Red and Green: the trajectory of political ecology in Greece

For the greatest part of Greek post-authoritarian political life the colour green has been associated with the politics of the Greek socialist party. The first Greek green candidature emerged in the European elections of 1989, a significant year both in terms of the electoral yields achieved by green parties and lists across Europe and the historic changes that occurred on the East side of the Iron Curtain. Another less obvious development was that the experimentation with a green party in Greece was occurring at a time when the most inspirational and radical green party in Europe, the German greens, was entering its period of self-rationalisation which eventually led to the dominance of pragmatism and its participation in the German government after the Bündestag elections of 1998.

Although green parties by their adopted banner highlight an unequivocal concern for environmental protection, the relevant literature generally acknowledges that the political space occupied by them encompasses a political dimension whereby environmental protection is one of a number of issues central to their discourse. Gender and sexual equality, solidarity with the developing world, anti-militarism are some of the issues composing the green party discourse. Nevertheless, it can by no means be argued that green parties are the sole representatives or promoters of these issues in the political arena. The wave of protest in the 1960s and 1970s did not only lead to the emergence of green political formations but to a whole reorientation of the emancipatory politics of the left and subsequently to the emergence of other so called new left parties. The most widely used perspectives outlining the character of green parties have been formulated by Poguntke [1987;1989] and Kitschelt [1988; 1990], both subscribing to the view that green parties belong to a much broader political category than an exclusive focus on their adopted banner may indicate. Thus, Poguntke perceives green parties as representatives of a 'new politics' and Kitschelt of a left-libertarian political dimension.

As Müller-Rommel [1990:211] points out both perspectives are largely synonymous.¹ In both cases the activists of these parties belong to the educated classes and they are employed in the

¹ Kitschelt is not in agreement with this view. In fact he regards the 'new politics' parties' formulation 'as a 'vague and undescriptive terminology, which has given rise to serious conceptual confusions and misunderstandings' [Kitschelt & Hellemans 1990: 473; Kitschelt 1990: footnote 4, p. 207]. However, this objection is rather pedantic since it is based on the view that the 'new politics' label lacks an

service sector while a large proportion of them are female. In addition, their organizational ethic rejects the hierarchy and formalization characterising mass political parties and they are programmatically committed to decentralization, individual differentiation and autonomy, ecology and unilateral disarmament [Poguntke 1987, 1989; Kitschelt 1988:197, 1990:180]. These characteristics of the 'new politics'/left-libertarian parties are in the admittance of Poguntke [1987:81] 'an ideal typical deduction from the characteristics of new politics...[which] represents the hypothetical endpoint of a continuum ranging from pure old politics to ideal new politics parties'. As a rule of thumb, a political party can be regarded as situated on the 'new politics' side of the political conflict in a given national context if a) it is distant from other parties in any particular of the aforementioned characteristics and b) it is not diametrically opposed in any of those, the latter implying a leeway allowing for 'varying degrees of radicalism' [1987:82]. Kitschelt [1988, 1989] argues that parties which have not entirely renounced their traditional clienteles and ideological affinities should be regarded as 'borderline cases' of left-libertarian parties. Under this category he includes parties such as the Danish Left Socialist Party, the Norwegian Socialist people's Party and the Swedish Left Communist Party.² The 'borderline'; characterization that Kitschelt puts forward is compatible with the aforementioned criteria of distinction and it can be used for parties which, although they do not stand at the most radical end of the 'new politics' continuum, are certainly part of it since they do not contrast any of its essential aspects.

Nevertheless, since the new left parties comprising the 'new politics'/left-libertarian thesis make explicit reference to an already existing political family through their adopted labels (left, communist et cetera) while the green parties make an explicit reference to environmental protection, it may be possible to argue that green parties in fact represent something different which is disguised in the application of more inclusive models. Rüdig [1990:16] highlights this problem in the following way:

explicit placement of those parties on the left of the political spectrum. Although that might be true about the label itself, Poguntke's analysis had as its main aim to delineate the dimensions of 'new politics' in order to exclude the incorporation of conservative political formations utilising the green label from subsequent investigations.

² Kitschelt also includes the Swedish Centre Party in his list of European left-libertarian parties. However, the Centre party has been used by Poguntke [1987: 85-86] as an example of the differences between genuine parties of the 'new politics' and conservative political formations touching upon some 'new politics' elements. According to Poguntke, the Centre Party may emphasise issues such as decentralization, environmental protection and opposition to nuclear energy, but decentralization is also a familiar theme of modern conservatism, and environmental protection and opposition to nuclear power emanate from a pre-industrial rather than post-industrial concern. In one of his later works, Kitschelt [1990:183] must have recognised the problematic character of the Centre Party's inclusion and has not included it in the list provided there.

Why is that most social scientists analysing Green parties regard the 'ecological' identity of these parties as irrelevant, unimportant or, at best as marginal? There seems to be a consensus that somehow they cannot be what they appear to be, that their appearance as ecological parties has to be a manifestation of some other social force which is totally unconnected to the material content of their demands.

