention has focused on the crisis of law, and the shift towards exceptional modes of state power. Today, there is a danger that critical reflection on law will be supplanted by the demand that law mitigate manifold crises. And yet, since those ‘bloody laws against the expropriated’ that Marx described as essential to the primitive accumulation of capital, law has served to enable the violent imposition of capitalist social relations as much as to restrain its more ‘extreme’ manifestations. How then is it possible to understand the relation between crisis and law today? Remaining wary of imagining that crisis necessarily presages a more just future, can we nonetheless, imagine a different sort of crisis, one that we ourselves may bring about—a ‘real state of emergency’, to invoke Walter Benjamin’s oft quoted suggestion?

In this special issue of the AFLJ we provide a forum to consider the diverse responses to crisis through law, beyond law, against law. The AFLJ seeks to publish critical feminist research on law and justice issues. We invite submissions that critically engage with the sources and practices of law in response to the diverse sites on which power and crisis are constituted, including:

- gendered and racialised impositions in regulating life
- state regulation of economy and the relation between law and the market
- the new imperialism: the imposition of neo-liberalism in the global south/failed states/war on terror, through the logic of constitution, democracy, law
- the operation and effect of the criminal justice system in and against crisis
- the crisis of the left in relation to law and legality
- possibilities for contesting crisis through political, rather than legal means.

Deadline for Submissions
Manuscripts of 8,000 - 10,000 words should be sent in electronic form to the Special Issue Editors, Victoria Sentas, King’s College London, vsentas@amcran.org or Jessica Whyte, Monash University, Jessica.Whyte@artdes.monash.edu.au by August 31, 2009. Earlier submissions are welcomed. Prospective contributors are invited to discuss any proposed submission with an Editor.

Refereeing of Articles
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