

Greek government courts fascist Golden Dawn with anti-immigrant law

Christoph Dreier
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As the social crisis worsens in Greece, the ruling elite is seeking to establish conditions where the fascist *Chrysi Avgi* (Golden Dawn) organization can play a greater role in government and brutally suppress the population.

In February, 84 of the 125 deputies of the conservative ruling party New Democracy (ND) brought a motion before parliament, demanding that naturalized Greeks be banned from military academies or join the military and police services. The reasoning behind the motion was that people of non-Greek descent constitute a security risk in these institutions.

The initiators' main aim was to send a signal to the fascist Golden Dawn that the ruling party accepts the party's racist policies and is preparing the basis for a new governing coalition. The two coalition partners of ND, the social democratic PASOK and Democratic Left (DIMAR), refused to support the initiative.

Golden Dawn welcomed this and announced it would support the motion in parliament. The party has long demanded the exclusion of immigrants from the police and army. In the event, the motion was postponed for technical reasons last week and eventually withdrawn.

ND deputy Adonis Georgiadis justified his support for the law change by arguing that it reflected the will of the majority of Greeks. He downplayed the role of Golden Dawn, stating that "in the crisis some people become a little bit extremist".

Golden Dawn—which has a modified swastika as its emblem, uses a Nazi-style salute and carries out pogrom type attacks on immigrants, homosexuals and political opponents—is being systematically promoted by business circles and the political establishment.

Thassos Teloglou, a journalist with the conservative Greek daily *Kathimerini*, examined data on Golden Dawn's financing: "Golden Dawn was financially

supported by parties that belong to the so-called constitutional arc. They helped it in previous election races by printing their election materials in order to break the rise of [the far-right] LAOS party. But in 2012, these funds were not sufficient. I have data showing that before the elections in May last year, they received cash from shipping tycoons, developers, lawyers and maybe a bank".

In December, Samaras defied parliamentary decisions and sent the Golden Dawn representative, Eleni Zaroulia, to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which is responsible, among other things, for the election of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights. By such means the fascists are to be made presentable.

In the same month, Samaras revoked the 2010 Ragousi Act, which permits people born in Greece and who attended Greek school for at least six years to apply for citizenship. Since its introduction, the law has been invoked by only 6,072 of roughly 200,000 eligible persons. Now the government wants to raise the legal hurdle even higher.

Since August of last year, the government has brutally implemented one of the central demands of Golden Dawn. In its *Xenios Zeus* campaign, a large contingent of police detained foreign-looking people. It is estimated that by early February around 60,000 people were stopped by the police in the course of their raids. About 4,200 of them were detained due to lack of papers and await deportation.

The victims are crowded into 30 special camps set up on the initiative of the government and with EU financial support. These camps reportedly often lack heating and hot water, as well as food and basic hygiene items, such as soap.

Amnesty International has reported the abuse of

immigrants and political opponents by Greek police, up to 60 percent of which voted for Golden Dawn in the latest elections of June 2012. In October it was revealed that anti-fascist demonstrators were beaten and humiliated by police in their prison cells following their arrest.

Shielded by the state, the fascists have become increasingly aggressive, routinely attacking immigrants and political meetings. A video by film student Konstantinos Georgousis, shown on the British Channel 4, shows Golden Dawn parliamentary candidate Alexandros Plomaritis spouting racist propaganda. He referred to immigrants as “subhumans” and declared—alluding to Nazi concentration camps—that one should relight the ovens for them, and that leftists’ teeth should be processed to make pearls.

The promotion of such fascist scum by layers of the Greek bourgeoisie and ND’s readiness to court them is a clear warning to the Greek and European working class. Athens is preparing to employ the most brutal methods to suppress working class opposition to EU austerity measures. Already, in November 2011, the EU had given the go-ahead for the integration of the far-right LAOS into the government.

On two occasions in February, the government imposed martial law on striking workers, forcing them back to work with EU support. To the extent that the unions are no longer able to suppress workers struggles by themselves, the government will increasingly resort to authoritarian forms of rule.

While PASOK and DIMAR are closely linked to the trade unions and rely on them to enforce social attacks, the ND has increasingly focused on a coalition with the right-wing Independent Greeks and the fascists of Golden Dawn. These forces put together possess enough seats for a government majority.

The growth of the fascists and ND’s open collaboration with these forces is encouraged by the right-wing policies of Greece’s various pseudo-left forces. DIMAR, which split from SYRIZA in 2010, has not only supported the government’s social attacks, but also its witch-hunt of immigrants and suppression of strikes.

The main opposition party, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA), has also supported the government’s policy on a number of decisive occasions, repeatedly making clear that it is prepared to

support EU austerity measures. Its president Alexis Tsipras spoke just last Wednesday at a ceremony to mark the 15th anniversary of the death of ND’s founder, Konstantinos Karamanlis. He showered this reactionary with praise – though Karamanlis organized the transition of Greece from the junta of the colonels to parliamentary rule in 1974 by making numerous concessions to the outgoing regime.

Together with the smaller Communist Party (KKE), SYRIZA refuses to organize any serious opposition to the fascists. The reason is that they represent the same social interests: they support social attacks and fear a movement of the working far more than the rise of the fascists.



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