He concludes by arguing that 'the emergence and politicization of environmental problems is a key factor, representing a cleavage on its own right' [1990:31]. Rüdig's criticism and suggestion has certainly a lot of value and deserves a lot of attention. In many European countries (Netherlands, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden and Italy) green parties have co-existed with small left wing parties which have been located in the literature within the 'new politics'/left-libertarian group of parties. The insistence of those green parties on competing in electoral rounds against political formations with very similar clienteles and issues of concern must indicate manifestation of a need for differentiation. This need for differentiation can emanate from various perspectives such as the adherence of a given left party to a Marxist perspective of the environmental problematic, its more hierarchical model of organization, its subjugation of movement politics to its overall strategy and so forth. Thus it more appropriate to view the perspectives of the 'new politics'/left-libertarian thesis as 'a class of facilitators rather than a political cleavage [1990:26]. It is certainly true that green parties are concerned with issues that go beyond ecology and correspond with those of small left parties, but the combination of these issues have not been incorporated into the discourse of green parties as part of a "natural" process.

There is no necessary connection between, say, ecology and feminism, or ecology and pacifism. Indeed, there is no necessity to interpret ecological problems in the framework of the "New Left" politics [1990:27].

The combination of these issues in the discourse of a green party will ultimately depend on various facilitators. These may include internal facilitators such as the presence of an expressed interest in these issues by members of the party and of course the configuration of power within the party which will allow these concerns to be included in the programmatic outlook of the party and external facilitators, such as the degree of politicization of these issues in a specific national context and their effective representation by other political forces [1990:29-30]. In essence, the main point here is that the primary concern facilitating green

party formation is an ecological concern; other issues crop up at a later stage and in different combinations among green parties depending on the aforementioned facilitating factors.

However, the addition of more issues to a green party's discourse and the consequent passage from a single-issue concern to a more articulate discourse encompassing other 'new politics' issues is not something that has been disregarded by the proponents of the 'new politics/leftlibertarian thesis. In fact, Poguntke [1987:81] does not regard green parties as having more, at the initial stage of their formation, than 'a diffuse agreement on a set of core issues' allowing for a symbiosis among the various components of the new social movements that have come together to form a given 'new politics' party. Nevertheless, Rüdig is right in asserting that that the overall purpose of formulating a model has neglected to illustrate the differences existing among green parties in the combination of the various issues but since he does not seem to suggest the inclusion of right wing green formations, which have been formed undoubtedly due to the advent of the environmental problematic in public consciousness in comparative studies of green parties then his point does not contradict the assertion of the 'new politics'/left-libertarian thesis that green parties are located on the left side of the political spectrum. Also, since all approaches emphasize the importance of individual national contexts, as long as the differentiation and the commonality among new left and green parties is accounted for -within the specific national context- misconceptions and over generalizations can be avoided.

Works dealing exclusively with green parties have identified various differences among green parties which however do not necessarily challenge their grouping together with small left parties. Müller-Rommel [1985:495] for example, found that green parties, despite their similar historical backgrounds, not only differ from one another in their programmes and political strategies but also in the social composition of their electorates. More precisely, according to him green parties can be classified into *pure green reformist parties* (Belgium, Great Britain, Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Switzerland and France) and *alternative green radical parties* (the Netherlands, West Germany, Luxembourg, and Austria) in relation to their programmes and political strategies.

This classification by Müller-Rommel corresponds with Rüdig's objections. Nevertheless, the siding of Müller-Rommel with Poguntke's 'new politics' formulation suggests that while an awareness of the differentiation existing among green parties is necessary, it does not upset the application of a more general formulation. Nevertheless, current endeavours to map the 'new politics'/left-libertarian dimension find themselves in a peculiar and simultaneously advantageous position. The relatively recent changes that have been experienced in the green

party camp –the moves to hierarchical organizational structures, and participation or support of government coalitions among others- may suggest that the close connection of the green party literature with that of the new social movements must be abandoned, and it is necessary to review existing classifications and possibly develop new ones. For instance, a recent work by Burchell [2002] suggests that the new social movement perspective should be abandoned and instead green parties should be placed in the proper party environment.

More precisely, the changes in organizational structures have been experienced by all green parties albeit with different degrees of intensity among green parties.³ The level of intensity of the conflict over organizational matters is probably indicative of the positioning of green parties in the pure/alternative green parties' dichotomy. Nevertheless, since the end result has been the same, it may be more accurate to suggest that this dichotomy is not applicable anymore.⁴ In addition, the current use of the 'new politics'/left-libertarian category must abandon the examination of organizational structures as a criterion of distinction for the inclusion of the party into the camp. Furthermore, the organizational changes experienced by green parties indicate that they have moved from the most radical end of the continuum, where Poguntke placed them, closer to the position occupied by the small left parties composing with them the 'new politics'/left-libertarian camp. Adding to these the transformation of some orthodox communist parties (Finland, Germany) after the collapse of the Eastern block, we may be in the process of witnessing an expansion of the new politics/left-libertarian camp. However further research is needed in order to give credence to this point.

