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Greece

# Judgment of Golden Dawn Nazis

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**The verdict that Golden Dawn is a "criminal organization" was given on 8 October. [1]** This article gives a picture of the mobilization around this case.

Wednesday 7 October, is already a historic date in Greece: tomorrow judgment will be handed down after long years of the trial of the murderous Nazi group Chryssi Avgi (Golden Dawn). The stakes are high: the conviction of the 68 accused would be a brake on the racist and fascist attacks that continue to be committed by members of the group who remain convinced that they can act with almost complete impunity. This can be seen, for example, on the island of Lesbos, where the Nazis managed to set up small groups aimed at terrorizing refugees and solidarity activists without the police intervening. A condemnation of the group as a criminal group would therefore be an important phase in curbing far-right terrorism, but also to place the old and current links between the right and fascists in Greece into the political situation. Nothing is therefore certain for the judgment of tomorrow, especially if we remember that the prosecutor has indicated that only the killer of the anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas was a criminal, the others, in particular the whole clique of the Nazi leadership, being exonerated!

We will of course come back as soon as possible to the decision that will be issued tomorrow, but already, we must underline 3 things:

- the trial is rich in lessons: despite all the manoeuvres of the accused, the lawyers of the victims (Pavlos Fyssas, trade unionists, foreign workers and others) relentlessly exposed the political nature of the crimes committed by a hierarchical organization around the little führer Michaloliakos.
- the anti-fascist movement in its various forms was a key player in this trial, around the moving and impressive figure of Magda Fyssa, Pavlos's mother, present at all the sessions of the trial - and insulted at it by the Nazi hyenas. In recent days, the mobilization has grown around the slogan "They are not innocent, this is a criminal organization, Chryssi Avgi in prison!". Demonstrations, petitions, appeals like the one adopted by the Athens city council at the initiative of anti-capitalist elected officials. Tomorrow, thousands of demonstrators are expected around the court, the whole anti-capitalist and reformist left is calling for it (and even Pasok!).
- the expected condemnation would be a victory in the fight against multifaceted fascism in Greece and in Europe, it would not mean the end of this threat: as the anti-fascist activist Dimitris Kousouris, left for dead by Chryssi Avgi in 1998, reminds us, this group benefited from impunity because it was part of the state mechanism aimed at deflecting popular anger against a background of helplessness on the left. Its ideology and practices remain ingrained in institutions and society and therefore, whatever the judgment, the anti-fascist battle must continue.

## **Hundreds of middle and high schools occupied**

Another mobilization has been developing for ten days: refusing to be "sardined" in classrooms that are too small, thousands of high school students and college students have started a mobilization to obtain the opening of rooms and the recruitment of teachers, which is fiercely rejected by the ultra-reactionary Minister of Education Niki Kerameos: thus, perhaps unique in the world in the midst of a pandemic, the limit on the number of students per class has just been increased by two students for primary and secondary! His giveaways to private education in a law passed this summer are damning, depriving staff of their rights. Public school is seen as an unnecessary expense

and education as the learning of minimum skills demanded by employers. With such a conception, the contempt of the minister translates into action in relation to protection against the virus. While it was announced that the students would be provided with protective masks, the public order placed by the ministry resulted in a confusing result of ridicule and incompetence, with masks far too large and covering the entire face! A second order also proved a disaster.

But beyond the wave of jokes around the gigantic masks, students have very quickly demanded study conditions in accordance with the health situation: while contamination is progressing very strongly lately, they refuse to be crowded into rooms that are too small (in cities, there are often classes of 27 or more, in rather narrow rooms), and they demand classes of 15 maximum, with the support of teachers and most families, and the recruitment of teachers, knowing that there are tens of thousands needed. Facing total rejection from the minister, the students demonstrated on several occasions (last Thursday, thousands in the streets of Athens) and returned to an activity well known in Greece: the occupation of schools. At the start of the week, it seems that around 700 institutions are occupied!

Faced with this situation, the authorities are deploying considerable resources: dispatching the police, forming small groups of “angry” parents demanding “freedom to work”. And a whole battery of threats against the students, such as the non-validation of the current year, distance education only for students refusing to occupy their school, with instructions for teachers to hand over the names of the rebels. Without forgetting a press campaign by the mainstream media, heavily financed by the government: the mobilized students are treated as thugs, the movement is manipulated by left political parties, the pupils are against masks (all the images of demonstrations show the opposite!) and the coronavirus is facilitated by the occupations (not by the narrowness of the classrooms!): a real festival of anti-youth hatred.

The situation is very tense, and if solidarity is absolutely necessary, what happens next will depend above all on the forms of mobilization and organization that the students adopt. Work stoppages have taken place in National Education and in the civil service, but we must go further: while the perspective that the government would like to impose is to reduce a large part of youth to an educational minimum, by tightening as much as possible expenditure on public education, the demands of young people for the right to a quality education – which would perhaps imply demanding the speedy resignation of the minister - bring hope, so let's help them win this fight!

6 October 2020

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[1] *The Guardian*, 7 October 2020 [“Golden Dawn guilty verdicts celebrated across Greece”](#).