Forget May 68 – Fight now: Dialogues of the December 2008 revolt in Greece with the movements of the past

«The Varkiza agreement is broken; we are once more in a war»

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Short Bio:

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Abstract:

The revolt of December 2008 in Greece was the first social explosion of the current period of economic and political crisis. This revolt, through its discourse, slogans, texts and tracts, was often referring to struggles of the past, either in order to break ties with them, or to rehabilitate them. Protesters did not perceive themselves as automatically continuing the revolutionary tradition. Contrary, they often wanted to avoid this connection or even displayed a remarkable indifference for the past. This was often due to the way the dominant discourse was using the past movements, presenting them in a way convenient for the political power, in order to devalorise the December revolt and its particular characteristics.

Protesters responded through slogans stating that they were an image from the future and not the past, claiming their proper place in history. In that way, they protected both themselves but also the historical tradition from its falsification. At the same time, they refused to enter into the game of comparison with other movements, and especially that of Polytechnieio, which used to function as a model, haunting all following movements. However, this often led them to fall into the trap of annihilation.
Finally, this position expressed a certain political view on the struggles of the past: protesters stood up for struggles which had an unconventional, revolutionary character (especially the civil war), and rejected those which were integrated by the system and were used as symbols of compromise (declaring the end of the Metapolitefsi era). In that way, they also expressed the duty of rendering justice to the past (in the sense that constructing a present is also correcting a past).

**Paper¹:**

**Introductory notes on the December 2008 revolt²**

In December 2008 in Greece the assassination of a young student by a policeman, in a quite particular district of the center of Athens³, made thousands of people, youths, immigrants, precarious workers, to take the streets in a revolt that lasted over a month. In reality, the December revolt was the answer of the youth against the oppressive regularity and the brutal deterioration of its life. Most importantly, it was the first social explosion of the period of the political and economic crisis and a reaction to a social disaster that everyone could sense it was coming. The revolt grew out of the awareness that for the first time a generation was facing a future that was worse than that of previous generations. Mass unemployment, austerity, precarious work, rising inequalities, retreat of the welfare state, fragmentation and individualization of social subjects, all these on the one hand meant an unbearable situation for the lower classes, and on the other hand intensified processes of social exclusion and marginalization and a constant denial of any prospect of upward social mobility. This social and political reality also induced a profound ideological crisis, in which the State chose constantly repression versus consent. A crisis of legitimization of the political system was also revealing, expressed through the challenging of bipartisanship, the widespread disillusionment with political parties and a growing feeling that State power was acting with indifference and authoritarian rigidity towards social demands and protests. At the same time though, the December revolt was the violent outburst of a *subterranean* current; a picture of the future, in the sense that this reality, which is today extremely evident, was at the time latent, buried

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¹ I owe special thanks to the colleague and friend Angelos Kontogiannis-Mandros for his constructive remarks on a previous version of this paper.
² For this introduction, see (Gaitanou 2011b), and (Gaitanou 2011a).
³ Exarcheia is an area which has always been a laboratory of radical political ideas and alternative social practices, and the meeting place of the radical youth. Here three central universities are situated, including the historic building of the National Technical University (Polytechnieio), where the occupation of 1973 occurred. Here are also situated the offices and meeting places of the radical Left and several anarchist groups, as well as union offices, libraries, cultural centers and stores of alternative entertainment. Because of these characteristics, it is a neighborhood often targeted by the police and the State. This historic area is not simply characterized by the resistance of its people to police violence and its strong participation in collective processes. It is also a neighborhood that has put forward an organization model of everyday life, alternative to the dominant one.
below the bubble of the fictitious prosperity of the 1990-2000s'.