The above analysis intended to highlight that the political expression of the environmental problematic and other 'new politics' issues can take a left and a green form. By that I am referring to adopted banners rather than the underlying wish for ideological differentiation or strategic prerequisite that each banner may be underlying or the suggested dichotomy between alternative and pure green political formations. It is reasonable to suggest that if both manifestations occupy a national political system then they are in direct competition

³ For a comparative examination of the organizational evolution of green parties see Burchell [2001] and Rihoux [2001].

⁴ For an attempt to explain the trajectory of green parties in accord with the pure/alternative dichotomy see O'Neill [1995, 1997]. For a critique of his analysis see Burchell & Williams [1996]. It should also be noted that the differentiation among green parties in the past was expressed with formation of different groups in the European parliament. Currently all green parties with elected MEPs are represented by the Group of Greens/European Free Alliance. In addition the foundation of the European Federation of Green Parties (EFGP) in 1993 (including parties outside the EU) has led to the development of a common programmatic platform for the European greens which although it reflects an inevitable bargaining among more than a dozen green parties, is certainly less polemical and more comprehensive and pragmatic than earlier attempts of this kind [Bomberg 1998:77-78].

with each other the results of which vary according to other parameters characterising that system.

Green and New Left Parties in Competition.

It has been suggested that in countries where new left parties have been electorally, green parties have not been successful [Kitschelt 1988; Rootes 1995, 1997]. In an earlier work [Karamichas 2001] I engaged in an analytical presentation of the electoral of green parties in twelve European societies in order to test three working hypotheses:

a) Green parties that have established a stronghold in their respective polities during the 1980s act as deterrents toward the rise of successful new left parties. This is the reverse of Kitschelt's assertion.

b) In countries where new left parties have achieved an electoral prominence, there are bleak prospects for green parties to achieve significant electoral success⁵-Kitschelt's assertion.

c) There are polities where the symbiosis of electorally significant new left and green parties is possible.

There I found that for the 1980s, from a total of twelve European countries, only five have experienced significant electoral success by a green party (see table 1). With the exception of Sweden, in all of them, electorally significant parties of the new left have been absent. In contrast, countries with significant new left parties have not produced successful green parties. Therefore, the first two hypotheses have tested positive. Nevertheless, the Swedish case seems to cancel the positiveness of the hypotheses, since it has already experienced a successful new left party, aptly named the Left party. However as Bennulf [1995] informs us, the success of Miljopartiet de gröna in the 1988 Swedish legislative elections can be attributed to the high saliency that environmental issues received in those elections, to a general tendency toward a protest vote and to support from right wing voters due to its appearance as 'neither left or right' [1995:129-40]. It appears then that this initial success of the Swedish greens after seven years of official presence and failure can be attributed to

⁵ Due to the fact that this comparison involves countries utilising different thresholds of parliamentary entry, I have adopted Kitschelt's 4% threshold of electoral significance, though I have accounted at the same for cases of electoral success with less than 4%.

contingent factors.⁶ Nevertheless, the validity of these findings can only be sustained through an examination of the trajectory of 'new politics'/left-libertarian parties in the same group of countries during the 1980s.

Table 1					
Green Parties and the New Left.					
1980s (1981-1990 elections)					

Country	Presence of Significant New Left Party.	Green Autonomous Success	Pre-electoral Alliances	Proportional Representation.
Germany	NO	YES	NO	YES
Belgium	NO	YES	NO	YES
Netherlands	YES	NO	NO	YES
Austria	NO	YES	NO	YES
Switzerland	NO	YES	NO	YES
France	NO	NO	NO	NO
Italy	NO	NO	NO	YES
Britain	NO	NO	NO	NO
Denmark	YES	NO	NO	YES
Sweden	YES	YES	NO	YES
Norway	YES	NO	NO	YES
Finland	NO	YES	NO	YES

Sources: Kitschelt [1988: p. 200-201], except for Switzerland, Ladner [1989])

During the 1990s some changes did occur but not of such significance as to alter or even cancel the earlier assertions. Most of the countries that witnessed significant green parties at various stages during the 1980s did not experience the emergence of the experience of new left challenger. In table 2, where the situation for the 1990s is presented, Finland appears together with Sweden as exceptions, namely countries experiencing a success on both varieties of the 'new politics'/left-libertarian party family. Similarly to the Swedish case, the successful new left party of Finland is what Kitschelt would have called, a 'borderline' left-libertarian party. As Zilliacus [2001] inform us, the Left Wing Alliance (LWA) is the reformed communist party of Finland with support from both post-materialist and materialist cohorts due to its effective mixture of both types of demands in its programme. It seems

⁶ Switzerland is another peculiar case where both of its green parties managed to achieve significant electoral results in the 1987 federal elections [Ladner 1989]. The origins of the GBS (Swiss Green Alliance) in the earlier POCH (Progressive Organizations) may indicate similarities with the Dutch case whereby the earlier alliance of Progressive Organizations transformed itself to the Green Left party. In the Dutch case I have categorised the Green Left as a new left party but the unification of the two Swiss parties in the 1990s suggests a differentiation from the Dutch context that does not allow from the adoption of the same approach.

