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BULGARIA'S YEAR OF CIVIC ANGER

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For the better part of 2013, Bulgaria was wracked by protests. In February, citizens of the EU's poorest country, incensed by skyrocketing energy prices, flooded the streets, bringing down the center-right government of Boyko Borisov, a former mayor of the capital city, before the end of the month. New elections were held in May, and by mid-June Bulgarians had poured into the streets again, this time in protest over the appointment by Prime Minister Plamen Oresharski's new Socialist-led government of a shady media mogul to head the State Agency for National Security. As of this writing in mid-November, nearly 160 days after the latest wave of protests began, the demonstrations rage on.

The political convulsions seizing Bulgaria have brought into sharp relief two generalizable propositions about postcommunist democratization in Central and Eastern Europe: First, the process of postcommunist democracy-building, which began in 1989 and managed to avoid any major setbacks or spectacular reversals, was successfully completed when the former Soviet satellites became full members of the European Union. Although it is impossible to say with absolute certainty that democracy will forever endure in the region, at present a backsliding to nondemocratic forms of governance is as unlikely in Bulgaria as it would be in France, Ireland, or Italy. Second, almost all postcommunist democracies were stricken by a political malaise after their entry into the EU. While democracy remains the only game in town, it is now dominated by unskilled players who push the boundaries of acceptable behavior and frequently commit serious offenses deserving of penalty cards.

These developments underline the importance of the EU's eastward expansion for the fate of democracy in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe. EU enlargement rendered obsolete an array of theoretical, comparative, and conceptual concerns revolving around one particular topic—democracy's successful consolidation. At the same time, it has elevated the salience of a different set of theoretical, comparative, and conceptual concerns—those focused on the quality of democracy, or the extent to which democratic regimes provide their citizens with “a high degree of freedom, political equality, and popular control over public policies and policy makers through the legitimate and lawful functioning of stable institutions.”¹

What has caused the visible fluctuations of democratic quality in postcommunist Europe? It would be impossible to argue that, in the course of a few years before and after joining the EU, Bulgaria—or, for that matter, Hungary, Poland, or Romania—underwent a massive structural, cultural, and social transformation. The peculiar twists and turns of democratic governance within the newest members of the EU can therefore be attributed only to human deeds. Thus any analysis of post-accession politics should proceed on the assumption that in the study of democratic politics “the universalistic attribution of agency” (to quote Guillermo O'Donnell) is not just a normative principle but also a fundamental interpretative perspective.² Simply put, what elites do and how citizens react can either better or worsen the quality of representative democracy.

Non-Electoral Democratic Accountability

In democracies, interactions between elites and citizens happen primarily via mechanisms of vertical accountability.³ The paradigmatic form of vertical accountability is the democratic election, the means through which citizens can remove leaders whom they do not like.⁴ Are there other ways in which citizens can hold politicians directly accountable? In my view, the analytical dimensions of this question have yet to be adequately explored.⁵ In order to do so, we must first distinguish between the two types of circumstances that generally impel mobilized social constituencies to enter the political arena to demand the removal of officials, whether they be democratically elected or appointed. The first is bad governance. In such cases, government policies that are deemed failures “on the basis of performance criteria that often have little or nothing to do with ‘democraticness’” lead to popular outrage.⁶ The second type, by contrast, has everything to do with “democraticness” and leads to what I call nonelectoral democratic accountability—grassroots civic mobilization provoked not by socioeconomic crises but rather by the damage that certain elite acts inflict on the quality of a country's democracy.

Remarkably, in the course of 2013 Bulgaria experienced all three scenarios of popular-elite interaction: mass protests against rising energy prices, parliamentary elections, and mass demonstrations against nondemocratic political machinations. Indeed, the year began with complaints about bad governance, went through a period when electoral dissatisfaction took center stage, and ended with grievances engendered by political misbehavior that threatened to reduce the quality of Bulgarian democracy.

