

REVOLT AND CRISIS IN GREECE

BETWEEN A PRESENT YET TO PASS AND A FUTURE STILL TO COME

Edited by

Antonis Vradis and Dimitris Dalakoglou

AK Press & Occupied London
Oakland, Baltimore, Edinburgh, London & Athens

— 2011 —

*Revolt and Crisis in Greece:
Between a Present Yet to Pass and a Future Still to Come*

An Occupied London Project
Edited by Antonis Vradis and Dimitris Dalakoglou
Co-Published by AK Press and Occupied London, 2011

ISBN: 978-0-98305-971-4
Library of Congress Control Number: 2011904668

No copyright. Copy and use is encouraged for the purposes and benefit of the global social antagonist movement with the kind request that the source is mentioned.

For more information:

www.occupiedlondon.org | www.revoltcrisis.org

AK PRESS
674-A 23rd Street
Oakland, CA 94612
USA
www.akpress.org
akpress@akpress.org

AK PRESS
PO Box 12766
Edinburgh, EH8 9YE
Scotland
www.akuk.com
ak@akedin.demon.co.uk

The above addresses would be delighted to provide you with the latest AK Press distribution catalog, which features the several thousand books, pamphlets, zines, audio and video products, and stylish apparel published and/or distributed by AK Press. Alternatively, visit our web site for the complete catalog, latest news, and secure ordering.

Visit us at www.akpress.org and www.revolutionbythebook.akpress.org.

Cover illustration by Leandros.

Cover design by Tim Simons.

Layout by Klara Jaya Brekke.

Profits from the sale of this book will benefit anarchist printing and publishing projects around the globe, including Rotta in Greece and AK Press in the United States.

This edition printed in Canada on 100% recycled, acid-free paper, with union labor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to everyone at AK Press and Kate, Lorna, Jessica, and Suzanne in particular for all their help; Bruce and Mikey (Oakland, US); Manny and Magpie (NYC, US); Shannon and Gabrielle (Montreal, Canada); Jaya, David, Daphne, and Yiannis (London, England); Catherine (Southampton, England); Harry (Edinburgh, Scotland); Christos and Yannis (St. Andrews, Scotland); Christos (Lancaster, England); Edward, Tom, Leila, Lia, Frances, and Emilia (Brighton, England); Evie (Madrid, Spain); Vasia (Patras, Greece); Haris (Thessaloniki, Greece); Leandros, Idris, Soula, Christos K, Christos G, Thanos, Stratos, Eleni, Hara, Vaso, Calamity, Achilleas, Yannis, Yiorgos, Dimitris, Evangelia, Katerina, Stefanos, Marilena, James, and Tim in Athens.

CONTENTS

Acronyms 10

1 Introduction

Dimitris Dalakoglou & Antonis Vradis 13

THE SITE: ATHENS

2 Urban planning and revolt: a spatial analysis of the December 2008 uprising in Athens

Vaso Makrygianni & Haris Tsavdaroglou 29

3 The polis-jungle, magical densities, and the survival guide of the enemy within

Christos Filippidis 59

4 Spatial legacies of December and the right to the city

Dimitris Dalakoglou & Antonis Vradis 77

THE EVENT: DECEMBER

5 From ruptures to eruption: A genealogy of post-dictatorial revolts in Greece

Christos Giovanopoulos & Dimitris Dalakoglou 91

6 The rebellious passage of a proletarian minority through a brief period of time

The Children of the Gallery (TPTG) 115

7 The (revolt) medium is the message: Counter-information and the 2008 revolt

Metropolitan Sirens 133

8	December as an event in Greek radical politics <i>Yannis Kallianos</i>	151
9	Short voyage to the land of ourselves <i>Hara Kouki</i>	167
10	Paper rifles <i>Kirilov</i>	181
11	Nothing happened: A letter from across the Atlantic <i>Some of Us</i>	193
12	The commonalities of emotion: Fear, faith, rage, and revolt <i>Soula M.</i>	199

THE CRISIS

13	The Greek economic crisis as evental substitution <i>Christos Lynteris</i>	207
14	An economy that excludes the many and an “accidental” revolt <i>Yiannis Kaplanis</i>	215
15	The Greek debt crisis in almost unimaginably long-term historical perspective <i>David Graeber</i>	229
16	Burdened with debt: “Debt crisis” and class struggles in Greece <i>The Children of the Gallery (TPTG)</i>	245
17	No one is revolutionary until the revolution! A long, hard reflection on Athenian anarchy through the prism of a burning bank <i>Christos Boukalas</i>	279

18 For the insurrection to succeed, we must first destroy ourselves <i>Alex Trocchi</i>	299
19 Postscript: Capitalism by default <i>Occupied London Collective</i>	329
<i>Timeline</i>	333
<i>Glossary</i>	337
<i>Key places and people</i>	341
<i>Bibliography</i>	345

5

FROM RUPTURES TO ERUPTION:

A GENEALOGY OF THE DECEMBER 2008 REVOLT IN GREECE

*Christos Giovanopoulos &
Dimitris Dalakoglou*

In mid-December 2008, a teacher from Athens narrated the following incident: a few days before, her nine-year-old son had come home from school and asked her if she knew how to make a Molotov cocktail. The woman was surprised, but wanted to tease him so she asked him if *he* knew how. The boy replied that he did and started describing the process with confidence:

“You take a bottle of beer,” the boy explained.

“Why not a bottle for orange juice?” his mother asked.

“No, no! It must be a bottle of beer; you drink the beer first and then fill the bottle with petrol, you put a piece of cloth on the top and you light up the cloth and throw it.”

Although some readers may be surprised to hear of a nine-year-old kid accurately describing how to make a petrol bomb, the fact is that this story is indicative of the diffusion of political images and imagination across entire generations, including the very young, in recent Greek history. Many of the kids who familiarised themselves with these radical discourses and imaginations sooner or later helped to form or participated actively in the recent political movements in the country. Three high school and university students’ movements in the last twenty years (1990–1991, 1998–2000, 2006–2007) confirm this radicalization of teenagers and people in their early twenties. Further ⁹¹ more, the December 2008 events comprise a further confirmation, as

students—who saw their peer being shot—made up the main body of the revolt.

