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Three Years since the Greek Insurrection

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December 7, 2011

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- Night Attack
- Destroyers of Whatever Is Left of Social Peace
- Manières à la Liberté & Max Stirner Fighting Nuclei
- Consciousness Gangs
- Perama Extremists
- Revolutionary Match
- Arsonanarchist Strike
- Night Arsonist Groups
- Sectarians of Revolution
- Council for the De-Structuralization of Order
- Happy Sleep's Apostates
- Criminals of Thought and Action, 31/3/2009
- Delta Group (Disturbance of Order and Control)
- Arsonists' Millennium Cooperation
- Attack Group "Catherine Gulioni" (she was a prisoner killed by the state)
- Practical Anarchists
- Revolutionary Action for Freedom
- Organizers of Night Entertainment
- CHAOS: Chaotic Groups of Sabotage
- De-Structuralization Cores
- Nikola Tesla Commandos
- Carnivalists in the Tune

Contents

December Revisited	5
<i>How much were the limits of the insurrection imposed from outside, by the power of the State?</i>	5
<i>How much did the limits come from the participants themselves?</i>	7
<i>In what ways were the limits of the insurrection determined by factors in place before it started, such as the infrastructure of anti-authoritarian groups and projects and the culture of resistance in Greece?</i>	11
<i>What conflicts have developed after the uprising between groups that participated in it together? Are there bonds and connections that were possible to maintain during the uprising that have broken down since then?</i>	13
<i>How effective has government repression been in weakening the movements that started the uprising? What have been the most effective ways to resist this repression?</i>	16
<i>What are some of the way that people have had to "recover" from the uprising? Legal troubles? Emotional trauma? Exhaustion?</i>	17
<i>How has the government used the uprising strategically to strengthen its position, since December? Could this have been avoided?</i>	18

In what ways has the uprising put anarchists in a stronger position? In what ways has it used up energy without putting anarchists in a stronger position? Are there any ways it has put anarchists in a weaker position? 19

What new tools and strategies do people have since December? 20

Inflamed Appendix 28

- Fire Shadows (they sabotaged the HSAP city trains)
- Revolutionary Consciousness
- “Fire Solidarity” (Hania)
- Anarchist Attack Group “Alexandros Grigoropoulos”
- Anomie’s Contract / Erebus’ Ambassadors
- Comandos Husscheyn Zhachyndhoul Jhachanghir / Revolutionary Intelligence Agency
- Morning Sabotage Group
- Comando Mauricio Morales Duarte, Chile 22-5-09
- Syndicate for Short-Circuiting the System
- Antisexist Group
- Immediate Intervention Hood-wearers
- Coalition of Arsonists – Security Project / Night Arsonist Groups
- Council for the De-Structuralization of Order / Coalition of Arsonists
- Wild Wolves
- Night Arsonists from Halkida
- Conspiracists for the Realization of Insecurity
- Immoral City De-Structuralists
- Revolutionary Cores Alliance – Speedy Arsonist Agency
- Fire Cores Conspiracy / Nihilist Commandos

Inflamed Appendix

For entertainment and context, here follows a list of groups that took credit for militant direct action in Greece in 2009. Possibly apocryphal and certainly incomplete, it still hints at the charming ingenuity of participants in the unrest that followed the riots of December 2008.

- Summer Entropy Commandos
- Summer Tranquility Disturbance
- Arsonists' Collective
- Arsonists with Dirty Consciousness
- Anomie Cores "Carpe Noctem"
- "Zero Tolerance" Organization
- Solidarity Paths in Light
- Insurrectionary Consciousness
- Fighting Solidarity
- Conspiracy Cells of Fire
- Immoral Vandals
- Antifascist Attack Nuclei
- Commandos — Solidarity Memory
- Attack Groups for the Liquidation of the Nation
- Fire Path Group
- Non-Patriot Saboteurs — Cores for the Spreading Insecurity

Three years ago today, police in Athens, Greece murdered Alexis Grigoropoulos, a fifteen-year-old student. This touched off the first wave of unrest to follow the economic crisis of 2008, setting the scene for the upheavals that have followed since in North Africa, Spain, and elsewhere.