The first crisis began in February, with a dramatic spike in the price of electricity. When impoverished Bulgarians received their bills—which for some exceeded their monthly incomes—thousands took to the streets to protest in more than twenty cities across this country of 7.3 million people. In addition to six self-immolations, there were several incidents of police brutality against protestors. By February 20, Prime Minister Borisov, leader of the ruling Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), had tendered his resignation, paving the way for new general elections.

At this juncture, the issue of electoral accountability moved to the forefront: The May 2013 elections were supposed to determine who would steer the country in a more promising direction. Instead, they failed to produce a clear majority, and the winner of the plurality—the incumbent party—failed to form a government.

Although GERB received less support than in the 2009 elections, it still managed to win more votes and National Assembly seats (97 out of 240) than any other single party. The ex-Communist Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) came in second. Despite performing better than it had in 2009, BSP received 140,000 fewer votes than GERB (and thus won only 84 seats). The BSP also fell way short of its best electoral performance this century, when it won more than a million votes of the 3.7 million cast in the 2005 election. The Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS) came in third (36 seats), faring much worse than in 2009. The only other party to surpass the 4 percent threshold needed to make it into parliament was the nationalist Ataka party (23 seats), a populist and xenophobic formation pushing for renationalization of industry, massive redistribution of income, and Bulgaria's withdrawal from the IMF and NATO.⁷

After the elections, BSP leader Sergei Stanishev proclaimed that his party had won a “moral victory” and that in coalition with DPS (a coalition expected to rely on Ataka's tacit support) it would rebuild the Bulgarian political system quickly and with determination. The coalition then proceeded to nominate Plamen Oresharski, a Stanishev confidante, as prime minister.

Oresharski refused to make public statements regarding his political platform and policy priorities. His main objective, he announced, was to form a team of top experts to guide the country toward a brighter future.

It was soon revealed, however, that the proposed government included a horde of deeply compromised individuals: One would-be minister had helped a nebulous construction conglomerate effectively destroy one of Bulgaria's most beautiful seaside national parks; another had run the local branch of one of the country's most brutal extortion syndicates in the 1990s; yet another had illegally collected unemployment benefits in France while holding a full-time job in Bulgaria.⁸ Nevertheless, on May 29—with all MPs from BSP and DPS voting “for” and Ataka's MPs voting “present” in order to ensure a quorum—the motley crew that Oresharski had assembled was approved with minor modifications. The Bulgarian people reacted with “a knowing smile.” This passive attitude decisively shaped by “the open secret” that politics is the domain of crooked individuals manifests itself through displays of “cynicism about the common good [and] low participation in civic action.”⁹ So despite the lack of a clear winner at the polls, the streets remained calm.

But all that changed two weeks later. On 14 June 2013, around 9:15 a.m., Oresharski nominated Delyan Peevski to head the State Agency for National Security (DANS). Stanishev enthusiastically endorsed Peevski's candidacy. At 9:30, after a roughly fifteen-minute parliamentary “debate” over the nomination, Peevski was appointed director of the country's most formidable law-enforcement institution.

The news of Peevski's appointment triggered a political firestorm. By noon the same day, the hashtag #DANSwithme had become the focal point of massive online mobilization. The turbulence rapidly spread from the virtual to the real world. At 6:30 p.m., tens of thousands of people gathered on Independence Square in downtown Sofia, demanding both the removal of Peevski and the resignation of the Oresharski cabinet. Thus began an unprecedented cycle of protests that continues today. As of this writing, the demonstrators are still trying to bring down the BSP-DPS-Ataka cabinet, and the protests are now entering their twenty-third week. What explains this extraordinary reaction? In order to answer this question, it is necessary not only to take a close look at the Bulgarian political landscape but also to weave together several analytical themes related to the underresearched and undertheorized issue of nonelectoral democratic accountability.

