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The Covid-19 pandemic as a possibilities frame for social resistances against the systemic transformation of power relations. The case of Greece

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INTRODUCTION

At the time of writing, we are fifteen months after January 2020, when humanity began to experience the Covid-19 pandemic crisis on a dramatic scale. The initial curiosity about what was happening in ‘distant’ China quickly gave way to widespread fear of the problem hitting the world community. Globally, societies have begun to experience a ‘state of exception’ in which governments have ‘acquired’ the right to make political decisions and to implement ‘precautionary measures’ on the population that go beyond any previous constitutional measure of democratic legitimacy and constitutional mandate. In some cases, the degree of arbitrariness of these decisions and measures has been so great that we reasonably wonder whether ‘cure’ is worse than ‘disease’.

But most governments have not stopped there. They have also been tempted to pursue a set of policies that in the midst of a ‘state of emergency’ had been clearly favorable to the dominant social and political elites. In other words, they have taken advantage of the dramatic situation of the pandemic to increase the risk, to spread fear and thus to apply relatively unhindered ‘reforms’ that they had long wanted, but the pre-Covid-19 reality did not allow them to implement.

THE GREEK CASE

Regarding the Greek case in particular, such reforms have been made in the fields of economy and labor, education, immigration, rights in general. In all cases, without exception, we have seen a decline and a serious deterioration in the protection of work and residence, social welfare, learning and education, care and asylum, civil liberties and social rights, and so on. Here, there have been some indicative legislative ‘initiatives’ of the Greek government that have moved towards this direction:

I) The 8-hour working day was abolished, the 10-hour one has been introduced, the start and end time of the work has been liquidated, the working hours have been linked to the productivity of each company or industry, individual employment contracts have been fully liberalized, overtime increased up to 150 hours¹.

II) Democratic rights have been restricted, such as public rallies (<https://www.taxheaven.gr/news/51862/apagoreysh-dhmosiwn-ypaioriwn-synaoroisewn-ews-tis-2400-ths-6hs-dekembrioy-2020>), while with government command the police has hardened the repression of popular protests.

III) The pre-existing government practice in the Memorandum period of taking extremely serious decisions through Legislative Acts has been further intensified, completely bypassing the Greek Parliament; e.g. a traffic ban was imposed in the country without holding a special Parliament sitting (<https://covid19.gov.gr/nomothesia-gia-ton-covid-19/>).

IV) The privatizations of the regional ports have been accelerated (https://www.economistas.gr/oikonomia/28028_lampiris-taiped-sto-bloomberg-o-covid-den-eplix-tis-idiotikopoiiseis).

V) Forest maps have been abolished with the consequence of facilitating the encroachment and privatization of forests; environmental organizations and control services of forests, wetland lakes, national parks have been abolished as well (<http://www.opengov.gr/minreform/?p=577>), while licenses have been issued on colonial terms for illegal and polluting activities such as Eldorado Gold in Skouries, Halkidiki (<https://www.sofokleousin.gr/sto-trapezi-apoikiaki-symfonia-gia-to-xryso-tis-xalkidikis>), and legislation has been formulated to favor conflicting interests.

VI) The Corruption Prosecutor’s Office has been abolished (<https://www.kathimerini.gr/society/561180331/telos-i-eisaggelia-diafthoras-antikathistatai-i-el-toy-loypaki/>) in order to cover up the scandal involving the pharmaceutical company Novartis and the secret collaboration with personal data management companies (<https://www.presspublica.gr/koronoios-sovara-erotimata-gia-tin-kryfi-synergasia-mitsotaki-kyvernisis-me-tin-etairaia-palantir-giati-tin-kratoyn-mystiki/>), which have been involved in public opinion manipulation scandals.

VII) The power supply to unemployed and vulnerable groups has been cut off



(<https://www.in.gr/2020/04/14/politics/koronaivos-kataggelies-gia-diakopes-paroxis-reymatos-se-anergous-kai-eypatheis-omades/>), the Media have been manipulated by having been directly funded by the government of the corporate media (Petsas and Kikilias lists²), the daily news has been censored³.

