

## 2.5 **Not just... ‘Angry music for angry people’<sup>1</sup>: Thessaloniki’s DIY music activity and ‘The Capitalist State of Metapolitefsi’**

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### × **Abstract**

From 1974 until 1981, Greece was experiencing the transition to parliamentary democracy (Metapolitefsi)<sup>3</sup> with a right-wing government trying to restore the democratic state’s institutions but being incapable to follow the radicalization of young people (Sklavenitis, 2016, p. 104). At the same time the first steps of a DIY culture and its artifacts (bands, studios, zines, pirate radio stations etc.) took place in Thessaloniki Greece (Karamoutsiou, forthcoming). According to Vernardakis (2014) during the 80s Greece was facing the effort of the neoliberal political and ideological domination and institutionalization. To what extent could we say that the radicalization of the youth was empowered and expressed through DIY ethos and its artifacts and vice versa? Could we assume that DIY music practices were being, an alternative to ‘The Capitalist state of Metapolitefsi’ (Vernadakis, 2014)? The afore questions will be answered through stories of the DIY music scene of Thessaloniki from the 80s.

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**Keywords:** DIY music scene, Thessaloniki Greece, Metapolitefsi.

## **Introduction**

The following narrative is based upon the hypothesis that the growth of DIY music activities in Thessaloniki in the 80s had taken place, on the one hand, due to the internal political and cultural circumstances of the decade (the “other” Metapolitefsi) and, on the other hand, due to the advent of punk music along with the Do-it-yourself (DIY) ethos. I am talking about a different Metapolitefsi that critically fought back the *modus vivendi*<sup>4</sup> of the first years of the political changeover, the phenomenally smooth democratic transition, the Konstantinos Karamanlis’ moderate political ethics (Karamanlis, 1974), and the modernizing conservative measures of his Europeanism (Rizas, 2018).

Therefore, I believe that the vivid music collectives in Thessaloniki Greece of the 80s were embodying through their music artifacts and practices the cultural expression of this ‘other’ Metapolitefsi. The first and basic step was made through setting up their DIY music studios and systematizing their DIY soundproofing rehearsal process and music collective creation. Then they moved forward to organizing DIY musical events and setting up music venues. Also, in the mid-80s fanzines that promoted the local scene were created and of course

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3. A military junta was governing the country fourteen years ago for seven years (1967-1974).

4. “It constitutes a one-sided agreement that obliges the dominated classes to accept the conditions of their dominance. Conversely, it binds the dominant classes to respect some constraints and to acknowledge certain rights of the dominated” (Sakellariopoulos, 2001, p. 37).

dozens of independent labels were born in order the DIY music creation to be circulated. Thessaloniki's music collectives of the 80s managed through DIY and Do it together (DIT) processes and practices to create their own infrastructure organized through the music creation (studios), its performances (venues) and its promotion (fanzines and labels).

In the first part of the following essay there will be a context analysis of the music activities of Thessaloniki. By context I mean the historical environment of this 'other Metapolitefsi' along with the DIY ethos. In the second part we will be guided to the infrastructure of this incredibly creative and vivid DIY music scene.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.1 The 'other Metapolitefsi'

The movement of university squatting of 1979-1980, that was the youngster's powerful answer to the government's conservative educational law, gave rise to a "sphere of multiple disputes" whose central quality was autonomy, and to a new political "space" (Sklavenitis, 2016, p. 89) that was "colorful, dynamic and radical" (Karamanolakis & Karpozilos, 2019: 6), like a distinctive and belated domestic "May '68" (Souzas, 2015, p. 72). Through this 'space', new issues emerged relating to the environment, bodily autonomy and sexual orientation, feminism, and resistance to patriarchy, as well as the movement of conscientious objectors (Karamanolakis & Karpozilos, 2019 p. 6). Thus, it could be stated that "politics' meaning was broadened to include all the activities and relationships of daily life" (Souzas, 2015, p. 72). Such activities include the artistic expression of this new political space with music playing a prominent

role and particularly the rock idioms. I believe that this 'tradition', created amidst the aforementioned political processes, formed the ideological and political basis of the DIY music activity in the city of Thessaloniki.