The December revolt was characterized by extensive violent clashes but also massive initiatives of self-organization, innovation and experimentation regarding forms of struggle, extensive collective re-appropriation of the public space, the creativity and activisms of diversified social subjects engaged in these initiatives and collective experiences. It also had an important political depth, though not exactly specific demands, and actually, through experimentation, tried to set new limits in the way that we perceive politics. It thus revealed a need for a different relation with political parties and institutions. Youth and its various sectors played a leading role in its development, without suppressing but contrary by respecting their differences. In fact, the social subject mobilized is one of the important features of the revolt. There has been formed what was named a «unity in diversity» (among others, by Karamesini 2009). This has actually led to the formation of a new collective identity; what Kotronaki and Seferiades (2010: 156) have called «a collective 'we' against 'the enemy'». A new collective identity though not a new social subject; thus the diverse theories speaking of a multitude, do not seem for us to properly address the issue posited here. What is at stake is actually the unification of existing social actors, under a new, relatively uniform collective identity which does not cancel but respects the differences among them. In terms of practices and functioning, innovation and direct participation predominated. Occupations and general assemblies were the grounds of the movement, whilst new forms and practices of ideological and cultural counter-hegemony were developed (among which, the occupation of the Athens Opera used as a venue for discussions and performances, various cultural interventions, occupations of working places etc.).

The revolt expressed the need for a return to politics, but not in the dominant or established forms of party politics and traditional political representation. It articulated the need for politics as self-organization and collective self-management. It was clearly anti-systemic (and violent), and at the same time, it demonstrated a massive participation but also enjoyed broad legitimation by the Greek society. One of the particularities of the December revolt was that its participants expressed an intense need to recreate a – contradictory – dialogue with the movements of the past in Greece. This is related to the fact that there is a strong left historical narrative, which has in a great degree influenced both militants and the constitution of movements.

**Necessary digression – historical remarks**

"The idea here is that the trauma is inherited and the..."

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4 (Michail 2009: 256). According to the same source, in surveys conducted during the revolt, the 43.2% of the people say that they would incite their children to participate in it.
legacy of violence can be transmitted across generations, even if in a non-verbal and non-mnemonic way.»
(Kornetis 2010: 180)

Before examining this relationship of the December revolt with the movements of the past, which is the central point of this paper, we must outline the main points of this narrative, thus of the Greek history. This is due to two reasons: First, there is a need not for a historical retrospective, but for an analysis of the past as an element of the political, ideological and cultural tradition of the Greek social formation, which influences the political situation to this day. Thus, as Kostis Kornetis has written, the past is transformed to an important element for the perspective and the study of the movements' identity today (Kornetis 2010: 175). Besides, in order to understand the specific circumstances and reasons why the movement has these forms and culminations in Greece, we have to consider neither the deterioration of the economic and social conditions by themselves, nor the political tradition as such, but the dialectics between the two (Sakellaropoulos 2012: 340-1).

McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly (2001) have laid stress on the importance of the broader historical, cultural and political background of the country in which protest develops, in relation to cognitive, relational and environmental mechanisms (Ibid.: 14, 345). Their «relational» perspective suggests «taking strategic interaction, consciousness and historically accumulated culture into account» (Ibid.: 22). This background as a factor is reckoned in other studies as well (Shorter and Tilly 1974: 308-31; Tarrow 1989: 166). In any case, interpretation of the past, however contradictory, is a crucial factor of the constitution of a movement, since it includes a process of appropriation and re-appropriation of time, among other elements. As Melucci notes, «Movements live in another dimension: in the everyday network of social relations, in the capacity and will to reappropriate space and time and in the attempt to practice alternative life-styles» (1989: 71).

Second, there is specifically a very interesting, contradictory relationship between the December revolt and the movements of the past, especially in terms of discourse, revealing a need to break ties with the past, while at the same time trying to rehabilitate it. Further, even if the December 2008 rebels have at certain circumstances tried even to deny their collective past, in reality the chosen forms of action inevitably respond to some degree to the historical background of actors. As Tarrow notes, «Particular groups have a particular history – and memory – of contentious forms» (1998: 21). This reality reflects the controversiality on how rebels of today deal with the past.

We should, at this point, make an important remark. We shall inevitably examine briefly the main moments of the Greek history, in relation to the parameters we are particularly interested in. However, as Kornetis notes (2013: 57), all these «moments of change» must be seen interconnected,
and genealogies are forged between them.