In addition, the utilization of Kitschelt's 4% threshold of significance presents Italy as lacking either of the two types of 'new politics'/left-libertarian parties. Nevertheless, in reality Italy during the 1980s has been a polity overcrowded with 'new politics/left-libertarian parties with parliamentary representation due to an unusually permissive electoral system sustaining fragmentation throughout the decade [see Diani 1989; Rhodes 1995].

therefore, that the presence of significant green parties does not preclude the emergence of successful new left parties but those are more likely to born out of existing orthodox communist parties which attempt to reform in order to save their faltering electoral fortunes.⁷ Nevertheless, this belated conversion of the Finnish communists has not affected the electoral results of the greens, which have remained stable since 1991. Furthermore, both types of 'new politics'/left-libertarian parties have been participating in governing coalitions since 1995 [see Paastela 2002].

Contrary to Bennulf's prediction, the Swedish greens continue to control a place in the Swedish electoral market. In addition, the socialists have come to depend on green approval in order to govern. The 1994 elections where the greens managed to return to the Rigstag with 5% pf the vote, after their failure in 1991, are regarded by Bennulf as a 'deviant case' and a 'surprise' [Bennulf 1995b:114]. Nevertheless, the continuous success of the Miljopartiet in the 1998 elections suggests the opposite. In my view the success of the Swedish greens can be attributed to the very 'borderline' left-libertarian status of the Left Party. voters interested in supporting a green party bereft of a discourse with Marxist connotations may constitute the pool of support for the Swedish greens.

1990s (1991-2000 elections).							
Country	Presence of Significant New Left Party.	Green Autonomous Success	Pre-electoral Alliances	Proportional Representation.			
Germany	NO	YES	NO	YES			
Belgium	NO	YES	NO	YES			
Netherlands	YES	NO	NO	YES			
Austria	NO	YES	NO	YES			
Switzerland	NO	YES	YES	YES			
France	NO	YES	YES	NO			
Italy	NO	NO	YES	YES			
Britain	NO	NO	NO	NO			
Denmark	YES	NO	YES	YES			
Sweden	YES	YES	NO	YES			

Table 2

Green Parties and the New Left. 1990s (1991-2000 elections).

⁷ The inclusion of the Finnish LWA may create some confusion. If communist parties which reformed themselves in the post 1989 era can be incorporated in the 'New Politics/left-libertarian cleavage, then maybe the reformed communist parties of Germany and Italy should be incorporated as well. Studies by German experts have suggested that those social sectors which in the past would have been attracted by the fundamentalist factions in the Greens are nowadays showing support for the former communist, PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) [see for e.g. Markovits & Silvia 1997]. Lacking a work in English pointing to an explicit New Politics orientation by PDS, I have not experimented with its inclusion in table 2. Nevertheless, that would not have altered in any way my assertions in the main text. It is certain though, that the 'New Politics' scholarly community has to come with a resolution regarding the positioning of the latest wave of renovated communist parties.

Norway	YES	NO	NO	YES
Finland	YES	YES	NO	YES

Sources: Redding & Viterna [1999: p. 469], except for Finland Zilliacus [2001].

Thus hypotheses (a) and (b) have also tested positive for the 1990s. Hypothesis (c) has tested positive only for Sweden and Finland. In the Swedish case there has been a strong pool of support for non-Marxist political ecology and in Finland the late conversion of its communist party to 'new politics' has established the Finnish green party as a permanent and significant feature of the Finnish party system.

The Greens and Socialist Parties.

The emergence and development of green parties is not only conditioned by the trajectory of their close new left competitors but also by the attitude adopted by socialist parties toward post-industrial mobilizations and movements.⁸ The hostility of the German Social Democrats toward the protest politics of the new left played a major role in the emergence and development of the German greens [see Markovits & Gorski 1993]. On the other hand the available literature suggests that the openness of socialist parties to the 'new politics' sectors may produce the opposite results, namely a slow or even negative development of green parties. For instance, the umbrella character of the Labour Party in Britain, which for example encouraged a close relationship with CND, has been highlighted as a contingent factor having an adverse effect on support for the British greens [Rootes 1997b]. Ladrech [1989] has convincingly argued that the inclusive discourse of the French socialist party toward the environmental movement had an adverse impact on the formation of the French greens. Shull [1999], in his comparative study of the German and French greens, has identified a connection between the electoral fortunes of the greens and the ability of socialist parties to present themselves as harbingers of emancipatory politics. When the given socialist party is strong both in the ideological and electoral level then the electoral success of green parties is very unlikely. He has also suggested that the initial adherence of the French greens to a pure green discourse had a lot to do with the appearance of the socialists as capable of incorporating political ecology [1999:55].

Thus it is not surprising that socialist parties have the capacity to capture the voting preference of voters than in other cases would have been voting for greens or their 'new politics'/left-libertarian counterparts. Indeed, a comparative study on the German and French greens suggests that although there is a stronger correlation between post-materialism and

⁸ Sassoon [1997] sees green parties as part of the development of socialism.

electoral support for social democratic parties in both countries (the correlation of support for the French PS by post-materialists is remarkably close to that of the greens) [Hoffman-Martinot 1991:85]. Furthermore, another study [Müller-Rommel 1990:226-27], comparing six European nations (Italy, Denmark, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Germany) points out that supporters of new social movements exhibit a far greater voting preference for social democratic and communist parties than 'new politics' parties. Only on the German case the distance between support for the greens and the SPD is quite small, and the German case is probably the one in which the relationship between its social-democratic party and new social movements and the new left has been the most hostile.

