

Chapter 14

Conclusion: Capitalism, Resistance and What is to be Done?

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This collection began with Marx's observation that the logic of capitalism, in its rapacious hunger to accumulate, leads inexorably to the immiseration of the direct producers of the system's wealth. By and large, the beneficiaries of this logic are the unproductive elite that, vampire-like, suck the life out of the producing class. Marx's observation is no fanciful conjuring of a dewy-eyed dreamer. Rather, as we see in the pages of *Capital*, it is the outcome of hard-edged critique cut from the steel-gaze of dialectical science. And what is Marx's point? What are we to take from his critique of political economy? Well, simply, it is that history is no accident. Nor is history the preordained prize of the 'deserving': be it the 'meek', capitalists or even workers. We learn from Marx that history is to be won. History is struggle and, more concretely, class struggle.

It is to such struggle and its intersections with education that his book has been directed. In Marx's days, he and his collaborator Frederick Engels noted 'Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat' (Marx and Engels, 1847). To be clear, such a splitting is not to be interpreted as a proposal for a rigid and immutable bipartite view of class. In accord with the political purposes of the *Communist Manifesto* Marx operates at a high level of abstraction. This is in contrast to Marx's historical and empirical work where his view of class is dynamic and contextually emergent. For example, in relation to the 1848 French Revolution, Marx noted

In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, they form a class.
[Marx, 1966/1852:479]

Certainly, today, we see the logic of capital splitting 'society as a whole into two great hostile camps'. Laid bare are not only the competing interests of Labour and Capital but also the class tactic of 'austerity capitalism' to assert the dominance of the latter over the former. Across the globe, the fangs of capital tear deeply in to the flesh of the body of the social wage: those hard won historical concessions won by Labour. In capital's reassertion of its class power, it is the poor that suffer first: living lives that are more precarious, increasingly unhealthy and terminated earlier. Austerity capitalism brings with it the impoverishment and *absolute* immiseration of millions via what Harvey (2003) - working from Marx's idea of primitive accumulation (Marx, 1976/1876) - calls 'accumulation by dispossession'. The accumulation and privatisation of public assets – the stealing of the commons (De Angelis, 2001) - by the capitalist class sees not only the erosion of the welfare state, free education and

universal health care but also the diminution of the dreams aspirations and the very lives of the working class.

In his speech at the anniversary of the People's Paper, Marx (1856) eloquently described what was facing society in the midst of the industrial era. He revealed the inherent contradictions of capital in that it can promise much (to a small percentage of people) yet deliver little with its obsessive need to restrict and hoard resources:

In our days, everything seems pregnant with its contrary: machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labour, we behold starving and overworking it; the new-fangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want; the victories of art seem bought by the loss of character (para.3).

Marx could not have envisioned the extreme lengths that capital would go to in cementing its status as a totalizing ideology, nor could he have imagined the urgency of the environmental crisis that overshadows everything (Williams, 2010). A case in point would be the proposed \$7 billion Keystone XL pipeline project to bring oil sands from Alberta, Canada, to the Gulf Coast of the US. Here capitalist business appears to be proceeding apace as usual, with the April 22, 2013 cover of the *National Review* proclaiming the 'Wonderland' and 'the miracle of Canada's tar sands'. Williams (2013) asserts that if climate change was not even mentioned during the previous presidential campaign, it is even more unlikely that anything significant will be done about it as long as capitalism is part of the picture. Put simply, capitalism is incompatible with the vision of sustaining life on the planet (Foster et. al., 2010; Kovel, 2007; Næss, 2006; Spence, 2000).

The state has been an enthusiastic foot soldier in capital's war on class and the natural environment. While the full armoury of its Ideological Apparatuses are turned to the duping and stupefying its citizenry, Repressive Apparatuses are honed to keep people in line, in prison and in fear. Such attacks often centre on denying the right of Labour to organise and assert its collective power. One of the most extreme examples in the US has been the recent Republican legislation in the US state of Wisconsin where the right to collective bargaining has been taken away public sector workers. Significantly, this assault occasioned the largest trade union rallying and activism for decades. (MacAskill, 2011; Socialist World, 2011).

In the United States, as elsewhere, the continued attack on unions is enabled by a lack of shop floor organizing coupled with the consensus ideology of giving weight to the formation of union-business partnerships. This leads to the marginalization of the revolutionary socialist project within unions in favour of the consensual management of issues disconnected from the larger struggle of the working class. As Sustar notes in relation to the events in Wisconsin:

Labour's focus on periodic contract bargaining and on-going contract enforcement, coupled with an acceptance of management's right to introduce new technologies and restructure work, are out of sync with the reality of on-

going change in the workplace. Conceding today's decisions about work process and technology sets the stage for defeat in the future (2013:6).