All the above add to anti-democratic developments that had already taken place in the previous Covid-19 period, that is, during the implementation of the harsh policies of austerity measures and the demolition of the welfare state. Such have been the abolition of collective labor agreements, the generalized authoritarianism and the restriction of trade union functions, the abolition of ASEP⁴ and so on.

CHANGING THE EXAMPLE OF THE MODEL OF POWER AND SOCIAL RESISTANCES

Regarding the Greek peculiarity, the difference between the social resistances during the coronavirus crisis and the social resistances during the over-indebtedness crisis of 2008 is possibly more intense compared to other countries that in one way or another also went through an over-indebtedness crisis and policies of austerity measures (Spain, Portugal, Italy, Ireland, and Iceland). Indeed, in the Greek case the resistance movements during the over-indebtedness crisis were called upon to oppose in principle a set of authoritarian ‘economic adjustment programs’ and only consequently to oppose the authoritarian methods of enforcing these respective memorandum policies. On the contrary, in the current pandemic crisis the terms have been reversed. In the current crisis, the resistance movements are called upon to fight predominantly the authoritarian way of governing, at a first level, that the conservative political and social elites of the country have been trying to establish and, at the second level, the conservative neo-liberal reforms themselves. Thus, if in the first case the authoritarian way of governing constituted the necessary complement to anti-democratic choices of the ruling political and economic elites, in the second case authoritarianism, surveillance and repression seem to be the final aims, the ultimate goals of the choices of these elites. The stake is therefore more critical today, because it invests the whole architectural logic of the political and legal-institutional system of governing⁵, which consolidates an extreme reactionary ideology that legitimizes ex ante rather than occasionally the use of force by state mechanisms. In this sense, it is not simply a matter of using violence as a mere means of enforcing authoritarian political choices, as was essentially the case mainly in the first seven years of implementing the policy of austerity measures.

A very informative example is the way the police are used. During the implementation of austerity measures during the five years of conservative rule 2010-2015, the governments of the time clearly implemented a plan of cold repression of the

protesters. However, they did not change the way the police operate, that is, they did not change its structure. In this light, the repression itself, although it escalated police (and therefore governmental) violence, did not substantially change the profile of society's daily policing. On the contrary, the current escalation of police repression is accompanied by a radical rearrangement of the qualitative and quantitative data of police operation. The latest developments are indicative of this situation (for an extensive analysis, see for example Papanikolaou & Rigakos, 2021). As far as the quality of the police operation is concerned, from the day the current government took power, the former DELTA group now renamed "Action" was re-established, the ODOS group was created with the aim of monitoring the mass protests, the university police was formed and soon, under the pretext of the brutal beating of a stationmaster by two young men, another body will be set up to guard the metro and electric stations. At the same time, in a country lacking basic health services during the pandemic (such as intensive care units for Covid-19 patients), several tens of millions of euros were spent to replace the police patrol and motorcycle fleet, and new equipment was purchased and drones that monitor cities on days when rallies are scheduled (Aravantinos, 2021).

In quantitative terms, although Greece has the second largest number of police officers per 100,000 citizens in the European Union, and has more than three times as many police officers in proportion to its population compared to Finland, the current conservative government is creating four new police officers bodies, greatly increasing the number of police officers. Thus, since July 2019, about 1,500 new special guards and 1,300 border guards have been hired, while the process of hiring more than 1,000 new police officers to staffing the new university police has already begun (https://www.ethnos.gr/ellada/146551_panepistimia-1030-proslipseis-eidikon-froyron-gia-ti-fylaxi-ton-aei-fek). Obviously, the total number of recruitments will increase to staff the new metro guard body that has been announced.