There are various ways that one can conceptualize the social activism of young people in Greece today. For example, one could argue that it reflects the level of politicization of the rest of society. This is a politicization that is linked with recent history: the civil war (1946–1949) of two generations ago was followed by several decades of police-state oppression and pogroms against the defeated left, and of course there was the military junta (1967–1974), all of which have left a mark on the personal and family histories of most people in Greece. However, despite the historical continuities that we should take into account, we have to state clearly that the radicalization of the youth during the post-dictatorial period is very particular and takes on a different character in the post-1990s period. Although this period signifies the longest-lasting parliamentary regime in Greek history, there has also been a large concentration of social movements, coinciding with the introduction of neoliberalism in the country.

In this article we hope to demonstrate that this “restored” Greek parliamentary democracy could not afford to allow acts of disobedience or protest against its own ills and the ills which it inherited. The line of argument they have used against the young protesters is that those who have revolted and protested against the supposedly democratic state do not have the right to do so as they have no legitimate reason for protest.

Especially the youth has been represented and criticized as the “lucky generation,” living in a free society, in a “Europeanised” and fully modernised polity with social provisions, etc. Furthermore, according to some public commentators, the youth of the post-dictatorial period is the first generation to live in affluence in comparison to their parents’ generation. This discourse was very popular amongst the reactionary journalists and academics in December 2008. They emphasised that Alexis was a private school kid, coming from relatively wealthy, middle-class parents.¹ This argument about wealthy kids revolting for fun has been used repeatedly against the youth who have chosen a radical and often violent way of resisting the authorities. Without fetishising the lower economic classes, one should notice that actually not a word was spoken about those kids who spread the rebellion to the poor, working-class suburbs of Athens and throughout Greece’s rural, small, and otherwise quiet towns. Neither did we hear about the great number of young migrants or second-generation immigrants who also participated ⁹² in December in large numbers. This meeting of youth from various paths of life in the streets in December 2008 did not come out of the

blue. Since the end of the dictatorship and especially since the beginning of the 1990s in Greece a lot of young people identify with far-left and anarchist agendas regardless of their class or wider social origin, not least because the youth have been constantly the primary target by various neoliberal measures and oppressive state campaigns.

The reader has to bear in mind that our argument throughout this paper is that there exist several distinctions applied to the people involved in the post-dictatorial movements. The main distinction we will draw is between the more fixed political subjectivities of the preneoliberalism period (up to circa 1990–1993) and the people who were raised or even born after the establishment of neoliberal (called modernization) policies in Greece. Our purpose is to outline the momentous genealogies of the December 2008 revolt in Greece and show the gradual emergence of a new social agency, political subjectivities and political tactics that contributed to the unmaking from below of the political context of *metapolitefsi* (the post-dictatorial period, see Glossary). In that respect we focus on the “breaking continuities” (or, continuous breaks) that led to the December eruption, which we consider to have been a radical break with *metapolitefsi*’s political structures. So our article aims to talk both about the political genealogy and the political formation of the actual *genea* (generation) of December’s revolt.

The empirical historical part of this chapter cannot be exhaustive, as there have been many more movements in Greece than we could include in this text. Instead, we will focus on five moments of mass militant student and youth movements (1979–80, 1987–88, 1990–91, 1998–99, 2006–07) that moved beyond the established margins and challenged the dominant political configurations in each of these periods. Moreover, we will underline three critical moments (1985, 1990, 1995) as in-between instances where the intervention of youth outside of the mainstream politics was felt strongly.

THE 1979–1980 OCCUPATION MOVEMENT: THE FIRST BLOW

In 1979–1980 Greece saw the formation of a mass student movement that was led by the extra-parliamentarian left, mainly its Marxist-Leninist contingent. This movement forced the prime minister at the time, Karamanlis (senior), to announce in his national address on New Year’s Eve the cancellation of the notorious 815 legal act, which pertained to educational reform. This movement formulated a militant political culture by actively challenging the political consensus of the “newly ⁹³ reborn” democracy of the early post-dictatorial period. The movement

was also linked to the appearance of a new extra-university youth that referenced the autonomous and antiauthoritarian ideologies and met and mingled with the students in the occupied universities. This meeting occurred at a moment when the people's demand for real change and an end to the—still ongoing at the time—right-wing post-civil-war police state was gathering momentum. During this period, and largely thanks to the occupation movement, the structural weakness of the conservative government of New Democracy—albeit its clear parliamentary majority—became apparent.

Despite the apparent weaknesses of the regime, there were efforts by the institutionalised and newly-legalised mainstream left to control the youth movement and support the established order. For example, the socialist- and communist-youth-controlled National Students' Union of Greece (EFEE) decided to close all universities just before Christmas in 1979 in order to diffuse the movement's dynamic that had developed outside the union's control. Arguably, amongst the crucial political contributions of the 1979–1980 protests was that they exposed the role of the communist youth (KNE)—the strongest student organisation at the time—in applying the political pact of *metapolitefsi*. KNE not only condemned the occupations but its members tried to re-occupy the Chemistry School of Athens, which was already occupied by the students' assembly, in order to regain order. For this action they received the congratulations of the conservative minister of Internal Security. In fact, through the KNE the government could bypass the obstacle that the *academic asylum* (see Glossary) imposed on the intervention of the police. On the other hand, the occupation movement functioned as the next reference point in the line of students' upheavals since the anti-junta revolt of 17 November 1973. In wider terms, it expressed the surfacing social and political changes from below in the post-dictatorship era.

Nevertheless, despite the 1979–1980 movement's attempts to define and intervene in the processes of social transformations, it was not able to substantiate an alternative route. It seemed that it reached the peak of its potential on 17 November 1980 when the radical part of the movement attempted to break the ban on marching towards the US embassy that the conservative government had imposed on the commemorating demonstration for the anti-junta revolt.² The break of the ban led to head-to-head clashes with the police outside the Greek parliament and the death of two militants: Stamatina Kanelopoulou, a worker, and Iakovos Koumis, a student. While the 1979–1980 movement challenged the strict limits of the post-dictatorial democracy and

exposed the demand for an end to the post-civil-war regime and for political change, what followed was characterised by a lack of strategy or the ability to take any further initiative. These changes culminated the next year in the victory for the first time in Greece of what was considered at the time to be a left party, PASOK: the populist social-democrats of Andreas Papandreou. Also faced with a dubious stance toward PASOK's left rhetoric (a year later), the movement suffered the dissolution of its most significant and large Marxist-Leninist organisations.