Significantly, Sustar notes that bourgeois union leadership plays an ideological role in nurturing and maintaining a culture of defeatism:

The union leaders' ideology flows from their social role as mediators between labour and capital. As a strata removed from the day-to-day pressures of the workplace and enjoying considerably more pay and perks than those they represent, union officials appeal to capital for 'fairness' for the 'middle class' rather than speak frankly to workers about the inevitability of class struggle and preparing for bitter conflicts in an era of endless austerity. This class collaboration approach was already disorienting and demobilizing even when labour was far stronger decades ago. In the face of today's relentless employer's offensive, such a policy leads from one disaster to another (2013: 4).

In much of the advanced, late capitalist, industrialised world we are in an era of intensified class struggle, intensified stratification, and intensified resistance. As the contributions of this collection show, the dynamics of the Labour-Capital class struggle are highly geo-temporally specific. As the chapters in this volume demonstrate, these dynamics vary from country to country, and over time. The intensification of global class conflict sees riots and flames in the streets of Istanbul, Athens, Madrid, London, Lisbon, Rio de Janeiro, millions demonstrating and taking part in general strikes, together with 'Occupy'/'indignado' movements and student protests. A slogan of Blockupy 2013 in Frankfurt puts in a revolutionary nutshell much of the current popular turbulence: "Sie wollen Kapitalismus ohne Demokratie, wir wollen Demokratie ohne Kapitalismus" ('They want capitalism without democracy, we want democracy without capitalism'; see DKP 2013a; Principe and Thun, 2013). That is also reflected in the people's assemblies being formed across Turkey (Roos, 2013). We see the task here being to convince the harried masses of the broad spectrum of what Gramsci called 'subaltern groups' (Levant, 2012:377) and massively unemployed youth in particular—all those marginalized by casino capitalism, its savage contradictions and its agendas of immiseration—that a reformed bourgeois democracy is a system primed for fatality.

However, this is accompanied, once again, with the rise of Nazism and extreme right gathering of racist, anti-trade unionist and anti-Left forces. For example, in Greece, in both the 6 May and the 17 June elections of 2012, the avowedly neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party won approximately 7% of the votes- including the reported support from 50% of Athens police, and is currently polling over 20% (Smith, 2012). It is wise to remember that at its emergence in 1924, the National Socialists only garnered 3% of the vote and was a relatively unknown party; by 1932, it had received 33% of the votes, still a minority, but a majority was not needed for them to proceed apace (Cmarda, 2003, para.23). Recalling Brecht's warning (from the final line of his play *The Irresistible Rise of Arturo Ui*) that, even if Hitler is dead, "the bitch that bore him

is in heat again" we might conceive of history repeating itself: first as tragedy and then as farce (Marx, 1966 / 1852).

It is within Brecht's sentiment that the papers in this volume are offered as both an insight to the ravaged terrain of the neoliberal onslaught with its pervasive political imaginary as well as the forms and organisation of resistance. While the papers here primarily focus on Euro-Atlantic contexts, it is to be noted that studies from the neo-colonized geopolitical South show familiar contours of class struggle but, of course, with distinctive contextual differences. The uprising June-July 2013 in Brazil, "unquestionably the most important social movement in Brazil in the last thirty years" (Filho, 2013), is just one instance. Everywhere we face a massive invasive panoply of diverse 'capitalizations' of our life worlds—a seemingly immutable engineering of diverse bourgeois forms of social, cultural, even "body capital" and "learning capital"—that accompany neoliberal economic capitalization (Reich, 2014). At the same time, as chapters of this book bring forward, the potential for resistance and change emerging in various forms of movements fighting these policies exist. Of particular importance are the signs that we have entered a new cycle in what concerns protest and contestation marked by movements of an almost insurrectionary character that do not limit themselves to particular grievances or sectoral demands but demand a profound political change. From the Arab Spring and the Indignados Movement to Occupy, the various phases of the Greek movement, the impressive resistance of the Turkish people to the authoritarian mixture of Islamism and neoliberalism of Erdogan and AKP and the return of the people of Egypt to Tahrir square in June 2013, we have seen many instances of this new "age of insurrections" (Sotiris, 2013b).

While the unrest in Turkey, Greece, Spain, and Portugal, for example, has been carried by strong left sentiment, this has not been universal. The slogans of the popular unrest in Bulgaria - and its fight back - against the newly installed BSP-led government in June/July 2013 were strongly anti-socialist and anti-communist. In general, its nationalist center-right, pro-EU, pro-'transparency', anti-'mafia' voice was of a markedly different tenor than that of large segments of protest in neighboring Greece and Turkey. This is a *dialectical contradiction* of huge dimensions infesting much popular alienated consciousness in Europe's East, heavily inoculated now for more than two decades against socialist future alternatives.

In this Conclusion so far, we have sought to establish that the degree of immiseration and intensity of class struggle are driven by the logic of capital accumulation, the logic of capitalism itself, and are emergent from historically contingent contextual conditions.

In the remainder of this Conclusion we focus on 'resistance to the resistance' takes place, how the capitalist class and its instruments fight back against the Resistance, against 'the almost insurrectionary cycle'. This we focus on Ideological and Repressive Apparatuses of the State and, reminiscent of the Nazi growth during the Weimar Republic in the 1930s, how the extreme right, in particular, the Nazi right (Golden Dawn in Greece) are being supported by capital to oppose and attack the

Left, and we discuss the 'appeal' of the Fascist and populist right. We proceed to discuss an alternative right-wing reaction, that of the libertarian right.