The creation of rock music in Greece began and grew significantly at the beginning of the 1980s, while politics and rock music had been linked since 1978 by parts of the youth who wanted to set free from the transition policies and their cultural expression. Later on in the 1980s, this link became even stronger with the advent of punk in Greece in 1979 (Bozinis, 2006, p. 256; Tourkopoulos, 1984, p. 50) and its diffusion among young groups who not only "felt suffocated by the dominant political discourse, the influence of the political parties and the conservatism of the Greek society" (Kymionis, 2014, p. 520) but also were dissatisfied with the state care for their cultural expression through the General Secretariat for Youth (GSY).<sup>6</sup>

The political planning of PASOK<sup>7</sup> regarding the youth did not only include GSY and funding of cultural events but also practices of political suppression. The operation 'Virtue'<sup>8</sup> was directed to the youth of Athens, specifically in Exarheia, while similar operations were undertaken in Thessaloniki too. Bozinis talks about groups of young rock fans gathering in Achilleio, Thessaloniki that were joined by punks from 1979 onwards. In 1981, when PASOK was elected, the punks made their presence felt by taking part in the first squattings of houses that took place at the time (Bozinis, 2006, p. 259). Since the early 80s, these groups started to hang out mainly at the Tsirogiannis park or at the café NTORE opposite the

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5. Music scene has been defined in several ways. For example, Straw describes it as a space that, different musical practices interact and coexist in a specific geographical region or in a specific urban setting (1991, 368-388). Shank defines music scene as a productive community that represents itself through music in a specific geographical place (Bealle, 2013). The concept of community was used before 'music scene' and is considered to imply a, not so stable and homogeneous, group of people (Straw, 1991, p. 373). Nevertheless, recent critical approaches use the term community, to describe a more romantic and wider construction, in which music is a common practice (Stefanou, 2009, pp. 132-133). In any case if we try to describe the DIY music activities of that time in Thessaloniki through the concepts, we are going to face several problems. In case of using the 'music scene' term we will not be able to include, nor the plurality of music idioms that we meet - because when we are talking about a music scene we usually talk about a specific music idiom (Bennet & Peterson, 2004) - nor the historical background of the phenomenon. Moreover, the DIY music activities in the 80s have not been clearly, in total, as much away from hierarchical relationships of music industry as the concept of music community (Stefanou, 2009, pp. 132-133) implies. During those years we could describe Thessaloniki's music making DIY activities using Shank's scene definition. So, we are talking about a productive DIY music community in Thessaloniki, that represents itself mostly through specific rock idioms such as, punk, post punk, garage punk, new wave, hardcore.

6. PASOK founded the General Secretariat for Youth in 1983 under the direction of Kostas Laliotis (Sklavenitis, 2016, p. 118). Its aim was to promote a policy of anti-conformism and plurality regarding, among others, the cultural artifacts of the youth and the management of free time. This was achieved through funding of institutions, such as the Biennale of Young Artists in Thessaloniki in 1986 and the Rock in Athens Festival in 1985 (Lagos, 2014, p. 517).

7. Acronym derived from the Pan-Hellenic Socialistic Party.

8. Romanized to 'Areti'.

White Tower and next to the Officers' Club (historical center of the city), while such gathering places were also found in Ampelokipous and Neapoli (west part of the city) (Souzas, 2015, p. 73). At that period, the first punk and new wave bands were formed in Thessaloniki.

## 1.2 DIY ethos in Thessaloniki

Thus, the processes that started in the '70s were realized during the 1980s and resulted in the creation of a Greek youth culture. What is of interest here is, on the one hand, Bozinis' (2006, p. 264) observation that "punk music associated rock with politics, therefore, associating the personal with the social, for the first time in our country", and, on the other hand, Kymionis' (2014, p. 520) insightful point that the advent of punk both as a genre and as a culture diffused among "young groups who felt suffocated by the dominant political discourse, the influence of the political parties and the conservatism of the Greek society". To this, I would add that punk in Greece was diffused among other music communities as well, which were empowered and led to a phase of unprecedented and wild original music creation. In this way, music fused to politics and vice versa at the time. In fact, the motto 'Do it yourself' happened to be the most effective reaction to the commercialization of daily life and the alienation in the Greek society that a considerable part of the youth shrewdly saw and criticized. Those people tried to create their own course based on autonomy through their musical expression and by developing their own infrastructure of creation, performance, and promotion.