To commemorate Alexis's life and the efforts of all who set out to avenge his death, we're offering selections from an interview we did with comrades in Greece the following year, when the riots were over but momentum was still fresh. The interview serves as a sort of historical snapshot, documenting the heady optimism of the time but also the realization of how vast the barriers to revolution still were. A great deal has changed since then; Greece has witnessed a series of new tragedies and clashes, while Greek anarchists have simultaneously seen their tactics embraced by broad sectors of the population and lost the initiative as the shortcomings of their strategies became apparent. Yet this interview is timelier than ever, as it grapples with the question of how to make the most of a high point of struggle. This may be relevant in North America sooner than anyone expects.

December Revisited

[*Void Network interviewed in 2009*]

How much were the limits of the insurrection imposed from outside, by the power of the State?

The government trapped in scandals, economical crisis, and inner conflicts is unable to learn from all the ways it was beaten. An elite that tries to behave like nothing happened can do nothing but forget.

During the insurrection in the countryside, the towns and small cities, the external influences were much stronger than in Athens and Thessaloniki. For example, in Patras and Larisa, both big cities that experienced riots that the police were unable to control for days, small but well-organized groups of neo-Nazis together with riot police were searching for the young people, street by street, and following groups of high school students from the riots to their houses, frightening them and their parents as well.

In small cities and towns, undercover policemen were going from shop to shop to spread false rumors and to inform the owners that wild anarchists were on their way from the big cities to come destroy their shops in the same way the television was portraying an exaggerated destruction of small shops in Athens. So when young people, anarchists, and leftists came out onto the streets of their small towns with no intention to smash anything but banks, police stations, and government buildings, the shop owners treated them like vandals rather than their own children. However, in most small towns during the insurrection, the people generally had an attitude that these were “our own children” and the youth and comrades accomplished unbelievable actions on a local scale.

The influence of conservatism was also much stronger in some right-wing towns. Conservatism, the power that keeps our life “as it was,” our mind “as we know it,” and our activities “as we’ve always done them,” was the strongest factor for sustaining normality before, during, and after the riots all over the country.

Many people opposed the insurrection and they had the power to express their disapproval much more openly and effectively in the countryside. In some of the towns the majority of the locals were obviously against the “tendencies” of the anarchists and the leftists. In these towns it was very difficult for the small number of isolated participants to sustain an insurrectionary enthusiasm for many days, even

points for bringing all those dreams to life. We lost so much in the selfishness of our small, insignificant, individual illusions. We may have to fight against many fears, traps, deeply-rooted lies, psychological complexes, and insecurities. And then we will link our daily lives with the most magical secret desires to transform the streets of the metropolis in precious moments of freedom and happiness.

The insurrection never ends. The insurrection will never end.

Maybe we need to start thinking about how the world we would like to live in looks. We must use moments and images of our present life that we want to expand and activate in all their significance. We don’t need any science-fiction plan for our future—we have everything here and now. We have to liberate it all from the State and the market and share it.

Revolution is when all society takes life in its hands and everything that now is merchandise becomes a gift once more. Revolution is One Thousand Insurrections, nothing more, nothing less. Insurrections open paths, liberate space and time, re-program Daily Life, change relations, invent new words, break hierarchies, and smash taboos and fears and limitations, achieving the highest possible public participation in projects and infrastructure that give us the chance to expand ourselves and share our abilities without limits. Insurrections are a never-ending fight, a constant struggle between desperation and self-restraint, apathy and action, fear and decisiveness, needs and passions, obligations and desires, obstacles and breakouts. Is it even possible to imagine such a thing? The experience of the 2008 insurrection showed us that those wild dreams we were too embarrassed to admit could actually become reality.

-Void Network [theory, utopia, empathy, ephemeral arts]

- Videos and media work uploaded to the Internet and used by mainstream TV channels proved that the police are working with neo-Nazis against immigrants and the social movements. Also, they proved to everybody that the neo-Nazis are a tool, the long hand of the State against any kind of social resistance.
- Independent amateur videos, like the video of the assassination of Alexis or moments of police brutality, played a very important role in building a new kind of public opinion.
- The creation of hundreds of blogs offered a digital space for the direct expression of the motivations and theory behind each struggle, attracting thousands of readers and participants. The blogs have broken the authority and monopoly of mainstream mass media.