Having discussed the reaction by capital and by far-right groups and parties, in particular in the USA and in Greece, we conclude the conclusion by returning to the question of Resistance- its organisation, the tension, the dialectic between spontaneity and party form, and ask the question, What is to be done? We offer no Blueprint or Redprint, but as revolutionary Marxists we do have a responsibility to reconstruct as well as to deconstruct. Thus we offer some guidelines both in terms of socialist education and in terms of political strategy in connection with 'What is to be Done'.

The State: Ideology, Repression and Class Struggle

Education and the Media are the dominant Ideological State Apparatuses, though from the US to Iran and elsewhere, organised religion is also assuming a more salient role. Each Ideological State Apparatus contains disciplinary Repressive moments and effects. A major achievement is that capital presents itself as natural, as free and as democratic. Attacks on free-market neoliberal capitalism are condemned as if it were an attack on democracy itself. There is the conflation of political freedom with (neoliberal) economic freedom. Also conflated is the 'freedom of the Press' with its capitalist domination, stupefaction, with its 'mass production of ignorance' (Philo, 2004).

The most powerful, restraint on capital (and the political parties funded and influenced by capitalists in their bountiful donations) is that capital needs to persuade the people that neo-liberalism is legitimate. If not, there is a delegitimation crisis, government and the existing system are seen through as grossly unfair and inhumane (Habermas, 1973). It may also be seen as in the pocket of the international and/or national ruling classes and their local and national state weaponry. Certainly, this seems to have been the case in Greece with mass anger focussed against 'The Troika' of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Bank (EB) and the European Commission, (the EC).

To avoid crises of legitimation and to ensure that the majority of the population considers the government and the economic system of private monopoly ownership is legitimate, the state uses the Ideological State Apparatuses such as schools and colleges and the Media to 'naturalise' capitalism: to make the existing status quo seem 'only natural' (Hill, 2006). This is especially the case in times, like the present, of capitalist crisis. Of course, if and when this doesn't work, the Repressive State Apparatuses kick in: sometimes literally, with steel-capped military boots, water cannons, draconian legislation and *coups d'état*. Throughout Europe the role of the police, especially the riot police, has become more pronounced, more evident, and more critiqued in social networking in particular, throughout the various mass demonstrations of 2008-11 in, for example, Britain and Greece. In the demonstrations in Syntagma Square, Athens of the general strike of 15 June and of 28-29 June 2011 the police used very brutal tactics (Hill, 2011a; Laskaridis, 2011). On the first two day general strike in recent Greek history, 28-29 June, police fired stun grenades and released 3,000 canisters of tear gas (including into the metro station). 500 demonstrators were hospitalised.

The term 'State Apparatus' does not refer solely to apparatuses such as Ministries and various levels of government. It applies to those societal apparatuses, institutions and agencies that operate on behalf of, and maintain the existing economic and social relations of production. In other words, the apparatuses that sustain capital, capitalism and capitalists. Educators and cultural workers are implicated in the process of economic, cultural and ideological reproduction. (Kelsh and Hill, 2006).

Althusser (1971) argues that the ideological dominance of the ruling class is, like its political dominance, secured in and through definite institutional forms and practices: the ideological apparatuses of the state. As Althusser suggests, *every Ideological State Apparatus is also in part a Repressive State Apparatus* that punishes those who dissent:

There is no such thing as a purely ideological apparatus ... Schools and Churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection etc., to 'discipline' not only their shepherds, but also their flocks. (138)

Ideological State Apparatuses have internal 'coercive' practices (for example, the forms of punishment, non-promotion, displacement, being 'out-of-favour' experienced by socialists and trade union activists/ militants historically and currently across numerous countries). Similarly, *Repressive State Apparatuses* attempt to secure significant internal unity and wider social authority through ideology (for example, through their ideologies of patriotism and national integrity). Every *Repressive State Apparatus* therefore has an ideological moment, propagating a version of common sense and attempting to legitimate it under threat of sanction.

Governments, and the ruling classes in whose interests they act, prefer to use the second form of state apparatuses - the Ideological State Apparatuses. Changing the school and initial teacher education curriculum, abandoning 'general studies' and 'liberal studies' and horizon-broadening in the UK for working class 'trade' and skilled worker students/ apprentices in 'Further Education' (vocational) colleges, is less messy than sending the troops onto the streets or visored baton-wielding police into strike-bound mining villages, or against peasant demonstrations or protests by the landless.

At the same time the very process of 'entrepreneurialization' of education, as part of the broader neoliberal project, which includes forms of privatization and commodification of education, as well as increases with private enterprise, also have important ideological consequences. Along with increased student indebtedness these tendencies also tend to induce a more individualist, consumerist and entrepreneurial conception of education but also of social life in general, in an attempt towards a neoliberal production of subjectivity (Read, 2009). However, since these processes of neoliberal restructuring of education also meet strong resistances and collective movements in favour of public education, we can also witness strong ideological counter-tendencies to neoliberalism in the form of collective practises and representations based on

solidarity, collective effort and a non-commodity conception of common goods such as education.

