



Bulgarian Comparative Education Society

**Spontaneous responses to Neoliberalism and their  
significance for education**

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# Features of current responses

- ❑ Not quite coherent or well-organised; very different responses; not subsumable under one heading
- ❑ Taken together, nevertheless seem to signal a turning point in NL trend
- ❑ Opposed to world government, centralised government, capitalist elites, right-wing economic model and business self-regulating
- ❑ Coincides with the rise of populism and nationalism
- ❑ Backlash against globalism and internationalism – emphasis on “ordinary” people, the “masses”
- ❑ Attempts to create cynicism in ordinary people / citizens: more concerned about protecting own big business interests than protecting the people
- ❑ Makes use of false news, post truths, propaganda to mislead
- ❑ Makes use of social media and political propaganda
- ❑ Attempts to erode trust in existing organisations (business and government)

# Possible manifestations of anti-neoliberal sentiments

- ▣ Brexit?
- ▣ Trump's election as president? (Protectionism, US first, surge of nationalism)
- ▣ IMF and WEF making noises that they might have had it wrong all the time (Davos); decisions not in interest of the "ordinary people"
- ▣ Globalisation NOT deglobalisation (Lagarde)
- ▣ Stiglitz: markets not to be unfettered
- ▣ Arundathi Roy in India
- ▣ Student unrest in South Africa – the government's "double speak"

# No concerted movement

- ▣ Seemingly unconnected incidents: a spontaneous groundswell?
- ▣ Movement worldwide – though recently somewhat arrested (British election; Trump's failure to do what he promised; centrism in France and the Netherlands, etc.)

# Implications for education

- ❑ Worldwide movement: impacts on education all over the globe
- ❑ Underscores: education not only for the wealthy and the political elite; also – and particularly – for the “ordinary” people; all classes; upliftment of the formerly deprived classes
- ❑ Education should be based on values conform with democratic principles
- ❑ Citizenship education to receive renewed attention: globalisation is in order, but national identity and appreciation of own culture should be attended to as well
- ❑ Schools should be institutions for teaching and learning (not for corporate purposes, of managed like businesses)
- ❑ Teach youngsters to be wary of fake news, half truths and political propaganda
- ❑ Teach them the responsible use of social media

# Concluding remarks

- ▣ NL has “colonised” every aspect of our thought; disparate reactions to it detectable around us
- ▣ The contents of this paper tentative and provisional: changes day by day
- ▣ Developments still have to run their full course
- ▣ Nevertheless clear that there is worldwide opposition to Neoliberalism, particularly in educational context
- ▣ A timely reminder to us as educationists to make every effort to restore education to its rightful place (resist encroachment by government, business and trade interests in education)