1981–1989: CHALLENGING THE “SOCIALIST” VERSION OF DEMOCRACY

After PASOK's domination for a number of years and despite the fact that a large number of activists remained active in higher education and at a local and social levels, the framework had changed. Although the political system of *metapolitefsi* was still intact, and more stable than ever, it was disguised in its most democratic gowns. Under this new condition a generation emerged, characterised by an anti-authoritarian sentiment, that challenged PASOK's hegemony and democratic credibility. It was a new breed that responded to the institutionalisation of the so-called *Polytechnic Generation* (see Glossary) and the November 1973 revolt. It was a youth critical of PASOK's modernisation and to the traditionalism and compliant integration of the left and the trade unions³ whose ineffective forms of struggle were actively refused.

The disillusionment and the numbness that affected the majority of the radical left after PASOK's first season in government, was interrupted in 1985 by violent protests and the occupations of the Chemistry School and the Polytechnic after the murder of the fifteen-year-old school student Michalis Kaltezas by the police. Kaltezas was shot by a riot cop named Melistas during clashes with the police in the neighbourhood of Exarcheia on the anniversary of the revolt of 17 November. The events were a culmination of numerous moments of intervention by the far left and the anarchist movement in the previous period, which were characterised in practice by violent clashes with the police: university occupations (e.g. of the Chemistry School occupation prior the general elections of 1984), the attack on and cancellation of a neo-Nazi meeting with Le Pen⁴ in Caravel Hotel in Athens (1984) or the conflicts for “territorial control” (i.e. resistance against the gentrification of the highly politicised Exarcheia square). Arguably, in this yet organisationally infant political culture, it was rather the subcultural urban identity politics that prevailed, interwoven with the phantom of ⁹⁵ a militant tradition and a prevailing antiauthoritarian sentiment. The

events of these years mark the first autonomous appearance of the anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement trying to establish a culture of direct action based largely on an anti-state and anti-police agenda. The intervention of this “angry youth” (as it was labelled at the time) signified an end to the golden years of PASOK. However it failed—or rather did not attempt at all—to create or connect with larger struggles, which to a large degree it despised. It was also during this time that the “annual rendezvous” with the police each 17 November was established. Thus, against the co-optation of the November revolt and the consumption of its ideals in the electoral terrain, one meets the mutation of the revolt to its simulacra, a formal repetition of the signs of revolt which created its own referential reality and political imagination that reached its limit in, or immediately after, December 2008. Nevertheless, the de-marginalisation of practices—such as school occupations—and their expansion outside the universities (or rather the gradual shift of the main subject of the youth movement from the politicised and organised university students to the more contingently mobilized school kids) marked another important difference of the period.

However, these events functioned as semiological and historical preludes to larger developments that the youth were at the front-lines of. The most significant phenomenon was the beginning of the de-alignment of notable parts of the Greek society from the political parties. Within the rigid polarisation of the post-WWII and the early *metapolitefsi* era, the struggles of those who were rejected by the state or prevented access to the goods of modernisation and democracy (e.g. the defeated of the civil war) coincided with the anti-right sentiment of political struggles, parties, and institutions. The memories were still very fresh and the political alignments were quite polarized on either side, that of the state and that of the popular resistance. Hence such polarity expressed an abstract and ideological subjectivity which was directly linked to the concrete conditions of people’s everyday lives. Therefore the distinction between the social and the political was very difficult to make for several decades after the end of the civil war. This changed with the victory of PASOK in 1981; the coming of PASOK to power was portrayed as the reconciliation of the civil war and as a reunification of the Greek society. Nevertheless, these politics of the so-called “national reconciliation” during the 1980s signified a process of consolidation that removed the basis on which previously socio-political subjectivities and affiliations were based on.

96 Thus the integration of the previous outcasts into the political establishment created considerable gaps, but not yet a vacuum. To

be fair, the right/anti-right dichotomy was still active and long-lasting (manifesting itself indirectly even in the December 2008 revolt) and formulated the dominant bipartisan system (PASOK-ND) in the exchange of power. However, another mass youth movement of the 1980s, signified by a new round of university and school occupations in 1986–1988, marked the emergence of the so-called “party of the discontent,” namely a youth with only loose reference to the previous politically-based identities. The mobilisation of this youth was motivated by its own experience, namely the eye-witnessing of the collapse of political difference between PASOK and ND in power, in their policies, discourses, and practices. A collapse those previous generations refused or could not apprehend, as the older generations still referred to those two poles in terms of imagined or actual differences. The collective and individual subjectivation of the 1980s movements was founded on this collapse and manifested itself with the spread of the action of occupation. Until that moment the occupation of public buildings, even universities and schools, was considered an act almost outside the limits of law (for the most conservatives it was an outwardly terrorist act), and certainly outside the “pact of *metapolitefsi*,” which laid out the agreed-upon borders of social confrontation. The efficiency of the 1979–1980 occupations, which managed the cancellation of an already-passed law by occupying just four university departments, underlined the real and symbolic power of this form of struggle. The people involved in the 1986–88 movement, however, created different constituencies and an agency that was characterised by two new elements. The first was the prevalence of their everyday social needs (as basis for their subjectivity and actions) and not of their ideological position. This had as a consequence the second: a distancing from, and critique of, party-based youth politics. They had a critique expanded beyond the two poles (PASOK and ND) and encompassed the rest of the parties, including those of the left (KKE and KKE) who had dominated the “politicisation” of the Greek youth. The spread of the act of occupations in secondary and higher education, for first time in the majority of the main cities in the country, exemplified the retreat of the party-youth control of the movement.

This loosening of party affiliation and social background expressed within the universities was combined with the structural changes of both higher education and of Greek society broadly. The expansion of higher education in the post-1981 era brought changes to the demographics of university students that also affected the politics of ⁹⁷ the students’ movement. Larger portions of students with working-class

origins did not translate automatically in stronger working-class-orientated student politics. On the contrary, at the level of student elections the results gradually converged with those of the general elections. This meant a retreat of the dominant communist youth representation that won the student elections until 1986, and the ascent of the student group of the conservative-party-affiliated DAP, fuelled by the ideal of upward social mobility and the promotion of the neoliberal yuppie dream.

In this context, the non-party affiliated student formations of the radical left provided to the movement the organisational know-how and a political framework and analysis. The latter though was somewhat distant for the majority of students. This was obvious due to the fact that, despite the rise of radical left activists and better results in the student elections after each occupation movement, the radical left groups failed to formulate a political subject or force, or to extend their hegemony at a social level. More importantly, this gap was obvious in the relationship between forms of activism and content. The more radical the former became, the less the latter, which was increasingly restricted to specific demands regarding education and provided less of an overall critique of the capitalist system. However, the spread of such radical practices of political contestation underlined deeper changes in Greek society, as the 1990s will show, with the main characteristic being the increased discrepancy between political institutions and social agency.

