

Capitalism reborn, chaos and the post-socialist freefall: a view from Europe's 'new periphery'

Bill Templer

Independent Researcher, Shumen, Bulgaria

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, Eastern Europe has not simply rejected communist slogans and privatized state enterprises, creating its own financial oligarchy. It has also become part of the world capitalist economy—its new periphery. ... The Communist Manifesto now reads as if it was written just a few weeks ago. ... the experience of Eastern Europe and of the Third World shows the vital need for a universalist left as the only real alternative to diverse forms of barbarism (Boris Kagarlitsky, 1999: 124, vii, viii).

The Communist icon of the Cold War is now the negative type against which an absolutely idealized capitalist market is both taken to be real and deemed the only sustainable paradigm for universal human organization (Michael E. Brown, 2008: 177).

Abstract

The present paper—from a vantage in Bulgaria, and focusing in significant part on this country as an iconic example of the 'post-socialist freefall' and its dystopia on European capitalism's neocolonial 'new periphery'—is a revised version of an earlier chapter in Hill (2013). It was originally written as a 'post-socialist' supplement to perspectives on austerity capitalism, education and fightback as analyzed in that volume. The revamped paper comprises an Introduction and six main sections, the first three contained in installment 1 of the article here, Sections 4-6 in a second installment to appear in the next issue of *JCEPS*:

0. Introduction

- 0.1 Testing grounds of neoliberal social engineering
- 0.2 Disimagination machines and 'political amnesia'
- 0.3 Bulgaria as an exemplar of the broader disaster and its aporias

1. The New Post-Socialist Periphery

- 1.1 Looking into the brink's widening abyss
- 1.2 Naturalizing immiseration
- 1.3 Bulgaria as imploded microcosm

2. ‘Real Existing Socialism’ Revisited: Questions and Dimensions of Method

- 2.1 Countering the ‘danger of a single story’
- 2.2 Toward socialist visions in ‘post-socialist studies’
- 2.3 The need for empirical oral people’s history
- 2.4 Toward more phenomenological socialist ‘post-socialist studies’
- 2.5 Research Proposal—‘Socialist education dismantled: Bulgarian teachers, parents and ordinary workers reflect on what has been lost’
- 2.6 People’s narratives as a prism on austerity across the planet

3. Did ‘Real Existing Socialism’ Deliver the Goods?

- 3.1 .Bulgaria as an icon
 - 3.1.1 Jobs for all? Guaranteed work for everybody
- 3.2 A paradigm of socialist education
 - 3.2.1 Polytechnical education
 - 3.2.2 Classic Marxist educational thinking, relevant today?
 - 3.2.3 Cuban analogues
- 3.3 Education in post-socialist freefall
 - 3.3.1 Socialist extracurricular education and its implosion
 - 3.3.2 Transformations in Bulgarian higher education

Installment 2 (forthcoming, *JCEPS*, 2014):

4. Three Core Related Aspects of Globalized Capitalism in the Pan-European Crucible

- 4.1 Vagabondage in high gear: labor exodus and influx
 - 4.1.1 Medical personnel in ominous flight
- 4.2. Austerity’s new far right and its dialectical contradictions
- 4.3. The Roma: subaltern periphery of the periphery

5. Convulsions, Contradictions and Fightback

- 5.1 Teargas democracy: resistance mounting across the ‘desert of transition’
 - 5.1.1 Resistance in nouveau capitalist Russia?
 - 5.1.2 Imperialist Politics and a new Cold War?
- 5.2 Bulgarian left in limbo

5.2.1 Now is the winter of our discontent

5.2.2 May 2013 elections—a prelude to more chaos?

5.2.3 Absence of a viable visible radical left in Europe’s poorhouse

6. Moving Forward Toward ‘Socialism 2.0’

6.1 Laboratories of potential (counter)hegemonic projects?

6.2 Life without money? Non-market socialist visions

6.3 From the bottom up

The main sections and subsections can be read in sequence, but some readers may wish to turn to one or another topic of special interest. Section 2 deals more centrally with methodology in ‘post-socialist studies’ from a left ‘socialist’ perspective (often lacking in such studies) and the need for more empirical oral people’s history. Of pedagogical interest, Section 3.2 looks specifically at aspects of socialist education in Bulgaria, including classic conceptions of polytechnism and some reflections on Marxist educational thinking in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Freinet proletarian communist pedagogy. Section 3.3 explores Bulgarian education in post-socialist freefall. Education among the Roma in Europe, now in a historic shambles, is one topical theme in Section 4.3. The extensive bibliography has numerous live links.

0. Introduction

From a grounded perspective based on long-term direct experience in Bulgaria—and centering in substantial part on this beleaguered country as illustrative example—the paper develops a reticulation of interlocking focus points in looking at neoliberalism implanted on the ruins of Eastern bloc ‘real existing socialism’ (*Realsozialismus*) and its many decades of lived experience. In Marxian terms, the core thesis is that the present crisis conjuncture is now re-riveting “the worker to capital more firmly than the wedges of Hephaestus held Prometheus to the rock” under Capital’s neo-colonial comeback, with mounting mass pauperization, an “accumulation of wealth at one pole ... ignorance, brutalization and moral degradation at the opposite pole” (Marx, 1976/1867: 799).

This paradigmatic ensemble of exigencies, its contradictions ranging across a range of diverse countries that lost the Cold War, in post-socialist freefall since the “obscure disaster” (Badiou,

2003/1998) of 1989, is arguably a highly distinctive manifestation within the hegemon of global austerity capitalism and its ensemble of conundrums. Unlike elsewhere in Europe and the North Atlantic world, this new ruling class and its golem-like bourgeois democracy have arisen from and upon the very detritus of a system ploughed under, with a thin stratum of the nouveau-rich over against entire populations as victims living on the edge, creating a dystopia of stark inequality and mass anomie on a societal scale.

0.1 Testing grounds of neoliberal social engineering

The former Comecon countries have in fact been turned with a vengeance into a “testing ground of an extremely aggressive form of neoliberal social engineering, an attempt to violently impose a change in social paradigm” (Sotiris, 2013b: 37), a metamorphosis in political and economic paradigms at the hands of the IMF, EU, and a nouveau riche comprador bourgeoisie and coterie of oligarchs. Griffiths and Millei (2013c: 2) note that the neo-colonial wake of the Cold War has brought extreme nouveau capitalist versions of neo-liberalism into Eastern Europe, engineered in national contexts, with devastating results for education and social welfare.

For the masses of ordinary workers, it has created a vast societal poorhouse. A prime structuring contrast is between this new Europe-oriented elite, its privileged position, discourses and social engineering, along with a small nouveau ‘middle class,’ largely in a few major urban areas—and the vast majority of an often bewildered and profoundly alienated population. The recent violent unrest in neo-capitalist Ukraine (DKP, 2014; Friedman, 2014), the now year-long protests of the alienated in Bulgaria railing against “24 years of transition and immiseration” are one stark expression of that societal malaise. Unrest in areas of the former Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro) is at a 10-year high. The masses are literally at an existential and political loss because they have been brainwashed to think there is no alternative now except EU-controlled neoliberal capitalism under surveillance from Brussels and Berlin. The repeated engineered litany is “Europe, Europe, Europe” ad nauseam. Writing on mass protest in Bosnia, Karadjis (2014) notes: “their demands indicate that some of the most powerful aspects of the ideology of that Yugoslavia – workers’ self-management of the factories, and radical social equality – have resurfaced, perhaps never buried very too deeply in the consciousness of the people.”

Levant (2008: 6) quotes a Russian auto union leader: “Politically, we have a bourgeois dictatorship whose aim is the rapid formation of a capitalist class at the expense of the majority. This process has two sources: redistribution of property and direct robbery of the working class by depressing its living standards.” That holds in Bulgaria and elsewhere. In writing about imperialist globalization and its planetary fallout, Goldstein (2008: 10, 11) reminds us of a salient fact that needs wider currency:

The decisive event in the rapid expansion of the power of imperialist capital over the workers and the oppressed of the world is certainly the fall of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe ... with the collapse of the USSR, imperialism reversed the historic trend of its contraction and began a rapid expansion not seen since the “scramble for Africa” at the end of the nineteenth century. Not only did the transnational corporations and banks, operating through the IMF, the World Bank, and other agencies, gain access to the former Soviet republics and Eastern Europe, but the removal of the economic and political force of the socialist camp as one able to retard the advance of the corporate ruling class into the so-called Third World paved the way for an escalation of the neo-liberalist offensive.

In 2014, the West’s neo-liberal, neo-colonial offensive is increasingly generating a renewed East-West clash at times conjuring a Cold War revival. As Snowden sits in Russian exile, this Cold War redux is echoed in the struggle over Ukraine (Catalinotto, 2014; Novinite, 2014c; RT, 2014; Friedman, 2014), West Asia and other flash points in geopolitical confrontation and global-capitalist restructuring.

0.2 Disimagination machines and ‘political amnesia’

I explore below a number of focal points coiled around the aporias of this catastrophe, lived out in daily existential struggle by populations against the robust memory of a crushed different world. The near total suffocating of radical Marxist discourse and organizing is a huge dialectical contradiction permeating much of ‘depoliticized politics’ and popular mentality in the capitalist freefall across Europe’s harried East, shaped by neoliberal social engineering. Arguably, it is a striking embodiment example of the workings of the nouveau capitalist “disimagination machine,” working full-time across Eastern Europe to instill political amnesia in public memory, akin to the “violence of organized forgetting” Giroux (2013b) diagnoses in the U.S. and beyond:

America has become amnesiac - a country in which forms of historical, political, and moral forgetting are not only willfully practiced but celebrated. ... Under a neoliberal regime, the language of authority, power and command is divorced from ethics, social

responsibility, critical analysis and social costs. These anti-public intellectuals are part of a disimagination machine that solidifies the power of the rich and the structures of the military-industrial-surveillance-academic complex by presenting the ideologies, institutions and relations of the powerful as commonsense.

Giroux defines the disimagination machine along the lines of Althusser's (1971: 139, 142-43) ISAs as both a set of cultural apparatuses extending from schools and mainstream media to the new sites of screen culture, and a public pedagogy that functions primarily to undermine the ability of individuals to think critically, imagine the unimaginable, and engage in thoughtful and critical dialogue: put simply, to become critically informed citizens of the world (Giroux, 2013a). But here it is on the ruins of a very different experiment in social organization and politics still fresh in the minds of most ordinary workers over the age of 40. Bourgeois history's irony—or perhaps its Cunning of Reason in Hegel's classic sense—is that major achievements under real existing socialisms in the 20th century, their authoritarian structures notwithstanding, were what people everywhere under austerity capitalism are fighting for here and now, across the globalizing planet.

0.3 Bulgaria as an exemplar of the broader disaster and its aporias

Bulgarian realities past and present are a recurrent theme in nearly all sections of the paper, and the central focus in section 1.3, 3.1, 3.2., 3.3 and 5.2. This forced morphing of polity, economy and society, with all its miscarriages of justice and equity, has been particularly catastrophic here, a veritable icon of “absolute immiseration” in Hill's (2012: 4) sense, since 2007 the poorest member of the EU. A 2014 poll reveals that 73% think this membership has not changed their lives much; those who see benefit are mainly a younger demographic resident in Sofia, while Euro-skepticism is more pronounced in smaller towns and rural areas (Novinite, 2014g). Today 50% of families are surviving on 160 Euros equivalent a month (the minimum wage, lowest in the EU); many ethnic Roma (some 10% of the remaining population) live largely in dire destitution, “Europe's dispossessed” (Pivovarchuk, 2013; Nicolae, 2014). Ordinary Bulgarians now face staggering utility and medical expenses; state medical care is in dire straits, hospital debt is catastrophic, with doctors emigrating en masse (Petkova, 2014; bTV, 2014). “The Euro Health Consumer Index has named Bulgaria as the EU country with the worst healthcare system and highest death toll per capita”(Kadrinov, 2012). Many villages have lost much of their population since 1990, some turning into ghost villages as residents seek survival abroad, a mass exodus sounding the “death knell for rural Bulgaria” (Evans, 2014; Darik Radio, 2014). In education and its freefall, Bulgaria now holds

the “lowest average age for dropping out of school in all of the EU, at 14.3 years” (Novinite, 2014a). Confused high school pupils experience the huge disconnect between the classroom, its newly engineered capitalist myths, and the specter of mass youth unemployment on their personal horizon, the “generation of the transition” discussed later below. A 2014 Education Syndicate survey reveals alarming tendencies of overwork and low morale, and “the quality of teaching is deteriorating” (Novinite, 2014d). F.S. (2013) provides a compact analysis, and can be read as a briefer version of the present article.

This is a country where full employment, excellent medical care, very inexpensive basic foods, cheap high-grade pharmaceuticals, nearly ‘demonetized’ public utilities and public transport, low-cost restaurants, workplace canteens and vacation resorts were once the guaranteed norm. Education was of remarkably high quality, and all school leavers and university graduates were guaranteed a job. Teachers were respected and received equitable state pay. In some ways, Bulgaria was perhaps the most successful of the smaller real-socialist experiments, with relatively low levels of dissidence—and is now the EU’s poorhouse (Novinite, 2013a; Adomanis, 2013). Living in the post-socialist labyrinth of contradictions, alienation between the Bulgarian masses and the State is perhaps at its highest level since liberation in 1878 from nearly five centuries of Ottoman Turkish rule and oppression.

1. The New Post-Socialist Periphery

1.1 Looking into the brink’s widening abyss

The class war from above under the naked rule of Capitalism redivivus in the former socialist states of East-Central and Eastern Europe—a ‘new periphery’ of global Capital, in some ways a ‘neocolonial’ topography of contradictions—is particularly virulent and barbaric. Arguably, it constitutes a special conjuncture worth in-depth study from a socialist perspective, a kind of epistemological arsenal for the study of austerity and globalized casino capitalism. Here we find distinctive neo-liberal terrains where free-market catechisms, drawing on hegemonic global discourse, have become so pervasive, countervailing evidence notwithstanding, that they comprise a kind of political and indeed existential post-socialist “cognitive dissonance” (Mirowski, 2013).

With the restoration of market economies and bourgeois democracy, and a massive de-collectivization of agriculture & de-statalization of industry, human dignity has been trashed, destitution multiplied (Novinite, 2013a; Roser, 2013), the gains of ‘real-socialist’ welfare over

many decades slashed, multifaceted economic and *ideological* colonization from the West intensified for the vast majority of working families—this on a scale clearly unprecedented anywhere in Europe or indeed the industrialized Global North. As Stephen Gowans (2011) observed:

The dismantling of socialism has, in a word, been a catastrophe, a great swindle that has not only delivered none of what it promised, but has wreaked irreparable harm ... Numberless voices in Russia, Romania, East Germany and elsewhere lament what has been stolen from them — and from humanity as a whole: “We lived better under communism. We had jobs. We had security.”