We have seen immigrants closed in concentration camps, we saw the revenge of normality expressed in threatening laws, we saw conservatism acting as the guardian and protector of the worst side of humanity, we saw greed and exploitation destroying our most beautiful dreams together with the forests, beaches, parks, squares, and hospitals. We saw apathy imprison our lives in fortress-like cities of commerce and mass stupidity...

Maybe now we are closer to the point of no return. To reach this point, perhaps we all should have resigned from our jobs last year in December... perhaps the unemployed should have replaced the uncertainty of "personal failure" with the pride of an insurgent collective risk. Maybe the students should have left school for at least a year of holidays, rediscovering the meaning of public education.

We have to live collectively again, redefining contemporary political philosophy and revolutionary art. Perhaps the affinity groups, occupied parks, squats, and social centers can become

though in such places actions still took place day after day for weeks, proving that the passion for freedom doesn't fear any authoritarian conservative majority.

The power of the State existed mainly in radio interviews, TV programming, and riot police in the streets. The work of the State was to offer excuses and reinforce the conservative defenses of this society, to sustain normality even in the middle of chaos, and to express with certainty that nothing will change; also to suppress the total chaos without having another dead body on the streets. It was crucial that they do it without filling up the stadiums with thousands of detainees, in order not to create images of dictatorship within the spectacle of social life.

The work of the mass media, as part of the regime, was to offer simplistic excuses for the "children's revolt," so as not to alienate their parents, to avoid speaking seriously about the specific reasons behind many targets of smashing and burning, to feed the worst fears of the conservative majority, and to portray the anarchists as irrelevant to the phenomenon. In this way they were building a separation between the good children and the bad anarchists, immigrants, radicals, extremists-criminals.

How much did the limits come from the participants themselves?

In big cities and especially in Athens and Thessaloniki, physical exhaustion had a strong influence after all those days of tear gas, running around the city center, hours of assemblies and all kinds of direct actions, creating and sustaining street barricades and liberated zones, smashing, burning, and fighting the riot police, the undercover police, and the neo-Nazis over vast areas of the city... day after day and through the nights.

The boys and girls sleeping inside the occupied universities for many days showed heroic physical strength.

When the schools reopened the students had to go back to class. Three weeks after the start of the revolt the university students started to think it was possible to lose credit for the whole academic year if the occupation of the universities continued after Christmas. After three weeks the students took to the streets less and less. Satisfied by the amazing personal experience of revolt and revenge against the State, they were tired from the street fighting. And they were pushed by their parents to return to normality. The students and youth who were not politically organized began to lose the feeling of togetherness of the first weeks, and started to express skepticism again towards the attitude, decisions, initiatives, and political analysis of the anarchists. Many continued to participate in different actions, but they began to keep a distance from the central occupations and riots.

And the workers had their jobs waiting for them. Most of the participants had to work all day and then they participated in the actions in the afternoons and evenings, also expressing an amazing physical strength. The worst moment of the assembly for the occupation of the General Confederation of Greek Workers was when the insurgent workers started to speak out against spending a long time forming a deeper analysis because they had to go to sleep so they could work the next morning. Work was a limitation before, during, and after the insurrection.

After the third day of the uprising the immigrants, many of whom lacked papers, faced a very strong backlash from the police and in public opinion. Police continued searching for them for months and in the following summer they arrested thousands of so-called illegal immigrants.

In the network of assemblies and conversations there began to reappear many different questions, debates, and the endless disagreements that characterize the Greek radical space. Many

space, offer an experiential introduction to the political and social awareness that cannot be replicated in books.

- Demonstrations in malls and luxury areas or in the metro stations transfer the message of insurrection to privatized public spaces at the center of capitalistic illusions.
- The occupation of the National Opera Hall and interruption of the commercial shows created an example of an intersection between the spheres of arts and philosophy and insurrectionary practices and ideas.
- The occupation of the building of the General Confederation of Greek Workers created a public, visible negation of the role of syndicalist leadership in the failures of workers' struggles over the last 100 years.
- The occupation of the offices of the newspaper editors by insurrectionary journalists and comrades active in the creation of underground media produced a lively meeting point for direct criticism to appear against the role of mass media in the building of social apathy.
- The occupation of the National Television Station studio by young artists and activists interrupted the speech of the prime minister, expanded mistrust of the mass media, and sent the message onto the screen of every house in Greece: "Switch Off Your TV, Come Into The Streets."
- Occupations of government buildings and municipalities all over the country sent a message to society of a different understanding of public institutions and constituted victorious fights in different causes and struggles.
- The anti-Nazi demonstrations in solidarity with the immigrants made it clear to many of them that we are standing on their side.

prison institutions, reveals the real causes of criminality in this society, and brings anarchist prisoners closer with all other prisoners, gaining respect and support for them inside the prison.