1990s: REFORMING METAPOLITEFSI AND CONTESTING NEOLIBERALISM

Structurally, the 1989–1990 period can be considered a transitional period in the reconfiguration of the dominant discourses and political establishment in Greece. This occurred as both the result of larger changes in world geopolitics (the collapse of the Soviet block) and of the antagonisms in struggles for internal domination between the emerging neo-bourgeois sectors (expressed by PASOK) and the traditional ones (ND). This antagonism created a climate of violent interventions between competing economic groups and extrapolitical institutions (e.g. media corporations) through the eclectic disclosure of scandals in an effort to remake the social contract and political map of *metapolitefsi*. The “end of *metapolitefsi*” has become a permanent slogan since then. In reality, what was introduced by the three governments

98 of the 1989–1993 period was an openly neoliberal restructuring of the Greek economy and society, which needed to disintegrate those social

obstacles for the “modernization”—the second dominant slogan—of the country. These obstacles included the social and public services of a poorly-developed welfare state, employment rights, sovereign policy for economic development, and any organized, antagonistic social agency, such as trade unions.

This neoliberal offence was implemented by the conservative government of K. Mitsotakis (1990–1993). This wouldn’t, however, have been able to occur without the consensus of the rest of the parliamentary parties at the time. Indeed, the Mitsotakis’s administration governed with a very thin parliamentary majority. He secured this through the tolerance of all the oppositional parties (from its arch-rival PASOK to the unified Coalition of the Left—SYNaspismos, namely the unified KKE and KKE) and their consensus for this “catharsis.” The slogan, literary meaning a “clearing” of the scandals,⁵ in reality regarded the direction of the reforms and each party’s position in the frame of a reformed *metapolitefsi*. The collapse of PASOK’s government (1989) under the weight of scandals and corruption led to two elections without any party gaining a majority. Thus after the first elections of 1989 a coalition government combining the right wing ND and the two unified communist parties (Synaspismos) was formed. While the latter was hoping that its participation would deepen the PASOK’s crisis and eventually marginalise the social democratic party, it was considered to be a betrayal of the whole post-WWII struggles against the police state of the right.⁶ Thus, instead, the result in the new elections two months later was that PASOK gained the lost ground and participated in a new “ecumenical” (national) government, which included all the parliamentary elected parties: PASOK, ND, and the unified Synaspismos.

1990–1991: MASS SCHOOL OCCUPATIONS

It was in this context that the 1990–1991 occupation movement emerged. It was preceded though, by the January 1990 monthly occupation of the Polytechnic. The Polytechnic was occupied by anarchists because Melistas—the cop who killed fifteen-year-old Michalis Kaltezas back in 1985—had just been cleared of all charges in his second trial. Although anarchists and anti-authoritarians initiated this occupation, it was supported by the decisions of the students’ assemblies of the different departments of the Polytechnic and it was also reinforced by student occupations of other universities for a shorter period (1–2 weeks). This occupation, remembered as “the blossom of the Greek youth” (named after the proverbial slogan on the banner of the last

demo), marks a qualitative difference within the anti-authoritarian movement and the anti-organisational anarchism of the 1980s, mainly due to the prominent role of the Athens squatters' movement. Despite being a relatively small group, the anarcho-punk squatters' organisational skills—gained from their DIY experience—were transferred into the running of the occupation. This meant not only a position against the destruction of buildings and university facilities, but also control at the gates, the setting up of a collective canteen, cleaning shifts, etc. This new spirit, along with the organised communication (mainly by way of leafleting and flyer-posting) to the schools outside the centre of Athens, allowed the occupation to last for a month and to gain a mass support. One could say that indeed the January occupation left some footprints that led to the school occupation movement that erupted in November of the same year and lasted almost three months.

The 1990–1991 movement was the biggest—almost universal—school occupation movement in the history of the country, involving hundreds of thousands of students and several thousand schools and higher education institutes. In fact, it was eclipsed only by the uprising of December 2008 as one of the most significant moments in the history of social antagonism and political contestation in the post-dictatorship era. In addition to its mass character, the 1990–1991 movement was distinguished by strong qualitative differences from previous ones and defines the entrance into a new era of antagonistic politics in Greece.

Demographically, this movement was made up of those who belonged to a generation of people who were born or grew up after the dictatorship and entered their teens under the PASOK government. This means that they had been severed from the first-hand memory of the radicalisation of the *metapolitefsi* years and its political culture, if not of the (institutionalised by now) 1973 Polytechnic revolt, too. While the political representation of the uprising consisted of university students—largely due to their ability to politically articulate the movement's positions, their experience, and their national networks—the real backbone of the movement consisted of secondary school students. The massive participation of schools and universities, reaching around 90%, meant that for the very first time every town in Greece had a secondary education school occupied. This invasion of school students in the forefront of social contestation meant that the political subject (not of one or the another party, but as such itself) was left to the social agency of those making the movement. Organised political groups were forced to follow the initiative of the youth, which in real-

ity set the agenda and exercised the real hegemony in the movement. Therefore the attempts to politicise the movement with larger aims and goals, or even analyses and perspective, failed. In the previously described atmosphere of disillusionment and de-alignment from political parties, the youth did not share much with the pre-1990s experience and posed its own kind of politics and culture of protest. Its political logic was unique; on the one hand it had the potential to revitalise those “old” and “stereotyped” methods, while on the other hand it asked for something different. In short, this first instance of the prevalence of social agency and rather unplanned responses (which were, however, not spontaneous despite being strongly intuitive), in comparison with the political subjects already active in the movement, provided a glimpse into the shifts that would emerge during the following years and expand beyond the educational sector. This movement also holds strong parallels with the December revolt regarding the relation between the “political” and the “social” subject, and regarding either what was called the “spontaneity” of the movement or its lack of concrete demands and political procedures of decision making.

Politically, the lack of any alternative within the system, either nationally due to the ecumenical government, or internationally due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the bipolar world, was spotted clearly within this mass movement. Going beyond the wider acknowledgement that “everyone is the same”—a sameness materialized very tangibly by the coalition and the ecumenical governments—this movement tried to constitute its antithesis to the political system by the slogan: “when you [the mainstream parties] agree in the parliament, the only opposition is us.” In that way, it reworked and subverted the promoted and dominant, at the time, anti-populist and anti-political discourse that propagated the need of technocrats and specialists to be at the helm rather than politicians. A discourse (of ignoring the political cost) that aimed at the marginalisation of the energetic politically Greek populace.

