

Greece to ban Golden Dawn after fascists assassinate musician Pavlos Fyssas

Cristoph Dreier, Alex Lantier
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Greek officials announced Wednesday they would ban the fascist party Golden Dawn, after its members were accused of murdering anti-fascist hip-hop musician Pavlos Fyssas, 34, in broad daylight early yesterday morning.

As he left a café in the Athens suburb of Keratsini, Fyssas was attacked by about 15 neo-Nazis whom eyewitnesses identified as supporters and members of Golden Dawn. When Fyssas and his three companions sought to flee, a car blocked the road and another group of 10 men advanced on them. One of the attackers pulled a knife and stabbed Fyssas twice.

Eyewitnesses also reported that motorcycle policemen were present during the attack, but did not intervene until Fyssas was already on the ground and most of his attackers had fled. Immediately after the stabbing, police claimed that the attack arose during an argument between football fans, rather than it being a planned political assassination.

The victim, whom the pseudo-left group Anti-Capitalist Left—Working for the Overthrow (Antarsya) claimed as a member, reportedly identified his assailants before dying in a hospital. Fyssas's father stated that the doctor who attended his son had spoken of "professional knife wounds," pointing to premeditated political murder.

Police arrested a 45-year-old supporter of Golden Dawn, who reportedly confessed to the killing. The suspect allegedly told his wife to throw his Golden Dawn membership card into the trash, where it was found by police.

Anti-Golden Dawn protests quickly spread in Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras. More than 5,000 people rallied in Athens at the location where Fyssas was stabbed. They clashed with police, who blocked off traffic to stop more protesters from reaching the scene.

Panos Kamenos, the leader of the right-wing Independent Greeks party, was attacked and slightly injured by protesters when he attempted to visit the scene of the killing.

Police blocked 6,000 demonstrators in Thessaloniki from marching on Golden Dawn's headquarters in the city. Angry protesters accused police of "protecting murderers."

Officials of both parties in Greece's ruling coalition, the conservative New Democracy and the social democratic PASOK, called for banning Golden Dawn. Public Order Minister Nikos Dendias cancelled a trip abroad, saying his government would prepare emergency legislation to ban the party. "The state will not tolerate, nor will society accept, acts and practices that undermine the legal system," Dendias told reporters.

"The abominable murder in Keratsini by an attacker sympathising with Golden Dawn, according to his own statement, illustrates in the clearest way the intentions of neo-Nazism," he added.

Golden Dawn issued a statement denying responsibility and claiming that their accusers "are exploiting a tragic event for politicking, to win votes and to divide Greek society."

European officials and human rights groups such as Amnesty International also called on Greek authorities to ban Golden Dawn. Hannes Swoboda, the president of the Socialists and Democrats Group in the European parliament, said: "Golden Dawn's openly xenophobic, neo-Nazi hatred even goes as far as murdering political opponents. This is shocking and intolerable by any standards, and more so in a European Union country."

Fyssas's murder is a horrible crime, and Golden Dawn is a violent fascist organisation, deeply hostile to the working class and infamous for its anti-immigrant

and anti-Semitic propaganda. However, no confidence can be placed in a state ban to halt the rise of Greek fascism. It can only be combated through the political mobilisation of the working class against the Greek state and the austerity agenda of the European Union (EU), on the basis of a revolutionary socialist perspective.

The EU's social cuts, imposed in defiance of mass popular opposition, have impoverished the population and undermined any semblance of democratic process in Greece. Sections of the ruling class have responded by promoting Golden Dawn to terrorise working class opposition and incite chauvinism and racism. Golden Dawn members and sympathisers have attacked immigrants, Jews, homosexuals and political figures; they murdered a Pakistani immigrant in January.

Golden Dawn works closely with the security forces, often under their protection. More than half of police officers reportedly voted for Golden Dawn in the last elections. Now, amid rising popular anger against Golden Dawn, officials are considering a ban on the organisation—supposedly to be enforced by the same police forces that supported and tolerated Golden Dawn's crimes!

Were such a ban to be successfully enforced, the sections of the ruling class and the security services that supported Golden Dawn would accept such a measure only as a temporary retreat. Before long, they would put together a new, even more violent fascist organisation—much as Golden Dawn itself rose to prominence after the neo-fascist LAOS organisation lost its support due to its participation in the 2011-2012 pro-austerity technocratic government.

On the other hand, the Greek state would try to use the precedent set by its banning of Golden Dawn to ban left-wing organisations developing in the working class. The ban, like Golden Dawn itself, would ultimately be directed against the workers.

Pseudo-left organisations such as the Greek Communist Party (KKE) and the Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza)—of which Antarsya is a political satellite—have responded to Fyssas's murder with appeals to the state and the trade union bureaucracy. They are responding to the killing by moving closer to Greece's reactionary ruling parties.

The KKE urged the union bureaucracy to lead a struggle against Golden Dawn, calling for a national

alliance against the fascists.

Syriza officials penned an appeal to what they called the “democrats” of the right-wing governing party, New Democracy. At a rally in Athens' Syntagma Square, Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras said, “We need normalcy and stability to move forward. We need to isolate those who are planning to threaten stability, to throw our country back into darkness.”

This call for “normalcy” and “stability” is a clear statement in defence of the capitalist status quo. It is an implicit attack on any struggle by the working class that threatens the state and the basic interests of the ruling class.

Such appeals amount to nothing more than a claim by sections of the political establishment that workers can leave the struggle against fascism to the ruling elite, its bureaucracies, and therefore—ultimately—its police. This is a fraud, a lie, and a dead end in the struggle against fascism and Pavlos Fyssas' murderers.

The pseudo-left parties are hostile to an independent struggle by the working class, having applauded the capitulation of the union bureaucracy to EU austerity measures over the course of four years. Already this year, the Greek government placed striking workers under martial law on no fewer than three separate occasions, forcing them back to work. These measures were supported by the union bureaucracy.

The murder of Pavlos Fyssas is a warning to workers in Greece and internationally. The capitalist class will stop at nothing to impose reactionary austerity policies and fatten the banks' profits at the expense of the working class. The defence of the population against fascist forces such as Golden Dawn cannot be left to the state or to the pseudo-left. It requires the building of workers' defence committees independent of all these organisations.



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