One of the most decisive points in this course is the popular revolution during the German occupation (1941-1944), with EAM\textsuperscript{5} having a leading role. This is the first time when the dominated classes acquire a central and autonomous role in the historical and political scene. EAM is guided by the Communist Party, and national liberation is tied to a perspective of social liberation and sovereignty of the people. According to estimations, approximately 1,520,000-2,120,000 people were members of EAM (in a total of 7,344,860 Greek citizens), which arrived to politically influence the 60-70% of the population (Vernardakis and Mavris 1991: 47). After liberation, the question of the form of the post-war State and political power led to an armed insurrection in December 1944. The EAM forces were dragged into the insurrection, since, at a moment when there existed no legitimate power and government center in Greece, and the form of political power was at stake, the governmental and English forces took the responsibility to shoot into the crowd during a demonstration of EAM, which was called in response to a government ultimatum for disarmament of all partisans (on December 3, 1944, resulting in the death of 33 and the wounding of 148 protesters). This is an important reference point in Greek history, since, after 33 days of armed civil conflicts, named «Dekemvriana» (meaning «the December events»), the EAM forces were defeated and signed «the Varkiza agreement»\textsuperscript{6}, which signaled the almost complete demobilization and official disarmament of EAM.

EAM politically determines the formation of the Greek history after the war: the political scene is traversed by the opposition between the «national» political forces and those of the left. It also determines it ideologically: the experience of a popular revolution, the formation of new forms of mass organization and its final collapse are printed in the ideology of the dominated classes (Vernardakis and Mavris 1991: 23). The «popular-democratic tradition» that was formed and in some degree exists until today, was deeply influenced by the revolution and its defeat. The Varkiza agreement has become a symbol of the compromise between the Communist Party and the ruling bloc (and those leading figures who did not accept it, such as Aris Velouxiotis, have come to be thought as heroes for the popular strata).

This period was the prelude of the civil war which lasted from 1946-1949, ending with the defeat of the forces of the Greek Democratic Army (supported by the Communist Party and associated to an important part of the EAM coalition). This defeat was thought to be related to the weaknesses and deficiencies of the Communist Party, especially in regards to what was perceived as reluctance to give the battle until the end. Besides, the Communist Party was thought to be dragged to the civil war, because of the «White Terror», the political exclusion, persecutions and terrorism against the

\textsuperscript{5} Front of National Liberation.

\textsuperscript{6} Signed by the government of N. Plastiras and EAM, in 12 February 1945.
forces of EAM that followed the Varkiza agreement. The post-civil war State was characterized by the establishment of the right-wing forces, State terrorism and repression against communists, exiles, concentration camps, executions, social isolation and exclusion. Thousands detainees, leftists and progressive citizens were forced to sign statements renouncing communist ideology and submission to the law (the famous «declarations of loyalty») as well as «repentance statements». These two forms of statement would allow them to leave the exile by getting a «certificate of citizenship» which was the sine qua non element in any relationship with the State (Panourgia 2010: 207). Thus, leftists were actually forced to deny their identity in order to survive. As Neni Panourgia poses it, they were forced to answer a question without an answer: «Are you with us or not?»; a question which meant: "You will either become human beings or die"· being a human being meaning accepting the State rules (Panour gia 2010: 215). Thousands of detainees finally signed these statements, a collective memory with undoubtful consequences on the collective imaginary of the Left.

However, the leftist culture and ideology remained central in the Greek society. Important social struggles developed after 1962, which culminated during 1965, and especially in July, when the «events of July» («Iouliana»), were thought to be an early Greek May '68. This politically turbulent period was followed by the imposition of the dictature in 1967 up until 1974. This was marked as another defeat, with important responsibilities of the official political scene, and underground conspiracies, which provoked a mistrust versus the political personnel.

Another focal point of the Greek history has been the revolt and occupation of «Polytechnieio» (the National Technical University of Athens), in 14-17 November 1973, a culmination of the anti-dictature struggle. This occupation has been for many years a symbol and reference point for all the following student movements, and it often served as a model to follow. However, even the occupation of Polytechnieio was progressively thought to be transformed into a «national place of memory», although in reality an important portion of the political personnel of the time participated, supported or tolerated the dictature (Kornetis 2010: 177). There has been an effort from the official political personnel and its apparatuses to soften its meaning and to reduce its goals to liberal-democratic, thought to be «justified» by the restoration of democracy. Moreover, several leading figures of the dominant political system participated in the occupation of Polytechnieio, being considered today by many movement activists as symbols of compromise.