Who is Delyan Peevski, and why did his appointment to head DANS cause such an uproar? Simply put, he is the instantly recognizable face of brutal oligarchic power in Bulgaria. The 33-year-old Peevski began his career at age 21, when his influential mother, the former head of the national lottery, got him a job at the Ministry of Transportation. Four years later, when he was fresh out of the country's lowest-ranked law school, he became deputy prime minister. Since 2009, Peevski has been a DPS member of parliament. His ascent has been marked by widely publicized incidents of extortion, blackmail, and backroom deals with corrupt judges and prosecutors.¹⁰ Peevski is also aligned with a formi-

dable group of seedy tycoons who manage the Corporate Commercial Bank, where virtually all state-owned enterprises keep their money. The young MP has used these public resources to build a media empire comprising newspapers, television stations, and online publications. Once he established himself as the country's most powerful media magnate, Peevski began to extract services from politicians in exchange for positive coverage.

Draped in gold chains, driving huge jeeps, and surrounded by an entourage of thugs and folk singers, Peevski is openly contemptuous of democratic institutions. This representative of the people never sets foot in parliament and regularly treats elected officials and high-ranking bureaucrats as his personal servants. Peevski also uses his access to the media to issue graphic (and grammatically incorrect) threats directed at named and unnamed enemies. There is no Gatsby-like mystique surrounding this *arriviste*: His meteoric rise is due entirely to a series of highly visible corrupt transactions. Yet Bulgaria's government and parliament were going to grant him control over a key component of the state's law-enforcement machinery and thus the power to arrest people, confiscate property, and destroy business and personal reputations at his discretion.

It bears emphasizing that there was nothing illegal about this appointment. In fact, among the first legislative acts passed by the newly elected parliament were several amendments to the law on DANS altering the eligibility rules (lowering the minimum age and relaxing the professional-service requirement) in order to make it possible for the young, undereducated, and inexperienced Peevski to lawfully become the agency's director. Moreover, no one's material well-being deteriorated as a result of the appointment—the decision of Bulgarian political elites to formally elevate Peevski to the highest echelons of power did not inflict instant economic pain on any social group. To the extent that there was a problem, it was that reckless elite behavior had made a mockery of Bulgaria's claim to being a democracy in which notions such as the public good and integrity of political institutions matter, and where the law is enforced by well-trained and impartial public servants. The popular response to this coordinated elite action can only be described as an explosion of civic anger.

The Political Economy of Civic Anger

Civic anger is a scarce resource—supply rarely meets demand. In any open society, there are numerous opposition forces and various organizations that constantly try to stir up support with slogans like “What's happening right now is outrageous!” and “Immediate action is urgently needed!” Yet very few citizens ever respond. We know little about the ways in which civic anger is generated, distributed among social

groups, and converted into a transformative political resource. What can we learn about the political economy of civic anger from the ongoing Bulgarian protests?

The first lesson is that civic anger is triggered by elite misbehavior and manifests itself as a collective effort to hold democratically elected rulers accountable. The most accurate way to describe the prevalent form of elite misconduct in Eastern Europe since the mid-2000s would be as “postaccession hooliganism.” During the pre-accession era, the matrix of opportunities and constraints within which powerholders in the region had to operate was decisively shaped by EU conditionality.¹¹ Once the era of EU carrots and sticks was over—that is, after accession—politicians no longer felt bound by the formal and informal constraints to which they had adhered while endeavoring to “rejoin Europe.” In other words, these politicians behaved just like soccer hooligans, who by day do just what they need to in order to earn a paycheck and stay out of jail, but then behave completely differently at the match.

In his masterful study *Among the Thugs*, Bill Buford wrote about a British electrician named Mike, who was a Manchester United fan. During work hours, Mike was completely reliable and fully capable of carrying out his professional and organizational duties. When attending his team’s matches, however, he willingly broke all kinds of rules in pursuit of the various pleasures that self-conscious deviance provides.¹² As I have written elsewhere, Bulgaria’s leaders (and those of other countries in the region) have likewise exhibited something of a split personality:

Prior to the accession . . . rulers evidently had an incentive to behave as Mike the electrician; once in the EU they started behaving like Mike the Manchester United fan. Put differently, if before [the entry] political elites considered themselves to be in a situation where restraint was deemed necessary, after 2007 they did what they wanted.¹³

