

Protests continue against social cuts and fascist terror in Greece

Christoph Dreier, Katerina Selin
25 September 2013

Strikes and demonstrations against social cuts and fascist terror are continuing in Greece. As new evidence emerges of government support for the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn organization, the unions and pseudo-left parties are trying to hold back protests and politically subordinate them to the state.

The teachers' union has extended the strike it began last week to Wednesday. Public service workers also commenced a 48-hour strike on Tuesday. Across the country, students have occupied dozens of schools in solidarity with the teachers. Many universities are on strike for the rest of the week.

On Tuesday, thousands of public sector workers demonstrated against the government's plans for mass layoffs. They carried banners with slogans such as "No human sacrifice" and "Down with the bosses". Protesters also demonstrated against the latest cases of fascist terror and the support given to Golden Dawn by the police and army.

On Saturday, thousands of port workers marched in Piraeus, where anti-fascist hip-hop musician Pavlos Fyssas was murdered by neo-Nazis last Wednesday. Further demonstrations took place in the port city on Monday. The country's two major trade union federations, ADEDY and GSSE, have called an anti-fascist demonstration in Syntagma Square for Wednesday evening.

The government has responded to the protests with brutal retaliation. Police repeatedly used tear gas to disperse demonstrators and protect Golden Dawn's offices. Last Friday, a plainclothes policeman approached a demonstration in the Athens suburb of Dafni and fired his pistol. When demonstrators sought to apprehend the provocateur they were attacked by police who, according to eyewitnesses, freed their colleague from the crowd using tear gas and stun grenades.

Social conditions are deteriorating and anger is

mounting, as new cuts are implemented. On Sunday, representatives of the troika—the International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Central Bank (ECB), and the EU Commission—travelled to Athens to monitor compliance with agreed austerity measures and negotiate new conditions to pay out the next tranche of aid credits, amounting to €1 billion.

The strikes are directed against the lay-off of 12,500 workers, with another 12,500 job cuts planned for later this year. In addition, three state-owned enterprises are to be closed. Even sharper attacks are planned for 2014, with 150,000 public service workers facing dismissal by the end of the year.

There have also been a number of reports since Fyssas's murder, pointing to links between the state apparatus and the fascists. New revelations, including the testimony of former members and sympathizers of the party, demonstrate that Golden Dawn was deliberately built up by state forces to suppress worker's resistance.

The daily *Ethnos* published pictorial evidence of the cooperation between the Golden Dawn and EKAM, the country's "special anti-terrorist unit".

Other photos show members of Golden Dawn alongside police units attacking protesters. While the police use tear gas and clubs, the fascists rain stones and bottles on demonstrators and beat them with sticks. On Sunday the newspaper *To Vima* also reported that members of Golden Dawn had been trained by special units of the Greek Army.

In a video on *Alpha News* a former member of Golden Dawn confirmed the report. He explained that party thugs were trained together with units of the army. "We always had people there from the leadership and therefore they let us into the training centers", he said.

The instructors were recruited from former members of the military who became active members of Golden Dawn.

Fyssas' murder was allegedly planned and carried out in close consultation with the regional party leadership. The suspected killer, Giorgos Roupakias, "was paid by Golden Dawn" and was a member of an "assault battalion", an elite party unit. In the interview, the former member added that unemployed persons were often engaged for such terror operations. They never had anything to fear from the police: "The police never intervene".

The money with which Golden Dawn paid their mercenaries came predominantly from the top echelons of business and politics.

Back in March, the conservative daily *Kathimerini* reported on the financing of Golden Dawn. The author of the report related that: "Golden Dawn was financially supported by the democratic parties. They helped in previous election campaigns to print propaganda material in order to impede the rise of [another far-right party,] LAOS ...

"But in 2012 these funds were not sufficient. I have data that show that Golden Dawn received money in May last year before the election from shipping tycoons, contractors, lawyers, and perhaps even a bank". Greece's richest businessmen, the country's ship-owners, have particularly close ties to Golden Dawn.

There are also close links between the conservative ruling party New Democracy (ND) and the fascists. In February this year around 80 ND deputies tried to pass a racist law together with the Golden Dawn parliamentary group against the government majority. There have been demands for a coalition government with the neo-Nazis from within the ND.

The ongoing demonstrations are directed against these links. The government is now trying to bring the situation under control by undertaking some measures against Golden Dawn and their supporters in the police force.

On Tuesday the police inspector for Southern Greece, Yannis Dikopoulos, and the Regional Director for Central Greece, Apostolos Kaskanis, resigned citing "personal reasons". Security Minister Nikos Dendias has suspended or transferred another seven senior police officials until internal investigations are completed.

Dendias also submitted to the Supreme Court at the weekend a list of offenses allegedly committed by Golden Dawn. The judges are to rule whether the organization, or parts of it, could be classified as criminal.

On Saturday house searches were conducted against Golden Dawn members, with some arrested for illegal possession of weapons. The government is also discussing

whether Golden Dawn should be deprived of state funding.

All these measures are primarily aimed at obscuring the close links between the police, army and Golden Dawn. The measures undertaken by the state will not stop the fascist terror, but strengthen the very same state apparatus that maintains such close ties to the fascists.

In its maneuvers the government has won support from the trade unions and pseudo-left organizations such as the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) and the Communist Party (KKE).

The unions have done all they can to limit the strikes by workers and keep them ineffective. The teachers' union, OLME, decided to limit their strike to three days, although teachers had voted by a large majority for a five-day strike with an option for its extension.

The KKE and SYRIZA are trying to disarm workers and subordinate their struggles to the state. SYRIZA encourages illusions in the state, which they declare should lead the struggle against the fascists, while the KKE calls for a "popular front" involving bourgeois parties to oppose the neo-Nazis.

On Saturday, SYRIZA chairman Alexis Tsipras offered to place the resources of his organization at the disposal of Prime Minister Antonis Samaras (ND) for a common struggle against the neo-Nazis, blatantly attempting to cover up the ND's own maneuvers and cooperation with the Golden Dawn.

According to the *Eleftherotypia* newspaper Tsipras said on Friday at an event in Vienna that he was convinced "that the armed forces and the police were democratized and posed no threat to democracy".



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact