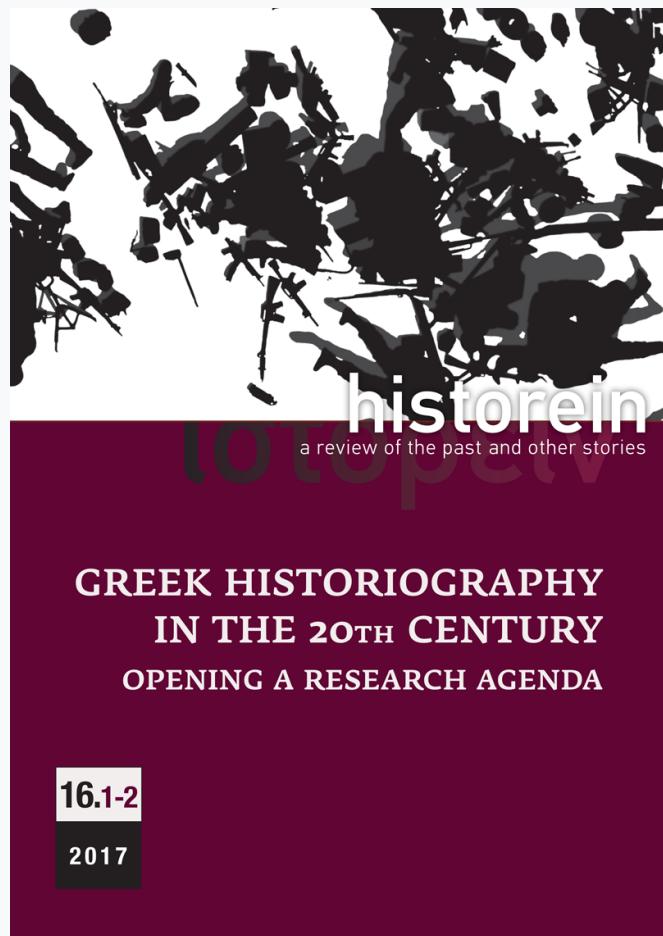


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Review of Nikolaos Papadogiannis', Militant around the Clock? Left-Wing Youth Politics, Leisure, and Sexuality in Post-Dictatorship Greece, 1974–1981

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The author inserts PEEA's endeavour into the broader effort by EAM to change the political balance of forces, upsetting the prewar political setting through the abolition of the monarchy and putting pressure on its Greek and British political opponents to negotiate in the new situation. The weakest points in this logic were EAM's total lack of international alliances and its failure to predict that the British would go as far as fighting militarily their own allies in EAM even before the war against Nazi Germany was over.

This book fills an important gap in the research concerning the development of the armed resistance movement in Free Greece. In a compact narrative, it demonstrates how this armed resistance movement came together and functioned in the mountainous interior and how the liberation of entire areas created a need for the formation of a governmental-administrative apparatus that would organise social, economic and political life. Indeed, Skalidakis takes the trouble to study something that we often take for granted and move past, what we describe as the *αντάρτικο* (partisan war). He shows the enormous effort made not only in the frontline of battle against the occupiers, but mainly in the rear where thousands of people had to work to support a fighting army and, at the same time, create a new power structure capable of fulfilling both the needs of the national liberation struggle and the vision for a different postwar society. The creation of Free Greece, the PEEA and the National Council becomes understandable for what it was: a process that materialised on the basis of emerging conditions and the needs of the resistance struggle where plan and action were realised almost simultaneously.

Nikolaos Papadogiannis

Militant around the Clock? Left-Wing Youth Politics, Leisure, and Sexuality in Post-Dictatorship Greece, 1974-1981

New York: Berghahn, 2015. x + 329 pp.

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In his recent feature film *Notias* (2016), acclaimed director Tassos Boulmetis focuses on young radicals in post-junta Greece, portraying them in a nostalgic but caricaturising manner. Beyond the colourful appearance of his protagonists, the various collectivities parading throughout the film, and the obligatory openness in sexual encounters, the viewer is left wondering whether there were any real political issues that motivated those youngsters. This book by Nikolaos Papadogiannis acts precisely as a guide to the very complex ideological prerogatives that informed these youthful identities, politicising both their recreational and their private life. The book offers an impressive panorama of radicalised youth (sub)cultures of the left in postauthoritarian Greece, during the early stages of the *Metapolitefsi*, that is, the transition to democracy that started on 24 July 1974. The author – an accomplished historian received his training in Greece, the UK and Germany – manages to convey both the organisational outlook of this dense microcosm and the lived experience of young radicals, at a time when Greece was undergoing a rapid transformation. He, thus, skilfully historicises the transitional moment in which young “subjects in motion” acted as a metaphor for change, demonstrating, at the same time, the remarkable continuities in protest culture before and after 1974.

