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“The Greek Political System in Crisis”

It's 1988 all over again. The moral and ideological collapse of a tired, saturated elite; systemic failures and institutionalised corruption; the rise of the left (and of the far right) as an oppositional and anti-systemic cry; an electoral system that in its second application (which will also be its last) will allow us a glimpse of public discontent with Greek democracy.

The only difference between 2008 and 1988 is the fact that Greek voters are not really *citizens* any more - they are *consumers*. Greek public opinion is beyond fear, anger, scepticism or frustration. It has gone into a post-depressive state of apathy and detachment. The fact that people are numb was already clear during last year's fires and elections. Key demographic groups have given up hope for the collective good and are focusing on their individualistic, materialistic aspirations.

In 1988 there was genuine anger, shock and the seeds of a collective need for modernisation – a longing for Europeanization – which eventually led to the hegemony of the Simitis project. There is no such plan or clear desire emerging in the public sphere today. The main agencies of power, such as government, the political parties, the state, public intellectuals and the media (the famous Fourth Estate), are in danger of making themselves irrelevant. They are acting as entertainers of TV audiences in the biggest reality soap-opera.

It looks as if Greece is finally letting go of the values and hierarchies of modernism, and entering a fluid, cynical post-modernism in which reality and fiction are difficult to disentangle. We are well into the 21st century.

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