It is obvious that these developments dramatically have changed not only the scope and ways of suppressing mass political events⁶, but also the scope and ways of policing the daily behavior of citizens. In other words, we have not only a tactic of savage and general repression of political protest in the country, but also an intensifying intimidation of citizens on a daily basis in neighborhoods, squares, streets, everywhere. This is how we see heavily armed police officers, as if taken from robocop movies, patrolling en masse everywhere on motorcycles, and terrorizing even residents of quiet neighborhoods. From this point of view, the events that took place at the beginning of March in the area of Nea Smyrni are typical. On Sunday, March 7, 2021, DIAS police officers were ordered to police the square of the area. The fully armed policemen brought abuse and intimidating behavior against family with two young children, leading team of young attendees complain about this behavior. This



was followed by the brutal beating of a young man who protested and unnecessary arrests of local residents⁷. On the occasion of these events, the following day a large and spontaneous protest took place in the area. That was followed by a brutal police crackdown on protesters and widespread incidents with many injured and arrested.

In conclusion, then, it seems that there have been a shift in the exercise of power in which, while austerity movements clashed mainly with the contents of policies of austerity measures, today's movements clash mainly with a way of governing that is largely based on anti-democratic methods of enforcing policies and recognizes its own *raison d'être* in these methods. Indeed, in the face of a research finding that the pandemic control policies implemented were more democratic in those countries with the highest democracy indexes (Dempere 2021), it would be more accurate to compare the attempted anti-democratic diversion not between countries with different indicators of democracy (based on the degree of freedom of the press, liberal legislation, democratic prehistory, etc.), but rather between countries with similar democratic indicators. Or, even better, the divergence of democratically developed countries during a pandemic from their own recent prehistory, from their own major constitutional commitments to the protection of democracy and political and social rights. It is certain that in terms of both comparisons, the Greek case is a special case of divergence. In other words, the deviation of government policies from democratic processes in Greece has been extremely large if compared both with other countries that have had a recent similar history of democratic tradition (e.g. Germany, Italy, France, etc.) and with itself, when it is taken into account the quality of provisions of the Constitution and its commitments to freedom of political participation and the protection of work and vulnerable social groups, following the fall of the military junta (in 1974).

We do not just have a transient (say, because of Covid-19) authoritarian model of government, we rather have a serious attempt to permanently undermine democracy and consolidate a viable anti-democratic system of power; that is, on the one hand, it allows the dominant political elite to create conditions that perpetuate an oligarchic democracy, and, on the other hand, it forces conscious citizens to become obedient citizens. Unexpectedly revealing, the country's prime minister himself, in a speech to the Greek people in March 2020, had clearly alluded to the ongoing attempt to transform consciences. At the time, he had expressed the ambition to get out of the crisis "(...) with values of a new social identity born of extraordinary circumstances, but which will quickly become the driving force of the next day" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzcAXE2Ofx4>, time segment 9: 40-9: 55). Greek society has quickly realized in a dramatic way what exactly these words meant. The "emergency" is not only the pandemic crisis, but above all the very undermining of democracy that the neoliberal government has been trying to bring off in order to achieve its goals. The

“values of a new social identity” have been basically the apotheosis of the citizens’ ‘individual responsibility’; that is, the passive acceptance on their part of the claim that they themselves are responsible, if the pandemic measures fail, and not the government that led methodically to the country’s weakening of the public health system.

The great contradiction that manifests itself in the above excerpt of the Prime Minister’s sermon lies in the fact that, while society has been experiencing in a dramatic way a state of multiple crises (economic, political, cultural, moral) that is supposed to be extraordinary and temporary, nevertheless, the political power of the country aims to achieve stable and sustainable changes. Therefore, it is revealed that the measures applied to Greek society are not so extraordinary; instead, they are measures that cause changes that will leave a permanent mark. This becomes even clearer if we consider that cultural processes required to form the ‘new social identity’ that the government seeks are in fact complex data that normally require long periods of time and profound cultural transformations to take place (Psimitis, 2020). In our case, on the other hand, the political power admits that it aspires to ‘compress’ the cultural content of such a profound social change in time to the limits of a state of emergency and to ‘package’ it politically to the limits of a temporary political conjuncture.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS SIMULTANEOUSLY CLAIMING AND PREFIGURATING

