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THE TERRORIST ACTIVITY OF NEO-NAZI ORGANISATIONS IN EUROPE: **THE CASE OF GOLDEN DAWN**

By Kevin Ovenden





1. INTRODUCTION

2017 has seen a further worrying growth of far right and fascist formations in several European countries.

May brought the advance of Marine Le Pen into the second round of the French presidential election. The following month the **Front National** increased its presence in the French National Assembly, though fell short of the numbers to form an official parliamentary group.

In September the **Alternative for Germany (AfD)** made a major breakthrough to enter the Bundestag for the first time, winning 12.6 percent of the national vote. The party has gone through a succession of radicalisations since its formation as a free-market Eurosceptic party. It now has a hardened anti-Muslim central ideology, which organises its propaganda and programme. Most concerning is that its growth as an electoral force has been accompanied by the increasing weight of its «fascising wing». Entry into first regional-state and now the federal parliaments has not provided a «domestication» of its message. Far from it.

At one end of the spectrum of radical right wing formations in Europe – ranging from racist populists to fascists – stands **Golden Dawn** in Greece. It is a neo-nazi party. Its leader, **Nikos Michaloliakos**, says that Golden Dawn hails from «the seeds of the defeated army of 1945», that is from the beaten armed forces of the Third Reich.

It was the third party in the Greek parliament elected in September 2015. While it continues to hover between third and fourth place in the polls it has suffered defections nationally and in localities. Despite the impetus given to racist politics on both sides of the Atlantic by the victory of **Donald Trump** in November 2016, the last 12 months have seen Golden Dawn significantly pushed back even as extreme right forces elsewhere in Europe have advanced.

While the neo-nazi party in Greece is very far from finished, its lack of success – despite a deepening social crisis in the country and the issues thrown up by refugee arrivals – has been an important gain for democratic and anti-fascist forces across the continent. It has meant that the most extreme model of far right organisation, with stormtrooper-style «batallion squads» of paramilitary streetfighters, has seen its prestige, and thus attractive power for others on the broad racist right, wane. Critical to the multi-faceted anti-fascist activity in Greece which has hampered Golden Dawn has been the intervention by the anti-fascist movement into the major trial of the neo-nazi organisation. It began in April of 2015, is ongoing and is due to conclude by the end of 2018.

The trial is the fruit of the eruption of popular anti-fascist feeling in Greece following the murder of anti-racist rapper **Pavlos Fyssas** in September 2013.

While it is the state which has brought the prosecution, it did not do so of its own volition. Just months before Fyssas's murder the public order minister of the then **Antonis Samaras**-led government threatened to sue veteran foreign correspondent of the Guardian **Helena Smith** because she reported on how left wing protesters had been beaten in police cells by officers sympathetic to Golden Dawn.

The murder by Golden Dawn supporters of Pakistani retail worker **Shehzad Luqman** in January 2013 brought thousands onto the streets of Athens but inertia from a government whose chef de cabinet was in private discussions with the fascist parliamentary group about their inclusion in a possible realignment of political forces on the right.

It was the tens of thousands who took to the streets in September of that year who forced an abrupt about face on the part of the government and the state prosecuting authorities.

The anti-fascist movement took a strategic decision to intervene in the trial with lawyers of the «Civil Action of the Anti-fascist Movement» representing victims of Golden Dawn in the proceedings. In the Greek legal system it is the lawyers of the injured party whose role it is to pursue the charges. The state prosecutors role is, as in the French system, to represent the state and a more neutral interest.

The trial of Golden Dawn is the largest prosecution of fascist criminality in Europe since the Nuremberg process post-1945 and those later trials related to it in the 1950s.

It is a single trial with four limbs. It comprises three specific prosecutions for crimes Golden Dawn and its members stand accused of. They are i) the attempted murder in a frenzied attack by Golden Dawn on **Abuzeid Embarak** and a group of Egyptian fishermen in their home in June 2012, ii) the murderous attack on **Sotiris Poulidikogiannis** and a group of Communist trade unionists in September 2013, and iii) a few days later the murder of **Pavlos Fyssas** in a neighbouring area.

Evidence has been heard in all three of these cases and the trial has moved to the overall charge. It is that Golden Dawn constitutes a criminal organisation under Article 187 of the Greek penal code masquerading as a legitimate political party, with 11 current MPs (actually almost all its leadership) accused of directing it. It is important to understand that this is not some «trial of ideas» as Golden Dawn and its defence lawyers constantly try to make out. It is a trial of actions and of their instigation, commissioning and hierarchical organisation. It is a criminal trial under the penal code. It is not an argument about the constitutionality or otherwise of Golden Dawn.

As with a mafia case - which is the origin of the legal base for this trial - the prosecution and the lawyers for the victims of Golden Dawn are seeking to prove criminal liability extending through the **Führerprinzip** command structure of the neo-nazi organisation to the top. The court will be giving judgement next year on the three exemplar cases of serious crimes.