- The fight for Konstantina Kuneva and all other workers sends a direct message to the bosses that when they hit one of us they have to confront all of us. Also, it proves that the collective struggle can reveal issues and attract the attention of the whole society.
- All direct syndicalist struggles self-organized from the base prepare in the consciousness of the people, year after year, a deep-rooted, radical strategy that intervenes in the sphere of work.
- Indymedia works like a strategic center for the organization of the struggles and as a digital public space where all the announcements, debates, and invitations can gain attention. A great many comrades start their day reading the indymedia calendar to decide what social action or assembly they will participate in.
- The creation of pirate communal radio stations and digital radio stations in universities and social centers sends the message of resistance on the radio waves and creates cultural and political communities around them.
- The critical mass parades, the street parades, the free party movement, the illegal rave parties, the squat events, the DIY concerts, the socially aware hip-hop, punk, indie rock, drum'n'bass, techno, and trance scenes attract thousands of young people to temporarily liberated public zones. They offer an existential contact between underground cultures and radical movements. The gatherings of the underground cultures, when they are connected in solidarity with the anarchist political

of these took the form of hostile dichotomies and enmities, like leftists vs. insurrectionists, anti-authoritarians vs. anarchists, artists vs. anti-artists, independent media journalists vs. anti-media activists, direct action vs. political messaging, naifs vs. extremists, hooliganism vs. anti-statism, anti-statism vs. criminality, anarcho-communism vs. post-anarchy, junkies vs. serious political revolutionaries, looting vs. burning... and so on. Many people felt this and made conscious efforts to combat it. But by the third week, many of the debates had become long and tedious distractions from the disappointment we felt when we saw that the whole society would not rise up, as many people hoped it would in the early days.

A major defeat came early when the syndicalist hierarchy decided to cancel the nationwide general strike scheduled for December 10. This strike had been announced long before the death of Alexis, but they cancelled it to avoid generalizing the insurrection. The historical meeting with the working class failed to happen once more. Never trust the workers. The “working class” followed their leaders, their political parties, their own syndicalist institutions, unions and organizations, their own idols and ghosts. The workers, the farmers, the petit-bourgeoisie did everything in their power to help the regime survive and bring everything back to normal.

So you see, normality was also hiding inside of us, not only around us.

The submission of the majority to the status quo and the habitual repetitive behavior of work and consumption kept millions of people off the streets. The inability of participants in the insurrection to explain politically the reasons for the actions and to expand this understanding on a scale that could address the problems of common people was a failure that kept the entire society from exploding, from taking up the revolt and continuing it with their own decisions and actions.

For sure, people were not ready for social change, not even for a general confrontation with their own realities. The death

of Alexis fell like a thunderclap, but most of them were unable to understand what caused their own children, their own friends, their own neighbors to revolt. The society could feel it, they could express empathy but they were not ready to translate it into a political confrontation with the regime.

In an insurrectionary way of thinking, we can say that now, after the insurrection, the consciousness of millions of people has stepped forward and this is the main achievement of the revolt. The insurrection opens horizons. Many things that will happen in the future could never have happened before December.

All the thousands of people who participated offered an invitation to the others, the silent majority. When this silence fills your ears, echoing off the streets of a crowded city that wants to return to normality after four weeks of endless riots and all kinds of actions, an inner voice forces you to pack up all the inspiration and experience you have won for yourself, to go back to your collective and continue the struggle from there.

Even with most of the markets destroyed, Greek society generated a strange need to reproduce a pseudo-celebratory Christmas. Even though all the walls of the city were painted with the slogan “Christmas Postponed, We Have Insurrection” and the smoke of the tear gas and the smell of burned banks and the ashes of luxury shops still hung in the air, and the death of Alexis filled everyone’s thoughts, Christmas happened on December 25 just like every other year. The fucking mayor announced during New Year’s Eve from Syntagma Square, next to the brand new Christmas tree, this one protected by riot police, that we were all one, we were all the same, and we were happy! Thousands of poor immigrants were clapping their hands below the stage, though many hardly understood a word. The three central occupations in Athens (Polytechnic, Nomiki, ASOEE) dissolved one or two days before Christmas.