The above practically means that, since the beginning of 2020, we have had a gradual but relentless voiding of the democratic content of the political system, although its formal institutional conditions remain. Political democracy in Greece has been degraded and devaluated extremely in contrast to the democratic tradition built in the country since the fall of the military junta (in 1974), that is, for the last fifty years or so. Nowadays, we are living in a ‘state of democratic exception’ in which an attempt has been made to reverse the country’s democratic history and to establish from the outset an authoritarian and anti-democratic model of government based on surveillance, the threat of repression and coercion. At the same time, the weakening of the welfare state, which had already begun during the recent economic crisis, has been accompanied by the strengthening of both the repressive mechanisms and the ideological mechanisms of the state (mainly the Church and the media) that have been willingly contributing to the lasting beautification of the image of power. (Tsimouris 2021, p. 78).

Under these unprecedented and extraordinary circumstances, social resistances against multifaceted political, social, and moral regression must also be of an exceptional nature. A simple claiming repertoire is not enough, no matter how dynamic it manifests itself. It is not enough to claim individual rights that are brutally violated



by political and economic powers. The fight needs to focus higher. The struggle for the supreme right to fight for all rights seems more critical today than ever. The right to disobedience seems to be a crucial choice. Workers must demand trade union freedoms that have been violated before workers can claim better wages and benefits. And, from a prefigurative point of view, while demanding these freedoms, they must exercise them themselves in and out of the workplace through meetings, assemblies, discussions and self-organization. Before the unemployed can claim employment, they must demand the right to claim and protest. And, from a prefigurative point of view, to exercise the right to work through autonomous forms of work, mutual aid and solidarity economy. Before teachers, students and parents can claim the right to open schools (when in the meantime there are open hairdressers, beauty salons, tourism companies, etc.) they must fight for the self-determination of the educational community. And, from a prefigurative point of view, to create 'experimental educational events' regardless of the formal educational process. And so on.

With regard to universities in particular, it is certainly important that students should react collectively against the content of the recent university reform, which includes the establishment of a police force within the campuses, the tightening of disciplinary sanctions against students and the restriction of admissions in universities. However, today it seems even more important for students to oppose a monstrous model of authoritarian university management that the government seeks to consolidate on an ongoing basis. And, from the prefigurative point of view, to revitalize in practical ways the living educational process and critical academic thinking, for example, with counter-lessons (<https://thepressproject.gr/foitites-kathigites-diorganonoun-mazi-antimathimata-sto-aristoteleio-panepistimio-thessalonikis/>), free discussions and events in the campuses etc.

Overall, it is crucial for movements to claim specific rights or fight to neutralize government attacks that aim to undermine citizens' rights, but it seems even more important to defend an absolutely fundamental right, that to fight freely to defend all the rights violated by the country's authorities (government, institutions, courts, police). Within this context, prefiguration also seems to be a priority in the form of manifestation of resistances. Although concepts of prefiguration and claiming practices often appear as concepts ideotypically opposed (Psimitis 2017), at this juncture their combined implementation seems to be a one-way solution. Indeed, the regression of rights in all spheres of life and activity requires a compensatory resistance on the part of social movements consisting of claiming practices; that is, in claiming the protection and security of these rights, starting with the supreme right to resistance and disobedience. At the same time, because the desired outcome of collective action (rights content) may not be just an uncertain strategic goal set in the future, but it can be functionally present within the action itself at the time it takes place,

prefigurative practices are required; that is, radical forms of collective action that attempt in practice and through daily experimental ventures to prefigure the social coexistence of the future in the present (*ibid.*, p. 16). Such actions, therefore, combine militant claiming practices with autonomous understanding of problems (and rights) and clearer social self-identification of actors (and their needs). Consequently, such a combination of claiming and prefigurative actions, on the one hand, ensures the long-term strategic goal of acquiring or defending rights in the future and, on the other hand, allows the immediate practical implementation of these rights today. Such actions aim at a desired future and, at the same time, aim to shape it (even on a micro scale) within the present.