The period after the dictature is widely known as «Metapolitefsi»7, a term which has caused an enormous debate both in the dominant discourse and among activists. As Gousis (2013: 582) notes, «the term functions as an empty signifier, given its varying meanings in different political contexts». Metapolitefsi is characterized by intense polarization, development of social struggles,

7 Meaning «The regime after [the dictature]».
improvement of the living standards of the popular strata, a certain democratization of the regime, the re-foundation of the concept of «social compromise». This period is presented by the ruling bloc as the end of conflicts and the restoration of democratic representation and social justice (Editions Urban Anarchy 2010: 24). This character was contested in some degree by the important struggles of the period. Metapolitefsi has ultimately become a civil consensus and a political compromise, cemented by the social contract after the electoral victory of social-democracy in 1981 (Kalyvas 2010: 353). This is the moment when an imaginary of national unity is restored, the left is legitimized, the «national resistance against German occupation» is assigned to «all Greeks who have fought for their nation» and civil war is forgotten. And if Metapolitefsi functions as an empty signifier as stated above, so does its end, following its contradictory character. The dominant political power, perceiving Metapolitefsi as a leftist period because of the aforementioned radicalization and its enforcement into a social contract which bestowed certain rights and conquests to the lower strata, sought its end meaning the abandonment of the social contract and structural transformations towards a neoliberal regulation. Protesters on the other hand, meant the end of Metapolitefsi as the end of the compromise with all its consequences and a thorough radicalization.

Thus, if the period of time between 1940 and the beginning of the Metapolitefsi is full of struggles and revolts, it is also full of what is perceived as defeats and compromises by the lower strata. However, the left and the social movements retain a very important place in Greek society and the collective imaginary. Moreover, violence has been a daily picture and practice in Greek society; both physical and symbolic, expressing a polarization both in political and class terms. Strong division and polarization has been a constant feature of the Greek society, since the resistance and the events of December 1944. And so has the State been founded on violence, repression and conflict.

«To construct the present is to correct the past»

We have thus examined the fundamental points of the Greek history, in regards to the social struggles. This overview was necessary in order to understand the way the participants in the December 2008 revolt perceived the struggles of the past and their relation to them. It should be noted at this point, in order to explain why is it crucial to examine this perception, that what is important in the emergence of a movement is not only the objective factors that lead to it but also how people perceive them – or, even more, in order not to lapse into an idealistic view, not simply

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8 Vanegeim 1967: ch. 22.
how they *mentally* perceive them, but how they perceive them *in their praxis*, thus how they *experience* them (Barker being the scholar to suggest the verb experience instead of the more commonly used perceive, in 2011: 5). Thus, the «objective conditions» must be perceived and interpreted as such in order for action to take place (Sommier, Fillieule et Agrikoliansky 2008: 29).

The political context is of course important for this framing process to be efficient. One additional parameter is exactly the perception of the past, the previous struggles, their possibilities and limits. This framing process is part of the very constitution of collective action and the construction of a collective identity, a process itself based on multiple interrelationships (Melucci 1989: 34). Indeed, the revolt's discourse, its slogans, texts and tracts often referred at past struggles, in a contradictory manner. Here, at the symbolic field, the discourse's role is significant. Besides, as Gusfield has underlined (2006: 32) «discourse is itself an action».

It is thus common for protesters to perceive themselves as parts of a revolutionary tradition. In Greece, the slogan «EAM, ELAS, Polytechneio» has been a constant during all the mobilizations of the last three decades. The revolutionary tradition has been considered as uniform, one to which all activists referred. But the December revolt, having quite different features than all the precedent movements, breaks with this tradition, and participants express a need to avoid this connection or even display a voluntary disregard for the past. The past has also been employed by the dominant discourse in order to devalorize the December revolt, by opposing it to the precedent struggles, presented as supposedly nobler, non-violent, cultural, harmless, and seeking to improve the system and not to «destroy». This refers mainly to the Polytechneio 1973 revolt, and is related to the effort of its transformation into a «national place of memory», as mentioned above. Thus, a nostalgic vision of the past is put forward, a «golden age», and the struggles of the past seem more benign than the present ones (Kornetis 2010: 182).