The CP of Canada echoes this:

Since the collapse of socialism, working people in these former socialist countries face massive privatization and the theft of social property, mass unemployment and poverty, the drastic erosion of education, health care and other social rights, the rise of organized crime and corruption, and the rise of ethnic and racial hatred (CPC 2013).

The gap between the tiny stratum of nouveaux riches and the masses is widening everywhere, an armature of engineered privatization, precarity and pauperization. Ozen Pupovac (2010) notes: “Suspended between negation and anticipation, post-socialist societies are a beginning with no end ... A neoliberal order underwritten by the science of transitology ensures that the sole constant of post-socialism is inequality.” Reuters (2009) observed: “Capitalism's failure to lift living standards, impose the rule of law and tame flourishing corruption and nepotism have given way to fond memories of the times when the jobless rate was zero, food was cheap and social safety was high.” This is particularly pronounced in Bulgaria, as Rombach (2013) notes:

The implementation of the austerity dictates of the international financial institutions since 1997 has meant that one in five Bulgarians is now considered poor and must live on less than €120 a month. Unemployment has climbed to over 19 percent, and 40 percent of young Bulgarians are without an apprenticeship or employment. With an official average monthly income of €350, Bulgaria is at the bottom of the EU; however, it takes a top spot when it comes to social inequality. ... Conforming to EU policies has led the nation to the brink of the abyss; austerity is bringing misery to the poorest country in the EU.

That was epitomized in an iconic comment on bTV (2013b) by an elderly Bulgarian worker asked about the present situation. He replied: “We’re living like animals, not human beings.” All Bulgarians over the age of 40 understand that this lament over human dignity trashed and

trampled is framed by the powerful memory of a socialist system in which they grew up, worked and prospered, whatever its authoritarian mechanisms of control. Exploring the aporias of post-communist 'nostalgia,' Maria Todorova (2010: 6) relates a popular Bulgarian joke about a woman who wakes up and runs about her house at night in panic, looking into the medicine cabinet, the refrigerator and then out the window into the street:

Relieved, she returns to the bedroom. Her husband asks her, "What's wrong with you?" "I had a terrible nightmare," she says. "I dreamt that we could still afford to buy medicine, that the refrigerator was absolutely full, and that the streets were safe and clean. "How is that a nightmare?" the husband asks. The woman shakes her head, "I thought the communists were back in power."

Andreev (2013) recently observed:

Since the breakdown of the communist system in 1989 and 1990, Bulgaria has been ruled by networks of oligarchies and clientilism. Practically all parties and coalitions in power serve the interests of large economic actors - or worse, those of shadow organizations which began as organized crime running protection rackets, but later established themselves as powerful market agents.

Writing from Moscow, Kagarlitsky (2009) presents an inside critical analysis of the specific aspects of post-Soviet Russia's transition to a neo-liberal economy, dominated by oligarchs, corruption and oil wealth. Not unique to post-capitalist Russia, he notes that "two-thirds of the capitalist class as it emerged in the 1990s had a party background" (ibid.: 7), drawn from the old *nomenklatura*. Levant (2008: 3, 6) offers a distinctive analysis of post-Soviet Russia in ruins:

The destruction of remaining Soviet institutions is part of the eradication of a system of values, a way of life. Social relations are becoming mediated in new ways, particularly by commodities, which are becoming more and more prevalent, though fewer and fewer people can afford them. Older people are finding themselves in a nihilistic and decaying society, while a new generation is growing up, relating to each other through commodities. ...] in contemporary Russia, the process of so-called 'primitive accumulation' involves the creation of a bourgeoisie, or the 'New Russians'.

In comments on the 22nd anniversary of the dissolving of the Soviet Union, Gowans (2013) briefly discusses seven myths about the USSR still prevalent in the West. He notes:

the Soviet Union's passing is regretted by the people who knew the USSR firsthand (but not by Western journalists, politicians and historians who knew Soviet socialism only

through the prism of their capitalist ideology.) Now that they've had over two decades of multi-party democracy, private enterprise and a market economy, Russians don't think these institutions are the wonders Western politicians and mass media make them out to be. Most Russians would prefer a return to the Soviet system of state planning, that is, to socialism. Even so, these realities are hidden behind a blizzard of propaganda ...

More than half of Russians regret the breakup of the Soviet Union and believe that it could have been avoided, according to survey data released in January 2014 by the independent Levada Center (www.levada.ru) in Moscow: "57 percent of the population regretted the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991. Only 30 percent had no regrets. [...] Those 25-39 had only 39 percent unhappy with the breakup while for those 55 and older it was 86 percent. Only 29 percent of all respondents thought the breakup was inevitable and 53 percent believed it could have been avoided" (Strategypage, 2014).

Tadeusz Kowalik's (2012) analysis of capitalist restoration in Poland, "now with one of the highest coefficients of social inequalities in Europe" (279), explores similar harrowing misdevelopments. Hungary reflects analogous patterns (Thürmer, 2009), and many East Germans feel life was far better, more equitable in the GDR, despite the Wall (Bonstein, 2009). In an unusual portrait of life in the GDR based on insider experience over many years, Green and de la Motte (2009) "attempt to assess what aspects of GDR-style socialism were genuine achievements in terms of human progress and are perhaps worth salvaging, emulating or learning from," salient aspects "which can provide us with insights about our own society and its failings as well as demonstrate that other alternatives are possible." Goldstein (2008: 41ff.) looks at how capitalist outsourcing and the quest for cheap labor have specifically penetrated Europe's East. A growing Marxist party in Bohemia/Moravia is highly critical, striving for a form of "communism renewed and supported" (Hudson, 2012:132-46).

Yet just as socialist countries differed significantly in Eastern Europe across a broad range of features (Smith, 2014: 4), post-socialist realities on the ground differ today, a vast topography of capitalist restoration and colonization. Based on several decades of fieldwork in the country and bolstered by numerous narratives of ordinary workmen, Kideckel (2008) describes the fear, distance and alienation besetting industrial workers in their everyday lives in post-socialist Romania. GDP expressed in purchasing power in Bulgaria and Romania is more than 50% below the EU27 average across the member states. Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Hungary and Latvia are between 30% and 40% lower than the average (Novinite, 2013b).

Within schools, universities and new research centers across all post-socialist economies, most Marxist educators have been purged or have reinvented themselves as neo-bourgeois teachers and scholars, hesitant to openly counter EU and Council of Europe ideology. In Bulgaria, a whole confused generation of students has been effectively ‘inoculated’ against the socialist legacy and achievements of their own country’s recent past, in the process stifling critical thought, smothering revolutionary perspectives, stoking vast cynicism in a crucible of profound discontent. The mass violence that flared across Bosnia in February 2014 over unemployment (at 40%), corruption and poverty reflects a similar conjuncture of capitalist immiseration in the heart of former Yugoslavia (Karadjis, 2014), where much industry has been destroyed. Wilson (2014) reminds us: “In the two decades since the U.S. imposed the Dayton Accords, U.S. and EU imperialism has fractured the former sovereign Yugoslavia into seven puppet ministates and systematically looted it of almost all of its industries and resources.” As Robertson (2014) notes:

[...] the challenge will be for activists to look beyond the local political elites and see behind them so many European elites who are aiding the attempts to transform not just Bosnia, but the entire Balkan region into a single neoliberal experiment. A new Balkans is possible--and we are seeing a glimpse of it in the streets of Bosnia and Herzegovina today.

1.2 Naturalizing immiseration

The ideological state apparatuses of the post-socialist neo-capitalist states have been especially energetic in convincing populations stunned by the implosion of their former socialist life worlds that whatever the nightmares, anomie and alienation of the ‘transition,’ there is seemingly *no alternative*. These apparatuses are especially busy seeking to “naturalize” Capitalism restored in a manner highly distinctive to post-socialist realities, endeavoring to convince bewildered populations of the inevitability of far “poorer standards of public services, greater inequalities between rich and poor” (Hill, 2006: sec. 3), part of the prolonged ‘transition’ to free-market ‘democratic’ bourgeois political economies – in effect implanting a whole set of neo-liberally driven epistemologies (see also Sotiris, 2013a: 106-8), a neoliberal “common sense” (Gramsci, 1971: 322). Reich (2014) analyzes how capitalizations permeate all aspects of contemporary life, creating myriad forms of social, cultural, and even “body capital,” as well as what he terms “learning capital” through the capitalization of schooling, cognition and the universities. An interesting question for research is the *distinctive architecture and tenor of such ISAs within post-socialist spaces of*

transformation, their special forms of “cognitive dissonance,” given the huge barriers in shared socialist memory in such populations, and efforts to induce a mass ‘historical amnesia’ about the socialist past and ‘demonizing’ its everyday realities—this while expunging Marxist thought and research, or ‘critical education’ in a socialist sense anywhere in the schools or the new armada of commercial textbooks. The corporate media are similarly engineered and orchestrated, now inculcating a capitalist ‘dreamworld’ (Buck-Morss, 2000), with all its savage dialectical contradictions, an infotainment of informed ignorance. As Pilger (2013) stresses: “With honourable exceptions, the bourgeois media club relegates and distracts from the fact that a full-blooded class war is under way.” That class war is everywhere, and everywhere mystified, its perception smothered by the disimagination machines (Giroux, 2013a) retrofitting the very chambers of the popular mind.

1.3 Bulgaria as imploded microcosm

Perhaps the most prosperous of the former socialist experiments, is a veritable microcosm of many of these post-socialist dialectical contradictions—its population, economy, levels of morale in massive contraction under unfettered Capital’s ‘shock therapy,’ now the lowest-income post-socialist state, with the highest levels of economic emigration in Europe (Darik Radio, 2014), part of a capitalist ‘race to the bottom’ in the EU. A small new oligarchy and its supporters, largely based in Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas and some larger towns, and closely linked with the colonizing EU, enjoy remarkable privilege, at a majority’s expense. Lurking behind this is a well-entrenched criminal mafia, and effective “plutocratic rule” (Novinite, 2013c), sparking growing popular outrage and protest (O’Brennan, 2013), although street slogans are largely anti-socialist. This has engendered a clear class divide and deepening class struggle reborn in Bulgaria, some assertions in Ivancheva’s (2013) probing analysis notwithstanding. Gowans (2011) comments: “A 2009 poll conducted by the Pew Global Attitudes Project found that a paltry one in nine Bulgarians believe ordinary people are better off as a result of the transition to capitalism. And few regard the state as representing their interests. Only 16 percent say it is run for the benefit of all people.” A June 2013 survey indicates that 86% of Bulgarians think the Bulgarian judiciary is corrupt, 78% believe the country’s medical and health services are affected by corruption, 76% say political parties are corrupt, while 71% think the national parliament is affected by graft (Novinite, 2013d). The country has plummeted to the lowest ranking within the EU in the World Press Freedom Index (Novinite, 2014h). Street protests repeatedly rail against an ill-defined Bulgarian

“oligarchy” while lauding “European values” as represented by the other oligarchy (not perceived as such) entrenched in the EU, as echoed in Higgins (2013). Rightwing nationalism is resurgent in various parties, such as Ataka (see Sec. 4.2) and other new formations, while there is no visible radical left, Marxist consciousness obliterated, even among students at universities, clueless in the din of protest.

‘Democracy’ is a knee-jerk expletive many Bulgarians born 1970 and before use with open contempt, identifying it with restoration of capitalism, return to a class society, poverty, despair, insecurity, gross inequality (Novinite, 2013e; Novinite, 2013f)—a wholesale trashing of the human dignity of most ordinary people extending now over 24 years. Bourgeois faux democracy appears as a kind of contradiction in terms: the lowest wages in Europe, colonized by neo-liberal myths, NATOization, massive joblessness (nearly 40% under age 30). The upshot: pervasive de-politicization, corrosive chaos, widespread social anomie, a new ruling class in power, integration into ‘predatory’ global Capital circuits at the expense of ordinary workers—now bombarded by an endless rhetoric exalting the cult of the commodity, Western ‘democracy’ and ‘becoming Europeans.’ Under socialism Bulgaria was largely self-sufficient and an exporter of agricultural produce, today “ninety percent of vegetables on the Bulgarian market are imported while livestock breeding is ruined” (Novinite, 2013g); only ca. 10% of the goods now sold in Bulgaria are locally produced (Novinite, 2013h). Vasilenkov (2013) observes:

There are barely any local products in stores, everything is imported. Meat comes from Germany, tomatoes from Turkey and Greece, garlic from China, potatoes from the Czech Republic. This happens in the country with the annual average of 320 days of sunshine and fertile soil. Bulgarian authorities consider local production unprofitable. Many Bulgarians yearn for the days when the Soviet Union supplied oil and gas to Bulgaria, buying nearly all agricultural and many industrial products that were the republic's specialty. Then, Bulgaria lived well. People were paid stable wages, and tourism flourished.

A vast ever-expanding disconnect emerges between the haves and have-nots. According to a Eurostat report, Bulgaria had the highest share of people living in material deprivation in the EU-27 in 2011, at 60.1 %, while half of the population was considered to be at risk of poverty or social exclusion (Novinite, 2013i). The Center for Demographic Policy stated in 2014 that “incomes should rise at least 20% a year to end the demographic crisis,” which is an impossibility in any European country, or indeed any capitalist country on the planet (BTA,

2014). Like some countries in the Global South, many families now survive through remittances sent by family members working abroad, which amounted in 2013 to nearly 2 billion Euros, more than all foreign investment 2013 [!] in the country (Darik Radio, 2014). The Bulgaria 'rule of law' ranking is among the world's lowest (Novinite, 2012a). The Pentagon operates four bases in Bulgaria, a compliant new NATO ally, with the important Bezmer Air Base, now to modernize with a large NATO grant, near the joint military Novo Selo Range (Focus News, 2014). The most successful American private university implanted in the Balkans is AUBG in Bulgaria's southwest (see Sec. 3.3.2). Some 18% of the Bulgarian population has emigrated since 1990 (Wikipedia, 2013a), a gigantic labor exodus, reducing the pool of taxpayers and skilled personnel significantly. According to a June 2013 survey, about 400,000 people will leave the country permanently in the next few years, an additional 5.7% of the population (Novinite, 2013j). A 2014 Academy of Science survey suggests 20% of the population of working age (ca. 0.5 million) hope to emigrate if possible (Darik Radio, 2014). A "demographic collapse" is looming due to such mass emigration (Novinite, 2012c), now emerging as a serious supposed threat of 'immigrant inundation' for the UK (Novinite, 2013k), compounded in 2013 by the lowest Bulgarian birth rate since 1945 (Novinite 2013o).

The unplanned corporate-run 'free market' economy and society remains in constant crisis since 1990, 24 years of abiding chaos. A May 2012 opinion survey found that a majority in Bulgaria say 'situation unbearable' and the economic situation 'worsening' (Sofia Globe, 2012). Horvat/Štiks' (2012) analysis of the "Desert of Transition" in the post-socialist Balkans is also applicable in Bulgaria. Many Bulgarians view the socialist period "as a golden era" compared to today (Novinite 2012b). Bulgarians have been shocked by a wave of self-immolation in the 2013 winter protests (Esslemont, 2013a), public suicides unprecedented in Bulgarian history. A 2013 study by the Bulgarian Industrial Association (BIA) shows that investment in the country "has declined by 79% in the past five years, and that 46% of enterprises have virtually stopped working." Unemployment is over 18% (Novinite, 2013L).