In this context, the 1990–1991 occupation movement managed to reconfigure the promoted system of political indifference amongst all the parliamentary parties and turn it into a condemnation of the political system as a whole. They did this by drawing and emphasizing an explicit line between the strategically-unified political personnel and the people who had taken over the streets and the education institutions. The workers’ and teachers’ struggles in the following years (1991–1993) against the de-industrialisation of the country and the privatisation of the public services in one sense resisted and derailed the neoliberal ref-

ormation of *metapolitefsi*. As result it deepened the internal contradictions of the political establishment, contradictions that were based on a developed clientèle system that absorbed social discontent and maintained electoral power. However, the contraction of the state apparatus and the deregulation of the working market shrunk this system's abilities to provide favours. This contradiction was given a radical form by the current IMF intervention that has exposed and shaken the political system in Greece to its foundations.

The contribution of the 1990–1991 movement to the legitimisation of a series of political practices was immense. Most notably, the perception of building occupations and road blockades as marginal behaviour used mainly by extreme revolutionary political groups was radically altered as a result of the movement. At the same time, the dissolution of the Youth of the Communist Party (KNE)⁷ allowed space for more immediate, or rather unmediated, expressions of social anger and more radical and inventive forms of resistance to emerge. One could suggest that the characteristics of the 1990–1991 movement, as they appeared in its slogans, actions, and organization, were more in sync with the movements of the French youth in 1986 and of the Italian students of the “panther” movement in 1990 than with the hitherto political culture of the radical students of Greece.

In that sense, the entry of a new generation, without the political links of the previous one, refreshed the logic and the vocabulary of political protest in Greece but at the same time was lacking the ability to articulate concrete demands or perspective. Namely, its demands were mainly defensive. This was not a new feature, only now it had become the dominant one. Due to the lack of any alternative proposal, the demands were very specific and were articulated against the most obviously reactionary elements of the proposed “white paper” for education. So the movement's most popular demands were a refusal: to pay for their textbooks, to return to the regime of school uniforms, to cut the days of school holidays, and to decrease the ceiling of the allowed absences from school. Their limited aims were directed against the economic consequences and the disciplinary functioning of the educational system. Nevertheless, larger demands or platforms connecting such consequences with the deeper restructuring of education failed to be embraced or prevail. But the unity and strength, both in numbers and morale, that these specific aims gathered showed the ability of the movement to expand, endure, and eventually succeed.

102 A second distinct element was the lack of the confrontational character that past youth movements had applied, a logic of force

that was exercised not only against the system but also for acquiring power within the movement. This does not mean that the 1990–1991 movement renounced or did not use force or violence, but rather that it did so as a last resort. Confrontation was not prioritized in its political practice. Instead, argumentation, inventiveness, ridicule, humour, and collective participation were the main attitudes of the movement and these things encompassed even its violent moments. And yet, the disruption that this movement caused was much greater than any other until then—both in terms of time and space. However, blocking the roads with their school desks in order to inform the public of their demands and creating “functional occupations”—namely staying in their schools and creating their own spaces that they cared for, cleaned up, and maintained—were tactics clearly distinct from the destroying of systemic symbols. Such tactics of spatial reclaiming proved so effective that the usual rhetoric of vandalism was unable to break the public support for the movement, to allow the success of legal or more radical anti-occupation actions organised by authorities and vigilante groups, or to unease and mobilise parents against their kids.

The political practice that this movement produced manifested a different set of ethics, subjectivity, and agency that, retrospectively, one could argue had more in common with the ethics of the first days of the anti-globalisation movement—ten years later—than with the previous experiences of youth mobilisation in Greece. Its non-violent, or rather, non-destructive attitude was manifested even in its slogans, which gave it an integrity that was instrumental for its endurance and final success. One must also underline the determination of this movement to resist all attacks by the government and the state. Integrity and determination were fundamental elements for the maintenance of its mass character and support, as well as its unprecedented endurance—expressed with the slogan “I endure”—that kept the schools open and occupied during the Christmas break. It was also effective in resisting the government’s attacks on the refusal of the movement to negotiate with it, and in mobilising masses broader than the youth.

Then at the beginning of January 1991, three days and nights of clashes with the police in the major cities of Greece erupted, marking, to a certain degree, the end of this movement. The event that had triggered this revolt was the murder of Nikos Temboneras, a teacher who had, together with his students, defended his school’s occupation from the right-wing vigilantes who were trying to break it.

In addition to the aforementioned particularities of the 1990–1991 movement, it is important to underline a number of other novel,

albeit minor, traits that it bore, as they have since become constant features of the emerging political culture. Something striking about this movement was the difference of its slogans and banners from the previous ones. The highly-politicised slogans and demands had been replaced with slogans that expressed feelings, attitudes, and sometimes visionary truisms: “When injustice becomes law/resistance is [our] duty” or “Our dreams will be your nightmares,” etc. Also, instead of declaring political organisations or mere educational institutions, the banners declared the location of the schools and thereby linked the groups with their neighbourhoods, suburbs, towns, or villages.

Moreover, in terms of the spatial allocation of the marches one could also notice differences: Until then the white banners of the student unions—usually controlled by the youth of the Communist Party—were at the head, followed by the red banners of the ultra left students, with the anarchists tailing off the march. The 1990–1991 marches, however, had no particular order.

Moreover, the use of political slogans and their distinctive rhythm, while still present, had been sexed up by rhythms and slogans brought in from the football pitch. Famously, the slogan “Never, never, never” (shouted to the opposite team to suggest that they will never score a goal) became a dominant one in the political movements that followed, suggesting that the proposed reforms which the movement resisted, would never be enacted. This refreshing of the slogan culture, joined by more upbeat demonstration “performances,” underlined a paradoxical return of the social to a waned political rhetoric and vocabulary. The newly involved masses of school kids brought their musical preferences in as well. A typical example of this was the slogan suggesting that “It’s better to be the generation of chaos⁸/than in Aftokinisi [a hip club at the time] and dance to house [music].”