It is also taking evidence, including scores of already determined cases of Golden Dawn criminality, about the criminal organisation of Golden Dawn as a whole. There is also expert testimony from journalists, academics and anti-fascist organisations about the nature of Golden Dawn and its structure. And it is upon that basis that the judges will be asked to determine the overall charge that the leadership of Golden Dawn, as well as those directly convicted of various crimes, is guilty.

The lawyers of the “civil action” (civil prosecution) are acting for the victims of neo-nazi violence. The rules of disclosure mean that they have accessed tens of thousands of pages of evidence. The legal intervention by anti-fascist forces is more than a belt and braces approach to avoid a recurrence of various cases down the decades in which state prosecutors have botched prosecutions. For on trial also are the elements within the Greek state and oligarchic employers who have for decades supported Golden Dawn and its predecessors, granting it a sense of immunity.

The previous government carefully set the cut-off date for investigating the fascists’ crimes as 2008. But Golden Dawn has been around since 1980. Its origins lie in the paramilitary Greek right going all the way back through the years of the military dictatorship of 1967-74, the Western-backed civil war against the Communist Party and the left in the 1940s to the collaborators with the nazi occupation of Greece, which was more brutal than anywhere in Europe outside of Poland and the Soviet Union.

Bringing to the light of day the dark recesses of the Greek deep state is not, as the parliamentary right claim, some vengeful settling of scores from the distant past. (Though why there should be a political statute of limitation on fascist crimes is a telling question.) It is a matter of contemporary self-defence.

In the second general election of May 2012 analysis of the polling stations where the police, army officers and similar state personnel vote revealed that possibly 50 percent of the Athenian riot police force voted for the fascists.

As social crisis arising from austerity in Greece continues to bite, the right is looking to make a comeback. The trial of Golden Dawn and the

mass movement which has taken to the streets to mark UN anti-racism day these last three years provides a barrier both to the resurgence of the fascists and to any temptation by the mainstream right to renew its previous flirtation with them.

As the trial started, some liberal voices raised the canard that the prosecution of Golden Dawn is in some way a violation of free speech.

But the prosecution has nothing to do with what Golden Dawn thinks or writes. It has to do with its actions, with the crimes it has committed – including murder.

The gist of the fascists' defence is that the organisation cannot be held responsible for the criminal activity of its members. But Golden Dawn is not a chess club, where it would be unreasonable to hold the secretary responsible for the driving offences of one of its players.



The anti-fascist case is that the actual organisation of GD, its core around which all the trappings of a political party are merely a carapace, is a hierarchical, violent gang with a command structure organised on the national-socialist Fuehrerprinzip – ie strongman rule from top to bottom.

Under the impetus of the mass movement the media have already publicised pieces of evidence showing that taking an oath containing this and other nazi doctrine is a required part of becoming a GD member.

The primary function in any branch or higher organisation of GD – all the way up to the Führer **Nikolaos Michaloliakos** – is the organisation of “security battalions.” That comes first and has precedence over the treasurer, secretary, press officer and all the other roles which normal parties or trade unions regard as the central officer functions.

Security battalions was the name given to the collaborationist forces under Hitler’s occupation of Greece. They rounded up partisans, Jews and others to be murdered.

There has never been a proper reckoning of the establishment’s complicity in those crimes, the atrocities of the civil war, the murder of socialists such as MP **Grigoris Lambrakis** in 1963 (subject of **Costas Gavras’s** film *Z*), the junta and the “strategy of tension” violence against the left in the 1970s.

It is in this enforced historical amnesia that Golden Dawn has been allowed for 25 years to burrow silently until the circumstances of economic collapse and complicit, authoritarian, institutionally racist Establishment politicians allowed it to grow out of despair.

The trial continues. Its purpose is justice in law, but also to cast a deeper light. In this memorandum we report on the proceedings of the trial so far and explain aspects of a legal process which should concern every democrat in Europe.



2. THE MURDER OF PAVLOS FYSSAS

The shameful murder of the 34-year-old musician, **Pavlos Fyssas** on the night of 17 September to 18 September 2013, as it emerges from the witnesses' testimonies and the statements of the defendants themselves, was the result of a collective and coordinated action of a battalion squad of the local Golden Dawn organisation in Nikea. Pavlos Fyssas was assassinated by **Georgios Roupakias**, a member of the Five-Member Council of the Nikea branch, with the direct involvement of other members of the "battalion squad". Branch members recognised Fyssas at the "Coralli" cafe, texted other branch members to gather outside the cafeteria, and following the orderly and disciplined mandate of the local leader **Giorgos Patelis**, went directly (within 15 minutes) to the offices of the local organisation of Nikea. There they were equipped with sticks and knives. They were given clear instructions about their mission and the target-victim, and left in one coordinated group for Keratsini.