For this to happen, though, the downfall of experts and big stars was necessary as well as the reinforcement of the conviction that everyone is not only capable of being a creator but also that they should be one (Dunn, 2016, p. 5). Through the DIY ethos, therefore, the creative initiatives and the "amateuris"<sup>9</sup> are praised (Spencer, 2005, p. 3) and at the same time the opportunities for empowerment and political resistance of individuals and societies are provided (Dunn, 2016, p. 9). The ability to control the production media reduces censorship and increases freedom which are both necessary for someone to find their voice and to create "a society

in which individuals and small groups dare to reclaim the right to develop their own procedures their own networks" (McClary, 2009, p. 158).

However, is the DIY ethos a matter of political ethos or a necessity? For example, according to Moran (2010, pp. 58-65), punks were led to create every aspect of their sub-culture because there was no record label interested in their music. Similarly, it is observed that Greek labels during the 1970s and 1980s showed no interest in rock bands due to the democratic transition (Metapolitefsi) and the dominance of political art Greek music. Even if the impressive and innovative initiatives that occurred in Thessaloniki at that period were a product of necessity, they were nonetheless a reflection of what is described here as the DIY ethos. In conclusion, the 'other Metapolitefsi' and the DIY culture, as portrayed so far, established the framework in which the youth of the 1980s was empowered politically and musically so that they could create an autonomous and self-managed music community in Thessaloniki.

## 2.1 The DIY music studios in Thessaloniki

In the early 1980s, young musicians were increasingly attempting the creation of original content trying to find their voice, using cover versions of songs as a preliminary process of band 'bonding' (Stefanos, 2020) and to familiarize with their musical instrument (Melfos & Miggas, 2020). As Firth (1996, p. 55) mentions, in this way imitation serves as the basis for creation. Thus, collective creation requires lots of free time and space and young people realized that and stood up for it as "most bands wanted their own (studio) and time in it" (Tselios, 2020, n/p).

At that period, music groups multiplied and faced serious problems of musical equipment and of housing their creative force. At first, it was a common practice to put up DIY studios and to record in the musicians' houses or in houses of their friends. For example, the band 'Plus and Minus'<sup>10</sup> (forerunner of 'Out of Control')<sup>11</sup> were rehearsing in the basement of the two-story house of the band's singer *Apostolos Dadatsis* in Neapoli with only basic equipment and without soundproofing (Miggas, 2020). That was the case of the band *Toeeon*, too, who were rehearsing in the basement of Thanasis Pliakis' house who was the guitarist, singer, and lyric writer of the band<sup>12</sup>.

9. "In exalting amateurism, they laid the foundation for a populist medium of cultural production in which passion, energy, and having something to say are more important than technical proficiency." (Moore, 2007, p. 446).

10. Romanized to 'Sin ke Plin'.

11. Romanized to 'Ektos Elenghou'.

12. Available at: <http://giusurum.blogspot.com/2016/09/toeeon.html>

However, through such narrations an additional problem arises, that of the neighborhood disturbance due to lack of soundproofing. This led the musicians to search for remote buildings and it might have also caused the setting up of studios to become more systematized. Creating DIY soundproofing with egg cartons, polystyrene foam, and carpeting (Tselios et al., 2020; Vlahou, 2018) and searching for remote places away from densely populated areas seemed to become established practices.