Red and Green Dimensions of Political Ecology in Greece.

Any account of the trajectory of political ecology in Greece would be incomplete without taking into consideration the aforementioned parameters. The initial works on the trajectory of FEA (Federation of Ecologists Alternatives), the first green party of Greece, [Stevis 1993; Demertzis 1995; O'Neill 1997], have failed, albeit in different degrees, to fully incorporate those parameters in their analyses. Most of their attention has been paid to value added parameters, paying in that way little attention to the available debates within the European green party scholarly community.

In addition, neither the study by Kitschelt nor the follow up study by Redding & Viterna [1999] recognise the presence of any significant left-libertarian party in Greece. Greece along with Spain and Portugal are included in Kitschelt's analysis as a proof of his overall point regarding facilitating conditions influencing the development of significant left-libertarian parties, namely extensive left party incumbency in government, neo-corporatist systems of interest intermediation and high social security expenditure. It is likely that a newly democratized country, as Greece was during his research, will lack any of these facilitating conditions. Nevertheless, Redding and Viterna's assertion that Greece, along with Spain, Portugal and the former Eastern block countries, should be excluded from their study as newly democratized countries is undoubtedly a poor excuse for a 1999 study, since Greece (and Spain) has been regarded as a fully consolidated democracy in the relevant literature from the early 1980s [see Gunther et al 1995]. In contrast in due course I shall argue that Greece has experienced a significant 'new politics'/left-libertarian party.

The following paragraphs are an attempt to incorporate the Greek case in the overall European discussion by examining each one of the earlier outlined parameters.

'New Politics' and Green Party Formation in Greece.

Without doubt the experience of authoritarianism and the transition to democracy during the 1970s played a role toward the development of new social movements and consequently toward the development of 'new politics'/left-libertarian parties in Greece. Nevertheless, this democratic delay is not enough on its own to explain the developmental path of these phenomena. The French example is guite revealing. France did not have the experience of an authoritarian regime; however the development of the French greens and especially their relationship with the socialist party contains many similarities with its Greek fellow traveller. The message of "change" transmitted by the French socialist party under the leadership of Mitterrand is in many of its facets similar to that of Papandreou's PASOK. The role of the dictatorship in Greece, according to the view I am supporting here, is that in exile, the socialists came in touch with the ideological developments of the left elsewhere in Europe. In this way, PASOK, at least during the period of opposition, presented itself as a party of the new left capable of representing the new social movements and mobilizations that had already made their presence felt during the period of opening of the dictatorship. The message it presented in relation to the new demands was undoubtedly radical and maybe without too much exaggeration comparable to that of some 'new politics'/left-libertarian parties.⁹ After all, it has, for a long time, been suggested that PASOK along with its Spanish counterpart were the most radical socialist parties in Europe during the 1970s and early 1980s [Petras et al 1993:161; Trumpbour 1993:10].¹⁰

The discourse employed by PASOK at that period was both unrefined and unspecific intended to capture the feelings of the masses of the masses that had been extremely radicalised during the transition period. PASOK's discourse with its lack of specific and symbolic use of historic figures encompassing the "progressive" side in the great political divisions of modern Greek

⁹ One of the slogans bearing a direct link to the demands of the new left as it was expressed in northern Europe is that of 'self-management'. A simple definition of 'self-management' implies the organization of society in an autonomous way with limited or no interference by the state apparatus. The concept received considerable attention from intellectuals of the left in an attempt to give it a substantive content connected sometimes to a need for new social experimentation leading to the emergence of new movements originating at the base of society rather than the top. Nevertheless, PASOK's discourse in opposition regarding self-management 'had little to do with self-management as a strategy for the exercise of power' but 'it was rather proven to be more an expression of a diffuse, unspecified, wish for change, rather than a political proposal of crisis disengagement' [Botopoulos 1994:43-44].

The commonalities with those parties are not only reduced to the discourse employed by PASOK but also by its strong appeal among 'segments of the new middle class' [Trumpbour 1993:13].

¹⁰ The socialist parties of Greece and Spain did not have the restrictions of the Bad-Godesberg programme of the German SPD toward the fledging new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that the approaching among the greens and the SPD began to take shape after the new basic programme of Berlin (1989), where the social-democratic tradition merged with the demands of the new social movements. For a detailed analysis of these developments and their impact see Meyer [1997].

history¹¹ had tuned into the growing swing of the Greek public to the left and the demand of the excluded for access to power. The communist left was unable to resist the sweeping tide of PASOK and initially encouraged it (particularly KKE) under the umbrella of ELE ($E\theta\nu\mu\kappa\eta$ Aaïκή Eνότητα/ National Popular Unity).