Peevski’s appointment should be viewed as a form of postaccession hooliganism—a deliberate flouting of certain rules that had to be followed in the pre-accession era as part of the sustained effort to convince Brussels that Bulgaria was ready for full membership. In this case—the elevation of an unscrupulous oligarch to the status of a law-enforcement czar—two informal rules were violated: 1) It is okay to give key jobs to associates of the top oligarchs, but not to the oligarchs themselves; and 2) it is okay to put under the oligarchs’ control jobs that allow them to manage the flow of resources, but not jobs that would allow them to use the legitimate coercive power of the state to settle private scores. Before Bulgaria’s entry into the EU, the country’s corrupt elite generally honored these rules, but no longer. The country’s democratically elected leaders delivered DANS as a gift to the biggest antihero of the Bulgarian netherworld.

A close look at the transgressed rules reveals another important facet

of civic anger: It is likely to erupt when a fairly large number of people realize that they are seeing elite misconduct *worse* than what they are used to. Undeniably, Peevski's appointment marked the crossing of a political threshold—but a threshold to what? It did not separate the legal from the illegal or the just from the unjust. Rather, it demarcated the zone between tolerable elite misbehavior and intolerably blatant abuses of public trust. In fact, the sentiment that *civic* anger supersedes is not the complacent acceptance of the status quo, but a *different kind* of anger—the suppressed anger of individuals who had no illusions about how damaged the system was and yet up to that point had opted to do nothing about it. We might hypothesize, then, that popular demands for nonelectoral democratic accountability will be voiced not when democratic idealists grow disillusioned, but when newly emerging facts prompt hardened cynics to revise the deeply held belief that they had already “seen it all.” As it turns out, hooligan-like elites can always stage never-before-seen performances—and it is at that moment that the “knowing smile” of the inveterate pessimist is replaced by the angry grimace of the offended citizen.

Parliament and the Puppet Master

That such metamorphoses proved possible in Bulgaria shows that the transformative potential of civic anger generates real political action when the motivations and objectives guiding elite actions are unambiguous. In a thoughtful essay, Andreas Schedler contends that “the demand for accountability . . . originates from the opacity of power.”¹⁴ The Bulgarian case suggests that this demand may also emerge when the exact opposite happens—when the way in which power is being used becomes crystal clear. The main reason that Peevski's appointment sparked civic unrest is because it was such an obvious plot point in a script that every Bulgarian citizen could easily understand. The story featured active and passive protagonists. The active protagonists were oligarchs dictating orders and the compliant politicians (most notably Oresharski and Stanishev) who made sure that these orders became the law of the land. The number of plausible interpretations of what had transpired was effectively reduced to one: The puppets—that is, the legislators and ministers—had used the parliamentary process, which supposedly constitutes the basis of democratic government, to pay homage to their puppet masters, the oligarchs.

The passive protagonists were Bulgaria's citizens, who were expected to behave as apathetic observers; though not because they had been deceived or deliberately misled. Paradoxically, Peevski's appointment marked the moment when Bulgarian politics reached a qualitatively new level of openness and transparency. For the first time, the informal hierarchy of power and formal officeholding arrangements were in perfect

alignment. Therefore, what Bulgarian political elites communicated to Bulgarian citizens on June 14 was the essential truth about who was calling the shots in the country.

This truth was conveyed not because the representatives of the people had honored the principle of democratic accountability, but because they believed the citizens to be nothing more than an amorphous mass of feckless stakeholders who had long ago learned not to interfere with the plans of the powerful agents in control of the whole enterprise of Bulgarian democracy. It is not respect for public opinion that explains why leaders such as Oresharski and Stanishev no longer had any compunction about revealing their unsavory relationships. This shift in elite behavior revealed the disdain with which the powerful treat the weak: "You see what happens," the oligarch says to the ordinary citizen, "you understand what happens, and you will have to suck it up."

Yet this time around, the citizens refused to play the role of marginalized weaklings. They took to the streets, where they vow to remain until the entire ruling coterie resigns. But it bears noting that elite expectations regarding citizen compliance were not unreasonable. After all, over the last several years, plenty of rotten apples had fallen from the crooked tree of Bulgarian democracy, yet almost no civic Newtons had jumped into action as a result of being hit.