PROTECTING (OR NOT) THE MOST VULNERABLE

The policies implemented during the pandemic have shown an ‘aggressive interest’ of the state in protecting the lives of those sections of the population that are largely institutionally and socially recognized on a global scale⁸. We have seen that the state has literally attacked rights and severely restricted them, and it has made a decisive contribution to redistributing wealth to the detriment of the popular classes and groups. At the same time, however, it has attacked people’s emotions with the paternal concern of Orwell’s Big Brother, that is, with the authoritarian paternalistic rhetoric of one who seems determined to think on behalf of all and act only for their own good, trying to convince them that all measures taken by the state are solely for their benefit, even if many have not understood it (yet) in this way. But even this interest stopped at the borders of the institutionally and socially recognized population. Governments, proving that a generalized state of emergency such as a pandemic can negate many vital goods (such as rights), but certainly do not undo the usual institutional policies of discrimination and consolidation of social inequalities, have excluded the most vulnerable social groups from this ‘aggressive interest’. As Tsimouris puts it (*ibid.*, p. 79), “the fact that the usual ‘naked lives’, i.e. refugees, immigrants, prisoners, homeless, but also factory workers were again excluded from the state’s aggressive interest in protecting life, shows the ruler’s arbitrariness in terms of reinforcing exceptions that existed before the generalized panic of the epidemic”.

Let us look briefly at the case of refugees. From 2014 to 2020 Greece has received a large number of refugees (1,259,303) from countries torn apart by wars, civil strife, famine, ecological disaster, etc. (UNHCR, 2021b). In 2015 alone, more than 850,000 refugees came from Turkey to Greece across the Aegean, a figure that accounts for more than 80% of all people who arrived illegally in Europe that year by sea (UNHCR, 2015). According to a UNHCR survey in 2019, there were 137,757 people in the country among recognized refugees and asylum seekers (Tokas, 2019). It is well



known that social protection systems for refugees in the country are extremely limited and weak to assist them effectively. Basic priorities of their lives, such as health protection, education of children, good living conditions, rapid processing of asylum applications, etc. have long been abandoned in fragmented, contradictory, and often underfunded policies, which since 2019 they have been deliberately retreated even more. Indeed, the doctrine of the current conservative government towards refugees is inspired by that of the corresponding government of 2013, which was based on the assumption that the lives of these people “must become unviable” (Demetis, 2013).

In this light, the deterioration of living conditions of refugees in the last twenty months that the center-right New Democracy party has been ruling neither is a random fact nor is it due to a ‘social accident’. It is the result of a deliberate political choice aiming to constantly discourage refugees from moving to Europe via Greece. The more Europe becomes a ‘fortress’ towards refugees⁹, the more Greece is pressured to remain a ‘bulwark’ of refugee flows, while the Greek islands of the Aegean Archipelago are turned into prisons for punishing and confining refugees (Xypolytas, 2019). This choice is also clearly reflected in the exceptional delays observed in asylum application processing times. When living conditions of migrants within the country have already been unbearable, then perpetuating or even worsening this situation becomes a necessary complement (along with criminalizing relocation and ‘pushing back’ operations) of policies that prevent the arrival of other migrants.

