

Greece: Thousands protest attack on KKE by fascist Golden Dawn

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Thousands protested on Friday evening in Perama, a working class district 15 miles from the centre of Athens, against a violent attack the previous night by around 50 Golden Dawn thugs on members of the Stalinist Communist Party of Greece (KKE).

The 30 KKE members were putting up posters to advertise the KKE youth wing's upcoming festival. According to *Eleftherotypia*, the fascists "attacked KKE members verbally and then started to viciously assault anyone in front of them with crowbars and poles to which they had attached nails, screws and other sharp instruments. They also seriously damaged some KKE members' cars."

Among the injured was Sotiris Poulikoyiannis, President of the Metalworkers Union of Piraeus, which is dominated by the All-Workers Militant Front (PAME)—the KKE's faction in the Greek union bureaucracy.

Much has been made in the Greek media of an operation launched by the Hellenic Police on Friday, which saw 26 people taken in for questioning over the attack. However, all of those have since been released, except one who was charged for possession of a small quantity of an illegal substance.

There is every reason to believe that the operation was a smokescreen to deflect accusations that the police routinely turn a blind eye to Golden Dawn's attacks. Police make up a significant section of the fascist organisation's supporters.

Such suspicions are substantiated by the accounts of bystanders who witnessed the attack and alerted police. According to *Eleftherotypia*, "bystanders spoke of the characteristic negligence of the police officers who, despite being told that the attackers were hiding in nearby side-streets, appeared to be indifferent, until the attackers vanished."

It is also worth noting that no one has yet been charged

for the attack, even though three of the attackers were identified by name by their victims and witnesses. One of them was reportedly also involved in an attack on Egyptian fishermen in Perama in June 2012.

The attack came shortly after a visit by Golden Dawn members of Parliament to the Perama Ship Repair zone a month ago, during which the fascists made open threats against members of KKE and PAME.

In a video uploaded on YouTube, a Golden Dawn supporter asks MP Yiannis Lagos whether Golden Dawn would be willing to come to the Piraeus Metalworkers Union to root out PAME—to which Lagos answers that they would. At the end of the video, another Golden Dawn MP, Ilias Panayiotaros, declares, "the abscess that exists here is causing all the problems. ... PAME will come to an end."

The assault is a heinous crime that must be condemned and the perpetrators must face justice. But the fact that Golden Dawn is able to mount such assaults with impunity is the direct consequence of the policies followed by pseudo-left outfits like the KKE.

Perama was historically a stronghold of the KKE, but since 2009 Golden Dawn has been able to win increasing support as the result of the betrayals of the working class by the organisations they previously adhered to.

In the May 2012 elections, Golden Dawn polled 11.49 percent in the Perama Municipality, up from 0.54 percent in the 2009 elections. The KKE received 12.15 percent in Perama. By the run-off general election in June, this had fallen to 6.57 percent.

This is the outcome of the KKE's having assisted in the imposition of austerity measures by successive governments on the working class. The KKE and the pseudo-left SYRIZA both work consciously to subordinate working class struggles to the trade unions, and through them, to the bourgeois state and the European Union. In several industrial actions, the unions stood aside

and refused to organize solidarity actions as security forces intervened to smash strikes and force workers back to work.

Through its trade union faction PAME, the KKE has participated in dozens of token 24-hour general strikes organised by the main trade union federations, whose sole objective is to allow workers to let off steam with minimal disruption to the ruling elite's austerity policies.

More recently, the KKE has directly participated and benefited from the asset-stripping that has laid waste to Greece in recent years. In an effort to salvage its ailing balance sheet, the KKE sold off its radio and television stations that broadcast under the brand "902" for €3.4 million last month. One of the conditions set by the unnamed buyer was that the entire staff be sacked before the company was handed over to him.

To comply with this condition, which is illegal under Greek law, the KKE transferred all 48 members of staff to other companies owned by the party in order to fire them in accordance with Greek law!

Golden Dawn taunted the KKE about 902's sale in parliament and in an article on its web site, which it concluded by asking mockingly: "Tell us, comrades, when *are* you going to carry out that ... damn socialist revolution?"

Friday's assault marks a significant escalation by the fascists. In an interview with the *Guardian* Dimitris Psarras, a writer who has chronicled the rise of the Greek far-right, said: "It was very well organised and the most serious incident yet. They are no longer only targeting immigrants in the middle of the night. They are deliberately increasing tensions, expanding their agenda of hate..."

At the beginning of this month, Savas Michael-Matsas and academic Constantinos Moutzouris stood trial in a lawsuit launched by Golden Dawn. Michael, General Secretary of the pseudo-left EEK (Revolutionary Workers Party), was charged with "defamation" and "incitement to violence and discord" for raising the slogan "smash fascism", and of "disturbing the civil peace" by urging participation in an anti-fascist demonstration.

Moutzouris, who was at the time the dean of the National Technical University of Athens, was charged with having allowed the web site, Athens Indymedia, to broadcast from the campus.

The case was dismissed only after several Golden Dawn representatives failed to appear.

The fact that the case ever came to trial was the result of a frame-up orchestrated by Greek fascists and their allies

in the state. As with the assault on the KKE members, its aim was to silence opposition to a fascistic organisation with well-documented connections with the Greek state, its police and security apparatus.

This must be viewed in the wider context of the Greek financial crisis and the upcoming visit by the troika—European Union, European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund—to Greece on September 22.

Claims by Prime Minister Antonis Samaras that there will be no new austerity measures following the visit were directly contradicted by Michael Meister, deputy parliamentary chairman of Germany's ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU) party.

Speaking to *Bloomberg*, Meister said that "should Greece need further help it's perfectly clear that it would be linked to new terms" and that "there would definitely be no new program without conditions."

According to *To Vima*, Samaras is due to meet with EU officials in Brussels on Tuesday where he is expected to plead, "Don't pressure us for more measures. We can't take anymore. Everything is hanging by a thread."

This comment underscores that Samaras' government is acutely aware it is on top of a social powder keg, which the trade union bureaucracy and its pseudo-left appendages would not be able to contain with token limited strikes. In implementing more austerity measures, the Greek state will have to rely exclusively on repressive measures carried out by state forces in alliance with fascist outfits like Golden Dawn.

The high turnout by workers and youth at Friday's demonstration at Perama speaks volumes of the disgust and opposition to Golden Dawn. But they must take heed that today's trade union and pseudo-left straightjacket will become tomorrow's coffin. The fight against fascism is bound up with the struggle for workers' power. It requires a fight against the capitalist state on the basis of an alternative, socialist perspective.



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