The conjuncture of the global capitalist crisis since 2007 dealt a heavy blow to the prevailing neoliberal hegemony. Referring to the endless economic dynamic of global capitalism or to the inherent rationalism of the markets lost their status as self-evident truths. Moreover, the almost insurrectionary cycle we have already referred to, questioned dominant forms of politics and brought forward the gap separating democracy as actual popular will and 'liberal democracy' as capitalist rule under parliamentary procedures. Economic crisis was combined with an ideological crisis of neoliberalism as dominant ideology. In certain cases this was also combined, with elements of a deeper political crisis. However, in the absence of a radical 'counter-hegemonic' alternative, as a result of the deep strategic and political crisis of the socialist and communist Left, the reaction of capitalist elites has not been some form of profound rethinking, but a *fuite en avant* of an even more aggressive neoliberalism, leading to the current form of immiseration capitalism. Politically this has led to more authoritarian turn, exemplified in increased police brutality, and ideologically to the emergence of aggressive reactionary ideologies, including the new rise of neo-fascist movements.

When the brutality and sheer injustice of austerity capitalism become so obvious and come to be reflected in the material conditions of people's actual lives, resistance is likely to become stronger. And so, in parallel, repression gets stronger. So we see for example in Greece, and in Turkey, the teargas that the police use is becoming more toxic, more chemically dangerous.

Police in different countries are developing new repressive tactics. In different countries there are different traditions. In England the police don't use rubber bullets (except, historically, in Northern Ireland). But now there is discussion about the police in England using rubber bullets. There is discussion about the police using water cannons. But they have never used water cannons so far, other than in Northern Ireland.

But they do have another tactic is called, is a new tactic, 'kettling'. The police surround a group of demonstrators, then they press in on them. So you may have a thousand demonstrators pressed into a smaller and smaller space for several hours, with no toilet, no food, no water. This is happening now in England. You could say that this is not a violent tactic. But it is. It doesn't break people's heads. It doesn't kill people but it is intimidation.

We see in Greece the most advanced forms of resistance in Europe since 1974 in Portugal, since 1968 in France. Greece today is not in a revolutionary situation. It is not in a pre-revolutionary situation. But Greece today is in a pre-pre-revolutionary situation. So for example, there have been occupations of ministries as well as for example a steelyard, a television station, a newspaper, and municipal offices. Furthermore, there has been not only the growth of local area peoples' assemblies but also the great experiment of actual workers' self-management and control. In the case

of ERT, the Greek Public Television and Radio, despite government attempts to shut it down, it continued to broadcast. All these are experiences of potential contemporary forms of dual power; in a way similar to the definition offered by Lenin: “the direct initiative of the people from below, in their local areas” (Lenin, 1917). Dual power should not be regarded as the opposition between two different forms of power; it also refers to the emergence, within struggles, of new social forms. This must go on further. We gain experience and we gain confidence, we learn from such practices. If want to think about what the soviets of the 21st century might look like, it is by studying such experiences of self-organization, self-organization and solidarity, from these we can learn lessons.

The Populist and Fascist Right

Such self-organisation is vital especially in the face of the rise of neo-fascist political groups and parties. Greece’s openly neo-nazi Golden Dawn is but the latest example. Such developments reflect a deepening social and political crisis fuelled by the authoritarian, anti-immigrant and in some cases openly racist turn of ‘mainstream parties’. ‘Golden Dawn’ is openly attacking immigrants, gays, the Left, in violent, even murderous forms. At the same time it is a deeply systemic political force, openly taking the side of big business in cases of labour disputes. The fact that up to 50% of Greek special police forces (riot squads etc.) members voted for Golden Dawn is a worrying development, especially if we consider the increased brutality of Greek police who have been accused even of torturing arrested protesters. Even more worrying is, in one sense, the fact that mainstream systemic parties in Greece (and other European countries) despite verbally condemning the fascists, in reality rush to embrace the agenda of the neo-fascist in the form of anti-immigrant measures and an authoritarian “law-and-order” rhetoric and practices, using the far right as a lever to shift the total political balance of forces to the right.

Here, voice and legitimacy is given to fascist discourse. At the same time, the fact that parts of the working class experience what they perceive as individual despair (and not class exploitation), turn towards neo-fascists. This points to the challenges confronting the contemporary Left politics in developing and a working class hegemony that would give anger and despair a collective and emancipatory form. The turn toward the right in Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, Belgium is a dialectical contradiction that points up the ‘negation’ of present aporias in capitalism in an extreme right Gestalt.