- The small urban guerilla arson groups continue fighting. Formed by people who know and trust each other, they continue to upgrade their weekly attacks against capitalist and state targets. The huge catalogue of arson attacks creates a map of institutions, corporations, banks, and offices that society has to eliminate from social life for the people to be free and equal. In this way, the arsonists offer the society a signal that elevates mistrust of these specific targets and encourages suspicion regarding the exploitive function of these targets.
- The active anarchist student groups don’t allow the bourgeoisie to control the university. These groups communicate day by day with each other and with all other students. They turn the university into a public space that can accommodate tons of public events every week, organized by comrades from other political and cultural collectives as well. Of course, leftist organizations and cultural groups also participate in the struggle to defend university asylum and the struggle for keeping the universities open to the public overnight.
- The defense of public autonomous zones like parks and urban hills, universities as well as urban areas, street corners, squares, and meeting points like Exarchia from police, mafia, drug dealers, neo-Nazis, and capitalist investors brings people together. Meetings in public space produce an explosive mixture of all kinds of people from all kinds of backgrounds. These day-to-day meetings empower groups and companies of friends to be ready and capable of fighting at a moment’s notice and to imagine that these areas are something completely different from the surrounding territory.
- The open public solidarity for all prisoners, both criminal and political prisoners, expresses the total negation of

ent posters, a whole spectrum of theory appears on the walls of the city. You don't need to read anarchist books any more—the theory is on the walls! Of course, it is also very important to use offset machines to produce thousands of copies of communiqués and books that you hand out for free in your city. These practices go together with the unstoppable use of spray paint to write political slogans on every wall, signed with the circle-A, and to remove neo-Nazi graffiti. Also, comrades go frequently to the central square of their city with a small electric generator and small sound system to play music, read out communiqués, and pass out pamphlets. With this method of counter-information, they attract attention to specific social struggles, raising solidarity and initiating endless dialogues with passers-by.

Some important struggles and strategies, as examples:

- The neighborhood assemblies, organized with invitation posters from door to door, offer answers to local problems and connect them with general social problems.
- The occupied parks offer a direct connection between ecological problems and everyday urban life, and produce new liberated public spaces where different kinds of people can meet and coexist.
- The new squats enable all different styles of anarchist thinking to achieve visibility.
- The new social centers offer workshops, free lessons, free food, cheap alcohol, free books, lectures, film shows, DJ sets, concerts, and open social meeting points for all kinds of people. They connect political activists with common people and young students.

And you walk in the city center with your friends, four o'clock on New Year's morning, and there are no riots anymore, and you want to smash everything around you and start again from the beginning. And an inner instinct says to you that there is still a lot of work to do before this world will explode. And the insurrection continues travelling in space and time, but still you feel that something is missing, and there are a lot of things we have to take care of.

In what ways were the limits of the insurrection determined by factors in place before it started, such as the infrastructure of anti-authoritarian groups and projects and the culture of resistance in Greece?

For many decades, the uncompromising fight of anarchists against the State and capitalism has found its chief expression in confrontation with all the various bureaus and branches of police across the planet, for example in the clashes that occurred in Prague, Seattle, Genoa, Thessaloniki, Maastricht, Nice, Rostock, Berlin, Copenhagen, Paris, Cancun, Santiago, Buenos Aires, San Francisco, Mexico City, Hamburg, St. Paul, Turin, Johannesburg, Miami, Seoul, and many other places. Of course, as the State is not a castle, the police are not the major protector of the State. Social apathy, habit, acceptance of status, and fear of change are perhaps even stronger protectors of the State than the army, and comrades in Greece know this well. But during the "Days for Alexis," the police were the primary target of the attack. The reasons were obvious this time even to the conservatives. The struggle was legitimate even for reformists. For once, anarchist common sense matched up with social common sense. Unfortunately, common sense is a great obstacle to wisdom.