Most groups preferred to have their own place or to share a DIY music studio together with other groups to save money and to share the equipment<sup>13</sup> (Tselios & Miggas, 2020). As mentioned before, the new groups of that period did not only cover their favorite songs, but they also started creating their own music using the form and conventions of the music genres of their interest. This process was usually time-consuming, since its musical product was a result of long improvisations (jamming) until it was finalized and ready for recording (Gioka, 2018; Melfos & Tselios, 2020). Babis Papadopoulos, guitarist of the band *Holes*<sup>14</sup>, pointedly said: “we did a lot of work, we constantly rehearsed, we played music all the time...” (snippet from the documentary ‘A Shout Out to the Way Out’, 2017). Such statements then indicate that DIY studios at the time served exclusively as places for rehearsals and not as recording studios. They were places where the process of creation took place, from experimentation and repetition until systematization and finalizing of the result. It should be noted here that the musical activity and practices emerging from these DIY music studios are considered by the present study to be not just a part of the DIY culture of Thessaloniki but a root cause of its development.

## 2.2 DIY concerts and music festivals

Due to the lack of available and suitable, for a rock performance, concert hall, live performances were taking place frequently at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki since the early 1980s. The students’ freedom was secured by the university asylum at least by common law until 1982 (Kanellopoulos, 2009), while universities and students were thought of as heroic in the collective consciousness of the transition period after the student Polytechnic uprising and the tank invasion of 1973.

All the individuals who narrated their stories referred to the university and the live performances in which they were either audience or participants as musicians or event assistants. A big portion of those musicians were never students at that university. During the 80s and particularly over the last years of the decade, the live performances at the AUTH were a weekly event for most of the music collectivities of the city.

In the first years of the 1980s, musical evenings were often planned at the university, specifically, at the university canteen (Melfos, 2020), at the Architects’ auditorium, at the square in front of the Chemistry School and, generally, at the auditoriums of many schools. “(There were) many live events at student parties and I remember live music being played on every floor of the School of Architecture simultaneously” (Koutsaris, 2018, n/p). Thanasis Nikolaidis (member of Yoghurt) recalls one of his first concerts during the carnival celebrations at the School of Architecture where the audience gathered was so big and enthusiastic that many damages were caused: “Just as we started playing, people broke the doors...they even made us play behind the doors... at that time such rock sounds were not common...whoever played rock loudly was...” (Nikolaidis, 2020, n/p).

This narration indicates, among other issues, the lack of appropriate performance venues. In addition, the sound systems were usually of really bad quality and the places were inappropriate due to bad acoustics. However, these factors did not reduce the audiences’ and the musicians’ enthusiasm: “Inside the canteen... with two amplifiers and a drum set, imagine the chaos, in other words, you couldn’t listen to the music, but we liked it a lot” (Melfos, 2020, n/p).

These self-managed performances continued fervently for years and took place at the AUTH campus or at several schools that were occupied, such as the Schools of Physics and Mathematics and the bands included the Grover, Out of Control and Gulag (Gioka, 2018). Through the activities of those years until 1986, a DIY ‘tradition’ was born in the sense of an evolving and conveyable body of knowledge. In other words, it was like self-education from the musical act and creation to the impeccable planning of a music festival.

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13. In the 3rd issue of the local fanzine *Rollin Under* there was a classified ad.: “We are searching for a group to share a studio in Thessaloniki. We provide drums and a guitar amplifier 60W. If there is an available space, it would be even better. More information through Lazy Dog 623451” (October 1986, p. 37).

14. Romanized to ‘Tripes’.

## 1984 Neapoli's Festival

In 1984, a three-day festival was organized by the self-managed youth community of Neapolis (west side of the city) at a park of the area. In this festival, Thessaloniki's musical presence was very strong, since bands had significantly increased between 1982 and 1984, though without many opportunities for live performances: "Many musicians played there...whoever was in the city..." (Miggas, 2020, n/p). Indeed, there are several videos that attest the participation of many bands in this festival, like *Out of Control*<sup>15</sup>, *Mosquitoes*<sup>16</sup>, *Holes*<sup>17</sup>, *Berkebe*, *International Comedy*, *Yoghurt* and, possibly, *New Rose and Grover*.