This approach is part of a larger campaign of propaganda by certain media and apparatuses. This campaign includes attacks against those political parties and organizations of the Left that speak in favor of the revolt; devaluation of its political character; misrepresentation of violent acts as irrational, antipolitical and criminal ones; view of the revolt as an archaic reaction which is due to lack of modernization in Greece; psychological interpretations (Gaitanou 2011a: 107-110). Further, part of this debate includes the very challenging of the events as a movement and/or revolt (see many examples in Gaitanou 2011a: 111-113). As part of this campaign, the revolt was compared in a distorted way to other movements of the past, in order to supposedly prove its non-political character.

This is perceived by the revolted masses as an attack to the December revolt and has resulted to a

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9 ELAS was the army of EAM, and the slogan signals the strong linkage between the civil war and the Polytechneio 1973 revolt.
certain reaction. Their main slogan suggested that they chose not to be «another revolt». «We are an image coming from the future», they claim, and one of the most well-known and interesting slogans of the revolt was «Fuck May ’68, Fight Now!»\(^\text{10}\). In a way, the December revolt claimed its place in history. Thereby, participants felt to protect the revolt itself, but also the historical tradition, from its falsification. Ultimately, it is the view carried by the rebels on the struggles of the past that determines their relationship with them. Rebels stood up for those struggles (more appropriately, those aspects of past struggles) which had a clearly antagonistic character, and disengaged themselves from those which were incorporated by the dominant system.

Thus, the protesters seemed to identify themselves to those of the 1940s', and referred constantly to the civil war and the EAM forces\(^\text{11}\). The December 2008 revolt itself was nicknamed "The new Dekemvriana"\(^\text{12}\). This linkage has several reasons. First, the rebels had actually the feeling of being in a civil war, a point emphasized in numerous texts and pamphlets. Thus, the December 2008 revolt questioned national unity just as the December 1944 insurrection did. Second, the December 1944 insurrection is inscribed into the collective imaginary as characterized by deeply conflictual elements, not incorporated by the capitalist system in Greece. It demanded social transformation, with a character that clearly turned against the system. Finally, participants in the December 1944 insurrection were considered to be betrayed (both by the official political scene and by the official leadership of the Communist Party), so they were perceived to have a need of rehabilitation\(^\text{13}\).

Demonstrators of today thought as their duty to render justice to the past, both in terms of how it was interpreted and of how it evolved. For the rebels, the present is ultimately only one of the feasible outcomes of the struggles of the past, even though, in the dominant philosophy of history, «the past exists only to better justify and magnify the present» (Ross 2002: 183). That is why one of the central slogans has been «The Varkiza agreement is broken; We are in a war again», meaning that what the Varkiza agreement has connoted, ie. national unity in defeat of communists and left-wing strugglers, is now refuted in praxis.

Contrary, a quite different treatment was reserved for the Polytechnieio revolt. In this sense, a vision that haunted political action was questioned. Until this moment, all the movements of Metapolitefsi were perforce compared to the Polytechnieio one, which functioned as a model, a benchmark from which movements could not escape (Kornetis 2010: 177). By refusing to enter into the comparison,

\(^\text{10}\) In the same way that English students cried «Fuck Greece, Fight Here», during their student mobilizations, what was first heard during a debate on the December revolt in Greece, held in Brighton.

\(^\text{11}\) Thus, many slogans referred to that period: «In these 'Dekemvriana', we shall win», «December 1944 - December 2008», «We are in a civil war», «The 'Dekemvriana' of our generation». [The word 'Dekemvriana' meaning the December events].

\(^\text{12}\) This linkage was made even by the dominant discourse (Papadatos-Anagnostopoulos 2009: 159). However, this was for the opposite reasons: to raise the reaction of the older generations who had negative memories on the «national discord.»