We have to recognise that people’s resistance is increasingly expressed in radical forms of reactionary, rightwing racist nationalism, and that needs more analysis regarding its gut working-class appeal. Selective ultra-nationalist and fascist borrowing of left analysis, and the utilization of anti-globalization and anti-EU discourse by the far right in Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, the UK and elsewhere, needs further analysis (Tsatsanis, 2011; Sotiris, 2013a). In Bulgaria, the only real voice in the public sphere against EU colonization, the invasion of foreign capital and neoliberal values has been the far right ATAKA (Novinite, 2013). More analysis on this is needed.

In some circumstances, such as in the USA, the right takes a different form, of right-wing libertarianism. The libertarian right is infiltrating into formerly leftist groups and issues. While on the surface it appears exciting to have the involvement of different constituencies around a particular cause (if not for building sheer numbers in support), this is not the same as what Lenin had in mind for “building the party” (Cliff, 1975). For example, libertarians started appearing on the Opt Out Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/unitedoptout/?fref=ts>), which was originally set up for parents, teachers, and community members opposed to standardised testing and related curriculum initiatives in the U.S. The anarcho-capitalist posts were decidedly anti-public education, anti-social safety net, and anti-commons. Some relied on the right wing tropes of Obama being a Muslim without a birth certificate as a rationale for opposing testing. When concerns were raised about this contradiction by Marxists and the liberal left constituencies on the page, accusations of being “divisive” were made, accompanied by a scolding from a well-known professor to make the movement welcoming to all and to refrain from bringing up politics. A similar set of incidents occurred more recently on the newly created Badass Teachers Association Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/BadAssTeachers/>), as documented by educator blogger janed (2013). The right wing element remained untouched while the leftists curbed their critique, left the page, or were removed by page administrators without explanation, to meet the page’s mission to be “non-partisan,” which is usually code speak in the U.S. for being friendly to the right wing.

Indeed, Antonio (2000) warns about reactionary tribalism being the latest creative response by the right wing, as a logical outcropping of postmodernism:

New tribalism bears the imprint of and helps drive post-modernization, especially its centrifugal forms of cultural fragmentation, anti-universalism, and identity politics... The new tribes often charge that post-war social democracies and today’s neoliberal states do not recognize or support adequately their group’s particularities and that liberal universalism homogenizes difference. Tribalism suffuses new social movements, which stress open dialogue and active citizenship and embrace multicultural civil society and representative democracy, but it is also pervasive in reactionary types of xenophobia, racism, violence and genocide. (pp. 55-56).

New right critiques are often layered and sophisticated because their survival requires the very democratic values that they often disparage. For example, the abuse of the principle of “open dialogue” is a common tactic used to take over discussion forums- if one opposes their views, one is being divisive and the views perpetuate, often aided by concerned liberal “allies.” Antonio provides the case of European new right opposition to immigration, which they base on the grounds of opposing capitalist globalization and cultural homogenization. Racism is masked by presenting multiculturalism as a problem of globalization, or even asserting “green” rationales of overpopulation as a threat to the environment. Both the postmodern left and the reactionary tribal right share the supremacy of culture as a point of analysis, while doing nothing to challenge neoliberalism.

Given the Power-driven permeation of ordinary ‘common sense’ by a neoliberal imaginary, reproduced incessantly by a range of orchestrated ISAs inculcated into mass bourgeois consciousness literally from infancy to death, that is no easy task. The social engineering of the mass neoliberal capitalist “dreamworld” (Buck-Morss, 2000) and its fetishisms remains trump despite widening cracks in the dikes of such mentality. Analyzing how such engineered consciousness can function as a shield against the shocks of capitalist existence, Buck-Morss (2000:104) observes:

Under conditions of modern technology, the aesthetic system undergoes a dialectical reversal. The human sensorium changes from a mode of being “in touch” with reality into a means of blocking out reality. Aesthetics—sensory perception—becomes *anaesthetics*, a numbing of the senses’ cognitive capacity that destroys the human organism’s power to respond politically even when self-preservation is at stake.

This is part of the social and political “cognitive dissonance” (Mirowski, 2013) we have to deal with on a daily basis in forging more revolutionary anti-systemic resistance, in the process seeking to create where possible “laboratories of potential (counter)hegemonic projects” (Sotiris, 2013b). Yet the Internet, through its alternative panoply of blogs and sites, and the upsurge in ‘citizen journalism’ it furthers, has generated a vast counter-media landscape over against the corporate media of the state and international capital.

Resistance and Organisation

Our task, a task explicit in this book, is to grow a working class consciousness that would be the basis of the organised pursuit of its own interests: its self-realisation as a class not simply ‘in itself’ but ‘for itself’ (Marx, 1977 / 1847).