This brings me to my last point about civic anger, which is that it is always mixed with civic guilt.¹⁵ Peevski was not parachuted in from outer space to take over DANS; his spectacular rise had been very public all along, in part because no civic group or constituency deemed it necessary to make an organized effort to block it. That is to say, if no one resists when the hooligans start to make forays beyond the stadium, they will openly try to take over the city. Before 2007, such forays encountered the stern disapproval of Brussels. After accession, no similar countervailing force emerged, and for this state of affairs Bulgarian citizens have nobody to blame but themselves. Thus today's civic anger is the emotional response of a self-reflective citizenry whose revulsion at the actions of the elites ("they") is intermingled with the clear understanding that the people themselves ("we") had long been too permissive, submissive, and inert. Peevski's appointment thus crossed a dual threshold—not only had elite misbehavior reached a new level, but citizens were finally acknowledging that their own apathetic acceptance of such misbehavior had allowed it to happen.

I am convinced that the link between nonelectoral democratic accountability and civic anger is an analytical nexus worth exploring. It provides a solid vantage point from which students of democratic governance may explore a number of key questions such as: How should the transgressions of democratic elites be typologized? Against what rules and standards of acceptable conduct should the acts of power-holders be judged? What is the best way to integrate concepts such as

“opacity” and transparency into empirically grounded explorations of the ongoing interactions between rulers and ruled in a democratic context? Cogent answers to such questions will emerge only if we welcome conceptual innovations and original theorizing. The effort to understand novel forms of civic discontent (that is, discontent not reducible either to socioeconomic grievances or to complaints rooted in arguments about discrimination, oppression, and injustice) should therefore be an essential component of any research program attempting to shed light on the reasons for troubling declines in democratic quality.

Democratic Vigilance in an Era of Organized Self-Interest

Bowing to the unexpected wave of protests, parliament revoked Peevski’s appointment less than a week after naming him director of DANS. But the ambitious young mogul remained at the center of political controversy. When he announced that he planned to resume working as an MP, GERB filed a petition with the Constitutional Court asking the justices to strip Peevski of his parliamentary mandate. The GERB petition argued that, by taking the oath of office as DANS’s director, he had forfeited his eligibility to sit in the National Assembly. At this point, several journalists and legal experts pointed out that Peevski and his associates maintain particularly warm relations with six of the twelve members of the Court. Coincidentally or not, it was these six justices who, on 8 October 2013, voted to dismiss GERB’s petition, thus paving the way for Peevski’s return to parliament. This decision triggered a new wave of civic anger and finally persuaded a previously uninvolved constituency to join the protests—the students, who quickly occupied every major university in the country. Indeed, thousands of young men and women became actively involved in the daily protests. Yet the demand that Oresharki’s cabinet step down remains unmet.

As the political standoff continues, the protestors have tried to define themselves as the authentic voice of civil society—which is, of course, problematic. It may or may not be true that eternal vigilance is the price of high-quality democracy. But in our era of organized self-interest, it is a fact of life that anyone who claims to speak on behalf of “the people” will inevitably be accused of resorting to noble rhetoric in order to conceal particularistic motivations. Democracy’s champions should therefore expect to be maligned as “lackeys of foreign forces,” “paid collaborators of ruthless profiteers,” or simply “supporters of the opposition.”

Aware of this problem, the protestors spontaneously hammered out a three-pronged strategy for validating their “civil society” credentials. First, they refused to associate themselves with any political organization (including GERB, the largest party in the country, which now plays the role of parliamentary opposition). Second, they rejected the idea of launching a political organization of their own—no individual, group,

or representative body is authorized to speak on behalf of the protesters. Finally, they formulated just a single demand—that Oresharski and his government resign. The protesters thereby sought to preempt charges that they were advancing someone else’s agenda, were promoting their own interests, or were pursuing a broader transformative vision without consulting the Bulgarian people.

While heightened democratic accountability is one possible outcome of displays of civic anger, another is elite retrenchment and the repudiation of civic demands.