\(^\text{13}\) Hence the slogans : «Varkiza – the end», «The Varkiza agreement is broken; we are in a war again». 
rebels felt freed of the weight of the past, though often falling into a trap of annihilation. Protesters felt dissociated from aspects of the Polytechnio insurrection, considered by them a "place of national memory", whilst certain participants in those events were now leading actors of the actual system. The way the Polytechnio revolt is transcribed in the official history was perceived by certain rebels as the symbol of the Metapolitefsi compromise. Besides, it is within this compromise that the liberal and defending representative democracy view of the Polytechnio revolt has been imposed. Slogans referring to that period basically tended to restore its radical character. In that way, linkages to the Polytechnio revolt do exist, both in the concrete material and the symbolic level. It is however equally revealing that the rebels have perceived and presented the December 2008 revolt as «the end of the Metapolitefsi», meaning the breakdown of the social contract that was implied at the time. In a way, similar was the distance kept against May '68.

In the suite, we ought to refer to the important struggles of the youth and especially of the student movement, which took place mainly after Metapolitefsi, and to which the December revolt is directly or indirectly associated. In Greece, the specific role of the educational apparatus, and the particular features of the youth, an underlying radicalism and the objective conditions in universities, have contributed to an important development of student struggles, which have often managed to block the attempted reforms. The most important ones have been the victorious school and university occupations in 1991, during which a professor named Nikos Temponeras was killed by members of the youth of the governing party (Temponeras being since a symbol of the youth movements); the pupil and student movement in 1997-98 against the «Arseni law» which changed the entry way into universities; and finally, the huge student movement in 2006-2007 against a law amending the universities' mode of operation («law-framework»), but also against the revision of the Constitution in order for private universities to be allowed. The mobilizations of 2006-2007 in particular have been the most important events of the student movement in the recent years, also partly victorious, which have produced a model of mobilization and a type of young pretty different than before; a militant type, determined to fight, with very strong representations of united struggles and solidarity.

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14 The slogan during the manifestation in homage of the Polytechnio insurrection, which took place the 17th November 2009, is indicative: «November belongs to everyone, December belongs to nobody».

15 In reality, this has been a large struggle inside the movement. Participants in movements to come have defended its more radical character, turning against the dominant political system in total, and tying its claims to social transformation.

16 For example: «There is police in every corner, the junta did not end in 1973».

17 See also note 5.

18 Education was thought by the popular strata to be a key means of upward social mobility and financial security, especially since there has been a strong absence of the welfare State and of generalized social benefits as well as strong inequalities.

19 Aside the most important ones, to which we shall refer below, we could mention in short, the university occupations in 1979 against the law 815, the mobilizations against respective laws in 1982 and 1987 and those in 1995 and the university occupations in 2001. Basically, each time a reform that would change the character of high education towards a neoliberal direction was suggested by the government, students rose up against it.
This type of militant has affected the youth in total, and has had an important impact on the December rebels. We could say that the student movement of 2006-07 has been the foundation of the revolt, in terms of subjects mobilized, forms of struggle, massive and unifying practices, representations of struggle. Closer in terms of time, it had a more immediate impact in shaping both the mentality and the praxis of the participants involved. We can detect links at a symbolic and a material level (re-legitimation of university occupations and of radical practices, unification of the youth as a social subject, representations of victory). These linkages were, as in the other cases, only partly realized by the rebels. Further, slogans from these mobilizations were largely employed during the December revolt.  