Bulgaria in 2012 had the highest number of private firm bankruptcies in Europe, local free-market neoliberalism in literal freefall; and this reached a record number in 2013 (Novinite, 2014e). Metastasizing in Bulgarian working-class consciousness is perhaps a form of "quotidian nihilism ... a kind of directionlessness and pointlessness to life that neoliberalism in an odd way provides" (Brown, 2010). Writer Deyan Enev's (2010) mini-stories in *Circus Bulgaria* conjure up an almost fairy-tale world of despair, silent poverty, hopeless black loneliness, crushed human dignity, absurd surreal plots, deranged Bulgarians in psychiatric

hospitals, recurrent senseless violence. In the tale “Niki-Nikola,” a small boy imagines he is Icarus, he and his mother craft strange wings, invite a TV crew. The boy then is filmed jumping from the tower block apartment to his death. His mother to a TV reporter:

We spent so many years shut up in this tiny room. It was terrible. Nothing good awaited us down there either, just clumps of mud. You know, we had so much fun collecting the feathers. You are mistaken if you believe that Niki-Nikola is dead. My boy is far away now, very far away. He flew away to another country where people are not afraid (p. 10).

Templer (2013b) provides an introduction to Enev’s at times Gothic fictional universe, short vignettes set largely in the lived matrix of Bulgarian post-socialist freefall. Utilizing in-depth long-term fieldwork, Creed (2011) critiques key themes in post-socialist studies in his ethnographic investigation of contemporary masquerade rituals in village Bulgaria, arguing that these traditional cultural practices could have been utilized to facilitate and ease post-socialist ‘reconstruction,’ but were ignored.

2. ‘Real Existing Socialism’ Revisited: Questions and Dimensions of Method

2.1 Countering the ‘danger of a single story’

In looking at the assault of Capitalism Restored on the ruins of ‘real existing socialism,’ it is important to counteract the “danger of a single story” (Adichie, 2009) in our lingering conceptions of what socialism was (and was not) in Europe’s East, challenging our often stereotyped and uninformed notions of the authentic quality of workers’ life worlds, their moral economy of labor and solidarity. Admittedly, such a proposition clashes with the thinking of neo-Hegelian Marxists like Peter Hudis (2012a; 2012b; Chitty, 2011), springing from the work of Raya Dunayevskaya, for example. The Cold War and its “national paranoia of anti-communism” (Wolff, 2013a) is over. Yet in some socialist ranks, there continues a kind of political ‘Orientalism’ grounded on a parallax perception of the socialist realities in Europe’s East and its persistent narratives, with what would seem to me to be surprisingly little direct knowledge. It is imperative to separate myth from reality. As Bruno Bosteels has stressed, in talking about the “idea of communism” and its movements:

We are also, I think, responsible for writing or rewriting the history of those movements in this country and internationally, to see what we can learn, or in fact more basically what happened, because this has been forgotten as a result of Cold War rhetoric, in which

as soon as one mentions those words, they either sound totalitarian and are easily dismissed, or simply as foreign imports, which they've certainly not in this case (Bosteels, 2011b: 3:48 min.).

Building on Brown (2008), Dean (2012:33) notes that “there is not yet a credible and established body of historical literature on communism, socialism, or the Soviet Union. Most of the histories we have were produced in the context of a hegemonic anticommunism.” She goes on to stress the need for leftists to move beyond the Cold War binary and “shatter the chain communism-Soviet Union-Stalinism-collapse” (p. 38). Smith (2014: 4) stresses the “immense variety between regimes” that should be taken into clear account; his Handbook is a major contribution to an ongoing revised historiography of the various ‘communisms’ in the past century. Typical of the predominant anglophone prism devoid of any concrete lived anchoring in real experience with the socialist East and its people at the grassroots is Michael Lebowitz’s largely ‘Bolivarian’ vision and experience, reflected in his 2012 book.¹ Speaking in Zagreb, he made little reference to that specific Yugoslav socialist experience of his audience and their parents, its everyday realities explored for example in Luthar and Pušnik (2012). Instead Lebowitz (2013a: 4:02 min.) demonized that legacy, blaming it in major part for the Left’s failure and continuing failings across the planet today:

A specter is haunting the working class of Europe, both East and West, and the working class of developed capitalism in general. And that specter is the specter of communism. For the working class, that frightful hobgoblin is a society of little freedom, a society of workers without power in the work place or community, and a society whose decisions are made at the top by a vanguard party. Which views itself as the sole repository of truth. ... And therein lies today’s tragedy. Despite the intensification of Capital’s class war against the working class, despite Capital’s insistence that workers must bear the burden of Capital’s own failures, the working class sees no alternative than to try to say no! No to cutbacks, no to austerity ... no to the destruction of our lives and our environment—but not yes! to a socialist alternative. Faced with the living nightmare of 21st century capitalism, workers have seen no apparent alternative other than to mitigate the damage individually or collectively. That is the tragic result of the destruction of the dream of socialism that occurred in the 20th century.

Yet in interview 6 May 2013 in Belgrade, Lebowitz was on target in stressing the obvious:

Serbia and other countries which experienced attempts at building socialism, though, have something that Latin American countries lack – the memory of desirable elements in the old societies and a sense of justice and fairness which can be a basis upon which to mobilize people. And, that is the starting point in challenging the capitalist assault (Lebowitz, 2013b).

2.2 Toward socialist visions in ‘post-socialist studies’

In line with Lebowitz’s comments in Belgrade, I wish to argue that the freefall of post-socialism and its stark spectrum of distinctive horror and existential ordeal, lived out against the backdrop of the concrete daily life experience of the experiments that lost the Cold War, require separate study from a socialist and phenomenological perspective. The international left needs to look unblinkered at redeemable past real-socialist achievements, authoritarian elements notwithstanding, a project of demythologizing and building a multi-perspectival and richer empirical semiotics of past and trashed socialist life worlds, a work of memory recovered. Working within fresh analytic frameworks, Todorova (2010) and Silova (2010) underscore this need, and have edited useful collective volumes. Berdahl (2009) is an important book on approaches to post-socialist life worlds through an ethnographic prism, centering on East Germany. Smith (2014) brings together 35 essays by a team of international scholars in his just released *Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*.

At this critical juncture, we need to re-explore in depth what was progressive, successful, where & when in the former socialist economies, as perceived by real actors existentially—especially the smaller socialist states like Bulgaria, and the Yugoslav model of worker-managed enterprises—along with all its weaknesses and contradictions, interrogating our blinders and received shibboleths about what some still call ‘state-run capitalism.’ We tend to forget or refuse to recognize what Goldstein (2008: 65) has stressed:

The most important point is that the world struggle between the rival social systems acted as a restraint upon the ruling class in the United States in its treatment of the workers and the oppressed, so long as the USSR and the socialist countries set the world standard for the rights of the working class. Perhaps the most fundamental of these rights was the right to a job, something contrary to the very essence of capitalism. Shedding labor is part of the automatic mechanism of capitalism, and the creation of a reserve army of unemployed is an essential condition for the advance of capital accumulation. ... The USSR, in addition to guaranteeing job security, also set the standard on guaranteed pensions, free health care, and many other rights. Every capitalist country had to take this into consideration in dealing with its own working class.

In a video talk, Goldstein (2010) underscores how the socialist bloc impacted on the class struggle in the U.S. and across the planet. That is a strong and controversial thesis, also foregrounded by Dean (2012: 26-38). But debates about how to build a broad democratic Marxist re-ordering of the economy, society and polity need to be informed by fresh critical

analysis of decades of concrete experience, daily life and practice in ‘real existing socialist’ experiments on the ground, especially through people’s oral history and grounded memory. This has largely been bracketed out for decades. ‘Socialism 1.0’ is our own history and legacy. Wolff (2013b) puts it succinctly:

In any case, socialism's history provides key raw materials for making the changes needed now to fashion a socialism for the 21st century. Its past achievements and failures, when faced honestly, are informing a new socialism capable of moving beyond a capitalism riddled with environmental as well as economic crises as it deepens profoundly divisive and unsustainable inequalities.

Speaking about moving forward to ‘socialism 2.0,’ Peter Mertens (2012) of the Workers Party Belgium has noted: “It's also not the case that we don't know anything at all or that we have to start from a blank sheet of paper. There exist experiences, there was a socialism 1.0. With its strong points and its weak points, with its fantastic achievements, but also with its grievous mistakes. And we’re living in different times.” Another Belgium-born theorist, Bruno Bosteels, argues that the communist horizon is real and to invoke it is to produce

a complete shift in perspective or a radical ideological turnabout, as a result of which capitalism no longer appears as the only game in town, and we no longer have to be ashamed to set our expecting and desiring eyes here and now on a different organization of social relationships (Bosteels, 2011a: 228).

Boris Kagarlitsky (1999; 2009; 2013) and colleagues provide critical analysis from the IGSO (Institute for Globalization and Social Research, ИГСО) in Moscow (IGSO, 2013).

The situation of women in real-socialist states contrasted with today needs phenomenological inquiry, in part through prisms honed by Federici (2009; 2011), who argues for theorizing and politicizing unpaid and exploitative reproductive work in the home and subsistence agriculture, in today’s era of neoliberal “Primitive Accumulation” and its ravages (idem, 2012a: 38-48). In an extended video-recorded lecture, she argues at length that capitalism “has to devalue the work that we do in order to reproduce ourselves” and continues to do so (Federici, 2012b). Left Unity women in Britain underscore the huge impact of austerity capitalism especially on women: in “Sisters! Organize don’t Agonise,” the call is for many changes in welfare that women largely enjoyed in the former socialist states (Dowling, 2013).

2.3 The need for empirical oral people's history

Crucial in such post-socialist studies is an empirical 'counter-grounding' in what 'real existing socialist' daily life actually was for ordinary families, as perceived by real people today, now caught up in the chaos of contradictions under Capitalism redivivus in these same societies. Their stories matter. The narratives of ordinary people who grew up in socialism and now work and live in post-socialist societies in the throes of anomie and widespread poverty, basic dignity trampled, need to be collected, discussed & disseminated widely, biographical lived memory of ordinary working people—an ensemble of authentic experience and history of memory, the prisms of *concrete subjectivities & their recollected experience of 'real existing socialism' in a specific space/time/culture*. Such an approach looks to qualitative inquiry within the narrative study of lives, but space here precludes more detailed discussion of the methodological aspects of such biographical research. One paradigmatic prism is qualitative narrative inquiry developed at *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (FQS, 2011) and the broader compass of phenomenological approaches pursued by van Manen (1997; see also Coetzee, Elliker & Rau, 2013).

Narratives abound, as Raleigh (2006; 2011) exemplifies for Russia. That project of inquiry should be oriented to oral history and biographical inquiry, exploring what these socialist states actually were for their citizens, building new facets of a 'people's history' of what 'socialism 1.0' achieved, viewed in critical grounded retrospect. Based on several decades of fieldwork in the country and bolstered by numerous narratives of ordinary workmen, Kideckel (2008) describes the fear, distance and alienation besetting industrial workers in their everyday lives in post-socialist Romania. Looking back at socialist Hungary and its schools, Millei (2013) analyzes the memories of five Hungarian kindergarten teachers under socialism, their recalled praxis as teachers and "the ways in which explicit socialist ideology is understood by the interviewed teachers." Anthropologist Gerald Creed (1998; 2010) looks in depth at the "ambivalent transition" as reflected in the consciousness of agriculturalists in a small village in Bulgaria's economically depressed northwest, the most impoverished area not only in Bulgaria but in all of Europe. Charon-Cardona (2013) gives an auto-ethnographic insider view of Cuban education in the 1970s/80s, and her later studies in Soviet Tashkent. Malenko (2013) presents a detailed autobiography of growing up in the Soviet Union, stressing in her lived experience its many positive dimensions. Albeltaro (2014) details how

memoirs and autobiographies can be used in such historiography, although oral history as a source and methodology is scarcely mentioned elsewhere in Smith's (2014) *Handbook*.

This requires extended qualitative inquiry probing 'working people's post-socialist subjectivity and memory,' explorations in the 'oral history of real existing socialism,' biography as a 'flare' to illuminate past societal realities. Their authentic stories—the subject-anchored nexus of history and memory—are relevant to our struggle. These narratives reflect past functioning realities now gutted that revolutionary socialists across Europe and North America, in their abstracted distance (such as Cristall, 2013; Lebowitz, 2012; 2013a; Hudis, 2012a; 2012b), seem oblivious of. Such narratives have resurfaced online and in the Bulgarian neighborhoods during the 2013 summer of mass discontent, contrasting past socialist achievements with current chaos and its prime contradiction in terms, "bourgeois democracy."

2.4 Toward more phenomenological socialist 'post-socialist studies'

Probing biographical research on oral memory is imperative, particularly from a socialist perspective, not financed by Western corporate or government interests tied to the machinery of anti-socialist ISAs (Althusser, 1971). Bulgarian narratives can be supplemented by authentic interviews from Russia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia and elsewhere. Mandel's studies (1993; 1997; 2004) are one example for early work in the post-Soviet Union, Belarus and Ukraine. Green and de la Motte (2009) provide insight on the GDR based on many years of direct biographical experience there, Green as a British journalist and Bruni de la Motte as a girl born and raised there.

One possible model for such research is Breda Luthar and Maruša Pušnik (2010); another is Daniela Koleva's work on oral memory and the social imaginary and 'moral economy' of everyday socialist reality in Bulgaria (Koleva, 2008). Griffiths and Millei (2013a; 2013b) contain some chapters based on oral narrative, and are focused specifically on aspects of socialist education. Todorova and Gille (2010), a volume examining "post-communist nostalgia," and Silova (2010), centering on comparative education in the post-socialist era, also bring together relevant studies. Perry (2013) explores 'democratic' dimensions of socialist and post-socialist schooling in Europe's East. Creed's (2011) ethnographic study of mumming rituals in Bulgaria is highly critical of dominant approaches in post-socialist studies and how they seek to import and foreground Western-based notions of 'modernity.' An important recent volume based on oral historiography from a spectrum of socialist countries is

Koleva (2012). Dr. Koleva is associated with the ongoing oral history project on Real Existing Socialism in Bulgaria, an academic venture largely non-socialist in orientation, grounded on oral history data recently collected. However, its self-description is expressly anti-socialist (<http://minaloto.org>). Some of its oral historiography is accessible there. The American Research Center Sofia (ARCS) regularly organizes presentations on ‘post-socialist studies’ by non-socialists, even to U.S. audiences, “part of ARCS’ mission to popularize the history of communism in Bulgaria and thereby helped to prevent the rebirth of the regime” (ARCS 2013). Such studies now constitute a burgeoning bourgeois academic industry. ARCS is also heavily funded by the neo-liberal ABF, a U.S. corporate executives’ foundation. Based on extended ethnographic fieldwork in Romania under socialism and after, Verdery (1996) provides intriguing data. Writing on goods production in socialist Romania (p. 26), she notes:

Basically, most of these goods were not being made to be sold competitively: they were being either centrally accumulated or redistributed at low prices—effectively given away. Thus whether a dress was pretty and well made or ugly and missewn was irrelevant, since profit was not at issue: the dress would be ‘given away’ at a subsidized price, not sold. In fact, the whole point was not to sell things: the center wanted to keep as much as possible under its control, because that was how it had redistributive power; and it wanted to give away the rest because that was how it confirmed its legitimacy with the public. Selling things competitively was therefore beside the point.