Spontaneity

In looking at the entire question of the role of “spontaneity” in present popular protest and organized insurrection on the streets of cities across the globe (Harvey, 2012), we need to better examine the role of telecommunication technologies in this present conjuncture of people’s anger and mass street aggregation. Networked insurrection is a fact, both on the left and right, reflected also in June 2013 protests across Brazil (Filho, 2013), in contrapuntal conjunction with those in Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria and elsewhere. This “cyber-mediated spontaneity”—channeled through social media such as Facebook and Twitter and through cell-phoned organizing of protest, YouTube videoing of protest events and their repression—deserves probing analysis, and is briefly examined in the present volume in Chapters 2 and 10. Mason (2012) explores this complex with relevant analysis, whatever his bourgeois prism, and Juris (2012) offers ethnological insight into social media, connectivity and the current associated logics of mass aggregation in public space. Mason (2013), asking what the force is propelling people en masse onto the streets from Istanbul to Brazil, and what “bubbles under from Sofia to Sarajevo,” notes:

The answer is in the detail: the self-shot videos, the jokes scrawled on handwritten signs, the ever-morphing hash tags on Twitter and the Guy Fawkes masks. Brazil's protests may have started over the equivalent of a 5p rise in bus fares, but the chants and placards in Rio speak to something different: "We've come from Facebook", "We are the social network", and in English: "Sorry for the inconvenience, we are changing Brazil. [...]"

Of course, technology is only an enabler of organized outrage and its recapitulations, an impotent yet indomitable frustration now reaching combustion point across the capitalist world. Yet what are the actual class positions of social media users? Commenting on the death in Turkey of 19-year-old factory worker, socialist activist and member of Redhack, Mehmet Ayvalıtaş, Emrah Yildiz (2013) admonishes against analytical myopia:

Mehmet's story, peppered with information about where he comes from, his participation in Redhack while being a factory worker, for instance, might help us rethink not only the secularist elite/Islamist working-class binary, but also the assumed class positions of social media users and online activists in particular and the more abstract relationship between social class and technology in the age of late capitalism.

He observes:

What is more upsetting to me, however, is the analytical myopia that underwrites the politics of naming what is happening and the actors who are doing the resisting in Turkey on the one hand, and the utter disregard for stories like that of Mehmet's, since they do not neatly fit into the banally familiar and mutually exclusive positions of the entrenched elite secularists vs the overly-confident working-class Islamists in Turkey [...] Mehmet's heartbreaking story and his truncated biographical information point to a much more complex picture on the ground, illustrating not only why the people are in a rage, but also who in particular is in a rage. Not taking Mehmet's story as a part and parcel of the "resistance" that sparked in Turkey, not only paves the way for the worst kind of epistemic violence unleashed in the idiom of armchair "political" analysis, but also unethical and irresponsible practices of representation.

From a Marxist perspective, Levant (2012) looks at spontaneity and Rosa Luxemburg's conceptions revisited, seen through a perspective informed by Gramsci, Thompson and Walter Benjamin. The discussion of spontaneity is worth deepened reflection in looking at the boons and banes of connectivity and how technologies are channeling and perhaps diverting and distorting mass upsurge and aggregations of the angry and disaffected. Along with the singular organization-technological and 'citizen journalism' pluses, the social media are the threshold of new levels of a total surveillance society (Pilger, 2013), and can also be utilized by the security forces in their praxes of repression of mass anti-systemic aggregations, as reflected in recent protests in Turkey and their crushing (Celik and Karaosmanoğlu, 2013)

What is more important is also to note that spontaneity should not be read as opposed to conscious political action. People taking part in ‘spontaneous’ movements are conscious of their action, they have perceptions of their situation and narratives about it, they have goals inscribed in their practice. Therefore ‘spontaneity’ refers to the absence of linkages to radical political projects and / or to the absence of such political planning in advance, without underestimating the importance of previous political interventions and the ‘traces’ they had left (from slogans and ways to describe the situation to street-fighting techniques). At the same time, conscious political intervention is not the ‘negation’ of spontaneity. The politics of emancipation, especially in their Marxism-inspired socialist / communist variants, need the collective knowledge and experience arising out of ‘spontaneous’ movements. Radical politics should be seen as an experimentation process and such movements are also sites of knowledge production, not only for those participating in them but also for any collective organizing trying to intervene politically. And here lies the importance of political organizations: they can facilitate, with the help of theory and the historical experience of the labour movement, the transformation of the knowledge, experience, innovations, new forms of organization arising out of these movements into political theory, political strategy and potentially revolutionary process.

The Bulgarian 2013 “summer of mass discontent” against politicians of all stripes points up this need for political organizations. It is characterized by a kind of people’s “depoliticized politics,” in some ways akin to the “*tamarud*” (mass rebellion) character of the Egyptian insurgency, albeit devoid of any violence whatsoever. The phenomenon of “depoliticized politics” is in part a failure of the Left, in part a manifestation of popular alienation from party politics in bourgeois democracy and its defunct structures that we in any case need to address more, as such “insurrections” multiply and reproduce themselves, in a bewildering upsurge of incandescent mass discontent.

What is to be done?

In this current period of Immiseration Capitalism, of Austerity Capitalism, impoverishing and immiserating millions, immiserating in an *absolute* sense, no longer just a *relative* sense, and in a social, cultural, ideational sense as well as an economic sense, then the gains of historic social democracy, the historic gains of the working class and its organisations, in education as in other sectors, are being stolen away by the capitalist class, which like vultures, are picking at the carcass of the welfare state, free education, as well as free health services, and the dreams hopes and, lives of the working class.