One can argue that the movement of 1990–1991 had a rather “positive” or “constructive” character in comparison to the December revolt. However, the movement of 1990–1991 had the doubtful “privilege” of being the first one to act against the newly formed neoliberal regime, and was not yet defined by the violent conditions that neoliberalism would soon produce. The movement was composed of youth who, while experiencing the impasse of social policy and its incompetence to fill its promises, stood against the neoliberal destruction of their future. They defended, albeit intuitively and politically incoherently, their right to the future, before its vision collapsed entirely, as it had ¹⁰⁴ for the December youth eighteen years later. If the 1990–1991 generation had something to defend (or loose), the December generation had

nothing. December's generation was born and grew up during and after the introduction of neoliberalism and was formed within its context—in terms of both its individual and collective subjectification—a context that produced subjects with a generalized marginality as antagonistic subjectivity and of a “deregulated” political action.

RECOMPOSITIONS CONCLUDING THE 1990s

The 1990–1991 student unrest functioned as the model for following school occupation movements opposing the further attempts at neoliberal educational restructuring made by both conservatives and by social democrats. The next important moment was the 1998–1999 school occupation movement. However, before we get to 1998 we should outline a number of developments that followed the 1990–1991 movement. Firstly, there were the workers' struggles against the deregulation of the labour market through deindustrialisation and privatisation. Most notably, the strike of the public bus drivers (the EAS strike), including its “All or none” (workers would stay at work) slogan and its dynamic and confrontational character against the state and police. However, the other trade unions did not actively support the strike despite the mass solidarity demonstrations that saw tens of thousands taking to the streets even in the vacation season of August. Parallel to the general disappearance of the official trade unions came the radicalization of the struggles of various sectors of workers—at least as far as forms of struggle are concerned. Thus, in the 1990s, there were two big farmers' movements with road blockades that split the country in two for weeks; multiple monthlong strikes by school teachers; and a lengthy blockade of the port of Piraeus by dock and sea workers—to mention but a few struggles. However, these mobilisations remained isolated and unsynchronised with each other, despite having developed simultaneously at times.

A second development is that within the atmosphere of emerging struggles in 1990–1993, the Communist Party split between those who wanted to stay within the SYNaspismos coalition and those wished to see the Party regain its autonomy. The official pretext for this divide was the agreement by SYNaspismos to the Maastricht Treaty. In reality, part of the top cadre of the party saw opportunity in the vacuum that developed between the rising social discontent and the political formations of the 1989–1991 transitional experiment to a post-*metapolitefsi* era. Thus, they aimed to fill this gap and control these new constituencies, seeing a renovated role as a way to cushion social ten
 105
 sions before they got out of hand. So on one hand the Communist Par-

ty organisations were mobilized especially amongst farmers, construction and port workers struggles that at times tested the tolerance of the system's limits; on the other hand, in the decisive moments they always retreated or replaced the real conflicts with symbolic ones. These symbolic conflicts included mock and controlled occupations of ministries (executed by assigned squads of party members) or other "dynamic" imitations of direct action. This new configuration of reformism that used means of struggle that had been previously condemned as acts of provocation reveals once more the extent to which the "pact" of *metapolitefsi* had by that point been broken down under the pressure of the people's movement.

A third moment that ought to be recounted is the 1995 Polytechnic occupation by the anarchist movement that followed the 17 November annual march. The fierce clashes with the police around the barricaded Polytechnic, the burning of Greek flags (demonstrating an anti-nationalist agenda), the solidarity expressed with the continuing revolt of the inmates of Korydalos Prison, and the besieging and eventual arrest of 530 young people—a large majority of whom were school students—were all aired on live television channels. The newly-funded private TV channels, alongside the state-owned ERT, undertook a new role that they have kept up with since: to create a social consensus for the police offensive that aimed to silence a radical part of the youth that had been gaining ground since 1991. The state aimed to make an example of the protestors—arresting everyone who was present in the occupation—and to renegotiate the "academic asylum," which prevented the police from entering university grounds. Nevertheless the hostage-like situation that the arrested and their milieu were thrown into was indeed a blow to the anarchist movement, though it also marked an internal transformation. It forced, in one respect, a part of that movement to develop different strategies from those of the singular scheme of policestate-banks vs. society, leading to a renegotiation of the tactics of violent confrontation. Thus a number of social centres (*steki*) were established at universities and in neighbourhoods. This relatively new anarchist activity led to the introduction of new people who had been politicized within the post-1995 atmosphere, while the pre-1995 radicals gradually returned or found themselves in a scene that was rapidly developing. Eventually, anarchism in Greece made an impressive comeback during the anti-globalization movement's struggles of the 2000s, and today it is considered one of the largest anarchist movements in Europe.

106 What we have labelled the youth movement did not calm down during the 1990s. New waves of students entering high school con-

tinued to resist new educational reforms. Thus, in 1998, the Arsenis's generation (named after the PASOK minister of education) managed to build the next big school occupation movement. By now, the communist youth had managed to reconstitute itself and supported the occupations. Its presence, however, only divided the schools between those that followed a national coordination assembly controlled by the KNE and those that ascribed to the independent school coordination initiative in which leftists and anarchist students, among others, were represented. Despite the dominating presence of the KNE's coordination, the group was for the first time forced to adopt occupation as a means of struggle, though they avoided such tactics whenever they could. Still, they were unable to marginalise the non-KNE schools and students. The threat that the latter posed to the KNE, and the real attitude of the KNE towards them, became obvious at the beginning of the so-called Arsenis movement. In 1998, once more on 17 November, the riot police—with the active assistance of the KNE—arrested, without reason, around 160 people who were marching with the anarchist bloc, the majority of them secondary school kids.

The KNE managed over the course of the following years to become the first organised left force within universities—electorally speaking, as it is still weak in the general assemblies. It quickly returned to its orthodox position of condemning the occupations, but yet it fails to convince even its own members of this position when the issue comes up. During the latest student movement (2006–2007), in support of the constitutional Article 16 (which prevents the foundation of private universities, an article that the conservative government of ND wanted to change through constitutional reform), the Communist Party was adamant that they did not support occupations. Similarly, and even more vociferously in December 2008, the KKE (Communist Party of Greece) received official congratulations—by the right-wing government and the extreme-right party LAOS—for its denunciation of violence and its respect for the government's right to impose “law and order.” “In the revolution, not even a shopping window will be broken,” the KKE's general secretary Aleka Papariga declared in December 2008 in the Greek parliament.⁹

As previously mentioned, more radical forms of action have been established as the norm throughout the last two decades. A typical example of this was the so-called ASEP strike of 1997–1998. ASEP was the name of a new state organization that used written exams to determine a teacher's right to work. ASEP was pushing hiring practices ¹⁰⁷ towards a market-oriented evaluation process that would replace the

previous system of placement based on teaching experience and academic merit. After numerous strikes, the movement decided to physically prevent the new exams from being administered. This meant three days of occupations of the exam centres and it meant clashes with the police. The fight was lost, but the movement, despite its organisational shortcomings, raised the stakes to an unprecedented level. It was one of the few cases in which a formal trade union decided to make use of direct action, which shows how particular dynamic practices had become legitimised forms of action.