In Bulgaria, many will tell you the actual quality of real-socialist manufactured goods was often superior to what is marketed today, and state quality control (BDS //БДС) was very high, including very durable furniture (still much in use) and other goods. Numerous products today proclaim to be “original,” meaning quality just like in socialist times. Verdery’s observations cast light on how real-socialist economies were in part demonetized and ‘de-commodified,’ in some sense the command economy’s early dream of “its own self-victualling tablecloth” (Spufford, 2012: 5). That ‘people not profit’ perspective needs to be investigated in popular memory, recaptured in existential depth, fleshed out in lived detail.

Raleigh’s oral history work (2006; 2011) strongly decenters and challenges the one-dimensional view of Soviet ‘totalitarianism’ and standard narratives of Soviet history widespread in the Western (esp. Anglo-American) imaginary. Yurchak (2005) is likewise of value. Keeran and Thomas (2004), Brown (2008), Bosteels (2011a), Dean (2012) and Szymanski (1979) are relevant, as is Spufford (2012), a semi-fiction about post-war Soviet visions of “red plenty.” In the U.S., the Marxist PSL defends the legacy of the workers’ states in Eastern Europe (La Riva, 2010) as do the WWP (www.workers.org), where Fred Goldstein

(2008) is active, and the (now largely reformist) CPUSA. In the broader envelope of ‘post-socialist studies,’ Korte et al. (2010) gathers studies of the ‘imaging of Eastern Europe’ (‘pre- and post-wall’) by the West. Crudu and Kostova (2014) also explores such terrain, centering especially on nouveau-capitalist Europe, as examined in the Vienna 2012 conference “Re-Inventing Eastern Europe” (Re-Inventing, 2012). Buck-Morss (2000) attempts a detailed analysis of differences and similarities between the Western and the Soviet “political imaginaries.” Kiossev (1995) gathers a number of critical essays from Bulgarian intellectuals in the mid-1990s looking back, a unique collection.

2.5 Research Proposal—‘Socialist education dismantled: Bulgarian teachers, parents and ordinary workers reflect on what has been lost’

One possible future project *focusing specifically on socialist education in Bulgaria*, based on oral narrative: ‘Socialist education dismantled: Bulgarian teachers, parents & ordinary workers reflect on what has been lost’—reflected through a prism a bit like Studs Terkel’s (1970; 1974; 1980a) oral history paradigm. A recorded interview with Terkel (1980b) is worth listening to. Pekar and Buhle (2009) provide a graphic version of Terkel’s (1974) earlier classic book on working people’s lives. The research should focus on education in 1970s/’80s, schooling, youth movements, recollected against the chaos of Bulgarian education and youth work today, and grounded in several methodological perspectives developed by van Manen (1997). How and why Marxist critical voices in education and the public sphere have been muzzled or obliterated is a related focus. The purging of former communists from Bulgarian government posts remains a hot issue, particularly for the center-right political formations (Novinite, 2013u); the latter often resort to Cold War discourse in their rhetoric.

2.6 People’s narratives as a prism on austerity across the planet

As a corollary, aspects of the analysis could also profit from a more evident grounding on interview and biographical narratives among ordinary working families, students and teachers, both in the existential throes of austerity capitalism and in the midst of resistance. This should also include narratives of migrant workers and their lived tragedies of uprooting, family separation, exploitation and “wage-slavery” abroad, bondage within vagabondage, as reflected in a harrowing tale about a Bulgarian migrant worker in Germany (Bartsch and Gezer, 2013).

3. Did ‘Real Existing Socialism’ Deliver the Goods?

3.1 Bulgaria as iconic example

The southernmost of the former socialist countries, Bulgaria may well have been the most successful Eastern European socialist economy and polity. That is a controversial but arguable thesis. It was also the closest state in sentiment and historical memory to Russia and the Soviet Union, since czarist Russia had liberated the country from Ottoman rule. It is likewise closely linked to Russia today by similar languages and the legacy of the Orthodox Church, founded by Cyril and Methodius in early medieval Bulgaria. Numerous ordinary working people aged 40 and over in Bulgaria think they were far better off than workers in the Soviet Union, Romania, Poland in the 1970s and ‘80s, whatever the deficiencies of one-party rule. They traveled freely throughout the socialist bloc (not to the West, except in organized groups), at very low cost, and could see life elsewhere, talk with citizens there. Bulgaria was also packed with summer and wintertime vacationers from the socialist bloc, on the Black Sea and at its skiing facilities. There was rich opportunity to interact and exchange perceptions. Despite the constant barrage of ‘pro-Europe’ propaganda today, the memories of many older Bulgarians belie the notion that socialism was unending hardship, a totalitarian ‘Stalinist’ society of mass oppression, lack of personal freedom, a drab economy of shoddy goods (Reuters, 2009). Yet Bulgarians recall nearby Romania in the mid-1980s and shudder: a society plagued by great shortages of food other basic necessities under Ceaușescu’s iron rule (Verdery, 1996), in stark contrast with their own society. Socialism had multiple faces over a vast topography of time and space. But social housing was often similar: more than 90 percent of Romanians and Bulgarians today live in owner-occupied dwellings, a legacy of socialism (CECODHAS, 2011: 10): the comparable figure in Germany and Western Europe is much lower. Under socialism, public housing apartments were granted to families at very low rent or were sold at affordable prices, payment to the state over 20 years. People built houses for themselves at low cost in the villages and towns, buying land plots cheaply from the state. Significantly, there was no ‘real estate market’ in the capitalist sense. Families likewise could not legally own more than one apartment/house.

Many from a demographic born roughly before 1972 remain certain that 25-35 years ago, the socialist welfare system in Bulgaria delivered the necessary goods and services for most families—production for basic human and societal needs – within an egalitarian system firmly grounded on the development, availability and access to all universal social programs

(whatever its 'bads' and 'non-democratic' authoritarian structures). Complaints about 'privileged bureaucratic elites' are rare; egalitarianism is a powerful memory (which empirical historical research can probe and interrogate). Tobacco cultivation was a major export industry, now one-quarter of its former size in 1989 (Mendick, 2013), whatever tobacco's questionable aspects. Many agro-collectives, industrial enterprises, schools, universities had vacation hotels and lodges on the Black Sea providing heavily subsidized vacations for their workers. Today much of that has vanished, a seaside vacation too pricey for most lower-income Bulgarians. The tourist industry now caters significantly to international clientele, even with an 'up-scale' new seaside golf course in Kavarna (PGA, 2013), and an influx of British entrepreneurs, having come to "Bulgaria to capitalise on its cheap labour and rental costs" (Esslemont, 2013b). Years ago, Bulgaria was reputed to have one of the best medical systems in Eastern Europe (Rombach, 2012); today there is a huge emigration of medical personnel, given Europe's lowest salaries and severe funding problems (Petkova, 2014). Iconic as a recent surprising figure for this disastrous brain drain: Bulgaria lost nearly 1,500 of its doctors through emigration abroad in just the past three years, and the trend may be increasing (bTV, 2014; Novinite, 2014b). Petkova (2014) describes the malaise:

Every year Bulgaria loses between 500 and 600 doctors to emigration [...] The graduating class of medical students for the whole country is about 600 people annually. According to a 2011 study, Bulgaria ranks lowest among EU countries in terms of remuneration for doctors [...] One anaesthesiologist [...] says since Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007, four of her colleagues in one of the biggest state hospitals in Sofia left for France and one emigrated to Germany. She says the number of anaesthesiologists has fallen by half in the last five years, and the hospital at which she works has not been able to fill vacancies for specialists in her field.

She quotes a fifth-year medical student, Gloria Petrova, daughter of a prominent cardiologist:

"I want to leave and set up and develop my life somewhere else because I don't see that many opportunities here," she says. "There are a lot of unfair things here and I don't like it... I want to go to a place where there are rules." Petrova explains that lack of regulation and accountability not only in the medical field but in other aspects of life in Bulgaria is what drives her to think of a career abroad.

Gloria's friend Ivelina, another medical student, is considering emigration to Germany:

"What can you do here with 300 leva [= €153] salary [per month]? You can't create a family. Your parents have to support you, your husband and your child," she says,

referring to the amount most young doctors receive in Bulgaria during the four years of specialisation after the initial medical degree. Some doctors get state-sponsored positions where the salary is double, but only a lucky few receive such jobs.

Kadrinov (2012) paints a very dark picture, indicating a shortage of 30,000 nurses. He states: “The Euro Health Consumer Index has named Bulgaria as the EU country with the worst healthcare system and highest death toll per capita.” The Bulgarian socialist system was grounded on totally free education, free medical care, low-cost pharmaceuticals, excellent (if often crowded) public transport nearly cost-free. Nearly all factories, schools, government offices and services (such as the national railroad) operated ‘canteens’ (столове). These offered low-cost, hi-quality menus, and facilities for accommodating large dinners, such as wedding parties of 400 guests, at a heavily subsidized cost affordable to all. Remembered fondly, most canteens have disappeared. People in narratives tell you how much they used to ‘celebrate’ and socialize in get-togethers in such canteens and many state-operated restaurants, at rock-bottom prices. Cafes and restaurants used to be packed with workers, because low-cost, non-profit; now far fewer can afford to eat out. All that is gone. A whole dimension of sociality and connectivity in everyday life has vanished, this is demonstrable. In essence, many such services for basic needs were ‘de-commodified,’ cost to ‘consumers’ very low, indeed almost ‘demonetized’ (Bollier, 2011): for water, electricity, transport, central urban steam heating. Those costs are now skyrocketing, most esp. for electricity and gas. Municipal bus fares of 6 stotinki (= \$0.04) were largely ‘symbolic.’ Wages were roughly 3x lower than today for many workers, including teachers, but most goods and services were significantly cheaper, unlike now (Templer, 2013a). Rents for public housing were symbolic. No one was homeless. There was virtually no advertising anywhere, it was not needed. Socialist maternity leave allowed 3 years partially paid, now much restricted and sorely missed (Dragova, 2012). Fraad and Fraad-Wolff (2014: 81-2) envision extended paid maternity leave in a socialist USA, plus “quality free or heavily subsidized child care, after-school and summer care, child allowances:” (once standard for all in real-socialist Bulgaria).

Older workers often narrate that years ago many families rarely even locked their front door, or the key was left under the proverbial mat. Security was high, break-ins rare. People will tell you there was no need to steal. Perhaps the exception was taking a bit in goods from the ‘state’ that a worker had access to on the job, used in ‘barter’ with others or as a small gift. Today petty crime, muggings and break-ins are rampant, a powerful criminal mafia operates

in many towns. Most apartments sport a heavy metal security door, businesses (and many residences) a burglar alarm connected to the privately owned security firm Telepol. Two-thirds of crimes, mainly household break-ins and theft, remain unsolved, creating a vast sense of family and personal insecurity, totally unknown in socialist times (Novinite, 2014f). A February 2014 survey indicated: “Sixty-seven percent of Bulgarians are afraid of becoming victims of household crimes. Fifteen percent of the respondents said they were victims of a home burglary in the past 12 months. Ten percent had their summer villa burglarized, 10% were victims of pickpockets, 10% had their agricultural produce stolen” (Novinite, 2014i).

Speaking privately, a quite significant segment of Bulgarians born 1970 and before will echo what Irina Malenko b. 1967), author of the memoir/novel *Sovietica* (2009), has written about growing up in the Soviet Union. Recently interviewed, Malenko (2013) noted:

Our life was very secure, safe, in a quiet, non-stressful environment, absolutely free of drugs, with virtually no crime. There was quite a lot of social control: if somebody was doing something wrong, his colleagues or neighbors would set him right. Every adult was in employment, except for disabled people, family care providers — if they wished to stay at home — and retired people. Retirement age was fifty-five for women and sixty for men. Soviet people were also the most literate people in the world. All art was very easy to access. Libraries were free of charge. Books, theater plays, concerts, museums, and exhibitions were extremely cheap.

We had a guaranteed right to housing, the right to have a job, and the right to have a paid holiday. Housing costs were extremely low. People paid only for water and electricity, just three or four percent of their wages in total. The state would give people apartments free of charge, for life, and their children could stay to live there, but you were not allowed to sell it. Public transport was extremely cheap too, as well as food. Children's clothes and shoes were subsidized by the state. Schoolbooks were supplied free of charge. ... We had whole publishing houses working specially on children's books; there was an enormous amount of cartoons and feature films produced especially for children ... All sports clubs were fully free of charge. Kids were encouraged to attend them.

Certainly, others complain about the ‘totalitarian’ regimentation top-down they grew up in, or the wealthy relatives they had arrested or dispossessed after 1945, who died in forced labor camps (Wikipedia, 2012). Novelist and poet Kapka Kassabova paints a singularly bleak picture of her own socialist youth, growing up in Sofia in the 1980s (Templer, 2013a). Those narratives also matter and should be collected and analyzed. As Creed (1999: 224) stresses: “people have multiple images of the past ... and the synthesis that results is very much a contemporary product.” His own long-term

fieldwork in the small northwestern Bulgarian village of Zamfirovo illuminates how agriculturalists adopted and adapted socialist practice and constraints to their own circumstances, and the problems this has engendered since 1990 (Creed, 1998; 2010; 2011). Yet unlike in Poland or Hungary or the GDR, dissent in Bulgaria was minimal among intellectuals, students and workers. Georgi Markov was one of the few dissident writers abroad, the highest-profile ‘cold warrior’ defector from Bulgaria (fled 1969 to the UK), working for Radio Free Europe, his murder by poison dart in 1978 notorious. Markov (1984), a volume of his anti-socialist writings, presents a Cold War view that a global neoliberal elite and a privileged urban-professional segment of Bulgarians today might agree with. They now plan a monument for Markov in Sofia (Novinite, 2014j).