In such a catastrophic situation, the rule, the dictatorship of capital, the nakedness of the rule of capital are opening the eyes of tens of millions to ‘what could be’ and to ‘what should be’ in terms of the organisation of human affairs. As alternative dystopias to rapacious capitalism the ‘what could be’ could be Fascist, or it could be military dictatorial rule. Or it could be the continued exponential increase in inequalities, and the immiserating impacts of neoliberal *cum* neo-conservative/ new authoritarian capitalism.

But, with the energies, the analysis, the anger, the strategic activism, the organisation, programme and focused strategy of activists, including teachers, professors, students, combining with other workers, the ‘what could be’ could be the ‘what should be’- a democratic Marxist re-ordering, reconstruction of the of the social apparatuses of the state, such as education, within the context of and as part of the wider revolutionary socialist and democratic reconstruction of the economy, society and polity. Indeed, within bourgeois capitalism and its multiples hegemonies, we have the *most educated ignorance in human history*. This is a dialectical *contradictio in adjecto* permeating much of the industrial and neo-colonial world.

In forging a revolutionary anti-capitalist movement and concrete forms of alternative existence that ordinary people from all walks can understand, let me underscore again the project of Marxist economist Richard Wolff (2013) and his associates at Democracy at Work (www.democracyatwork.info), building worker self-directed enterprises (Wolff, 2013b) mentioned in chapter. 13. Wolff makes Marxist anti-capitalist common sense in talk that is centered on people’s existential life worlds and the way the U.S. and global economy operates—to the point, hands-on analysis that is richly concrete (in this quite unlike some Marxist discourse, including our own)—as exemplified in his many videos and weekly radio broadcasts (Wolff, 2013b). Initiatives for WSDEs can be concretely combined with the people’s assemblies’ calls in Europe, Turkey and elsewhere, struggling for real participatory non-bourgeois democracy.

We certainly must avoid “epistemic violence unleashed in the idiom of armchair ‘political’ analysis,” always a danger, especially in looking at realities from afar—such as the actual daily life worlds of ‘real socialism’ across a diverse aggregation of people’s republics, as I have argued. Cold War distortional narratives of what such societies were imagined or constructed to be, need to be interrogated, and in my view jettisoned. In moving forward to ‘socialism 2.0,’ Peter Mertens (of the Workers Party Belgium) has stressed:

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 (Mertens, 2012).

Socialist Education and Full Employment in a Low-Energy World

Education in socialism 1.0 was cost-free at all levels. The right to a job was guaranteed. Polytechnical education, as in Cuba today (MacDonald, 2009), gave many a practical skill by the time students left secondary education. Project learning was a central feature of this, overcoming in cooperative study the walls between school and community. Polytechnical education of a certain type and an expanded apprenticeship system giving many youth a second skill need to be pondered (see chap. 13, fn. 3; Lunacharsky, 1981; Beck, 1990; MacDonald, 2009; Grant, 1965; 1969; Makarenko,

1965). The working-class, radically democratic, socialist cooperative people's pedagogy pioneered by communist educator Célestin Freinet in France also needs re-exploration from a contemporary revolutionary perspective (Acker, 2007; Dietrich, 1982/1998). As Legrand (1993:404) notes: "his devotion to the cause of the people and his sense of social justice that led him to conceive of his educational purpose as being the intellectual liberation of the working class [...] led him to join, and later to fall out with, the Communist Party." A video from a Freinet school in Mexico (Escuela Freinet, 2011) is instructive, as is this overview of his pedagogy (Freinet, 2001).

But higher education in the centrally planned socialist economies was restricted to a relatively small percentage of youth, the best students, at times in part children from families with the best connections, or indeed from workers' families given privileges children from the former bourgeois strata were denied.

In looking to what some of us call socialism 2.0, or 21st century socialism along Bolivarian lines, what basic desiderata can be considered? In guaranteeing full employment, I cannot imagine any such economy without basic forms of central planning, whether through worker assemblies or other architectures of a moral economy of shared labour. It will mean inventive job sharing, shorter hours for many, and overcoming the worker/management divide. Wolff (2013) discusses how in a democratized cooperative-based economy, all workers would acquire a range of management skills through schooling and on the job. Such new skills would significantly transform socialist curricula in secondary and lower tertiary education. In all of this, the Roma, Europe's dispossessed, a trans-national, trans-territorial subaltern ethnic community, have the lowest levels of education and face extreme discrimination on all fronts, particularly in education and as labour migrants. This needs radical change that bourgeois democracies seem impotent to effect (Pivovarchuk, 2013). As a case in point, the close social subaltern cousins of the Roma in Ireland, the Traveller community, grapple with mounting levels of exclusion, discrimination and marginalization (Fay, 2013).