Looking into the audiovisual content available on the Internet, one could also recognize the festival's DIY nature and the quality of self-management. The stage was relatively small, covered with tarp and there was a blue ladder left on it. The video quality cannot convey the real sound of the event, but the instruments, the electric guitars, the bass and the drums prevailed over the vocals for the most part.<sup>18</sup>

## 1986 Three-day musical event at Kalogries

Two years later, in June 1986, the self-managed youth community of Neapolis and the groups related to it organized a legendary three-day event at Nuns.<sup>19</sup> "Kalogries was a spot on the west side of the city where a huge live performance took place and people went crazy...it was great" (Gioka, 2018, n/p). In fact, this place is now where Lazaristes Monastery theater is located, in Stavroupolis (Zigkeridis, 2020). Like the previous festival, this one was mentioned by many informants of the research.

In this festival, many of the bands that had played in the previous events appeared as well as new bands that formed through the developments of the years 1984-1986, like Moot Point, Indignant Citizens<sup>20</sup> Special Forces<sup>21</sup>, and others. But this event also hosted bands from Athens like White Symphony<sup>22</sup> Panx Romana, Anti Troppau Council, Chaos Generation<sup>23</sup> and Litis & Trik. The main rock idioms played were punk, new wave, rock n' roll, while heavy metal was also introduced. This event was significantly bigger and more organized than the previous one.

It is notable that most of the informants of the research had attended these events. This fact proves that these musical events played a significant role in the evolution of the music communities of the time. Such concerts helped bands get to know each other, while they also encouraged some people to take up music. The communication in these networks of people is also attested by the exchange of members between bands.

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## Late 1980s at AUTh: the perfect embodiment of the DIY and DIT ethos

In 1988, the group HELL ENTERPRISES<sup>24</sup> was formed which organized three live performances at AUTh from

15. Romanized to 'Ektos Elenghou'.

16. Romanized to 'Konopes'.

17. Romanized to 'Tripes'.

18. In this video, at the end of the song 'Another Solution' Romanized to 'Alli lisi' the singer of Berkebe tells the sound engineer: "Sound master, raise the vocals!" [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5HJxhQWXTQ&ab\\_channel=Tom67R](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5HJxhQWXTQ&ab_channel=Tom67R)

19. Romanized to 'Kalogries'.

20. Romanized to 'Aganaktismenoi Polites'.

21. Romanized to 'Idikes Dinamis'.

22. Romanized to 'Lefki Simfonia'.

23. Romanized to 'Genia tou Haous'.

24. Romanized to 'KOLASI ENTERPRISES'.

January to September of that year. More specifically, the first took place in January 1988 with Disorder<sup>25</sup> and Homo Detritus together with the Thessaloniki-based band Gulag, the second in May as a protest against nuclear weapons and the third in September with the British band Chaos UK. Finding a space was not a problem thanks to the asylum, however, there are many aspects when it comes to event planning, such as finding sound systems. The following year (1989) the group got bigger and changed its name to The... Presents<sup>26</sup>. The collectivity consisted of 24 people, many of which were members of the bands Gulag, Was is and will be, Nausea<sup>27</sup> and Dalailama. With the collective contribution of its members, this newly formed group bought PA systems to bring the problem of sound system to an end.

In the mid-1980s (possibly in 1986), two of the members of the group Nausea<sup>28</sup>, Sonia Vlahou and Vaggelis Haholos, travelled to Milan to attend a punk festival organized by the people of a squatting. Their experiences and the people they met there (such as the group Homo Detritus) had an enormous influence on them. Moreover, after the last event of Hell ENTERPRISES hosting Chaos UK, Nausea went off to a European tour with the British band (Haholos, 1991, p. 47). Similarly, Gulag also went on a tour at the same period. Both tours were organized by DIY European and Balkan networks of the DIY communities of various countries (Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Yugoslavia) and the performances took place in self-managed spaces (Karamoutsiou 2020, p. 68) and that really inspired the two bands.

