Editorial: As provincialized Europe expands

For the new Eastern citizens of the European Union, the sprawling map of the budget airlines signifies an emergent geography of citizenship that weaves the continent together. Predictably, such spatial practices highlight the huge inequalities involved as well as the associated contrastive imaginations of what this new Europe could be about. They bring senior British citizens buying real estate on the Black Sea coast or Western bachelor partygoers on their way to a night in a cheap and swinging Eastern city together with what are migrant and itinerant workers from the East. Each of these multiplying low-budget Euro linkages has its particular ethnography of connection, inequality, and citizenship.

I am a regular traveler on a late night budget connection between Charleroi (advertised as 'Brussels South', which it is not) and Budapest. This is a rather happy line from the Eastern point of view: A far below average number of 'unskilled' migrant workers and a big group of people actually embodying personal success stories—by having well-paying white-collar jobs in the bureaucracies of the EU or NATO or in the complex economies surrounding them. This connection is an extremely high status one compared to such lines as Lviv-Barcelona, Arad-Naples, or Katowice-Liverpool. That high status makes the tale of citizenship that I want to narrate even more telling.

One Friday night, the plane that should bring us to Budapest is not arriving. Instead, three busses are positioning themselves in front of the makeshift departure hall of this EU-regional subsidies-based airport among the abandoned coal mines of the *Borinage*. After a while, the

intercom tells us that we will leave by bus for another city, Liege, where in four hours another airplane will pick us up. Instead of around midnight, we will arrive in Budapest after four o'clock in the morning. Disappointment and exhaustion is painted on everyone's face. Meanwhile, our luggage is being dropped out in the rain, in front of the buses. People are being asked to come out one by one to pick out their belongings and get seated on the buses. After a good hour, most passengers have more or less managed to squeeze into the buses but there is insufficient space for people and luggage. The bus drivers are getting stressed, becoming more impatient every minute. The passengers, 90 percent Hungarians, are tired and silent, trying to obey the orders the drivers are giving them in French or, sometimes, in broken English. The man from Budapest seated before me tries to shove his three trays of canned Belgian beer into the overhead luggage bin, but the driver grabs the trays and drops them back on his lap, shouting that he cannot put them there and that he will have to take care of them himself. All of a sudden, his middle-aged Dutch neighbor loses his nerves, gets up, puts the trays back in the overhead bin and says bluntly and loudly, in Dutch, to the driver that we are not here for fun, that we are all very tired, that we never signed up for a bus ride in the middle of the night in the first place, that we are all frustrated that we will not be in Budapest in time, and that the driver has to behave decently and help, for example, this old lady here to find a place instead of bossing people around and barking people in the face. To everyone's surprise, the driver from Wallonia seems to understand the Dutch, nods,

and takes the old woman by the hand to accompany her to the other bus. People in the back at once begin to applaud the Dutch man, and one of them shouts, in English, “Sir, could you now please take the steering wheel and bring us all safely to Budapest?” Laughter all around.

Jansen and Löfving’s theme section on “Movement, violence, and the making of home” argues, importantly, that home is not the reductive construct that liberals fancy it to be: a sentimental brew of fatherland, mother-tongue, and family house. Home, especially for those pushed on the move, they insist, depends on a precious measure of hope for more comprehensive existential security, needed to dedicate oneself to long-run public and private projects, from living in peace to getting citizenship, living and working in dignity, educating one’s children, etc. Home, ultimately, is a public claim toward the future, rather than a private thing from the past. Their special section, underscoring the misleading sentimental projections in the prevailing discourses about refugees, features fascinating analyses from violent contexts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Guatemala, and Sri Lanka. Together, these essays warn against the simplifications of a burgeoning field of studies that has always been dependent on policy makers and policy discourses.

Their approach also helps to see that, ultimately, in my little bus episode, different practices of claiming home in Europe colluded. The specific Dutch/Hungarian division of labor in the production of just a bit of voice under budget airline conditions was no coincidence. Neither was the spontaneous satisfaction by the migrant Hungarians. Post-1989 democracies, as Löfving emphasizes in his Guatemalan example, are generally better in sponsoring exit—migration and public fantasies of becoming Western persons—than in generating voice. The Dutch voice in the bus was nurtured pre-1989.

An increasingly articulate voice that East European nations do have these days is the one that condemns the ‘historical crimes of communism’, see in particular the ongoing Hungarian riots, the rhetoric of the rightwing Polish government, the Romanian presidential report, and the 2006 resolution of the Council of Europe. Some even

wanted to outlaw the concept of class struggle. This anti-communist and anti-Marxist Eastern alliance, however, is far from a unified club. The Romanian report’s lead author, the political scientist Vladimir Tismaneanu (University of Maryland), has been describing for some time now a manicheic struggle between the principles of a rational individualist West and a collective, mythic, holistic East. Indeed, one cannot accuse him of being interested in recent postcolonial writing. Tismaneanu paints an Eastern scene where anti-modern attitudes, anti-democratic inclinations, and anti-capitalist politics reinforce each other into an illiberal brew that is mostly made by the Right but incorporates Marxism ontologically. The ruling parties in Poland are more focused these days on actual old communists in capitalist disguise who, presumably, produce the current corruption that is draining Poland of its moral vitality. Interestingly, both have found allies among the liberal lawyers representing the ‘old’ West in the Council of Europe. Western governments had, of course, long stopped being interested in Marx as a useful interlocutor, so there was little for them to defend, certainly in an organization that specializes these days on ‘fair elections’ in the East European fringe. But an important subterranean fight is going on about the heritage of the Left in Europe. Ultimately, it is a fight about the substance of ‘the common European home’. And the East, where Marx became the symbol of Soviet imperialism and bloody repressive state making, and the West, where Marx became a crucial building block of civil society, do clash.

Bleahu and Ivancheva expose the sheer exploitation of millions of migrant Romanians and Bulgarians in the West as they try to build actual homes in the new Europe while their parliaments back home are debating the ‘historical crimes of communism’. There is little the Italian state does to prevent Italians from using the labor of illegal, and therefore utterly exploitable, Romanian workers. At the same time, the *Carabinieri*, not known for any communist crimes in the past, destroy their squatter settlements in the woods around Rome in a typical contemporary *Nacht und Nebel* action, graphically suggesting

that illegal Romanians can serve the Italian bourgeoisie but will not be allowed to survive while doing so. Blair's England, meanwhile, does its best not to get informed about how Bulgarian students are officially deceived and openly forced into temporary slavery in the strawberry fields. On the eve of Bulgarian and Romanian accession to the European Union, 1 January 2007, a journalist of *Romania Liberal* celebrated the fact that returning migrants will not only bring back money but also "a Western mentality" (*Der Standard*, 29 December 2006). How relevant is Terence Turner's conclusion that we need "More Marx, less Foucault," and clearly not only for explaining the contradictions from which indige-

nous mobilizations in Canada and elsewhere arise, as he shows! Marnie Bjornson discusses other aspects of Marx, Foucault, and immigration: the contradictions of the new Dutch language-citizenship regime. Elisabeth Schober discusses recent work on women trafficking and Istvan Adorjan predicts that the next Left resurgence will pass the North by and happen in the global South. Whitehead, finally, expands the analysis of capitalist contradictions and civil society to governance in Mumbai as urban development threatens to drown whole residential areas into the rising waters of the monsoon.

—Don Kalb, *Editor*