The target of the struggle itself, the police, was the greatest limitation to the expanding of the insurrection to a general social insurrection. For most of the common people, police brutality was the target of this struggle, and the anarchists, long experienced in fighting against the police, fought hardest alongside the people who wanted to express their rage against police brutality, together with them, sometimes even following them.

But generally, they were unable to take the majority of the people with them in a total negation of the roots of the regime and against the real causes of this and all the other murders carried out by the State and capitalism. Most of the people were not ready yet to travel to the roots of their slavery. The society was not ready to face its own failures in the clear light of insurrection.

And the people in the struggle did not expand the dialogue as necessary to encompass all sides of everyday life. Of the hundreds of communiqués released, only a few could really offer an inspiring political explanation and a solid organizational solution. The affinity groups and the initiatives had the capability to offer high-quality analysis of the conditions and a hard critique of the regime, but they hadn't enough experience to spread enthusiasm for a social victory—visions of a world that could appear from the ashes of the old world, practical escape routes from the dead-ends of neoliberalism in crisis, images from the future we are dreaming of, applicable plans for continuing the struggle once everything has been smashed and burned.

So when the rage started to fade, there were no solid answers as to what should come next. Not even in our craziest dreams had any of us come so far. We walked for days and days like shadows inside our own struggles, wondering, through the smoke of the tear gas, about each next step.

Who has the proper answers, who can even narrate this story, who can offer solutions and answers about the way to

a high price or putting people in serious danger. With these victories the struggle attracts new people.

2. Political Work—which is based on direct connection with the problems of society and not on ideological abstractions. Efforts to listen to society enable anarchists to maintain contact with the worries and fears of the people, giving answers where it seems that there are no answers and attacking the causes of the problems, not just the symptoms. The ability of the movement to play a serious role in the political world of the country depends on the creation of deep roots in the social struggles and the ability to inject anarchist ideas and practices into the hearts of common people and young radicals. This happens through the personal cultivation of critical minds and the collective creation of open, all-inclusive, public confrontation with all forms of authority.
3. Cultural Work—the meetings, the assemblies, the squares, the parks, and the public life tend to include people who have the courage to fight and the capability to think and create. For the first time in many years, anarchists now are ready to achieve high visibility in this society and attract new people not only through their destructive power but also through the defense of public spaces (like the parks), and the creation of political spaces (like the squats and social centers). Also important is the collective culture that allows all individuals to benefit from the communes without losing their personalities within them, as happens in the Left tradition of organizing.
4. Constant Spreading of Counter-Information—not digital printing, but 70-cm-by-50-cm offset posters! Printing thousands of copies of these and sticking them everywhere is vital. As different groups produce many differ-

comrades and eliminated inner conflicts. And anarchist participation empowered those social struggles, gained respect from other political organizations, produced common ground with many different social subjects, and attracted many new people to anarchy.

The defence of Exarchia and other areas like it in Greece as autonomous public zones, including street corners and an everyday presence in “our own” cafés and bars, offered a constant meeting point that empowered the relations, the connections, and the coordination of actions. The creation of anarchists squats, social centers, occupied rooms in universities, concerts, events, film showings, and assemblies offered a sustainable ground for the cultivation of anarchist ideas and practices.

All these conditions are much more powerful now after December and it doesn't seem that there is any way to put ourselves in a weaker position. As long as we maintain the ability to listen to the heart and understand the mind of the society the state cannot defeat the anarchists.

What new tools and strategies do people have since December?

The most important characteristics are:

1. Consistency—efforts to offer answers and direct responses to all the moves of the state and to keep the fight alive with actions and events that take place almost every day. Also, there are conscious efforts to avoid suicidal or sacrificial moves that will cause arrests or hard defeats. The riots and the clashes with the police are well-organized and well-equipped, and they occur at the place and time when they'll have the greatest possibility of causing the most damage without paying

general social insurrection? No one wanted to force society to go further, and anarchists always dislike this role. Four weeks after the assassination of Alexis, everyone knew that the uprising was not a revolution, so nobody gave specific answers for what we had to do in order to go further. What could we do to keep the riots from ending? Is the never-ending riot the way to social insurrection?

Most people that participated in the insurrection say that it didn't end. We find great truth in this, as thousands of us participate and stay active in many projects, struggles, and assemblies that were created after December in all the cities and towns. For most people Alexis is still alive. In today's struggles you can find him smiling behind actions, demonstrations, creative plans, and destructive visions.