These experiences seem to have motivated the musicians to have a vision and to set up a self-managed music space in the occupied Faculty of Philosophy of AUTH. It was named 'haunt'<sup>29</sup> of the Faculty of Philosophy' or simply haunt and it was set up by leftist groups of the Schools of Psychology, History. Therefore, around 1988-1989 Nausea, Was is and will be, Dalailama and Gulag, which probably acted as a link between political and music collectivities, thought about taking advantage of that free space in the basement and setting up a stage.

Every weekend, different performances took place with bands from Thessaloniki, Athens, Patra or other Greek and foreign cities (Europe and USA), with a very low price: "There was no way we would leave someone out if they had no money to pay" (Vlahou, 2018, n/p). There was a wide variety of music idioms played in these performances, but the main ones were punk, post punk, garage punk, new wave, and hardcore. The existence of 'haunt' was a crucial point in the history of music of Thessaloniki, since its space-time encouraged the development of human networks that advanced the music scene.<sup>30</sup> The people behind 'haunt' achieved to create a space that served as a place of inspiration and empowerment to young musicians, who might have started playing music because of that one night at 'haunt' hosting their favorite band.

## 2.1. Fanzines of Thessaloniki: the 'Rollin Under' case

An ideal expression of the DIY ethos was the fanzines (Souzas, 2012, pp. 59-71), since they constitute "a cultural form that is transmitted to others on its own terms" (Spencer, 2015, pp. 9-11) without any control or censorship (Dunn, 2016: 162). A fanzine is a small scale self-financed and self-managed publication run by music lovers. The people involved in the publication of a fanzine are not professional writers; profit-making is not their goal, while the magazine's publishing and distribution often comes with personal expenditure and financial loss (Dunn, 2016: 160). Fanzine publishers should not be considered passive group fans but actively involved members of the music communities. They try to find their own voice (Souzas, 2012, pp. 59-71) and at the same time contribute to the community they represent and belong to: "when you are part of a minority and not part of the system, you build your own little world and communicate in your own ways" (Argiriou, 2019, n/p).

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**25.** The influence these performances had on the city's audiences is attested by the narration of the musicians like Gianni Ioannidis: "one of the first events that took place around 1988-1989 there...the notorious Disorder from England had come to play in the foyer of the School of Architecture, so I got informed about it, went down to see and I couldn't believe it...they are here, I still couldn't believe it was not a joke...".

**26.** Romanized to 'I Parousiazeti'.

**27.** Romanized to 'Naftia'.

**28.** Romanized to 'Naftia'.

**29.** Romanized to 'steki'.

**30.** "Haunt in its first years was an incredible initiative since it was like the basis for many things to happen, for example, there were indeed many DIY live performances there..." (Gioka, 2018).

One of the first fanzines in Greece was Rollin Under, whose distribution started in the mid-80s in Thessaloniki. It started as a music zine that aimed at promoting the Greek groups of that period and particularly those from Thessaloniki. Its content eventually included groups and artists (correspondence, interviews, album reviews) from all over the country, Europe, America, and Australia that were generally not covered by conventional music media, which is anyway a characteristic of fanzines (Spencer 2009, p. 88). Later, the content included original short stories, comics as well as articles about literature, cinema and other fanzines.

Rollin Under was a product and part of the intense musical expression and life of Thessaloniki, as described in the previous sections, that had not yet been communicated adequately. Babis Argiriou, chief writer and founder of RU, tried to promote the work of local bands that he loved as he knew that: “Producing an album was an elusive dream at that period...because in the transition years (Metapolitefsi) the dominant genre was the political art songs...and I didn't want the work (of these bands) to disappear...there was nothing about Thessaloniki in Maximumrocknroll, for example, and I also sent nothing...” (Argiriou, 2019, n/p).

The first three issues of the fanzine were in fact the accompanying fact sheets of cassette collections that Babis Argiriou published to capture, promote, and distribute the local music creation. Through the fanzine, readers were transported to various concerts and kept up with musical life of Thessaloniki, Athens, and other cities of Greece. Furthermore, it informed its readers about music events, networks, performance venues and occupied spaces in Europe through the articles of Greek correspondents from abroad and information by musicians.