Papadogiannis analyses the discourse and action of various rival political groupings – especially the two communist parties' youth formations, namely the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE) and Rigas Feraios; the Maoist Progressive All-Students' Unionist Movement (PPSP) and Antifascist Antiimperialist Student Movement (AASPE); the socialist Panhellenic Militant Student Organisation (PASP), and Choros, a loose network of student groups and cultural associations. The author's attention to this "plurality" of leftwing politics not only echoes, but also powerfully backs up, the influential thesis of the volume edited by Bernard Pudal *Le siècle des communismes* (2000) with a Greek case study. The book skilfully demonstrates how Raphael Samuel's assertion that Marxism "claimed jurisdiction over every dimension of experience, every department of social life" (3) applied to the lives of these young revolutionaries, including aspects of their private sphere, such as leisure and sexuality. By deciphering, moreover, the cultural and political grammar of the time, including the young subjects' bisemic relation to tradition, the 1940s, Americanisation and "Sovietism" (12), the author uncovers the social, cultural and political underpinnings of the resilience in collective action in post-1974 Greece. This "political fever", according to the author's fitting description, was truly impressive in terms of its intensity and duration, especially if compared to other countries like, for instance, posttransitional Spain, where a similar postauthoritarian fever quickly receded.

Papadogiannis' book uses an array of sources, including party publications, pamphlets, personal collections as well as stills taken from youth journals from the time, which he uses in pertinent ways to illuminate his overall argument. He also uses more than 50 interviews with former participants in the various political subgroupings of the booming youth

culture of the time. The detail throughout the book is impressive, and so are the careful discourse analysis of testimonies and the meticulous scrutiny of texts of the period, resulting in a "thick description" of the cultural and social processes of the early *Metapolitefsi*. At the same time, the author manages to establish a comparative perspective, by weighing the Greek experience against that of different contexts, such as the French, Italian and East German ones. Hence, apart from grounding his topic within the continuum of cycles of protest that characterised Greece throughout the "long 1960s", Papadogiannis proceeds to demonstrate the various flows from abroad and interconnections to the wider European trend of "the personal is political" of the 1970s.

The book, however, is not just empirical in nature, as it also tackles complex conceptual and theoretical issues, which the author manages to metabolise throughout the book, exploring in depth the "emotionology" (6) of his subjects, looking at identities as plural entities, and keeping a balance between the production of culture and the intricate reception of its meanings. Methodologically, he employs the challenging tool of oral history, displaying a "reflexive alert" vis-à-vis the deep exchange between himself and his interviewees. One of the few setbacks regarding the oral history practice is that, since Papadogiannis often "measures the distance" between the "then" of the experience and the "now" of the interview, at times the sole criterion informing the author's evaluation of someone's appraisal of the past is his/her current political stance. In other moments, however, he brings in his own agency and his relationship to the interviewee, rendering the results of their intersubjective communication both transparent and multidimensional.

Among the questions that the book provokes in empirical terms concerns the attitude to

political violence by the groupings the author deals with. Papadogiannis writes, for instance, “By contrast [to the *autonomisti* in Italy], the overwhelming majority of the Greek Left, including Choros and the Maoists, opposed ... terrorist violence” (82). One wonders to what extent this applies to the totality of the groupings he deals with and what was their relation, for instance, to the violent upsurge in factory occupations, often with a bloody conclusion, by people ready to embrace forms of “armed struggle”. In times, moreover, in which terrorist organisations such as 17 November, Revolutionary People’s Struggle (ELA) and June 1978 were highly popular due to the “execution” of torturers, one is left wondering about this supposed pacifism on the part of the extraparliamentary left. Furthermore, Maoist manifestos throughout the junta years were steeped in the vocabulary of armed struggle, either as a continuation of the antidictatorship struggle or as a form of rupture with the bourgeois state. In times in which the “antifascist” and “anti-imperialist” struggle was far from considered as over and with a radicalised post-junta generation in play, it strikes one as bizarre that the extreme rhetoric of such groupings receded so quickly.

One of Papadogiannis’ strong points is that he demonstrates that the hitherto strict taxonomies in the private sphere and sexuality among young radicals were eventually overcome. One wonders, however, about what changed so drastically over so few years. As the book powerfully starts by enumerating some influential anthropological/ethnographic views on Greeks and their attitudes towards sexuality and marriage until the first half of the twentieth century – the famous, albeit tricky, “honour and shame complex” – it seems that what one witnesses here are not just ephemeral sociopolitical changes but deep, anthropological transformations. However, Papado-

giannis zooms into the young subcultures and exposes them in delightful detail, without entirely zooming out again. This would have been necessary, I believe, in order to recontextualise these fascinating changes among the young and to place them firmly within the history of a wider society in flux, thus combining the micro with the macro.

All in all, Papadogiannis’ book comes to enrich the scarce Greek historiography on the 1970s which tends to view the post-1974 regime change as a smooth and top-down process, disregarding the upsurge in political action from below that characterised it. At a time, moreover, in which there is much talk in Greece on the supposedly detrimental “culture” that the *Metapolitefsi* bequeathed to Greek society and politics, this work is indispensable for its careful reconstruction of the time, helping us overcome popular misconceptions and generalisations regarding this sensitive period. Reaching beyond the Greek case study, finally, Papadogiannis’ well-researched and thought-provoking book will become, I believe, an indispensable companion to anyone interested in post-authoritarian youth cultures in contemporary Europe.