In this situation, the Covid-19 pandemic gave the Greek government the perfect opportunity to decide on new policies to worsen the refugee situation. In June 2020, the Minister of Immigration Policy announced, for reasons of saving resources, a ‘padlock’ on sixty of the ninety-two refugee structures operating in mainland Greece, noting, regarding the future of people who will be left homeless, that “everyone has a responsibility to maintain himself” (https://thepressproject.gr/klisimo-60-prosfygikon-domon-proanangelli-o-mitarakis-o-kathenas-na-syntirisi-ton-eafto-tou/?fbclid=IwARlzatpgRUTQcnyLNkiKjpsnj2nnrkTZQoTlysa8TxJLWP_AzN-pX1Kex5JY#.Xt-k6FHWfhk.facebook). An excellent example of the inclusion of refugees in the logic of individualization of responsibility that we saw above commenting on the ‘new social identity’ that the government has been seeking! With this measure, some 9,000 recognized refugees have suddenly become homeless, while they have been completely unable to integrate into the (for them non-existent) general social welfare system. At the same time, in a few months another 11,000 refugees will be in the same position, as soon as they are officially recognized as refugees by the Greek asylum authorities (UNHCR, 2020). According to the UNHCR, although refugees are formally eligible for many national schemes, such as the Minimum Guaranteed Income or Housing Allowance and other benefits to the most vulnerable, in practice they have been prevented from accessing this support. The same phenomenon

has been observed in vaccinating refugees against Covid-19. As early April 2021, vaccinations for refugees did not start, while in other countries they have already progressed. In fact, in some counties – such as in Jordan and Germany, refugees have joined vaccination priority groups, (UNHCR, 2021a) (<https://www.kathimerini.gr/world/561256612/vretania-emvoliasmos-metanaston-anexartita-apo-to-kathestos-paramonis-toys/>).

EPILOGUE

In the limits of this article, we have shown elements of the systemic attempt to transform power relations in Greece during the pandemic, in relation to society, economy, politics, culture and daily life. We have also expressed some thoughts of social resistances that are being formed and can be further developed. At the political, economic and institutional level, the ruling elites have had the upper hand, they have the tools to manipulate relations that develop there, because politics, economy and institutions have been properly structured by neoliberalism to be the privileged fields of action of ruling powers. But what neoliberalism suffers from is how to convince people that they must consent and obey the instructions and orders of the state in their daily lives. Where it suffers is in creating consensus and obedience. This weakness is rooted in the cracks of the field of culture and everyday life, that is, where social movements and popular resistances are formed and strengthened among people who give a different meaning to their lives from what the systemic culture of selfish individualization, commercialization of relationships, economic rationality, self-interested and utilitarian orientation of behavior and human isolation calls them to do.

In this field, people engage with each other, test experiential and cultural features of life, enjoy emotional relationships, share the values of coexistence and altruism, activate complex networks of direct relationships, and build reciprocal bonds. In this field, in which neoliberalism is not welcome, new resistances of struggling subjects are built. When this field is violated, even temporarily, by the manipulative policies pursued by the neoliberal state, then we have what Agamben calls “degeneration and alteration of human relations” (Agamben, 2020). It is then that, as Silvia Federici says, “the powerlessness to resist and change something so obvious such an obvious insult on human life, such an obvious devaluation of human life is possible when people are feeling so alone, defeated, isolated from each other”. On the contrary, “only when we bring together, when we do connect our lives, not only ideologically, but we reconnect in the day to day fabric, in the day to day making of our reproduction, only when we do that, only then we really create the power to resist” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1fSTDmad6A>, time segment 36:00-36:50).

The movements, worldwide and in Greece, have shown such examples. Ironically,



a new form of sociability is born into quarantine and ‘social distancing’. Imaginative forms of social protest and cultural resistance are erected within the compelling rule of passivity and obedience. In the marches, in the parks and in the squares the embodied mass presence of young people challenges the rule of isolation and brings fear in the political and medical power. On campus, students organize ‘counter-courses’. On social media, such a massive and interactive activism of analysis, denunciation and irony is organized, which subverts the gray reality of the corporate media, which are paid by the government to faithfully reproduce its propaganda. The first results of these resistances have already become visible. Opinions that were almost banned a year ago are now appearing in public debate. Conservative politicians and leading epidemiologists and infectious disease experts have voiced opposition to the government’s measures, talking about ‘mistakes’ in pandemic management for the first time. Public opinion is shifting, which the rulers apologize for as “the people’s fatigue with the measures”. Regardless of whether the pandemic is overcome through mass vaccinations of the population, many people will emerge from this pandemic having formed a new consciousness on both the ways in which the authorities manipulate society and the forms and contents of social struggles of the future.