RU was one of the fanzines that was present for a long time during the 1980s, it was rich in information and distinctly participatory and self-managed. Through its pages, one could discover bands that were once popular, read about new releases by independent labels and be transported to various festivals, performances, and venues. For this reason, it is my belief that RU and fanzines in general constitute source materials that provide valuable information in the attempt to trace the ‘messy paths’ pursued by people of the DIY scene. Zines are, therefore, historical records that offer a great deal of insight into DIY communities, marginal networks, and individuals (Fife, 2013, p. 13), whose history might otherwise have fallen into oblivion (Anna Elizabeth Moore in Dunn, 2016, p. 162). Through fanzines, members of such communities and music scenes, as the one in Thessaloniki in the 80s, were able to profile themselves and write down their (DIY) history on their own.

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## 2.2. Independent labels in Thessaloniki

More often than not, collaborating with an independent label or even founding one was the only chance for many punk groups of the late 1970s to release and distribute their music (Spencer, 2005, p. 161). Similarly, that was the situation in Greece in the 1980s. “The independent labels that appeared in Greece in the 1980s were the result of two traditions; the first was local and had to do with the successful labels of the previous years, while the second was supra-local and had to do with the punk explosion. Also, there was a feeling that the small could find its place in the world of the big” (Vaios, 2021, n/p).<sup>31</sup> In Thessaloniki, however, the independent releases or even the self-released cassettes are not only punk-related. Besides, the tradition of independent labels existed prior to punk music (Dunn 2016, p. 129). Yet, this tradition was strengthened by punk, since the first independent punk labels showed how easy and simple it was for anyone to record (Laing, 2015, p. 27).

Most bands coming from DIY music studios did not seek to collaborate with a major label at least during the 80s. All the bands coming from DIY studios in Thessaloniki released albums either under independent labels founded by music circles, groups and collectivities or as self-releases.<sup>32</sup> Of course, this process entails problems mostly relating to lack of money and album distribution and promotion (‘Pete and Royce’ in Milatos, 1981): “The problem we weren't able to deal with as we would like to was that of promotion.” (Gulag, 1993, interview at DIY Radio Utopia)<sup>33</sup>.

31. Extract from his narration in the episode ‘Independent record labels in the 1980s’ of the television documentary ‘Kleinon Asty’. <https://www.ertflix.gr/ellinika-docs/kleinon-asty-oi-anexartites-diskografikes-etaireies-ton-80-s/>

32. The first group to sign a contract with a major label was Tripes in 1987. This indicates that during those years the music community of Thessaloniki was in a transition period; on the one hand, an alternative scene is being developed, and, on the other hand, the music community is strengthened.

33. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWav2Ox-1s0&ab\\_channel=punkrockradio](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWav2Ox-1s0&ab_channel=punkrockradio)

The only independent label that operated in Thessaloniki in the early 80s was CVR Records, which was founded by the former instrumentalist of 69, Christos Vatseris (Dimatatis, 1998, p. 146), and became the medium of expression for emergent new wave groups. Specifically, in 1983 and 1984, CVR released the albums of Proxies, Rodondo Rocks, The Flood, and the collection Sound and Noises of SKG by four local groups; these works ranged from new wave to synth pop. The label's lifecycle, though, was quite short and it had not included any of the punk bands of the city in their releases; these bands did not seem interested in collaborating with the label either (Koutsaris, 2019) and preferred to self-release cassettes or nothing at all.

For example, in November 1982 Grover recorded their first demo, which they possibly distributed in the city by themselves. Another self-released cassette in Thessaloniki was that of Moot Point titled 'Gonna Blast! Ya Fulla Lead', which was recorded with Babis Argirious' four-channel sound mixer in their DIY studio. In 1987, New Rose recorded their first LP (Rollin Under, May 1987) in Giorgos Pentzikis' studio, which they eventually self-released in the form of cassette, founding at the same time their own label, Rock n' roll Reckordings. In the same year, Moot Point announced their split-up in Rollin Under (Argiriou, 1987, p. 36) and released their new cassette titled Circus. In this case, the band made a conscious political decision to not interfere with the cassettes' circulation not even through an independent label: "We were set in our own ways...we wanted only to release cassettes but not sell them...but this is how they should circulate, to give them only to friends due to a prejudice against mass society and the world of media" (Gioka, 2019, n/p). Similarly, Denial<sup>1</sup>, the first grind core band in Thessaloniki, released their own cassette "To earn my daily bread" in 1988 and one year later the hardcore band *Naftia* released theirs, titled 'Sweet Secret Of Life'.