3.1.1 Jobs for all? Guaranteed work for everybody

One key question socialists should be asking in this crisis of immiseration, and are: how was full employment achieved and maintained in these socialist economies? As Samir Amin (2010) has stressed, whatever forms socialist systems develop in the future, a centrally planned economy, however regulated with worker self-management, seems a necessary prerequisite for guaranteeing employment for all, including the young. A new demand raised by communist parties in Europe is the ‘30-hour week’ (DKP, 2013). Bulgarians in interview speak about “three people doing the job of one,” in effect a form of real-socialist job-sharing, all with a guaranteed livable egalitarian wage. Citizens with a primary school education (or less) were also *all* employed, as factory hands, toilet attendants, street cleaners and other simple jobs, with a livable wage. Today that whole massive state employment sector has been largely eviscerated in Bulgaria. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) under Roosevelt, the largest and most ambitious agency of his New Deal, employed millions in public works projects, and was a capitalist employment scheme to stave off revolution during the Great Depression (Wikipedia, 2013b). A Bulgarian 2014 analogue to WPA is necessary but goes against the genetic code of neoliberal ‘reconstruction’ here.

Anthropologist Katherine Verdery (1996: 23) has intriguing insight into how full employment in socialist Romania was organized, and contends that “structurally speaking, workers under socialism had a somewhat more powerful position relative to management than do workers in capitalism. Just as managers’ bargaining with bureaucrats undercut central power, so labour’s position in production undercut that of management.” Such perspectives from empirical

fieldwork clash with views among Marxist critics (Wolff, 2014: 46-8) that workers in Eastern European socialism were powerless, voiceless.

In a related vein, Jesse Myerson (2014a), a high-profile leader in the Occupy movement stateside, proposes five radical economic reforms. One is ‘guaranteed work for everybody.’ He also suggests a ‘universal basic income,’ ‘making everything owned by everybody,’ and a ‘public bank in every state.’ In another recent provocative piece (2014b), he argues for a fresh unbiased look at communism, past and future, stressing that given the “technological, material, and social advances of the last century, we could expect an approach to communism beginning here and now to be far more open, humane, democratic, participatory and egalitarian than the Russian and Chinese attempts managed.”

The collective volume *Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA* (Goldin, Smith and Smith, 2014) projects a range of concrete ideas regarding full employment in a post-capitalist economy and polity, lauded on its cover by socialist historian Paul Buhle as “[t]he best, most insightful, and most lively work on socialism to appear in a long time.” I agree. The book is touched on in Sec. 6.3 of this article; among its 31 articles are Wolff (2014) and Fraad and Fraad-Wolff (2014), cited here above and below.

3.2 A paradigm of socialist education

In the Bulgarian ‘transition,’ education has not only been subjugated to neo-liberal agendas dictated by European capital, but has been heavily gutted, its value systems trampled. Many citizens here contend education was better under socialism in terms of funding allocated, quality of teachers, and importantly, student attitudes to learning: schools were demanding, geared to high performance levels and energizing student engagement, anti-capitalist Marxist thinking—probably not ‘critical thinking’ in current senses. Little open dissent was tolerated. Public universities (none were private) were hard to enter, high grades needed. But they were tuition-free—and a job state-guaranteed after graduation, *no student debts or unemployed graduates*. Social class distinction was kept very marginal in most schools, the regimen of discipline strict. A classic critical Bulgarian film exploring an elite high school, its regime of strict discipline, teenage resistance to school authority and its tensions in the 1960s is *Vchera* (Yesterday, 1988), on YouTube in full (youtu.be/iBvofH3heek). *Buepa* is one of the very last great films produced in socialism, in a kind of critical look 25 years back. The much-lauded movie begins with a scene from an English class reading Macbeth (Act 5/sc. 5: 17-28),

playing in the film's title on the line "And all our yesterdays have lighted fools the way to dusty death." In Russia, there are similar widespread complaints today among teachers about the plunge in quality of high-school graduates, much confusion in school reform (RT, 2011).

3.2.1 Polytechnical education

Great emphasis was put on polytechnical/vocational education for all, along with Marxist-Leninist studies. Polytechnical education sought to fuse academic and vocational education for all pupils. They were introduced to many aspects of rural and urban production, hands-on, combining mental and bodily education, intellectual and manual labor, and technological and industrial training, in this sense 'polytechnical,' a term associated with Marx (Spiegel, 1969). Polytechnism combines learning about economic production with actual productive work experience (Smart 2012/1963). It also aimed in socialist schooling to instill a "communist attitude toward labor" in the pupils (Beck, 1990: 6). This involves direct cooperation between schools and farms, factories, transport and other sectors (Georgeoff, 1968, 50ff.). Differences between the sexes were also downplayed. A focus on the natural sciences is also central to this, as well as indoctrination of pupils "in the spirit of respect for and love of labor" (Beck, 1990: 9). Krupskaya's Marxist-Leninist conceptions in her "On Polytechnism" played a fundamental role in Soviet polytechnical education in its formative and later periods. Cooperation in the workplace remains a clear goal of polytechnical instruction as well, building the moral economy of labor. This can be contrasted with academic versus vocational education in the U.S., for example, with its powerful social class-rooted basis (Beck, 1990:13). Lunacharsky (1981), the founder of early directions in polytechnical education in the Soviet Union, also stressed the "extra-mural" link with real life and production outside the school (Beck: 22), all aspects oriented to develop the "new Soviet man." Commenting on polytechnical education in East Germany in 1969, critical voices in West Germany noted: "Every 13-year-old pupil in the GDR already has more occupational experience and concrete knowledge of economics than a high school graduate here in the Federal Republic" (Spiegel, 1969). The education of teachers in Russia under the tsar, the Soviet Union and the post-socialist period is examined in depth by Long and Long (1999). Georgeoff (1968) offers detailed material on and analysis of the ideology and structure of Bulgarian education in the later 1960s, a classic study. It contains six appendixes (pp. 165-283) of relevant government source materials in translation.

Envisioning education in a socialist USA, Wolff (2014: 50-1) states that schools would no longer be divided into those for a privileged elite and others more ‘vocational,’ or low-cost community colleges for children of the working class: “When all workers have to participate in running their enterprises, they will need and demand correspondingly integrated and comprehensive educations at schools where what is taught, how it is taught, and what resources are taught to support teaching are equal.” This would probably entail a kind of digital ‘polytechnism redux’ for a new century in a transformed moral economy of labor.

3.2.2 Classic Marxist educational thinking, relevant today?

Socialists contemplating what socialist education might look like in ‘socialism 2.0’ can build on this specific past praxis, now largely dismantled. Nigel Grant’s (1965; 1969) studies on schools under Soviet and East European socialism still remain valuable studies. More broadly, what is the relevance of Soviet educator Anton Makarenko’s socialist pedagogy today, particularly “cultivation of traditions of collective life; unity of the learning, labour, social, aesthetic and sporting activities of pupils in and out of school” (Filonov, 1994: 7; Makarenko, 1965; Long and Long, 1999: 38-42)? Intriguingly, Tarlau (2013) sketches the impact of Soviet educational theory and praxis, including Makarenko’s ideas, on the current MST movement in Brazil. Morgan (2003) provides a broad survey of proletarian and socialist education 1848-1948, including John MacLean in Scotland. Siegfried Bernfeld’s (1892-1953) *Sisyphus or the Limits of Education* (1973/1925) is a neglected classic of Freudo-Marxist anti-authoritarian pedagogy. Edwin Hoernle’s (1970/1929) work on proletarian education is a key Marxist text; Hoernle (1883-1952) was close to Rosa Luxemburg, connected with Spartakus and one of the major educational theorists among the founders of the German KPD. Otto Rühle (1874-1943) and his prolific writings on proletarian education (1912; 1975) likewise remain significant texts from a more libertarian stream of German council communism. Plans are afoot for future English translations of Hoernle and Rühle under IEPS.

Centrally relevant is also Célestin Freinet’s (1896-1966) radically democratic, cooperative working-class socialist pedagogy in France, strongly shaped in part initially by ideas of Makarenko (Legrand, 1993; Acker, 2007), reflected in Freinet’s *L’Éducation du Travail* (1949) and *Pour l’École du Peuple* (1977). Freinet remains little known in Anglo-American critical pedagogy, and is reflected in today’s Modern School Movement Federation (FIMEM) (fimem-freinet.org). Schlemminger (1999) is a compact introduction. Dietrich (1998/1982)

provides analysis on the radical anti-authoritarian revolutionary socialist political aims of Freinet pedagogy (esp. 115-72), fighting for a “school of cooperation” and radical pupil autonomy cum solidarity within the context of a “*socialisme autogestionnaire*” (p. 124), centered on the politics of *autogestion*. She also details Freinet’s own communist politics as a proletarian educator (pp. 149-52). Dietrich (1995) is a useful multi-authored Freinet handbook and papers by Lee and others at an international seminar in London provide a good overview (Plaisir, 1997). Beattie (2002: 312) notes that for Johannes Beck, a key Freinet revolutionary educator in West Germany in the 1970s, Freinet was “in the same line as Paulo Freire, the School of Barbiana in Italy, the liberated schools of the Vietnamese Resistance in the Mekong Delta and the peasant schools of southern Portugal, newly liberated from fascism. This was ‘a people’s pedagogy’” Templer (2014) sketches a practical application of Freinet pedagogy and intercultural networking in teaching global issues in the EFL classroom.

3.2.3 Cuban analogues

Bulgaria, the GDR and other real-socialist systems developed such education in changing forms for many decades, and impacted on the polytechnical curriculum in Cuban schools after the revolution, as MacDonald (2009: 128-32) describes the system there, including schools set up by the GDR there. Socialist education in Bulgaria was in salient ways similar to Cuba from the mid-1960s down to today (with its own modifications), particularly in the sense of building a ‘moral economy of solidarity and community’ and overcoming the divide between the curriculum and life beyond, the classroom and the natural, social and ‘communal’ world, ‘schooling the revolution.’

Anglophone socialists who hold the Cuban educational system up as a model, as reflected in the NUT foreword to MacDonald’s book—vowing “The NUT will continue to make sure that the educational achievements in Cuba are recognized throughout the world” (p. iv) —often seem unaware that its paradigms were largely Soviet and East European socialist. For example, the principle of spurring socialist ‘emulation’ among students rather than bourgeois competition, central to Cuban schooling (ibid., 105-6, 193), is appropriated directly from real existing socialist educational paradigms, and springs from Lenin’s famous essay “How to organize competition?” (*Pravda*, 20 Jan. 1929) on what came to be called “*sotssorevnovanie*” (socialist competition) across socialist experiments in Eastern Europe (Wikipedia, 2013c). MacDonald does not mention this key East European paradigm or its source. In highlighting

Cuba's literacy campaign and revolutionary stress on "high-quality education as an international human right," Gutierrez (2013) reminds us: "Cuba is not perfect, but in Cuba the working class has been liberated from imperialist domination; it has been emancipated from capitalist relations and therefore, the playing field has been leveled for all. Education and health care are free for all!" While critical as an émigré Cuban scholar, Charon-Cardona (2013) provides an intriguing insider view through auto-ethnography of her own educational experience in Cuba in the 1970s/80s. In an analysis of Cuban literacy education as a paradigm, McLaren (2009) does not mention the strong impact of East European socialist models more broadly on its development. In his extended history of 20th-century socialist movements, Cristall (2013) dismisses Cuba in four words. Malott (2007) develops a critical view of contemporary Cuban education, arguing that "because the external control over one's labor power interferes with our 'species being,' regardless of whose interests the value generated benefits, Cuba must therefore manufacture consent through cultural institutions such as education." Marxists will debate the term '*Gattungswesen*' that Marx appropriated from Feuerbach for the 'human being in essence'—perhaps a better rendering than 'species-being' (Held, 2009: 146)—and its salience for real-world practice in building a functioning socialist economy. Yet in *Die Deutsche Ideology*, Marx and Engels (1970/1845: 54) write:

[...] in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticise after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, herdsman or critic. This fixation of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now.

This is also foregrounded by Myerson (2014b), stressing: "In that way, communism is based on the total opposite of uniformity: tremendous diversity, not just among people, but even within a single person's 'occupation,'" and clearly echoed in the vision for a socialist USA sketched by Fraad and Fraad-Wolff (2014: 82-3). To what extent that "fixation of social activity" ("*Sichfestsetzen der sozialen Tätigkeit*") was indeed partially loosened and dissolved in 'real existing socialism' (and perhaps in Cuba) is open to empirical inquiry and analysis. In oral narratives, Bulgarians often expand on how they were quite free in ample spare time to pursue many activities and to socialize, their livelihood guaranteed, far more so than today.

3.3 Education in post-socialist freefall

Today in Bulgaria a severe lack of learner discipline is ravaging the entire system, the alienated ‘children of the transition.’ Most youth, nearly all in fact, have no conception of what Bulgarian life and education were under socialism, an engineered amnesia. As mentioned, nearly all Marxist educators have been purged or coerced by the new System into silence. One senior educator told me in private: “Bulgarian education has been destroyed. The result is total chaos in a system once among Eastern Europe’s best.” Many students just want to get a degree and emigrate. One survey indicates some two-thirds of Bulgarians would like their children to study abroad (Mikova, 2012). A May 2012 survey: 40% of youth want out of Bulgaria the first chance they get, a future ‘lost generation.’ Interviews with graduating high school seniors in 2013 confirm this: most, more privileged, students intend to study in the ‘West,’ saying they may never return (bTV, 2013a). A 2013 EdMin poll determined that 52% of the 2013 graduating high-school class applied for university abroad. One in six 2012 high-school graduates went on to foreign universities (Novinite, 2013m).

Another 2012 study found 41% of Bulgarians aged 16 “alarmingly illiterate,” a genuine national crisis, “thus ranking Bulgaria at the level of countries such as Peru and Uruguay, not as a European one” (Novinite, 2012d). A recent 2013 report from the Center for Demographic Policy (Sofia) notes that “Bulgaria has the highest illiteracy rate in the EU. The CDP cites data of the European Commission indicating that 41% of Bulgarian students are not fully literate. Bulgaria ranks 53rd by literacy rate in 2012, after Kyrgyzstan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkmenistan, and Tonga. It notes: “higher education in Bulgaria has been commercialized to an absurd degree ... there is a fake diploma industry, academic titles are being bought ... there is proven evidence of corruption in the allocation of public funding for scientific research” (Novinite, 2013n). A 2014 Education Syndicate survey revealed alarming tendencies of overwork (working 48 hours a week despite the legal 40 hrs), excessive administrative burdens and low morale among teachers: “Bulgaria's teachers, 90% of whom are female, manage to spare just 5 hours weekly to spend with their families, and 2 hours for any leisure activities [...] while teachers are overtired by headmasters, inspectorates and the Ministry of Education, the quality of teaching is deteriorating” (Novinite, 2014d).