The government’s reactions to this civic effort evolved over time. Initially Oresharski and Stanishev appeared to be in a conciliatory mood. They acknowledged that the government’s public-relations apparatus had failed to effectively communicate to the Bulgarian people Peevski’s strengths as a candidate to head DANS, but claimed

that with his dismissal the problem had been fixed. In other words—to use Albert Hirschman’s conceptual language—the ruling clique construed the situation as “a repairable lapse” reported to a dutiful “management” by “alert customers.” The people, of course, saw what was happening in a very different light and were voicing to “anyone who cared to listen” their deep concern about the “management” itself.¹⁶ After all, when Peevski and his cohort were prevented from *openly* pulling the strings of government the status quo that was restored left the Peevski contingent *secretly* pulling the strings from behind the scenes. This is why the protesters continue to demand the government’s ouster.

As a result, the government has changed its tactics. Oresharski announced in late June that his government would borrow US\$700 million to invest in welfare programs and immediately began portraying those calling for his resignation as callous, wealthy urbanites who wanted to derail his grand initiative for helping Bulgaria’s poor. By declaring the public purse open, the government could use what Hannah Arendt called “the social question” to justify its actions and discredit the protesters. “The social question,” Arendt explained, “may better and simply be called the existence of poverty.” According to Arendt, leaders such as Robespierre have insisted that “freedom has to be surrendered to necessity, to the urgency of the life process itself.”¹⁷ In Bulgaria in 2013, unlike in France during the 1790s, it was not freedom itself that was at stake in the standoff between civic activists and the government; rather it was the quality of the country’s democracy. But Arendt’s insight still applies, even if elite misconduct does not necessarily pose an existential threat to democracy: By invoking the needs of the poor, democratically elected elites often can get away with engaging in undemocratic behavior.

It was precisely “the social question” that Oresharski’s government raised as it tried to stave off the civic pushback against oligarchic power.

Bulgaria's leaders were now arguing that there are two kinds of public demands, those for financial assistance and those that can be ignored. Similarly, there are two kinds of errors that politicians can commit, failing to deliver cash to constituents and all other mistakes, which do not matter. From this perspective, the protestors seemed to be either pretentious moralizers, whose appeals on behalf of political morality and the integrity of the public sphere had nothing to do with what thousands of penniless Bulgarians really wanted, or narrow-minded elitists preaching such abstractions as accountability while impoverished Bulgarians could hardly make ends meet.

Promises of governmental largess were thus used by those with power to radically narrow the scope of democratic politics. As a result, there was a backsliding in at least two dimensions of democratic quality identified by Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino. The first is the rule of law—the set of rules and political practices which ensure that “the legal state is supreme throughout the country, leaving no areas dominated by organized crime, local oligarchs, and political bosses who are above the law.” The fact that Oresharski, who nominated Peevski, remained prime minister and that Stanishev, who endorsed the nomination, remained the parliamentary leader could only mean that Peevski and his associates would continue to engage in corruption with impunity. The second dimension is that of democratic equality—the failure to dislodge Peevski's clique revealed the hollowness of this principle in Bulgaria. That Oresharski's government would not step down confirmed the dark truth that in Bulgaria certain unsavory constituencies, in the words of Diamond and Morlino, “inevitably have more power to shape public debate and preferences and to determine the choice of leaders and policies.”¹⁸

That democracy needs vigilant citizens cannot in good faith be disputed. At the same time, their forceful interventions in the political process are bound to trigger unpredictable reactions—mainly because incumbent elites will inevitably describe them as political egotists. So while heightened democratic accountability is one possible outcome of displays of civic anger, another is elite retrenchment and the repudiation of civic demands. How democratic vigilance is defined in the era of organized self-interest is therefore a question that should be squarely confronted by students of modern democracy.

If there is one overarching lesson from Bulgaria's recent experiences, it is that civic involvement—holding officials accountable outside the voting booth—has the greatest potential for reversing declining democratic quality. In other words, nonelectoral democratic accountability is more effective for maintaining high-quality democracy than are elections or campaigns challenging specific socioeconomic policies. It is precisely the emergence of an informed, competent citizenry capable of coordinated action that may alter hierarchies of power and reestablish important limits on hooligan-like elite behavior.