However, there was one label that supported the punk bands of the city, that of Babis Argiriou called Lazy Dog, whose inception was occasioned by the release of Gulag's album, Emergency Entrance 0 (degrees Celsius), in 1987. In fact, Lazy Dog was the result of collaboration and partnership; a Do it together (DIT) endeavor by musicians who wanted to release an album together with a highly skilled music lover who believed in that music. This is exactly what Spencer (2005, p. 164) describes: "Small record labels were set up by music lovers who wanted to help promote music by bands that would not be heard otherwise".

In 1984, ANO KATO Records by Giorgos Tsakalidis started operating, which was possibly the most active independent label in Thessaloniki (Argiriou, 1986, p. 3). The label's first release was that of the blues band Blues Gang (forerunners of Blues Wire) titled Dig it!. Nikos Papazoglou was the sound engineer, so it can be assumed that the recording took place at his studio, Agricultural<sup>2</sup>. There was ongoing collaboration between Ilias Zaikos, guitarist of the band, and Giorgos Tsakalidis throughout the decade either on the band's later releases in 1985 or on the work of Tsakalidis' band called 'Amateur lovers'<sup>3</sup>. In the same year, Tripes released their homonymous first album under ANO KATO, following the recipe for success, namely the recording in Nikos Papazoglou's studio with him being the sound engineer.

Lastly, Smash Records from Thessaloniki released the work of the Athenian band Yell-O-Yell 'XII (Thirteen)' in 1986, which was their fourth release and their last in the 1980s. The same label had released the albums of two of Thessaloniki's bands, Stained Veil and Fear Condition, earlier that year. Those albums were recorded in Giorgos Pentzikis' studio. However, during the 80s, this label did not release any other music but instead became involved in event and concert planning (Argiriou, 1987).

## **Conclusion: 'Not just angry music for angry people' but...**

According to Christoforos Vernardakis during the 1980s Greece was facing the first period of its capitalist modernization with the neoliberal political and ideological domination. The second face of modernization was to happen in the 1990s with the institutionalization of these neoliberal policies. In order the state to institutionalize neoliberal politics, it withdrew gradually and became the guarantor of instant production of capital. In this context this era is marked by what is called as 'modernization politics' that were sealed in a global level by Gulf war (2014). The 1980s generation on the one hand was tired of the ideological and historical burden of Metapolitefsi (the transition period) while at the same time had foreseen state's capitalization. As Sonia (2018), member of *Nausea*, had told me: "It was the first period of the intensification,

1. Romanized to 'Arnisi'.

2. Romanized to 'Agrotikon'.

3. Romanized to 'Erasitehnes Erastes'.

I think that now this thing is worst". A big part of the 80s youthhood empowered by new rock idioms (new wave, punk, hardcore) felt the urge of musical expression. Hence, these music gangs were transformed into creative music collectivities grafted by DIY ethos and praxis. That way these people envisioned a different world with music being at the same time the motivating power and embodiment of that world.

The 1980s digital revolution and its impact upon the rehearsing and recording processes (Bennet & Peterson, 2004, p. 5) allowed them to impose their own noise because now they possessed their own means of recording (Attali, 1985, p. 145). Therefore, this way music is not being just a tool of political expression but is that expression per se (Street, 2011: 11). I believe that the music collectivities of that time manage to create an alternative to the cultural dominant channels of capitalism (Graham, 2012, p. 67) of their time. Finally, this music community and its artifacts weren't "just angry music for angry people" but is worth to be seen as alternative cultural time-spaces that thrive in the system's ruptures and operate as revolutions (Bey, 1985, p. 77).

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