3.3.1 Socialist extracurricular education and its implosion

Under socialism, a huge diverse state-run array of well-organized extra-curricular activities, cost-free summer camps, excursions for school kids and youth existed. Those summer hostels, long closed, are now being privatized. Pioneers (age 9-13) and Komsomol (age 14-18) organized kids at/after school existed—all that now destroyed, often wistfully recalled. The Young Pioneers or *chavdarcheta* (age 6-8) were given required socially useful tasks like collecting old paper and bottles for recycling, picking herbs (Obshchestvo, 2008). Youth normally were mobilized to participate in compulsory agricultural harvest brigades in socialist Bulgaria; mandated from above, yet many still recall this as enjoyable camaraderie, campfires & songs/dancing in the evenings—heavy collaborative manual labor, minimal pay, summers of required social service. Volunteer *subbotnik* work teams for teens and adults were organized on weekends in keeping neighborhoods clean, shoveling snow and ice from streets and sidewalks, recycling waste and other community services (Wikipedia, 2013d). Today smaller neighborhood streets remain full of snow, sidewalks are nearly impassable after a heavy snowfall. Older retirees can hardly walk to shop. Litter gathers on many streets. Few neighbors and no youth—who could be mobilized for such neighborhood tasks—lift a finger.

The reading culture among children was spurred in all socialist countries by the Home of the Children's Books, its low-cost publication & book distribution system, along with research on young people's reading culture (Georgeoff, 1968, 114-117). Georgeoff also gives a detailed description (pp. 125-56) of how the youth movements served as a highly active educational space beyond the classroom. The disimagination machinery (Giroux, 2013a; 2013b) has worked 24/7 to discredit and vitiate that memory.

By stark bourgeois contrast, many youngsters now live in a world of social atomization, individualism, consumerist fantasies and fetishisms, hanging out in bars, Facebookery in lieu of books, little stress on physical fitness or love of nature, once a central education component, few field trips, sparse hands-on contact with real agriculture. Most know little about the very different youth of their parents and grandparents. Once upon a socialist time, there were excellent school libraries, cultural activities, organized sports of all kinds, a high-energy social mobilization. Many schoolchildren attended monthly concerts of classical music and theatre plays, this was obligatory in the curriculum. Now few go to any such relatively rare performances. Recent studies report that the average Bulgarian family spent the

equivalent of €6 on books in 2010, and €2 on cinema/theatre/concerts (Novinite, 2012e): a whole children's and adult reading culture has been trampled under the privatization of publishing. These are phenomena under the dialectical contradictions of bourgeois capitalism that have generated the *most educated ignorance in human history*, in its specific configurations in nouveau-capitalist Bulgaria. What Giroux (2013b) describes for the U.S. also holds for many young Bulgarians caught up in the “neoliberal historical conjuncture”:

Social solidarities are torn apart, furthering the retreat into orbits of the private that undermine those spaces that nurture non-commodified knowledge, values, critical exchange and civic literacy. ... young people, especially poor minorities and low-income whites, are increasingly inscribed within a machinery of dead knowledge, social relations and values in which there is an attempt to render them voiceless and invisible. ... There appears to be no space outside the panopticon of commercial barbarism and casino capitalism.

3.3.2 Transformations in Bulgarian higher education

Empirical research is needed on how neo-liberal capitalist policy has specifically transformed the schools and impoverished universities within the restructured and colonizing European context of “new imaginary ideotypes and regimes of truth,” the establishing of a “modern Panopticon of a ‘measurable’ Europe of knowledge,” governed by data, indicators and benchmarks. (Pasiás & Roussakis, 2012: 129, 128 and Fig. 2). New performance standards for teachers, intense monitoring of working life, immiseration due to trends leaving teachers at the bottom of government pay scales, endless curriculum revision, ever more costly, glossy commercially produced books poorer students cannot afford—and resistance by teachers to those developments—are all important foci for research on education gutted in the ‘transition.’ Under-resourced universities have been colonized by the Bologna Process and programs such as Erasmus, leading to myriad forms of links that often morph in practical terms into a kind of ‘academic tourism,’ the hunger to link with the ‘West’ whatever its actual value. What benefit Bologna and Erasmus have brought concretely needs research in depth. Bulgarian universities now have perhaps the poorest prepared student intake in their history, acknowledged by all colleagues I have interviewed. Better students try by hook, crook or background privilege to study somewhere abroad. Teaching ‘under the audit’ (Illner, 2011) in Bulgaria is a separate focus needing research: the audit is there, yet many overworked underpaid academics manage to survive with sparse publication, mainly in local Bulgarian academic outlets and ‘in-house’ university presses. Research positions at Bulgarian universities are virtually non-existent, monopolized at the Academy of Sciences. The

Academy (BAH) has been buffeted by heavy probing of practices, scandal and funding cutbacks since 2009 (Novinite, 2009), still continuing in 2013. There were small staff and student street protests against education and research budget cuts in late 2010 (Novinite, 2010), which have flared sporadically since, but morale among *all* educators at *all* levels is at a historic low. Marxist critique has been silenced, despite the panoply of contradictions. The current government is seeking to attune Bulgarian curricula to ‘market needs,’ with close cooperation with the business community, a dubious neoliberal watchword (Novinite, 2013p).

Yet privatization and corporatization of education are still relatively at an early stage in Bulgaria. The nouveau riche micro-stratum seeks to send its children abroad, especially for university education. Some elite private schools exist, like the American College of Sofia, an old secondary private school of privilege now charging annual tuition fees of €5,800 for Bulgarian pupils and €15,000 for international students (ACS, 2013), supported in part by the corporate neo-liberal America for Bulgaria Foundation (ABF). The ACS had the top marks in Bulgaria in June 2013 results for the national *matura* exam (= A-levels). Several private non-state ‘free universities’ in Varna and Burgas have emerged, with questionable reputations as “diploma mills” and charges of wholesale corruption, along with the elite New Bulgarian University in Sofia, and are in part highly entrepreneurial in their structuring and aims.

Critical research is needed on these institutions and most particularly on the American University in Blagoevgrad (www.aubg.bg), a veritable American academic colony and magnet for students from throughout Eastern Europe. AUBG is largely a cadre training campus for future global corporate careers. Yet what does the college contribute to Bulgarian education, how does it cooperate with the nearby Southwestern University, a large under-funded state institution in the same small city? Interviews of teaching staff at SU suggest surprisingly little contact with AUBG staff or students. What percentage of its graduates emigrate, who finances AUBG and why? One of its main donors is also the ABF, which is committed to supporting “rule-of-law initiatives to create an enabling environment for increased inflows of foreign investment and to ensure a modern, prosperous Bulgaria that values free markets and democracy” (ABF, 2013). Annual tuition at AUBG is now \$10,300, in a country where most state university lecturers earn less than US\$500 a month, beginning school teachers ca. US\$250, librarians often even less. As mentioned, libraries as a sector have suffered heavily across Bulgaria since 1990. But by neoliberal contrast, AUBG boasts

the “largest English-language library in the Balkans” (AUB, 2013). That library itself is an icon of the ‘transition’ to *demokratiya*—its contradictions, inequities and westward wrench.

(Sections 4-6, to be continued)

Notes

1. Lebowitz (2012) focuses principally on deficiencies in the Soviet Union, yet there is no attempt to look at actual individuals’ everyday experiences there or elsewhere in Eastern European socialism, aside from intriguing commentary on the “moral economy of the working class” and worker “resistance” under *Realsozialismus*, a major focus of Kopstein’s (1996) analysis of the GDR, elaborated in Lebowitz (2013a). For analysis, Lebowitz builds in significant measure on the work of the dissident Hungarian economist János Kornai, who defected to Harvard University in the 1980s as a “leading guru of privatization” (Trumpbour, 1991). Lebowitz’s book has no references to Romania, Bulgaria, almost none to Poland. Importantly, it is Marxist economic and political historiography centering on Eastern Europe while relying solely on material in English, seen largely through a ‘Bolivarian’ prism of critique. Nowhere does he mention the huge impact of WW II and its aftermath in Eastern Europe, and the four-decade Cold War as shaping forces on ‘real existing socialism,’ distorting its everyday realities and visions, creating multiple exigencies, turning countries like Romania and Poland into heavily burdened debtor states. The study reflects a shrunken semiotics of everyday socialist life and actual practice. By marked contrast, Goldstein (2008: 60ff.) deals with the Cold War’s impact on Western imperialism and capitalist welfare states in competition with the socialist bloc, as does Dean (2012: 26-38). Goldstein (2010) emphasizes how the socialist bloc impacted on the class struggle in the U.S., and what happened after its implosion. Lebowitz reiterates his rejection of ‘vanguard socialism’ and his primary focus on the Bolivarian Revolution in a November 2013 panel in Vancouver, railing against a system where “an enlightened few bring socialism to the unenlightened masses” (Lebowitz, 2013c: 4:25-5:20 min.)—his recurrent travesty of the complex empirical reality of *Realsozialismus*. He apparently has spent little time in Europe’s East.

References

- ABF. (2013). America for Bulgaria Foundation, project descriptions. ABF. (goo.gl/2KWiF) .
- Acker, Victor. (2007). *The French Educator Célestin Freinet*. Lanham, MD: Lexington.
- ACS. (2013). American College of Sofia. About.com. (goo.gl/dnzhp).
- Adichie, Chimamanda. (2009). The Danger of a Single Story. *TED blog*, July. (goo.gl/15KO3).
- Adomanis, Mark. (2013) Bulgaria's Travails Should Be A Sobering Reminder to Ukrainians:

- The EU Doesn't Fix Everything . *Forbes*. Reprinted in *Novinite*, 28 December. (goo.gl/0nGnPJ).
- Albataro, Marco. (2014). The Life of a Communist Militant. In: S. A. Smith (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism* (pp. 441-54). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Althusser, L. (1971). Ideology and State Apparatuses. In *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books.
- Amin, Samir. (2010). Interview Zagreb, 3/3. Youtube, 5 May. (<http://goo.gl/epxDi>).
- Andreev, Alexander. (2013). DW: Violence in Bulgaria to be Expected. *Novinite*, 26 July. (goo.gl/vnU3pc).
- ARCS. (2013). The Past and the Un-Past. Lecture on Recent Bulgarian History. Chicago, Field Museum. ARCS, 29 April (goo.gl/tT2TI).
- AUB. (2013). American University in Bulgaria. AUB. (goo.gl/8LJhY).
- Badiou, Alain. (1998/2003). Of an Obscure Disaster. *Lacanian ink*, 22. (goo.gl/3Dw2g).
- Bartsch, Matthias, and Gezer, Özlem. (2013). Waiting in Pain: Migrant's Case Highlights Modern Slavery in Germany. *Der Spiegel*. Reprinted in *Novinite*, 18 April. (goo.gl/vQgpx).
- Beattie, Nicholas. (2002). *The Freinet Movements of France, Italy, and Germany, 1920–2000: Versions of Educational Progressivism*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Beck, Robert H. (1990). *Polytechnical Education: A Step*. NCRVE. Berkeley: Univ. of California. (goo.gl/8tYsk).
- Berdahl, Daphne. (2009). *On the Social Life of Postsocialism. Memory, Consumption, Germany*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Bernfeld, Siegfried. (1973/1925). *Sisyphus, or The Limits of Education*. Trans. F. Lilge. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bollier, David. (2011). Demonetize.it! – A World Beyond Money? *News and perspectives on the commons*, 11 July. (goo.gl/xDuz0).
- Bonstein, Julia. (2009). Homesick for a Dictatorship: Majority of Eastern Germans Feel Life Better under Communism. *Spiegel online international*, 3 July. (goo.gl/Dp8BN).
- Bosteels, Bruno. (2011a). *The Actuality of Communism*. London: Verso.
- Bosteels, Bruno. (2011b). Howard Zinn lecture series at Occupy Boston, Dec. 3. (goo.gl/tEJG8).
- Brown, Michael E. (2008). *The Historiography of Communism*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. (goo.gl/dZ8rC).

- Brown, Wendy. (2010). Interview, *Broken Power Lines blog*, 27 Feb. (goo.gl/dzry8).
- BTA. (2014). Incomes Should Rise at Least 20% a Year to End Demographic Crisis - Center for Demographic Policy, *BTA*, 4 February. (goo.gl/EfUM1r).
- bTV. (2013a). Evening news, interviews with high school graduates ('*abiturienti*') at matriculation final exam, Sofia, bTV, 23 May.
- bTV. (2013b). Evening news, interviews on the street. Sofia, bTV, May 27.
- bTV. (2014). Doctors at the Crossroads. Special report, *Penopmepume*, bTV, 16 February. (goo.gl/kliMHf).
- Buck-Morss, Susan. (2000). *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*. Cambridge/MA: MIT Press.
- CECODHAS. (2011). Housing Europe Review 2012. CECODHAS Housing Europe. (goo.gl/O5ztx).
- Catalinotto, John.. (2014). U.S./EU imperialists aim to seize Ukraine. *Workers World*, 7 February. (goo.gl/IkCXWY).
- Charon-Cardona, Euridice. (2013). Socialism and education in Cuba and Soviet Uzbekistan. In Griffiths, Tom G., and Millei, Zsuzsa. (eds.), Education in/for socialism: historical, current and future perspectives, special issue, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 11(2), 296-313. (goo.gl/Yz6SIO).
- Chitty, Andrew. (2011). Hegel and Marx. In Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur (eds.), *A Companion to Hegel*. Oxford: Blackwell. (goo.gl/UmyzRx).
- Coetzee, Jan K., Elliker, Florian, & Rau, Asta. (2013). Training for Advanced Research in the Narrative Study of Lives Within the Context of Political and Educational Transformation: A Case Study in South Africa, *FQS* 14(2), May. (goo.gl/IC82S).
- CPC (2013). Building Socialism. In: Program of the Communist Party of Canada. CPC. (goo.gl/9Q26d).
- Creed, Gerald W. (1998). *Domesticating Revolution: From Socialist Reform to Ambivalent Transition in a Bulgarian Village*. University Park/PA: Penn State University Press. (goo.gl/9vHckj).
- Creed, Gerald W. (1999). Deconstructing Socialism in Bulgaria. In Burawoy, Michael, and Verdery, Katherine (eds.), *Uncertain Transition: Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World*. (pp. 223-43). Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Creed, Gerald W. (2010). Strange Bedfellows: Socialist Nostalgia and Neoliberalism in Bulgaria. In Todorova, Maria, and Gille, Zsuzsa (eds.), *Post-Communist Nostalgia*. (pp. 29-45). Oxford: Berghahn Books. (goo.gl/z4zs58).