The Bulgarian case also shows that efforts to put nonelectoral democratic accountability into practice are not necessarily destined to succeed. In addition to combating a hostile political class, activists must contend

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with certain dilemmas inherent in their efforts to bring about change “from below.” Although distancing itself from all political parties and having no set leadership lend credence to the claim of the Bulgarian protest movement that it authentically represents civil society, those decisions also have drawbacks. Because the movement lacks access to the logistical and financial resources that political parties typically possess, it is less likely to be able to successfully steer the democratic process. Likewise, its lack of formal leadership considerably diminishes its collective ability to reshape the lopsided field

of Bulgarian politics. Finally, the fact that the protesters have rallied around one simple demand—the resignation of Oresharski’s government—makes it easier to attract an array of individuals with diverse views, but it also leaves the movement vulnerable to the charge that it lacks a viable alternative vision.

There is one thing, however, that the year of civic anger in Bulgaria has made clear: Public apathy and individual passivity suddenly may be perceived as chains that shackle whole generations to a demeaning status quo. It is this change in perspective that explains the protesters’ attempt to infuse a mighty current of fresh water into the swamp of oligarchic power. If the movement is to succeed in revitalizing Bulgarian democracy, it will need to muster more creativity, determination, and civic virtue. But, to paraphrase Thucydides, if the effort fades, the powerful will do what they want, and the humiliated will suffer what they must.

NOTES

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1. Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino, “Introduction,” in Diamond and Morlino, eds., *Assessing the Quality of Democracy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), xi.

2. Guillermo O’Donnell, “Human Development, Human Rights and Democracy,” in Guillermo O’Donnell, Jorge Vargas Cullel, and Osvaldo M. Iazzetta, eds., *The Quality of Democracy: Theory and Applications* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 24.

3. See Guillermo O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5 (January 1994): 55–69.
4. G. Bingham Powell, Jr., *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).
5. See Catalina Smulovitz and Enrique Peruzzotti, "Societal Accountability in Latin America," *Journal of Democracy* 11 (October 2000): 147–58.
6. On the distinction between "bad-governance" democracies and "low-quality" democracies, see Marc F. Plattner, "A Skeptical Perspective," in *Assessing the Quality of Democracy*, 77–81.
7. For more on Ataka's radical leftism, see Venelin I. Ganev, "Ballots, Bribes, and State-Building in Bulgaria," *Journal of Democracy* 17 (January 2006): 75–89.
8. For more details, see "Naznachenijata na kabineta Oresharski" [Oresharski's appointments], *Dnevnik*, 2 September 2013, available at www.dnevnik.bg/bulgaria/2013/09/02/2132033_naznachenijata_na_kabineta_oreharski_infografika.
9. On "open secrets" and "knowing smiles," see Alena V. Ledeneva, *Can Russia Modernise? Sistema, Power Networks and Informal Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 24.
10. For example, in 2005 he was hired by the national investigative service, though he did not possess the required professional qualifications; the head of the service simply announced that "an exception" would be made for Peevski. In 2007, he was charged with extortion and fired from his position as a deputy prime minister. While under investigation, and in violation of Bulgarian law, Peevski was allowed to work as a magistrate. Several investigators subsequently complained that he had used his position to blackmail them in order to thwart the effort to bring him to justice. After a series of nontransparent proceedings involving judges close to his mother, the charges against him were dropped.
11. See Milada Anna Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
12. Bill Buford, *Among the Thugs* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 27.
13. Venelin I. Ganev, "Post-Accession Hooliganism: Democratic Governance in Bulgaria and Romania After 2007," *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 27 (February 2013): 40.
14. Andreas Schedler, "Conceptualizing Accountability," in: Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 20.
15. The observations that follow draw upon numerous conversations I had with participants in the protests in June and July 2013.
16. See Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 2–5.
17. Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1963), 60.
18. Diamond and Morlino, "Introduction," xiv and xxvii.