For a well known figure of the Greek extra-parliamentary left who was later to play a prominent role in the developments within FEA, the coming of PASOK to power can be seen as an overall victory for the left.

The triumph of the front that came to power cannot be understood solely or mainly through its social form...but as a general political and cultural triumph of the Left. We must assume that the victory of ELE concerns, to a lesser or greater extent, all the parties of the Left, even extra-parliamentary forces. Because, it may be the case that PASOK took central government power, but next to it, with it, the remaining forces of the left participated in its distribution [Karampelias 1989:224-25].

When a party of the left touches so heavily upon the demands and discourse of the new social movements sectors it is unlikely that it is going to be ignored by them. Only new social movement sectors subscribing to anti-partyist logic are more likely to reject the offer of utilising via incorporation the extensive resources of an established political party. A good example proving this point can be found in the trajectory of the Greek feminist movement. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that from all the promises that PASOK made before its advent to power, those related to women's issues were the ones it abided by the most. PASOK's reforms were important and certainly took away a lot of the momentum that an autonomous feminist movement might have gained as it aptly demonstrated that use of existing resources and structures, to use a resource mobilization perspective, were a worthy compromise toward the promotion of the most urgent demands of the feminist movement [see Kyriazis 1995]. Some commentators go as far as to suggest that the barrage of legislative reforms brought by PASOK in government stand in an advantageous position when compared with similar legislation elsewhere in Europe [Tzannatos 1986:110-11].

¹¹ Characteristically, Voulgaris [2001:94] argues that PASOK's 'social poly-collectivism was matched by a historical poly-collectivism, which was overcoming the contradictions through its selective use and limited engagement'.

The impact of PASOK toward the fledgling environmental movement of is demonstrated by the fact that a significant number of ecological initiatives and committees active during the transition period ceased to exist with its electoral victory in 1981 [see Tremopoulos 1992:20-21].¹²

Nevertheless, regardless of the rhetoric, prominent PASOK cadres, seemingly keen on the ecological discourse when in opposition, began to dismiss it as utopian after they assumed office [Louloudis 1987:16], while most of the professional organizations active during the transition period on environmental issues became 'less willing to facilitate environmental activities', mainly due to the employment of many of their members by the new administration [Stevis 1993:89]. With its accession to power, PASOK announced a set of environmental measures, including the infamous 'hundred days programme against nephos (smog)', forgotten in less than hundred days by its authors [Schizas 1993:44].

In 1982 the ecological journal of Ecology and Nature (Οικολογία και Φύση) published its first issue in the publishing house of a prominent PASOK parliamentarian. Two years later the journal changed its name to New Ecology (νέα Οικολογία) after its publisher decided to stop its publication because of its strong critique of PASOK's environmental policy. This is the period where PASOK's leadership has de facto shut any intra-party or affiliated opposition to its decisions. It is worth mentioning that as early as 1982 the violent repression of a local mobilization in northern Greece produced the Ecological Movement of Thessalonica. From the first years of socialist administration the gap between PASOK's rhetoric and praxis began to become evident to activists in the ecology movement. At the same time their composition experienced a generational change with the incorporation of younger cohorts socialised in the mobilizations and riots involving extra-parliamentary and anarchists groups in the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹³

Kitschelt's is quite right in arguing that Greece lacked during his research any significant 'new politics'/left-libertarian formation. KKE-in (Κομμουνιστικό Κόμμα Ελλάδαςεσωτερικού/Greek Communist Party-interior), the Euro-communist party of Greece, squeezed

¹² The inclusion of environmental protection in PASOK's discourse of "change" is manifested in Papandreou's programmatic presentation after the inauguration of the new government in the Greek parliament [see the paragraphs cited in Tsakiris 1997:11-12].

¹³ EKO (Εναλλακτική Κίνηση Οικολόγων/Alternative Movement of Ecologists) and the Ecological Movement of Thessalonica are two examples of ecological groups composed by this type of activists. The occupation of the School of Chemistry in Athens by extra-parliamentary leftists and anarchists in 1979 was their main reference point. It is very important to mention that in the extensive riots that took place in and around the vicinity of the Chemistry School, the protesters did not only collided with the riot police (MAT) but also with the youth of the communist party (KNE) which subsequently violently ejected the occupiers from the university premises.

between PASOK and KKE and experiencing really weak electoral results was definitely not the party to be incorporated in Kitschelt's analysis. Nevertheless, the new left credentials of that party cannot be disputed. The feminist organization of KKE-in, KDG (Kίνημα Δημοκρατικών Γυναικών/Movement of Democratic Women) had a semi-autonomous relationship with the party and the experience of a respect for the differentiation of the feminist demands from the general socialist struggle. In fact, according to one commentator [Marantzidis 1996:120], KKE-in allowed itself to be influenced so much by KDG that it eventually abolished its communist character (meaning the predominance of the working class struggle).