What conflicts have developed after the uprising between groups that participated in it together? Are there bonds and connections that were possible to maintain during the uprising that have broken down since then?

During the insurrection many old friends lost each other forever and people or groups that hated each other for decades worked in projects and actions together. Many old groups transformed into something completely different and many new affinity groups were created. As most of the Greek anarchists don't like each other, and deep differences separate groups and people, no one can speak definitively about what is happening and nobody clearly understands what is prepared and by whom. This total fragmentation is very useful during periods of “social peace,” as it produces a vast variety of opinions, analysis, and initiatives. The police cannot infiltrate

the movement, since such a thing does not exist. Hundreds upon hundreds of groups, people who've known each other for many years and share total trust and empathy, appear as if from nowhere and return to nowhere.

In a way, all this fragmentation created the strange situation: all these people, who knew each other for years but would never talk to each other, were suddenly speaking, spending time together, and fighting side by side. December produced strong feelings of solidarity and common struggle.

In the first months of 2009, huge assemblies, mostly staged in the university amphitheaters late in the afternoon, took place nearly every day. Sometimes people intending to join one assembly started to participate in the one taking place before it, as they waited for it to finish and for the next one to start. Some of them were gathering from 100 to 400 active people every week. To name a few: * The Assembly for Solidarity with Immigrants * The Assembly for Solidarity with December's Prisoners * The Fight for Worker Konstantina Kuneva * The Assembly of the School and University Students * The Assembly of Insurgent Doctors and Nurses * The Assembly of Insurgent Artists, the Assembly of Unknown Artists * The Assembly of The Ones Here and Now and For All of Us * The Assembly of Workers and Unemployed * The Exarchia neighborhood Initiative Committee

...and many other committees in different neighborhoods, as well as assemblies happening in other cities all over the country. And to all these general insurrectionary assemblies, of course, we have to add all the separate meetings of collectives and groups that were participating in these general assemblies.

Throughout these months there was a poster on the walls of Athens with a wildly naïve Dadaist monster saying: "Obedience Ended! Life is Magical!"—and for most of us living this magical life meant jumping from assembly to assembly preparing unbelievable things and putting them into practice with all those people. Those assemblies brought to life all different

In what ways has the uprising put anarchists in a stronger position? In what ways has it used up energy without putting anarchists in a stronger position? Are there any ways it has put anarchists in a weaker position?

The anarchist movement in Greece underwent a lot of methodological changes over the last years in its efforts to come closer to society, to hear the problems of the people, to avoid an anti-social attitude without falling into reformism, and to try to find ways to participate in and radicalize the social movements of our times. All these efforts bore fruit during December.

The social centers that opened in all the major cities of Greece during the last years, rented or squatted, offered the best preparation for the creation of strong, active circles of fighters and assemblies able to produce and spread analysis and propaganda everywhere.

Anarchist participation in the social struggles of the students and workers during the last years was also very important, and it utilized two main strategies, changing according to the circumstances:

1. Separate, visible anarchist blocs, with flags, banners, posters, and pamphlets.
2. Radical direct action, smashings, attacks on the police with molotovs, sticks, and stones.

In this way the Black Bloc spread throughout the whole body of these mass demonstrations, even if only a minority were participating. The adoption of these two strategies by all anarchists according to the tension of the social struggle and the available momentum produced a common ground for different

one of the main methodologies of any movement that wants to participate in a serious confrontation with the regime.

There was no need for “recovering” after December. We also have to clarify that there was no end to the insurrection and especially no ending caused by legal troubles, emotional troubles, exhaustion, or repression. Rather, the anarchist space, in an instinctual and intelligent way, chose to disappear from the central highways and put into practice many other low-tension initiatives that enrich the struggle. This wise, self-preserving urban guerilla strategy also finds its expressions in the appearance of many different projects that started after December and now help the “movement” to deepen its roots in the society and in the local communities.

How has the government used the uprising strategically to strengthen its position, since December? Could this have been avoided?

