

The right-wing threat in Greece

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Attempts by New Democracy (ND), Greece's largest ruling party, to appeal to the fascist Golden Dawn vote—by proposing to ban immigrants from the police and military and attacking naturalization laws affecting hundreds of thousands of immigrant children—are a clear warning to the working class.

The Greek courts struck down the 2010 Ragousis naturalization law after a campaign against it by both ND and Golden Dawn. Some 85 of ND's 125 deputies supported the army ban, which has now been postponed and which aims to create far-right, racially-pure security services.

These moves are part of a broad campaign by the Greek ruling class to integrate Golden Dawn into official politics. The party, which daily attacks and terrorises immigrants and political opponents, has been systematically built up in recent years. Financed by influential sections of the Greek bourgeoisie and supported by the police, it is currently polling up to 14 percent.

The actions of the Greek government, which in addition to ND also contains the social democratic PASOK and the Democratic Left (DIMAR) parties, are only the sharpest expression of a trend throughout Europe. The ruling class increasingly relies on appeals to far-right or anti-immigrant forces to shore up a constituency for austerity policies imposed on the working class throughout the entire continent.

The expulsion and deportation of Roma by French President François Hollande; the stoking up of anti-Roma pogroms and fascist forces by the Hungarian government; and the recent agitation against Eastern European immigrants by German Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich are all examples of this deeply reactionary policy.

European governments making up the European Union (EU) rely on such policies at home, and endorse them in Greece, where the EU not only orders social

cuts; it also helps fund mass police raids to hunt down and deport refugees, approves the suppression of strikes, and accepts ND's manoeuvres with Golden Dawn.

Some 68 years after the end of Nazi rule in Europe, fascistic organizations are again part of official politics, and entire ethnic groups are deported and humiliated. Amid deep social decline, the barbarism of European capitalism is once again coming to the surface.

Social attacks carried out in every country are no longer compatible with the trappings of democratic rule. In Greece alone, the cuts in recent years have produced an average loss of wages of 38 percent. Unemployment is rising constantly and has already reached 27 percent.

The European bourgeoisie's right-wing offensive is only possible in a climate in which workers' opposition to this policy is suppressed and no mass political force opposes the fascists. The primary responsibility for this situation lies with Europe's unions and pseudo-left parties, which are based on affluent sections of the middle class. They help implement EU austerity policies, sabotage workers' struggles, and block the development of a working class party fighting to politically destroy the influence of Golden Dawn.

One such party in Greece, DIMAR, is already part of the government, helping ensure a majority for ND and the social-democratic PASOK. It is jointly responsible for all the attacks on workers and the witch-hunting of immigrants. Even after ND's manoeuvres with Golden Dawn, DIMAR remained in the coalition.

The key role in suppressing workers' resistance, however, is played by the largest opposition party, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA)—from which DIMAR split three years ago.

In recent years, Greece has witnessed massive social protests, strikes and demonstrations. But the unions have worked closely with the government to isolate the

protests and steer them into harmless channels. If this does not succeed, as in the last strikes by subway workers and sailors, then the government imposes martial law to force the workers back to work. The unions in turn ensured that martial law was implemented immediately.

SYRIZA has supported not only the unions as they suppressed these workers' struggles, but also the government at each critical juncture. Last November, when the fifth EU austerity package passed and hundreds of thousands of workers took to the streets in protest, SYRIZA chair Alexis Tsipras promised his party would not use the parliamentary means available to him to bring down the government. In his trips abroad, he stressed that SYRIZA would defend the EU and its debt regime.

The social layers for whom SYRIZA speaks are organically hostile to the social interests of the proletariat. Their support for the austerity measures drives them, together with the governments of Europe, ever further to the right.

Just days after the ND began its parliamentary manoeuvre with Chrysi Avgi, Tsipras spoke at the festivities marking the 15th anniversary of the death of ND founder Konstantinos Karamanlis, heaping praise upon the old reactionary. SYRIZA has also opposed any cuts in the size of the army and for funding to upgrade police weaponry.

This political orientation is the reason why neither SYRIZA nor the smaller Greek Communist Party (KKE) carries out any serious struggle against the fascist danger, or defends immigrants from attack. They fear a movement of the working class far more than the fascist gangs.

To counter the danger of a dictatorship, workers need their own independent perspective. The situation depends on workers uniting across national borders in a struggle against social attacks and for a socialist programme that places social need above the greed for profits. This demands an intransigent struggle in the working class against the union bureaucracy and all the pseudo-left tendencies.



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