In 1987, KKE-in experienced a split and the largest part officially relinquished its communist identity and renamed itself to EAR (Ελληνική Αριστερά/Greek Left). The other part of the party became known as KKE-in A-A (Ανανεωτική Αριστερά/Renovatory Left) and interestingly enough it turned completely to political ecology [Stevis 1993:91]. EAR formed its very own Ecological Chapter (Τμήμα Οικολογίας και Περιβάλλοντος της Ελληνικής Αριστεράς). The ecologists of EAR had an ambition to transform EAR into a green party. This is evident in the one and only publication of this organization [see Louloudis 1988:11] but also from an earlier publication where a prominent member calls for the necessity of the incorporation of the ecological discourse into to that of the left [see Louloudis 1986:192]. The formation of SYN (Συνασπισμός της Αριστεράς και της Προόδου/Coalition of the Left and Progress) in December 1988, a coalition among KKE, EAR and other left-wing elements [Pridham & Verney 1991:51] meant for the ecologists of EAR that their 'new politics' sensitivities would be of lesser importance than the old politics of KKE and of course that their aspiration for EAR's transformation had to be abandoned. As a result, most of them abdicated from EAR and later joined in the formation of FEA.

Recent works have presented the path to green party formation in Greece in detail [Botetzagias 2001; Karamichas 2002]. For the purposes of this paper it suffices to highlight that the foundation of FEA in October 1989 was mainly due to the positive results achieved in the European elections of the same year¹⁴, the growing euphoria for the general success of green parties and lists across Europe in general and the 15% achieved by the British greens in particular and the perceived opening of the political opportunity structure due to the

¹⁴ A group of ecologists decided to participate in the European elections of 1989 under the banner of Ecologists-Alternatives with little official support from the groups comprising the then Federation of Ecological Groups. The 1.1% was regarded as a positive sign, considering the very low threshold (1.36%) and the similar results achieved by other (pseudo-) green parties participating in the same elections, and encouraged other ecologists to abandon their misgivings and participate in the deliberations for party formation.

widespread disappointment with the mainstream political parties and the more proportional electoral system.¹⁵

FEA participated in elections only forty days after its foundation and managed to send one MP to the Greek parliament with 0.60% of the vote. This sudden success certainly increased the visibility of the ecology movement but it had some negative consequences leading to the quick demise of FEA. The ideological and strategic fermentation that took place eventually in other green parties in Europe due to an early experimentation and a process of learning by default and, we should add a lack of serious possibility of governmental office, did not take place in the Greek case. FEA was confronted at the most primordial stage of its development with issues that other green parties had to face when they had consolidated both their internal organization and a place in their respective political systems. With its first participation in national elections, FEA was placed in a position to influence the political system and achieve governmental office. As O'Neill [1997:240] has stated, FEA could have had experienced 'the quickest elevation to national office of any European green party'. So, from the very beginning, the fledgling green party of Greece experienced a challenge that the most successful and best known example of green parties, the German greens, experienced more than a decade after its first electoral success. This event, combined with the rise of nationalism in the Balkans and the inability of the groups comprising FEA to agree on stable organizational structures, at such an early stage, led to the early demise of FEA in 1992 [see Karamichas 2001; Karamichas & Botetzagias forthcoming; Botetzagias forthcoming]. Had things been different, FEA, as political scientists were predicting at the time, 'could have covered the left space as a systemic party in Greek politics' [Katsoulis 1990:41]. A year before FEA's demise (December 1991), SYN experienced a rift between KKE and the renovatory elements of EAR which subsequently led to KKE's abdication and return to its Marxist-Leninist orientation. Following that, SYN transformed itself from a coalition into a party in June 1992.

Political Ecology after the demise of FEA.

FEA can be rightly seen as the last attempt by the alternative sectors of Greek politics to penetrate the political system. For a great number of activists the failure of the experimentation with party politics did not mean the abandonment of their activities at the societal level but this time those activities have begun to be centred on NGOs rather than loose citizens' networks with a radical ideology underpinning them. A smaller proportion of FEA's militants did not abandon the idea that an independent eco-political option needs to

¹⁵ For a very well presented review and analysis in English of the political climate of those days, PASOK's involvement in scandals and the electoral law see Featherstone [1990].

have a place in Greek politics. For the latter group of activists the failure of FEA was attributed to the presence of militant extra-parliamentary leftists in its ranks that were creating unnecessary conflict.

In 1994 that group managed to form a last minute list under the name Political Ecology for participation in the European elections which managed to achieve an extremely poor 0.3% of the vote.¹⁶ At the same time the banner of Ecologists-Alternatives under which the Greek greens first participated in the European elections of 1989 began to make again their appearance. Those activists participated in the 1998 municipal and prefectural elections with the list of the mayoral candidate for Athens supported by KKE. Although these kinds of collaborations at the local level over the candidature of a certain political personality do not signify the change of character of the still orthodox KKE, they nevertheless suggest that issues affecting the quality of life and the environment have gone up in the political agenda of KKE as well. For the same elections the Ecological Movement of Thessalonica collaborated with SYN managing to elect its leader, Michalis Tremopoulos as a prefectural councillor.