In the aftermath: interrelations and controversialities

Of course and as already noted, in reality there is a controversy on the way rebels perceive and are affected by the past. First, innovation can never be absolute. Many movement theory scholars have actually hesitated on the degree of real innovation feasible. Participants are often not thought as capable of committing drastically new forms of action since any form of action is considered as resulting from a previous, more familiar one (e.g. DellaPorta and Diani 1999: 185-86). McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly underline that innovative forms of action are rather creative modifications or extensions of familiar routines, and not adoptions of truly new forms (2001: 49, 140); however they do relate innovation to transgressive action (2001: 7-8), as is the case of the December 2008 revolt. The New Social Movements approach stresses more the innovative character of action (e.g. Melucci 1996: 341-44). In any case, action cannot be thought to be generated in a vacuum, independent of previous experiences and their symbolic inscription. As a result, many slogans coming from movements of the past – in Greece or abroad - were employed by the rebels of December 2008. The past, even denied at first by the protesters, worked as representation. This reveals the controversiality in the very constitution of the movement's discourse. We could embrace here Derrida's schema -in a more dialectical version though-, according to which the living present is in a non-contemporaneity with itself (Derrida 1994), in the sense that the past is neither abandoned not completely determinative, simultaneously remembered and actively forgotten, finally haunted by its

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20 Eg the slogan «Temponeras lives, he guides us along with Petroulas and Lambrakis», the latter two being emblematic figures, Petroulas as a student killed during the Iouliana events in 1965 and Lambrakis as a deputy of the Left killed by the government of the Right in 1963. This slogan, showing the linkages we examine in this paper, has been an identity slogan for the student movement since 1991.

21 Slogans coming from May '68 were written in the walls in many cities, such as: «Imagination in power», «This is just the beginning». Moreover, slogans like «No God, No Master», «Attention: the police is speaking to you through the 8 o’clock news», «We are not asking for too much, we demand everything», «City in flames, flower blooming» were vastly used as parts of an existing repertoire.

22 «Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation» (Debord 1977: par. 1).
Further, interconnections and interrelations such as the ones we have examined, have appeared in other fields as well. First of all, this is evident in the constitution of the collective identity of the movement itself, which, for the first perhaps time, has managed to overcome the frontiers of the separate social fields and spaces, and to express in a more unified way the subjects mobilized during the revolt. Moreover, interrelations were developed among the rebels of December 2008 and protesters all over the world, in several ways (solidarity manifestations in hundreds of cities worldwide; impact on strategic and political choices in various European cities – e.g. the cancellation of the educational reform in France; slogans in various languages; consciousness of an interconnection between the political choices in Greece and in the EU – see also Gaitanou 2011a: 92-4).

Concluding, rebels of the December 2008 revolt had developed a rather strange and controversial dialogue with the movements of the past. We would say that this dialogue was conducted in a way that it reflected an agony: as if, the stance towards the past determined in some degree the quality, the goals, the radicalism, the refusal of an integration into the dominant system of the protesters. In the movements that have followed, after Greece's insertion into the memorandum mechanisms, this relationship to the past is not that vociferous, though it does exist. It seems to us that the main reason for this relative absence is that, during the current demonstrations (actually, during the insurrectionary cycle of 2010-2011), the social subject mobilized is really wide, surpassing by far the limits of those who have had a somehow frequent political activation. Thus, their references to other movements, to the past and its struggles, are more limited. As for a second reason, this is indicative of a certain lack of connections observed today. Protesters in the current mobilizations, seek to be dissociated both from the past, the Greek history with all its controversies, the regime after the fall of the dictatorship up until the early '00s, the political choices made then, and the political personnel. Thus, this strange dialogue with the past is actually avoided. Even more, the absence of a political subject that would act in a unifying way for all the partial struggles, intensifies this lack of connections. It is indicative of this lack, that the current movements are not studied or perceived not even in relation to the December 2008 revolt.

Finally and as underlined, independent of how it is perceived, movements do not start in a vacuum. The political, ideological and cultural tradition and the tradition of struggles, the broader historical background, is of great importance in order to study a social movement. Besides, as Bensaid has written, based on one of Deleuze's writings that he often quoted (Bensaid 2013), «As long as one

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23 In the same vein though from a different starting point, Kostis Karpozilos examines the relationship of the Left with history and time (Karpozilos 2014). For the writer, the Left is entrapped into a regression between the disturbing present, the uncertain future and the reassuring past, proving the impasse of radical thinking, unable to imagine the future in terms radically different from those into which it was formed.
claims the right to start again, the last word is never said. And one always commences from the middle, as Gilles Deleuze maintains. Neither a clean slate nor a white page: “It is the future of the past, as it were, that is in question.”

**Bibliography**