Chapter 12 of this volume describes changes in Bolivarian educational experimentation in Venezuela, where education is being revamped "to promote citizen participation and joint responsibility, and to include all citizens in the creation of a new model of production that stressed endogenous development, that is, an economic system that was self-sufficient and diversified." That is one possible revolutionary direction, with stress on "development from below." In demarketizing higher education, we have to decouple employment from what students may study in terms of interest and self-development, redefining the whole character of "learning capital" (Reich, 2014) and its value production. Guaranteed employment at an egalitarian liveable wage would help free education from its inequalities, market-oriented commercialization and commodification. The society in socialism 2.0 would have to build a higher education system geared to self-development, creativity and indeed what Marx at an abstract level was talking about in terms of the "comprehensively developed personality." This did not exist (yet) under real socialism anywhere,

impacted by the savage exigencies of the Cold War. Gatekeeper standards for university admission were extremely strict and pegged at very high levels.

Wolff downplays central economic planning, but others, as Samir Amin has emphasized speaking in Zagreb (Amin, 2010), think a centrally planned economy, however this might be inventively regulated through worker self-management rather than by the State, seems a necessary prerequisite for guaranteeing employment for all, including the young. A demand now being raised by communist parties in Europe is the ‘30-hour week’ (DKP, 2013b), which is also grounded on redistribution of labor power and job-sharing within a still capitalist economy.

Worker flexibility is one key to guaranteed full employment. Such levels of employment existed in real-socialist economies, however they were bolstered. Verdery (1996) suggests factories in Romania overemployed staff because of constraints in materials supply. The entire question of transnational labour migration takes on new dimensions in a reticulation of guaranteed full employment and needs much discussion.

Socialism 1.0 had aspects approaching a mode of partial ‘demonetization’ in the realm of basic services and certain staples, although some socialists will certainly disagree with that. To what extent demonetization is on socialist horizons is unclear, the ‘demonetize it’ site is worth exploring: <http://demonetize.it> The main socialist grouping that has long argued for a socialism that “will, and must, be a wageless, moneyless, worldwide society of common (not state) ownership and democratic control of the means of wealth production and distribution” is the SPGB (SPGB, 2013), but it remains a marginal tendency on the British and North American left. Is the overcoming of value-production discussed in Chap. 1 connected with the conception of a wageless, demonetized economy? In exploring the antagonism between concrete and abstract labour, discussed in chap. 1 of this volume, Holloway (2010) presents an in-depth social-anarchist argument for overcoming value-production and its contradictions from the grassroots up, multiplying the “cracks” in capitalist domination, moving toward a communism of “socially self-determined doing” (154, 180). He has many concrete examples, but does not discuss a demonetized economy, although his vision is clearly of a world beyond production of commodities and the “rule of money” (184).

Development from below, but for what? If we are heading for a low-energy future, as many ecosocialists argue and people at the Post-Carbon Institute (www.postcarbon.org) and Transition Towns (Hopkins, 2007) envision, our entire notion of what industrial economies may be heading for in a power-downed planetary future has to change. Climate Space has called for “a just transition for workers and communities away from the extreme energy economy and into resilient local economies based on social, economic and environmental justice” (Climate Space, 2013). What full employment and education at all levels can look like in a low-energy, sustainable world, ‘back to the future,’ also needs to be discussed.

All these point to the many open questions facing any attempt towards a Socialism of the 21st century. But accepting the fact that there open questions is a much better starting point than the dogmatism of many leftism tendencies. Analyses from the ruins of the post-socialist periphery, grounded particularly in qualitative biographical narratives of real people who grew up and worked within East European socialism, can illuminate stark even exponential realities of the same current project of nouveau capital expansion (see Chapter 13). What is more important is to realize that we must think of socialism not as a project, but as constant and conscious experimentation. And we should not wait until working class seizing political power to start this experimentation. We must begin with the ‘traces of communism’ in contemporary struggles and resistances in the sense of forms and networks of solidarity, self-management, and direct democracy emerging within movements. All these collective knowledge and experience will be more than necessary for any future ‘socialist construction’. Running a self-management factory, organizing social medical centres to counter the collapse of the public health system, using school facilities to offer gratis tutorials, creating networks of distribution based on fair trade or even non-monetary exchange, resisting contemporary enclosures in cultural products or software, and even the numerous single acts of solidarity, using general assemblies as a decision process, all these should not be seen simply in an instrumental way. They must be seen as the necessary learning processes for alternative non-capitalist social configurations. This is not to deny the importance of political programs, and especially transitory programs, as the foundations for alternative narratives. On the contrary it is imperative to combine all these different experiences, collectivities, sensitivities, aspirations into a unifying political process. Without such a process, and a corresponding organizational form (through a profound rethinking and refoundation of the ‘party-form’) the forces of capital, with the political resources of the State and the hegemonic apparatuses, both public and private, will have a strategic advantage against a myriad of fragmented resistances. What we need is to think in terms of a potential “historical block” to use Gramsci’s term (Gramsci, 1971), not simply an electoral alliance, but the encounter between an alliance of the subaltern classes, a radical anti-capitalist program, in the sense of an alternative narrative, and new collective forms of organization and experimentation. Devising such a contemporary revolutionary strategy should also be seen as a learning process, through experimentation with current experiences of self-management, non-commodity provision of services, and direct democracy from below.

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