NOTES

1. According to the 2020 annual report on the Greek Economy and Employment of the Work Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Workers: “This situation reveals the picture of a labor market where fundamental labor rights have been overturned and de facto abolition of the eight-hour period and liquidation of the start and end time of work has been imposed. The prevailing climate of insecurity and uncertainty is not a sign of economic and social progress” (https://www.alfavita.gr/koinonia/335670_gsee-de-facto-katargisi-toy-oktaoroy-meiosi-toy-mesoy-misthoy).
2. https://www.efsyn.gr/politiki/kybernisi/274619_zilepse-o-kikilias-ti-lista-petsa-kai-moirazei-185-ekat-eyro
3. As of May 2020, Greece is 24th in Europe and 65th in the world in terms of press freedom, even lower than Orban’s Hungary (<https://www.lawspot.gr/nomika-nea/anamesa-stis-teley-taies-hores-tis-ee-se-oti-afora-tin-eleytheria-toy-typoy-i-ellada>).
4. The Supreme Personnel Selection Council (ASEP in Greek) is a Greek independent authority that ensures the correct recruitment of regular and seasonal staff in the wider public sector.
5. Such a holistic form of political intervention, attempted internationally on the occasion of the Covid 19 pandemic, may lead to the idea that, even so, the ‘political’ returns to the forefront of history and strongly challenges the automations that in the previous period the powerful market economy had imposed with its market rationality (for example, see Tsoukalas 2021). I think, however, that this current ‘revival’ of the ‘political’ (at least in its institutional dimen-

sion) is not so much a normal return, that may foreshadow the domination of the ‘political’ over the ‘economic’, but rather a temporary ‘resurrection’ intended to implement and consolidate the new transformations that the system needs and then discreetly retreat again in the shadow of economy and biopolitical domination.

6. From the end of 2020 until today, this repression has been escalating and stormy. Indicatively, general bans of demonstrations were imposed on 17/11/2020 and 6/12/2020, thus violating the Constitution of the country, while a crescent of violence and arbitrariness has been developed against protesting trade unionists, lawyers, members of Municipal and Regional Councils and even Parliament. Finally, the repression culminated with the events in N. Smyrni in March 2021.
7. Weeks later, the Secretary-General of the Special Guards himself commented on a television program: “Fortunately, the political leadership has listened to us, and is no longer using the DIAS team with fully armed police to make remarks to ladies with children about how to wear the mask.” (<https://thepressproject.gr/esoteriki-omologia-apotychias-kai-ektos-i-omada-di-as-apo-ton-elegcho-gia-tin-tirisi-ton-metron/>).
8. The state shows ‘aggressive interest’ when, on the one hand, it shifts the political decision on the shoulders of a mythically perceived science, while, on the other hand, it works on “the mass experiment in social control and social compliance, the legitimization of tele-presence as a mode of sociability and of instruction, the increase of surveillance, the normalization of biopolitics, and the reinforcement of risk awareness as a foundation of social life” (Cayley at: <https://www.quodlibet.it/david-cayley-questions-about-the-current-pandemic-from-the-point>).
9. In recent years, the refugee issue seems to have raised the need to reformulate the concept and practice of solidarity in the European continent. In fact, solidarity in Europe’s migration has become a highly contested concept and value, as local networks and citizens’ initiatives in favor of migrants are increasingly targeted by national laws, police measures and local decisions that have criminalized infrastructure and solidarity practices to migrants (Tazzioli & Walters, 2019).

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