The government didn't find ways to use the insurrection to strengthen its position. It was difficult to do such a thing as the insurrection was spread among all social classes and backgrounds. Only the immigrants were brought into a worse position as they faced a backlash and the police pogrom against those without papers, which occurred in June. The solidarity shown toward immigrants was strong but unable to protect them. A lot of effort is going into bringing the immigrants closer to the anarchist space, but this task is not easy at all. The immigrants have their own interests, their own fears and wishes. Many of them they have a very difficult life and very different cultural and political or non-political backgrounds.

kinds of actions and projects and visions, the crazy dreams you had from when you were fifteen years old or from last week's late-night talk with friends or some secret plan you had with your lover and now was coming true.

Most of the initiatives and assemblies of artists, romantics, non-ideological people, and creative activists soon shrank, losing the enthusiasm of the first week and becoming smaller and more solid creative groups. Various reasons forced people from these assemblies to go back to their individual creativity, but many of these groups are still dedicated to their projects.

Week after week, and as people were coming closer and closer, the old conflicts, the differences, the diverse political standpoints and the different needs, expectations, strategies, and methods started to appear again. This brought back to the surface the old separations and the old debates. It proved that the differences were not just ephemeral misunderstandings or personal distrust, but were based in deep analysis and long-term differences of practice and ways of thinking.

The interesting thing was that even though most of these general assemblies split or started to attract fewer people and to have less power and influence, new ways of organizing appeared. After months of meetings, the whole political space took new directions. The general assemblies were not useful any more as new coalitions, new friendships, and new contacts appeared. Different squats, social centers, and initiatives started to form after the end of the general assemblies. People and groups that had met during the insurrection and the period of open creativity and massive open meetings that followed December now had experience with each other—they knew where they agreed and disagreed, they knew what the directions and strategies of each group were—and so new projects, plans, and decisions took place. In this way, the anarchists and other insurrectionists and radical activists avoided conflicts. The melting pot of general assemblies broke into much more effective

meetings, laboratories of creative chaos, squats, and direct actions.

How effective has government repression been in weakening the movements that started the uprising? What have been the most effective ways to resist this repression?

A basic characteristic of the Greek anarchist space is that through the influence of insurrectionary practices it refuses to see itself as a homogenous “movement” and especially as a movement of “resistance” or “direct action.” The idea of direct attack is much more influential. The momentum of the attack is controlled by the groups and the initiatives and not by any collective central decision-making process.

Of course, in periods of social mobilization, such as the demonstrations against the privatization of education or of health and public insurance, or in big events like the European Union Summit or the G8, there is coordination and communication between the groups. But even under these circumstances, the initiative for the direct attack is taken autonomously by groups and individuals. This makes things very complicated for the state—and also for the people. No one can decide what will happen, no one knows what will actually transpire until it has already happened.

The anarchist space has the ability to appear very powerful and then disappear completely from the stage of confrontation for short periods of recovery. These short periods without riots hypnotize the government into believing it has other more important things to care about. In these periods of calm, the eye of authority is not focused on anarchists. Meanwhile, the arson groups commit unstoppable attacks against all kinds of targets. During these periods, hundreds of assemblies,

events, public talks, film shows, free festivals, parties, lectures, workshops, and public non-confrontational demonstrations assure the visibility of anarchists, autonomists, and anarcho-libertarians. These political and cultural processes are also responsible for the never-ending arrival of new people, the replacement of burnt-out people with fresh ones, and the preparation of a new cycle of intense confrontation.

It is like a wave. When it’s up, you can see it in the news, on TV, in the streets, everywhere. When its down, you don’t see it but you feel it. You meet with the wave because it is coming to you and moving unstoppably through the initiatives of thousands of different people.

What are some of the way that people have had to “recover” from the uprising? Legal troubles? Emotional trauma? Exhaustion?

There was not any emotional trauma from December. The use of molotov cocktails heals a crowds’ panic and fear and takes back control of the streets from the police. Molotovs used as a defensive tool can keep the riot police away long enough for everyone to run safely away and recover from the tear gas or avoid arrest. When molotovs are used as offensive weapons together with hundreds of stones from broken pavement, they give courage to the crowds and spread a feeling of power and the belief that they can accomplish amazing things.

As a slogan from December put it: “Action replaces tears.”

Many people participated in the solidarity movement for the sixty-five that were arrested, who stayed in custody for two to eight months. Now all of them are free. The solidarity movement that took over the streets with massive demonstrations and counter-information, that held massive fundraising concerts and organized movement lawyers, has made clear to Greek anarchists that in the years to come solidarity must be