- Creed, Gerald W. (2011). *Masquerade and Postsocialism. Ritual and Cultural Dispossession in Bulgaria*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Cristall, Gary. (2013). History and Crisis of the Left. Presentation, World Peace Forum, Vancouver, 2 November. (goo.gl/9so5q1).
- Crudu, Emanuel, & Kostova, Ludmilla (eds.). (2014). *Re-Inventing Eastern Europe: New Directions in Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge, forthcoming.
- Darik Radio. (2014). Half a Million Bulgarians Want to Emigrate (bulg.), Кой Говори?, February 19. (goo.gl/iy2Ble)
- Dean, Jodi. (2012). *The Communist Horizon*. London: Verso. (goo.gl/Kdk6Z).
- Dietrich, Ingrid. (ed.). (1998/1982). *Politische Ziele der Freinet-Pädagogik*. Weinheim and Basel: Beltz.
- Dietrich, Ingrid. (ed.). (1995). *Handbuch Freinet-Pädagogik. Eine praxisbezogene Einführung*. Weinheim and Basel: Beltz.
- DKP. (2013). 30-Stunden-Woche für Europa? *kommunisten.de*, 31 May. (goo.gl/ZbUVU).
- DKP. (2014). Ukrainische Kommunisten zur Krise – eine richtige Alternative zum SiKo/Nato-Kurs. *kommunisten.de*, 1 February. (goo.gl/eGFQoo).
- Dowling, Felicity (2013). Sisters! Organise don't Agonise! *Left Unity*, 8 June. (goo.gl/IjRqB).
- Dragova, Donka. (2012). I Just Want to Have a Baby in Bulgaria. *Novinite*, 9 Nov. (goo.gl/abxhc).
- Enev, Deyan. (2010). *Circus Bulgaria*. London: Portobello. (goo.gl/IEPN2).
- Esslemont, Tom. (2013a). Poverty in Bulgaria Drives More to Make Ultimate Sacrifice. BBC. *Novinite*, 8 May. (goo.gl/abUa6).
- Esslemont, Tom. (2013b). British entrepreneurs invest in Bulgaria. BBC, 16 May. (goo.gl/kpBeh).
- Evans, Martin. (2014). Lure of Jobs Abroad Sounds Death Knell for Rural Bulgaria. *Daily Telegraph*. Reprinted in *Novinite*, 3 January. (goo.gl/TgaudJ).
- Federici, Silvia. (2009). On Capitalism, Colonialism, Women and Food Politics. An Interview with Silvia Federici. *Politics and Culture*, 2 (goo.gl/2Xsjz).
- Federici, Silvia. (2011). The Reproduction of Labor Power in the Global Economy and the Unfinished Feminist Revolution. *The End of Capitalism*, 29 May (goo.gl/AOKzG).
- Federici, Silvia. (2012a). *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*. Oakland/CA: PM Press (goo.gl/YBcqH).
- Federici, Silvia. (2012b). Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle. Lecture, Bristol, 22 November. Video: (goo.gl/EIHzfL).

- Filonov, G. N. (1994). Anton Makarenko. *Prospects* 24(1/2), 77-91. (goo.gl/lqPvn).
- Focus News. (2014). NATO allocates nearly BGN 60 mln under project for modernisation of Bulgaria's Bezmer Air Base. *FOCUS News*, 11 February. (goo.gl/KxwYAA).
- FQS. (2011). *Forum Qualitative Social Research/Sozialforschung* 12(2). Biography and Politics. (goo.gl/u8tDY).
- Fraad, Harriet, and Fraad-Wolff, Tess. (2014). Personal, Emotional, and Sexual Life Without Capitalism. In: Frances Goldin et al., eds. *Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA* (pp. 77-84). New York: HarperCollins.
- Freinet, Célestin. (1977). *Pour l'École du Peuple*. Paris: Maspero.
- Freinet, Célestin. (1978/1949). *L'Éducation du Travail*. Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé.
- Friedman, George. (2014). New Dimensions of U.S. Foreign Policy Toward Russia. *Geopolitical Weekly*, 11 February. (goo.gl/thwGE9).
- F.S. (2013). An experiment in living socialism: Bulgaria then and now. *Political Affairs*, 2 October. (goo.gl/Mf6nbt).
- Georgeoff, John P. (1968). *The Social Education of Bulgarian Youth*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press.
- Giroux, Henry (2013a). The Politics of Disimagination and the Pathologies of Power. *Truthout*, 27 Feb. (goo.gl/NqHhPg).
- Giroux, Henry. (2013b). The Violence of Organized Forgetting. *Truthout*, 23 July. (goo.gl/lkfME).
- Goldin, Frances, Smith, Debby, and Smith, Michael. (eds.). (2014). *Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Goldstein, Fred. (2008). *Low-Wage Capitalism*. New York: World View Forum. (goo.gl/VT45Z).
- Goldstein, Fred. (2010). The USSR and the U.S. Working Class. Talk, WWP conference, New York, 22 April. Video. (goo.gl/nT8FKQ).
- Gowans, Stephen. (2011). "We Lived Better Then." *Marxism-Leninism Today*, 20 December. (goo.gl/731Jh).
- Gowans, Stephen. (2013). Seven Myths about the USSR. *Marxism-Leninism Today*, 23 December. (goo.gl/O0n8gD).
- Gramsci, Antonio. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Grant, Nigel. (1965). *Soviet Education*. London: U of London Press.
- Grant, Nigel. (1969). *Society, Schools and Progress in Eastern Europe*. Oxford: Pergamon.

- Green, John, and de la Mottte, Bruni. (2009). *Stasi Hell or Workers' Paradise? Socialism in the German Democratic Republic – what can we learn from it?* London: Artery. (goo.gl/TKfZUc).
- Griffiths, Tom G., and Millei, Zsuzsa. (eds.). (2013a). *Logics of Socialist Education: Engaging with Crisis, Insecurity and Uncertainty*. Dordrecht: Springer. (goo.gl/DqrmSb).
- Griffiths, Tom G., and Millei, Zsuzsa. (eds.). (2013b). Education in/for socialism: historical, current and future perspectives, special issue, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 11(2). (goo.gl/Yz6SIO).
- Griffiths, Tom G., and Millei, Zsuzsa. (2013c). Socialist Educational Logics under Post-socialist Conditions. In idem (eds.), *Logics of Socialist Education: Engaging with Crisis, Insecurity and Uncertainty*. (pp. 1-18). Dordrecht: Springer. (goo.gl/DqrmSb).
- Held, Jacob M. (2009). Marx Via Feuerbach: Species-being Revisited. *Idealistic Studies* 39, 1-3. (goo.gl/RpDUPW).
- Higgins, Andrew. (2013). Change Comes Slowly for Bulgaria, Even With E.U. Membership, *The New York Times*. Reprinted in *Novinite*, 25 December. (goo.gl/XaLHr1).
- Hill, Dave. (2006). Class, Neoliberal Global Capital, Education and Resistance. *Social Change* 36(3), September (goo.gl/twVWt).
- Hill, Dave. (2012). Immiseration Capitalism, Activism and Education: Resistance, Revolt and Revenge. *JCEPS* 10(2). (goo.gl/1dwHz).
- Hill, Dave (ed). (2013). *Immiseration Capitalism and Education: Austerity, Resistance and Revolt* Brighton: Institute for Education Policy Studies. (goo.gl/BP3SEp).
- Hoernle, Edwin. (1970/1929). *Grundfragen proletarischer Erziehung*. Frankfurt/Main: März Verlag.
- Horvath, Srečko, and Štikl, Igor. (2012). Welcome to the Desert of Transition! Post-Socialism, the European Union, and a New Left in the Balkans. *Monthly Review* 63(10), March. (goo.gl/MNJpy).
- Hudis, Peter. (2012a). From the Economic Crisis to the Transcendence of Capital. *The International Marxist Humanist*. (goo.gl/i9OWf).
- Hudis, Peter. (2012b). *Marx's Concept of the Alternative to Capitalism*. Leiden: Brill.
- Hudson, Kate. (2012). *The New European Left: A Socialism for the 21st Century?* London: Palgrave Macmillan
- IGSO. (2013). Института глобализации и социальных движений (goo.gl/eyTNE).
- Illner, P. (2011). Against audited education: The emergence of an activist pedagogy.

- EduFactory webjournal*, no. 1, 68-81. (goo.gl/hUDnK).
- Ivancheva, Mariya. (2013). Bulgaria's 'Class War.' *The Guardian*. Reprinted in *Novinite*, 27 July. (goo.gl/I0XG9J).
- Kadrinov, Vasil. (2012). Bulgaria Faces Emigration of Medical Doctors and Nurses. Izmir Strategic Research Center, 19 April. (goo.gl/Na3poQ).
- Kagarlitsky, Boris. (1999). *New Realism, New Barbarism*. London: Pluto.
- Kagarlitsky, Boris. (2009). *Back in the USSR*. London: Seagull.
- Kagarlitsky, Boris. (2013). Economic Policies after the Death of Neoliberalism. Moscow: ИГСО. (goo.gl/s1jVy).
- Karadjis, Michael. (2014). Bosnia's magnificent uprising: Heralding a new era of class politics? *Links International Journal of Social Renewal*, 13 February. (goo.gl/1vtgW0).
- Keeran, Roger, & Kenny, Thomas. (2004). *Socialism Betrayed: Behind the Collapse of the Soviet Union*. Bloomington, IN: iUniverse.com. (goo.gl/ojbpmp).
- Kideckel, David. A. (2008). *Getting by in postsocialist Romania: labor, the body, & working-class culture*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kiossev, Alexander (ed.). (1995). *Post-Theory, Games, and Discursive Resistance: The Bulgarian Case*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Koleva, Daniela. (2008). 'My life has mostly been spent working': Notions and patterns of work in socialist Bulgaria. *Anthropological Notebooks* 14 (1): 27–48. (goo.gl/cDtGj).
- Koleva, Daniela. (ed.). (2012). *Negotiating Normality: Everyday Lives in Socialist Institutions*. London: Transaction Books. (goo.gl/VZSiv).
- Kopstein, Jeffrey. (1996). Chipping Away at the State. Workers' Resistance and the Demise of East Germany. *World Politics* 48(3), 391-423. (goo.gl/xtg6j).
- Korte, Barbara, Pirker, Eva U., & Helff, Sissy (eds.). (2010). *Facing the East in the West: Images of Eastern Europe in British Literature, Film and Culture*. New York: Rodopi. (goo.gl/dZa2l).
- Kowalik, Tadeusz. (2012). *From Solidarity to Sellout: The Restoration of Capitalism in Poland*. New York: Monthly Review. (goo.gl/Ew55C).
- La Riva, Gloria. (2010). Why we continue to defend the Soviet Union. Gains of USSR, despite problems, show potential of socialism. PSL national conference, 30 Nov. (goo.gl/5s2mj).
- Lebowitz, Michael A. (2012). *The Contradictions of 'Real Socialism': The Conductor and the Conducted* (New York: Monthly Review, 2012 (goo.gl/Zl7dr)).

- Lebowitz, Michael A. (2013a). Specters & Struggles, talk, Zagreb, 3 May. (goo.gl/mlnXeS).
- Lebowitz, Michael A. (2013b). Socialism for the 21st Century. Interview with Michael A. Lebowitz. *LeftEast*, 7 May. (goo.gl/cJ73s).
- Lebowitz, Michael. A. (2013c). Building New Parties or Building Direct Democracy? World Peace Forum panel, Vancouver, 2 November. (goo.gl/kRw6eq).
- Legrand, Louis. (1993). Célestin Freinet. *Prospects* 23(1/2), 403-18. (goo.gl/j7J3F).
- Lenin, Vladimir. I. (1929 [1917]). How to Organise Competition? *Pravda*, No. 17, 20 January. (goo.gl/IMWRA).
- Levant, Alex. (2008). *The Soviet Union in Ruins*. Saarbrücken: VDM (goo.gl/pqy8F).
- Long, Delbert and Roberta. (1999). *Education of Teachers in Russia*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing.
- Lunacharsky, A.V. (1981). *On Education. Selected Articles and Speeches*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Luthar, Breda, and Pušnik, Maruša. (eds.). (2010). *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia*. Washington, DC: New Academia. (goo.gl/noM0g).
- Makarenko, Anton. S. (1965). *Problems of Soviet Education*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Malenko, Irina. (2013). An Interview with Irina Malenko, Author of *Sovietica*. NCCUSA, 2 February. (goo.gl/xdUAm).
- Malott, Curry. (2007). Cuban Education in Neo-liberal Times: Socialist Revolutionaries and State Capitalism. *JCEPS* 5(1). (goo.gl/HVBS9).
- MacDonald, Theodore H. (2009). *The Education Revolution: Cuba's Alternative to Neoliberalism*. London: Manifesto Press.
- McLaren, Peter (2009). Guided by a Red Star: the Cuban Literacy Campaign and the Challenge of History. *JCEPS* 7(2) (goo.gl/yITii).
- Mandel, David. (1993). *Rabotyagi: Perestroika and after Viewed from Below: Interviews with Workers in the Former Soviet Union*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Mandel, David. (1997). *Looking East Leftwards*. Montreal: Black Rose.
- Mandel, David. (2004). *Labour after Soviet Socialism: Autoworkers and their Unions in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*. Montreal: Black Rose.
- Markov, Georgi. (1984). *The Truth that Killed*. London: Ticknor & Fields.
- Marx, Karl (1976/1867). *Capital*, vol. 1. Trans. Ben Fowkes. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Marx, Karl, and Engels, Friedrich. (1970/1845). *The German Ideology: Introduction to a*

- Critique of Political Economy*. London: New York: International Publishers.
(<http://goo.gl/tcpEc>).
- Mendick, Robert. (2013). EU Cash Could Stop us Going up in Smoke, Say Bulgarian Tobacco Growers. *The Telegraph*, republished in *Novinite*, 3 Feb. (goo.gl/DrCUL).
- Mertens, Peter. (2012). WP of Belgium. A Conversation with Peter Mertens. *Solidnet.org*, 14 February. (goo.gl/FQw2s).
- Mikova, Desislava. (2013). No Highway Takes Bulgarian Education to The Times' Top 400. *Novinite*, 4 October. (goo.gl/WOQ0d).
- Millei, Zsuzsa. (2013). Memory and kindergarten teachers' work: children's needs before the needs of the socialist state. In: Griffiths, Tom G., and idem (eds.), Education in/for socialism: historical, current and future perspectives, special issue, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 11(2): 170-93. (goo.gl/Yz6SIO).
- Mirowski, Philip. (2013). *Never Let a Serious Crisis Go To Waste*. London: Verso.
- Morgan, W. John. (2003). *Communists on Education and Culture, 1848-1948*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Myerson, Jesse. (2014a). Five Economic Reforms Millennials Should Be Fighting For. *RollingStone*, 3 January. (goo.gl/JT0Rn3).
- Myerson, Jesse. (2014b). Why you're wrong about communism: 7 huge misconceptions about it (and capitalism). *Salon*, 2 February. (goo.gl/fuBBIM).
- Nicolae, Valeriu. (2014). Ghettoes – Bulgaria. *valeriunicolae.wordpress.com*, 30 January. (goo.gl/3GHJ3B).
- Novinite. (2009). PM Vows to Rejuvenate Bulgarian Academy of Sciences after Scandal. *Novinite*, 18 Nov. (goo.gl/8EHDP).
- Novinite. (2010). Bulgaria Scientists, Students, Doctors Unite in Anti-Govt Rally. *Novinite*, 1 Dec. (goo.gl/F3mNq).
- Novinite. (2012a). Bulgaria at Bottom of Global Rule of Law Ranking. *Novinite*, 28 Nov. (goo.gl/3LfMs).
- Novinite. (2012b). Unenthusiastic Bulgaria Marks 23 Years since Communism Collapse. *Novinite*, 10 Nov. (goo.gl/UDPsi).
- Novinite. (2012c). Latest Data Confirms Bulgaria Faces Demographic Collapse. *Novinite*, 28 Nov. (goo.gl/KVyp6).
- Novinite. (2012d). Bulgarian Teens Alarmingly Illiterate, Study Shows. *Novinite*, 25 Sept. (goo.gl/PJoOW).