2000s: TOWARDS THE UNEXPECTED

The Greek far left and anarchist movements participated actively in the various anti-globalization gatherings that followed Seattle during the late 1990s and early 2000s, most notably in Prague (2000) and Genoa (2001), which several thousand activists from Greece travelled to and participated in. The same model was repeated in December 2001 in Brussels and it was followed by an anti-EU demonstration in the Greek city of Thessaloniki in the summer of 2003. This international experience gave the chance for the Greek movement to put some of their tactics into a new perspective, to compare and to solidify them in order to project them within an international framework. New international points of reference were added to the logic of the Greek movement and new codes emerged. At the same time, this globalization of the movement has to be seen in parallel with the changes that globalization brought to Greek society itself. A typical example is that of an increasing number of youth migrating for studies and thus increasing the international links between the youth of Greece and the rest of Europe. Moreover, this was happening as a drastic inflow of immigration was taking place in Greece at the same time, particularly since the early 1990s. Migrants' rights and solidarity were added to the agenda of the movement while a lot of migrants—particularly second-generation—started participating in secondary school and university movements.

It was during the 2000s when, for the first time, a sizeable group of people emerged into the terrain of social and political struggles on such numerous fronts as local issues regarding environment and free urban spaces, official or grassroots union struggles, anti-racism, anti-war, anti-imperialism, and international solidarity campaigns, etc. This so-called “social left” identified with some of the objectives and strategies¹⁰⁸ of political groupings (from radical left to anarchist ones) but did not wish to become explicitly part of them, although many hold anti-hier-

archical or/and anti-authoritarian views. This part of society became visible quite suddenly in May 2005 when, at the closing demonstration of the European Social Forum of Athens, more than 70,000 people participated. The sudden appearance of this part of society and in such great numbers not only surprised everyone, but it catalysed the kick-off of the “Defend Article 16” movement.

This university-centred movement took place in 2006 and 2007. It was a year-and-a-half-long campaign against the aforementioned change of the constitution’s Article 16, which secures a free and public higher education. The movement represented an important moment because it showed an attempt of political subjects, especially on the side of the radical left within the education movement, to correspond to and mould themselves to social shifts and aspirations in a militant movement. The broadness of this movement was a successful—though a weak and contingent—meeting of the political subject and social discontent. Of course, it is not coincidence that this occurred in the realm of the education sector in which a long tradition of mobilisations had established patterns of cooperation between different parts of the movement. It was this wide inclusion and unity of focus that made this movement successful in the end and even enabled it to revitalise hope for the potential of the intervention of the radical left in the central political scene. This was also supported by the unification of different tendencies within the left that could not have been previously imagined. These two last statements refer particularly to the project of SYRIZA (Coalition of Radical Left).¹⁰

However, when these ruptures became an eruption in December 2008, the social movements and the people more actively involved met with their limitations and had to deal with events that, while they may have contributed to, were beyond their reach. The role of this radical social left in building new sites for the antagonistic movement, and in acting as a national network of activists distributing a different political culture, must not be neglected in the effort to discern new shifts in the formation of social antagonism in Greece. Not in the least because it manifests the changing relations between social agency and political organization, even within the left.

A second development, closely paralleling the first, was the expansion of and further integration of the anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement over the past few years. In other words, anarchist groups, organizations, media, publications, and activities started appearing in more cities and towns than they ever had been before. Simultaneously, ¹⁰⁹ anarchist groups started getting more involved with wider social issues

such as labour relationships or neighbourhood demands, and for first time during this period we have a much wider dissemination and popularization of anarchist ideas within society. One must recognise the role of new media and technology (particularly Athens Indymedia) in both acting as a “centre” (not exclusively, but primarily) for the anarchist/anti-authoritarian movement while at the same time multiplying its decentralisation and creation of its experience and practices (e.g. social centres). It is obvious that this spread of the movement and the increasing fluidity of the terrain of various local or national-scale struggles diversified the anarchist movement even more and created a whole group of activists that refuse any fixed ideological position. This shift manifested in the participation of “anarchists/anti-authoritarians/autonomists” in the movement for Article 16, in contrast with their previously hostile attitude towards the student movements. As such, the 2006–07 movement provided more than just the confidence inspired by its victory, but also a fresh memory and organising experience for the generation that revolted a year later.

POST-DECEMBER '08: “MOVING BY ASKING”

This text began with the story of a teacher and her son. Although the two of them had different demographic cohorts, they both seem to have experienced moments of political ruptures during their school years. Then we described some moments in the political genealogy of revolts in post-dictatorial Greece and the emergence and development of the practices and discourses that could be seen during December 2008. December, although it surprised everyone, did not come out of the blue. Although social injustice and social rage had been accumulating at the time, the event bore with it a legacy; a legacy not in terms of direct physical links—although these too were part of December 2008, as older activists who had not been on the streets for years ended up in the demonstrations, at the barricades, and in the occupations—but in terms of semiology, practices, discourses, and imagination. In other words, December 2008 was an intensive materialization of previously constructed images and experiences.

Moreover, in this chapter we have tried to demonstrate that, although the post-dictatorial political ruptures have often been portrayed and perceived in continuity with previous movements, they actually also carry some distinct qualities. First of all, they took place in what was 110 formally the longest-lasting democratic period in modern Greek history and at the same time reflect the neoliberal restructuring that has

affected every sector of Greek society since 1989–90. The frequency of these mass movements and the rebellion of students and young adults that occurred in the last twenty-five or so years also released a social dynamic that at the same time reflected and propelled such shifts on many levels. Most importantly, the emerging political subjectivities of the neoliberal era of Greece challenged the political structures that corresponded to the pre-neoliberal conditions as they had been formed after the collapse of the dictatorship.

