

Political issues in the struggle against the threat of fascism and dictatorship in Greece

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The murder last week of hip-hop musician Pavlos Fyssas by fascist thugs has intensified class tensions in Greece. Thousands have taken to the streets on a daily basis to demonstrate against fascist terror and government attacks on social programs, jobs, wages and pensions. The police have responded with violence, attacking demonstrations and protecting the offices of the fascist Golden Dawn organization. There are open discussions in ruling circles of a possible military coup.

Fascism and dictatorship can be prevented only if the working class intervenes into the crisis as a politically independent force on the basis of a genuinely democratic and socialist program. Only on the basis of such a program can the working class mobilize behind it all of the oppressed layers of society. Such a movement cannot permit itself to be subordinated to the state or the bourgeois parties, which ever more aggressively attack the democratic rights and social interests of the workers. It must link the struggle against dictatorship with resistance to social attacks and be directed against the capitalist system itself.

It is necessary to form self-defense committees in neighborhoods and factories to protect workers and immigrants from the fascist gangs and their police accomplices, and prepare strike action.

Golden Dawn, which denies the Holocaust and employs a modified swastika as its symbol, has been deliberately built up by the ruling class. Forces within the state apparatus, the political establishment and big business set up the party to spearhead the fight against the working class. Funded by layers of the super-rich, the party has established paramilitary units, trained by the Army and supported by the police.

The same circles are now discussing plans to establish a military dictatorship. On Wednesday, the Federation of Greek Reservist elite soldiers (KEED)

demanding a government of “national necessity” under the “guarantee” of the armed forces. The demands of this association largely coincide with those of the Golden Dawn, including calls for the expulsion of all immigrants and the seizure of German assets in Greece.

The aim of such dictatorial measures is to suppress the continuing resistance by workers to austerity. Class struggles in Greece are reaching the point where the ruling class can no longer impose social attacks by traditional means. To implement the latest dictates of the “troika”—the European Union, International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank—against workers’ opposition, the ruling elite increasingly relies on the army, police and fascist gangs.

Greece poses most starkly the question posed across Europe and internationally. Either the working class breaks politically from all sections of the bourgeoisie, intervenes independently in political life, expropriates the big banks and major corporations, and establishes a workers’ government, or the ruling class will reduce society to barbarism. The crucial question is now the independent mobilization of the working class in political struggle.

Opposing this perspective are the various pseudo-left groups, such as the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) and the Communist Party (KKE). Together with the trade unions, they are sabotaging the struggles of workers and subordinating them to the state and the so-called “democratic” parties of the ruling class, chiefly the social democratic PASOK. By politically paralyzing the working class, they create favorable conditions for the most right-wing elements, using nationalist and pseudo-populist demagoguery, to gain a hearing among desperate layers of the middle class and sections of the working class itself.

SYRIZA supports the European Union—the bankers’

conspiracy against the European working class—and presents itself as a force for “stability” in alliance with “democratic” forces in the ruling parties, including the right-wing New Democracy. It opposes any independent mobilization of the working class against the bourgeois parties and the system they defend. In this way, it lends its support to the brutal austerity measures directed against the working population.

It has responded to Fyssas’ murder and the subsequent mass protests by stepping up its efforts to present itself to the ruling elite as a reliable defender of the status quo, while seeking to politically disarm the working class in the face of ruling class preparations for dictatorship. At a recent meeting in Vienna, SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras declared that the armed forces and the police “are democratized and pose no threat to democracy.” A few days later, plans for a military coup and further evidence of the cooperation between Golden Dawn and the police came to light.

Calls for a state ban of Golden Dawn have essentially the same content. Such a ban would not weaken the fascists, but ultimately strengthen them. It would give the state apparatus, which is profoundly compromised by its relations with the neo-Nazis, greater powers to act against political organizations and against the working class.

SYRIZA’s main concern is to stabilize Greek capitalism and preserve its relations with the European Union. Tsipras recently called for an alliance against the fascists with the ruling New Democracy, which has innumerable links to Golden Dawn.

Similar policies are being advanced by the other pseudo-left organizations in Greece, which speak for the same privileged middle-class milieu and differ only on details. The Communist Party (KKE) seeks to stir up illusions that the trade unions can lead the fight against the fascists and calls for a “popular front”. The state capitalist SEK has joined the chorus of those demanding the banning of Golden Dawn.

All these groups speak for wealthy layers of the petty-bourgeoisie, such as the trade union bureaucracy, which fear an independent movement of workers far more than state repression and fascist terror. By sabotaging the struggles of workers and subordinating them to the state, however, they are paving the way for the rise of fascism.

The political mobilization of the working class

against the threat of fascism and dictatorship requires a struggle to expose the reactionary role of the pseudo-left tendencies. This is essential for establishing the political independence of the working class from all sections of the bourgeoisie and developing the struggle for workers’ power and socialism.



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