- Novinite. (2012e). Annual Household Spending on Culture in Bulgaria at BGN 4. *Novinite*, 8 Nov. (goo.gl/OLmhl).
- Novinite. (2013a). Bulgarians Battle Extreme Poverty. *Novinite*, 5 May. (goo.gl/LCxnc)
- Novinite. (2013b). Bulgaria, Romania Welfare Indicator 50% below EU Average. *Novinite*, 19 June. (goo.gl/QqKrg).
- Novinite. (2013c). Bulgarian Scholars Call for End to Plutocracy. *Novinite*, 24 June. (goo.gl/95oAq).
- Novinite. (2013d). 86% of Bulgarians Say Judiciary is Corrupt. *Novinite*, 9 July. (goo.gl/JxwD2).
- Novinite. (2013e). EC: Poverty Level in Bulgaria is Alarming. *Novinite*, 6 March. (goo.gl/HYYws).
- Novinite. (2013f). Bulgaria 1st in EU by Share of Materially Deprived People. *Novinite*, 18 January. (goo.gl/JcNbL).
- Novinite. (2013g). Bulgaria's AgriMin: Farming Is Ruined. *Novinite*, 22 March. (goo.gl/wxKoX)
- Novinite. (2013h). Only 10% of Products Sold in Bulgaria Are Locally Manufactured. *Novinite*, 23 Jan. (goo.gl/h0SC7).
- Novinite. (2013i). Bulgaria with Highest Material Deprivation Rate in EU27 in 2011. *Novinite*, 28 May. (goo.gl/x8yFb).
- Novinite. (2013j). Close to Half M Bulgarians Ready to Leave Homeland for Good. *Novinite*, 5 July. (goo.gl/loVI9).
- Novinite. (2013k). Next Stop UK: Romanians & Bulgarians Are Queueing up for Handout Britain. *Novinite*, 3 Feb. (goo.gl/b97yd).
- Novinite. (2013L). Bulgaria's Parliamentary Elections. *Novinite*, 8 May. (goo.gl/1iz3V).
- Novinite. (2013m). Ex FinMin Comments on Bulgaria's 'Endless' Protests for WSJ. *Wall Street Journal*. Reprinted in *Novinite*, 29 July. (goo.gl/d2pAAI).
- Novinite. (2013n). Bulgaria with Worse Literacy Rate than Kyrgyzstan, Tonga. *Novinite*, 4 Feb. (goo.gl/CeRYu).
- Novinite. (2013o). Economic Crisis Nearly Stifles to Death Bulgaria Birth Rates. *Novinite*, 23 July. (goo.gl/MQ3dKK).
- Novinite. (2013p). Streamlining Education, Business Among Bulgaria's Priorities. *Novinite*, 7 December. (goo.gl/6U0tjX).
- Novinite. (2014a). Bulgarian Students Youngest Dropouts in EU. *Novinite*, 3 January. (goo.gl/7dkYss).

- Novinite. (2014b). Bulgarian Healthcare in Dire Straits – Study. *Novinite*, 30 January. (goo.gl/TU6Hbq).
- Novinite. (2014c). German Foreign Minister Calls for Sanctions on Ukraine. *Novinite*, 4 Feb. (goo.gl/60sYis).
- Novinite. (2014d). Bulgarian Teachers Tired and Stressed—Poll, *Novinite*, 5 Feb. (goo.gl/zI9ZIf).
- Novinite. (2014e). Bulgaria's Registry Agency: Record Number of Bankruptcies in 2013. *Novinite*, 6 Feb. (goo.gl/JQ0Jui).
- Novinite. (2014f). Two-Thirds of Crimes in Bulgaria Remain Unsolved. *Novinite*, 11 Feb. (goo.gl/IT3rM7).
- Novinite. (2014g). Bulgarians have Mixed Feelings for the EU –Poll. *Novinite*, 12 Feb. (goo.gl/FqRxbX).
- Novinite. (2014h). Bulgaria Drops to 100th in Press Freedom Index. *Novinite*, 12 Feb. (goo.gl/2A5KN2).
- Novinite. (2014i). Two-Thirds of Bulgarians Fear Household Crimes. *Novinite*, 17 Feb. (goo.gl/0Efwam).
- Novinite. (2014j). Dissident Bulgarian Writer Georgi Markov Monument Planned in Sofia. *Novinite*, 18 February. (goo.gl/cLQzdj).
- O'Brennan, John. (2013). The Spirit of Protest in Brazil and Turkey has Now Swept into Bulgaria. *Novinite*, 26 June. (goo.gl/FlbGN).
- Obshchestvo. (2008). My Memories of Communism. (bulg.). *kaka-cuuka.com*, 17 July. (goo.gl/OoVYP).
- Pasias, George, & Roussakis, Yannis. (2012). “Who Marks the Bench?” A Critical Review of the Neo-European “Paradigm Shift” Through Higher Education Policies and Discourses. *JCEPS* 10 (1). (goo.gl/tqTZL).
- Pekar, Harvey, and Buhle, Paul. (2009). *Studs Terkel's Working: A Graphic Adaptation*. New York: The New Press. (goo.gl/9dtdnc).
- Perry, Laura B. (2013). Democratic Aspects of Communist and Post-Communist Schooling in Central and Eastern Europe. In: Griffiths, Tom G., and Millei, Zsuzsa. (eds.), *Logics of Socialist Education: Engaging with Crisis, Insecurity and Uncertainty*. (pp. 155-71). Dordrecht: Springer. (goo.gl/DqrmSb).
- Petkova, Mariya. (2014). Bleeding Doctors: Bulgaria's Medical Crisis. *Aljazeera*. Reprinted in *Novinite*, 28 January. (goo.gl/U4bbj9).

- PGA. (2013). McDowell Praises European Tour at Volvo World Match Play in Bulgaria. PGA European Tour, 15 May. (goo.gl/7pfMb).
- Pilger, John. (2013). There is a war on ordinary people and feminists are needed at the front. *London Progressive Journal*, 19 June (goo.gl/bb2pr).
- Pivovarchuk, Anna. (2013). Roma: Europe's Dispossessed. *Fair Observer*, 23 June. (goo.gl/etFvp).
- Plaisir. (1997). Plaisir de Apprendre. International seminar, London, Alliance. (goo.gl/n2aNHk).
- Pupovac, Ozren. (2010). Present perfect, or the time of post-socialism. *Eorozine*, 12 May. (goo.gl/mZLh8).
- Raleigh, Daniel J. (2006). *Russia's Sputnik Generation: Soviet Baby Boomers Talk About Their Lives*. Bloomington: Indiana UP.
- Raleigh, Daniel J. (2011). *Soviet Baby Boomers: An Oral History of Russia's Cold War Generation*. Oxford: OUP.
- Reich, Kersten. (2014). *Equality of Opportunity, Equity and Forms of Capital – Social and Individual Opportunity in Times of Increasing Capitalization*, forthcoming. Original German edition 2013 (goo.gl/XzTMn).
- Re-Inventing. (2012). International Conference: Re-Inventing Eastern Europe. Vienna, 17-19 May. *Euroacademia*. (goo.gl/kDCWZ).
- Reuters. (2009). In Eastern Europe, People Pine for Socialism. *Marxism-Leninism Today*, (goo.gl/LGT3i).
- Robertson, James. (2014). The revolt rocking Bosnia. *Socialist Worker*, 11 February. (goo.gl/agiKnO).
- Rombach, Anna. (2012). Catastrophic Conditions in the Bulgarian Health System, *WSWS*, 5 June (goo.gl/UFUkk).
- Rombach, Anna. (2013). Stalemate after Elections in Bulgaria. *WSWS*, 20 May (goo.gl/bG4Fy).
- Roser, Thomas. (2013). Bulgarien: Ein täglicher Überlebenskampf. *Die Presse*, 4 May. (goo.gl/PSBiC).
- RT. (2011). Russian education system learning to adapt to changing times. *RT Question More*, 15 May. (goo.gl/Wrfddj).
- Rühle, Otto. (1912). *Grundfragen der Erziehung*. Stuttgart: Dietz.
- Rühle, Otto. (1971). *Schriften. Perspektiven einer Revolution in hochindustrialisierten Ländern*. Ed. Gottfried Mergner. Reinbek: rororo.

- Rühle, Otto. (1975). *Zur Psychologie des proletarischen Kindes*. Frankfurt/Main: Fischer.
- Schlemminger, Gerald. (1999). The Freinet Movement: Past and Present. In: Yannick Lefranc (ed.),: *Plaisir d'apprendre et travail coopératif. Les méthodes éducatives et la philosophie pratique de Célestin Freinet* (pp. 17-26). London: Alliance française. (goo.gl/jeds5q).
- Silova, Iveta. (2010). Rediscovering Post-Socialism in Comparative Education. In: idem (ed.), *Post-socialism is not dead. (Re)reading the global in comparative education* (pp. 1-24). Bingley: Emerald Publishing Group. (goo.gl/ujAF35).
- Smart, Kenneth F. (1963/2012). The Polytechnical Principle. In: Edmund J. King (ed.), *Communist Education* (pp. 153-76). London: Routledge.
- Smith, Stephen A. (ed.). (2014). *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Communism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (goo.gl/ttu1ND).
- Sofia Globe. (2012). More than half of Bulgarians see situation in country as 'unbearable' – poll. *Sofia Globe*, 5 July. (goo.gl/YeQH3).
- Sotiris, Panagiotis. (2013a). Higher Education and Class: Production or Reproduction? *JCEPS* 11 (1). March (goo.gl/RjY6S).
- Sotiris, Panagiotis. (2013b). Austerity Capitalism and Education in Greece. In Dave Hill (ed.), *Immiseration Capitalism and Education: Austerity, Resistance and Revolt* (pp. 20-40). Brighton: Institute for Education Policy Studies.
- Spiegel. (1969). Frühe Saat. *Der Spiegel*, 20, 46-49, 12 May. (goo.gl/F1rEcZ).
- Spufford, Francis. (2012). *Red Plenty*. Minneapolis: Graywolf. (goo.gl/kpcSj).
- Strategypage. (2014). Morale: Old Russians Resent the Loss of Communism and Poverty. *strategypage.com*, 22 January.
- Szymanski, Albert. (1979). *Is the Red Flag Flying?* London: ZED. (goo.gl/ckIcP).
- Tarlau, Rebecca. (2013). Soviets in the Countryside: The MST's Remaking of Socialist Educational Practices in Brazil. In: Griffiths, Tom G., and Millei, Zsuzsa. (eds.), *Logics of Socialist Education: Engaging with Crisis, Insecurity and Uncertainty*. (pp. 53-72). Dordrecht: Springer. (goo.gl/DqrmSb).
- Templer, Bill. (2013a). Review, Kapka Kassabova, *A Street Without a Name: Childhood and Other Misadventures in Bulgaria* (London, 2009), *amazon.com*, 5 March (goo.gl/YEzvh).
- Templer, Bill (2013b). Deyan Enev's Flash Fiction in the Bulgarian EFL Classroom. *BETA E-Newsletter*, July-August, 16-25. (goo.gl/e1JeMj).

- Templer, Bill. (2014). Freinet Pedagogy and Intercultural Networking, *IATEFL GISIG Global Issues Newsletter*, 31, Spring 2014, pp. 8-10. (goo.gl/9e1kau).
- Terkel, Studs. (1970). *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression*. New York: Pantheon.
- Terkel, Studs. (1974). *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*. New York: Pantheon.
- Terkel, Studs. (1980a). *American Dreams: Lost and Found*. New York: Pantheon.
- Terkel, Studs. (1980b), Interview with Studs Terkel. WBAI, 29 September. (goo.gl/bTmShs).
- Todorova, Maria. (2010). From Utopia to Propaganda and Back. In idem and Gille, Zsuzsa (eds.), *Post-Communist Nostalgia*. (pp. 1-13). Oxford: Berghahn Books. (goo.gl/z4zs58).
- Todorova, Maria, and Gille, Zsuzsa.(eds.) (2010). *Post-Communist Nostalgia*. Oxford: Berghahn Books. (goo.gl/z4zs58).
- Thürmer, Gyula. (2009). The Crisis of Capitalism and the Revolutionary Perspective in Hungary. *International Communist Review*, No. 1. (goo.gl/LDBtG).
- Trumbour, John. (1991). Harvard in Service to the National Security State. *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, Fall, 12-16. (goo.gl/DOjIw).
- van Manen, Max. (1997). *Researching lived experience: human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, Ontario: Althouse Press. (goo.gl/40LIS).
- Vasilenkov, Sergei. (2013). Bulgaria Standing on the Edge of Revolution. *pravda.ru*, 21 June. (goo.gl/HttOX).
- Verdery, Katherine (1996). *What was Socialism, and What Comes Next?* Princeton: Princeton University Press. (chap. 1 download: goo.gl/pxLEB).
- Wikipedia. (2012). Forced Labour Camps in Communist Bulgaria. (goo.gl/qZvr0).
- Wikipedia. (2013a). Demographics of Bulgaria. (goo.gl/16kkn).
- Wikipedia. (2013b). Works Progress Administration. (goo.gl/SEIF).
- Wikipedia. (2013c). Socialist Competition. (goo.gl/9KQaF).
- Wikipedia. (2013d). Subbotnik. (goo.gl/KluMh).
- Wilson, Gary. (2014). Mass workers' actions shake Bosnia. *Workers World*, 19 February. (goo.gl/eUp20G).
- Wolff, Richard. (2013a). Alternatives to Capitalism. *Critical Sociology* 39(4), 487-490. (goo.gl/3LUa8).
- Wolff, Richard. (2013b). A Socialism for the 21st Century. *Truthout*, 7 June. (goo.gl/HMRop).

Wolff, Richard. (2014). The Shape of a Post-Capitalist Future. In: Frances Goldin et al., eds.

Imagine: Living in a Socialist USA (pp. 43-52). New York: HarperCollins.

Yurchak, Alexei. (2005). *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton UP.

(all URLs here accessed 19 February 2014)

Author's Details

Bill Templer is a Chicago-born educator with research interests in English as a lingua franca, critical pedagogy, socialist/Marxist transformative policy for education, and Extensive Reading methodologies. He serves on the staff of the IATEFL SIG Global Issues: (gisig.iatefl.org/about.php). Bill has taught in the U.S., Ireland, Germany, Israel/Palestine, Austria, Bulgaria, Iran, Nepal, Thailand, Laos and Malaysia. He is Editor (Eastern Europe) at the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* (www.jceps.com). A widely published translator from German, he is chief translator for the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture, University of Leipzig (www.dubnow.de). Bill is currently based as an independent researcher in Shumen, Bulgaria.

E-mail: bill_templer@yahoo.com