The December 2008 events constituted the full disintegration of such political superstructures, following the complete removal (thanks to neoliberal restructuring) of the social grounds over which they stood, resulting in their violent collapse. However, in the eruption of December 2008 and during the previous ruptures, this depositioning of the social in relation to its political abstraction (representation and state) was not articulated into a coherent social alternative. It was articulated as a violent, non-directional (or rather multi-directional) “re-alignment” of the political with the social terrains of the dismantled previous structures, forced into being by “the street.” It is in this sense that those who revolted in December completed the work of previous moments of social antagonism that had challenged the “limits of protest” that the democratically-elected regimes had imposed. Those previous moments had caused several cracks in the political establishment of the post-dictatorship state that led to the eruption. December also signifies one of the first revolts within the latest global economic crisis, marking in one sense the end of the neoliberal hegemony by exposing its remnants.

Throughout the post-dictatorial period, and especially over the course of the last twenty years, movements in Greece had been building towards an end that December 2008 materialised and fulfilled. But as we know, there is no end that is not also a beginning—the only question is of what sort. What kind of political logic, agency, field, and discourse has December 2008 produced? To confine this only to the participants of December 2008 would be an act of evasion. It would be evasive to not try to understand, face, and deal with the results of that great unmaking, of what the December 2008 revolt produced by penetrating all levels of the Greek society, not only those who participated in it. Failing to frame the action within the larger shifts in the post-December 2008 picture would be an attempt to avoid the questions that December 2008 has raised, questions that we need to face if we really want to turn the momentary grasp of the impossible, that we all felt, into a real 111 potential. That, however, is another article. What we address herein are

the discernible changes that December 2008 has produced as (part of) its legacy, both in the still-active social subject that was formulated by experiencing (or, rather, making) it and in the larger political culture within the antagonist movement.

Occupations and violent confrontation as dominant forms of political activism drew a formal line between revolutionary practices and reformist ones. However, we argue here that the gradual demarginalisation of these tactics, as part of consecutive political and social struggles, met its own end in December 2008. In one sense the “absolute” domination or exercise of these tactics meant also their end as political indexes of radicalism (if they ever were as such by themselves). December 2008 challenged their limits and, by trespassing the borders of the most radical or maximal forms of political action, laid bare the nakedness of the political discourses and identities that had been built around their formality. This was something that was unfortunately realised with tragic consequences a year and a half later on 5 May 2010. On that day, three bank workers died in a fire set, allegedly, by “black bloc” activists, during an anti-IMF general strike.

At the same time, the December 2008 revolt reproduced such forms at their highest fidelity, realising them as simulacra. Thus the “non-result” of December 2008—which far from being non-productive, produced something that was and is of a different order—revealed not the inadequacy of such forms of action necessarily, but the political vacuum beneath or behind them, in that they were not supported by, nor did they support, an alternative way of doing or imagining things. That suggests that the December 2008 revolt was rather the expression of a social implosion rather than of a social explosion. It is within this context of implosion that one can detect the December 2008 revolt both as disruption and as a missed opportunity. Or as a slogan on a wall in Athens during those days put it: “December was not an answer. It was a question.”

One could argue that any attempt to return to the pre-December 2008 political normalities is impossible at any level and for any actor in Greek political life. What followed the December revolt was a culmination in the intensification of the Greek crisis,¹¹ the neo-colonial regime of the IMF-EU imposed rule, and the unmaking of *metapolitefsi* from the top down through the forced collapse of any social and public regulations, the development of a securitised state, and the popular resistance to it. Even if the resistance is inefficient and lacking¹¹² when compared to the size of both the attack and the social anger, the threat of a new eruption is still a visible phantom over Greece. It is not

only the social anger that boils. Since the post-December struggles a new militant subject is emerging, one whose political culture cross-cuts the existing radical and revolutionary political actors and changes their qualities. There are developments that, in any case, have accelerated and condensed socio-historical time so much that they have made incomplete any critical discourse on December 2008 that doesn't project it in the context of more recent events. Having said that, one should be equally cautious not to underestimate the similarly incomplete, but real, social potential that the revolt opened up, a potential that still burns and re-shapes both the political culture at large and the antagonistic movement in Greece.

NOTES

1 For a typical example of such a position one can see in The New York Times a text by a Greek professor at Yale named Stathis Kalyvas, under the title "Why Athens is Burning," published during the December revolt. See: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/11/opinion/11iht-edkalyvas.1.18595110.html>

2 The ban had been in place since 1976 and respected by the institutional left (PASOK, KKE, and KKE), until November 1981 when, under PASOK, the ban was lifted. It is still a contested of the US embassy each year. The US embassy is the destination of the annual 17 November demonstration because the US government backed the Greek junta.

3 It is important not to forget that this is also the era of the "farewell to the working class" among the disillusioned social democrats, leftists, and anarchists, the era of alternative social movements, and the era of the ascendancy of the neoliberal agenda and culture as expressed by the yuppies. This is not a minor point: the processes of pre-neoliberal politics and the emergence of neoliberalism as political structures/field have defined, to a certain extent, the production of its negation and its opposing social subject.

4 Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the extreme-right National Front party in France.

5 The Greek equivalent of the Italian "operation clean hands" that changed drastically the map of Italian politics to date. However, in Greece, it was merely a caricature as the two-party system of corruption and carried on.

7 A few months earlier, the majority of KNE had been kicked out of the Party because they disagreed with the collaboration between the Party with the right-wing ND.

8 Generation of Chaos (Genia tou chaos) was the name of an anarchist punk rock band of the 1980s.

9 This congratulation of the KKE was repeated by the current minister of education

in October 2010. When a new school occupation movement began, with the potential to put the IMF-subdued social democratic government in a difficult position prior to the start of elections, the KKE was quick to separate itself and to condemn those kinds of actions.

10 This was particularly obvious in the case of SYRIZA, a left coalition party with parliamentary presence. SYRIZA was the only parliamentary party that explicitly expressed its solidarity with December's revolt. Moreover, parts of SYRIZA had a visible and active participation in December. SYRIZA increased its electoral strength during the 2006–2007 students' movement. However, the full project is now falling apart, as some parts of the coalition have broken away from it.

11 We consider "the Greek crisis" to be something that is not merely an economic, but is instead an organic systemic crisis, and we see and the December 2008 revolt as its first grand moment. December 2008 was the first instance of an implosion of the system, rather than a social explosion due to its internal socio-economic contradictions (on the international level) and the specific socio-political discrepancies (on the national level) that together formed the current crisis in Greece.