During the same year the activists of Political Ecology joined with some other former FEA militants to form yet another green party under the banner Green Politics which was subsequently accepted in the European Federation of Green Parties. Nevertheless, the most important development took place in 1999 with the national elections of 2000 approaching. After successive contacts between the Renovatory Initiative (Ανανεωτική Πρωτοβουλία) of SYN and the Ecologists-Alternatives a programmatic agreement was formed and a number of greens including two of the former MPs of FEA participated in those elections as candidates of SYN. The participation of greens in the ranks of SYN was of extreme importance; in fact it is an undisputable fact that SYN managed to surpass the 3% threshold required under the Greek electoral law for parliamentary representation thanks to the green participation in its electoral lists.¹⁷

Nevertheless, after the national elections the leader of PASOK announced the award of a ministerial position to Elias Efthymiopoulos, a prominent green who had participated in FEA at its early stages until he left to become the president of Greenpeace-Greece. PASOK's environmental overtures to ecology increased even further with the announcement of the foundation of a National centre for the Environment and Sustainable Development (Εθνικό Κέντρο Περιβάλλοντος και Αειφόρου Ανάπτυξης) to be headed by Michalis Modinos, the

¹⁶ See also Carter [1994].

¹⁷ The electoral strength of SYN declined by about 2% in comparison to its electoral score in the 1996 general elections. That meant a loss of four seats in the parliament.

former editor of New Ecology and prominent figure in the deliberations of FEA. The de facto incorporation of ecologists in the ranks of PASOK and the governmental echelons is a manifestation of the increased salience of the environmental issue and pressures at the EU In addition, the new discourse of 'modernization' (εκσυγχρονισμός) level for action. employed by the leadership of PASOK with its emphasis on lessening the power of the state and empowering the citizens is regarded as a project that is 'compatible with ecology' by those incorporated in its ranks [see Efthymiopoulos, To Vima 29/10/2000].

The loose collaboration of the Ecologists-Alternatives with SYN has led to a process for the transformation of SYN to a green party in the image of the Dutch Groen Links (Green left) with the incorporation of collaborating greens in its ranks and an ecological addition in its title. This process has been weighted carefully by both sides. The ecologists-Alternatives do not want to join SYN as an icing on the cake and those in SYN who are positively predisposed to such a development do not want to alienate the old left sectors of the party and provoke their abdication. Nevertheless, such a development has received the strong support of the Renovatory Initiative and the Ecology Section of the party. In January 2001 the Central Political Committee of the party decided to approve the proposals of the Ecology Section 'to continue the process of co-ordination with ecological movements and to discuss prior to the Programmatic Congress of the party the possibility of changing the title to Coalition of the Left and Ecology.¹⁸ As part of this process, a year later (21/1/2002) the Renovatory tendency held a pre-congress conference entitled 'The meeting of ecology with the left'. This pre-congress conference highlighted the necessity for SYN to show to the general public by adopting an explicit ecological title what changes have taken place in its physiognomy.¹⁹

While these processes were taking place for the transformation of SYN to an explicit greenleft political force another initiative was founded by the Ecological Movement of Thessalonica, Green Politics and some of the Ecologists-Alternatives collaborating with SYN. The Ecological Forum as it became known organised a number of conferences aiming at 'the re-foundation of the ecological movement', an imperative for the expression of a radical ecological critique and the development of a proper social movement. It is clear though that the covert aim of this initiative was to re-unite the greens toward the formation of another green party. Indeed, five months after the second Panhellenic meeting of the Forum a new green political formation called Ecologists Greens was founded (07/10/2002) with the

 ¹⁸ See the proposals by Th. Margaritis of the Ecology Section of SYN: <u>http://www.ananeotiki.gr/perivallon/kentrikipolitikiepitropi.htm</u>
¹⁹ The delegates speeches can be found in <u>http://www.ananeotiki.gr/main.htm</u>

participation of Green Politics, Ecological Movement of Thessalonica and ten more green groups representing an equal number of prefectures. Following this development and presumably as a reaction to it, thirty-two ecologists collaborating with SYN have recently decided to incorporate themselves in its ranks as a Green left tendency. In their announcement to the press they stipulated that 'the Green Left belongs to the current of radical ecology and through its expression in the ranks of SYN intends to attempt a permanent link with the new left of social movements, promoting the ideas of the respective current of Green Left politics developing in the whole of Europe' [Eleftherotypia, 14/02/2003]. Recently, the delayed Programmatic Conference of the Party decided by a 59% majority to change the name of the party to that of Coalition of the Left, Social Movements and Ecology [Eleftherotypia, 02/06/2003].

Concluding Remark

It is very early to make predictions on the future directions of each one of these green initiatives but it is certain following the analytical presentation of the European experience at the beginning of this paper that the realistic option for political ecology in Greece is through collaborations with SYN, the 'new politics'/left-libertarian party with the capacity to give parliamentary representation to the 'new politics' demands. The increased visibility of Green Politics during the past three years as a key organiser of 'anti-globalization' initiatives is not enough to suggest a possibility for the Ecologists-Greens to surpass the 3% threshold in national elections. On the contrary the strategic involvement of SYN in the Greek Social Forum with its adoption colourful protest tactics may be capable under the current climate of protest politics to increase SYN's electoral strength.

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