On the basis of the documents in the case file and the testimonies in the trial, the facts are as follows:

On Tuesday 17 September 2013 at the Coralli Cafe, at the cross-roads of Pavlou Mela and Kefallinias streets in Keratsini, and during the football game between Olympiakos and Paris Saint-Germain, **Ioannis Aggos**, one of the security officials of the local organisation of

Golden Dawn in Nikea (as he declares in his 5-10-2013 statement, which he confirmed on 1-11-2013, before the Investigators), sat in the cafeteria, dressed in the usual Golden Dawn fashion (military trousers, boots and black shirt) with two more people (dressed in the same way) in order to watch the football match.

There, he saw that next to his table, alongside his friends **Doulvaris Georgios** and **Tosloukou Chrysoula**, sat **Pavlos Fyssas**, a musician well known in the locality for his ideological views contrary to Golden Dawn, as mentioned by: a) the witness **Michalis Ksipolitos**, a friend of Pavlos Fyssas before the Investigators: “I am sure that Pavlos, who was from Amphiali and lived very close to the point where he was murdered was known in the area by his music as an anti-fascist and was their target”; b) the witness, **Dimitrios Chatzistamatis**: “From their conversations, the way they addressed Pavlos Fyssas, I was given the impression that they did not see him for the first time, on the contrary they seemed as if they knew who he was, as if they had prior knowledge of him ...” and c) in his statement, the defendant **Nikolaos Tsorvas**: “When I saw this tall lad, Pavlos Fyssas, as I later learned his name, something reminded me of his face because I used to live in Keratsini in the Evgenia Square and whatever concerts were happening I was going and I somewhere remembered him as a musician from these concerts. I also saw him in the square whenever I was going and said, ‘Oh! This is the musician who sang at the concerts’, when I was with a friend of mine and pointed him out.”).

The friends of Pavlos Fyssas, **Elias Kontonikolas**, **Nikolaos Mantas**, **Pavlos Seirlis**, **Nikos**, **Michalis Ksipolitos**, **Dimitris Melachrinopoulos** and **Lina**, joined him in the cafeteria after the start of the second half of the football match, in order to watch the match together. When entering the cafeteria, **Nikolaos Mantas**, mentioned in his testimony: “I saw a person who I knew from a video on Youtube” (during the Golden Dawn visit in the Ship Building Zone, wearing sunglasses, a black t-shirt and a meander [the ancient Greek symbol that Golden Dawn use and which has the topology of a swastika] tattoo in his right arm) who he recognized as the defendant **Anastasios Michalaros**. The same witness confirms in his above testimony the presence of **Ioannis Aggos**

in the cafe, who was constantly talking on his cell phone and sent sms messages. The defendant **Leontas Tsalikis** admits his presence in the Coralli cafe, confirming the testimony of **Michalis Ksipolitos**, who recognized Tsalikis as the second person in the venue.

The constant communications of **Ioannis Aggos** with other telephones and the connection with the murder of Pavlos Fyssas is confirmed by the testimonies of witnesses present and friends of Pavlos Fyssas, such as the 18-9-2013 deposition by **Georgios Doulvaris**: "What I believe is that one of the two people in the cafeteria who looked like Golden Dawn members had somehow notified the man who stabbed Pavlos." This is also confirmed by the centralised log of mobile phone calls from 21:00 of 17/9/2013 to 03:00 of 18/9/2013, where the calls of Ioannis Aggos are shown.

At 23:30 on 17 September 17 2013 the head of the Local Organisation of Nikea, **Georgios Patelis**, sends a message from the mobile phone of the local organisation to all the members of the organisation's "security department". The message was imperative and ordered the members who had received it to immediately present themselves at the organisation's offices: "Everyone at the branch offices now. Those who are close. We will not wait for those who are distant. Now."

The same is proved by the memo of the defendant **Georgios Dimou** on 04/10/2013, which is confirmed in his statement where he says: "That evening I was watching TV when I received a written message at about 23.00, which called us to the local offices. I was struck by the time and I called Roupakias. I told him about the message and asked him what they wanted from us and he replied: "I do not know, I will get back to you." I then called Patelis and told him, 'Mr. Patelis, why do you want us in the local offices at this time of hour?', but he urged me to get there in ten minutes, without answering my question.

Those who received the sms message, operated in a structured way and disciplining themselves directly to the order given to them by the secretary of the local organisation - paid by Golden Dawn - **Georgios Patelis** who sent the message. They complied and obeyed without any reaction or questioning of the purpose of the mobilisation at such a

late hour on a working day. They were gathered within 15 minutes at the offices of the above local organisation: **Georgios Patelis, Ioannis Kazantzoglou, Athanasios Tsorvas, Georgios Dimou, Georgios Stampelos** (according to **Georgios Roupakias's** statement on 15/10/2013: "... I actually went to the branch [office] and saw 10-12 motorbikes with 17-18 people, among whom I recognized Patelis, Kazantzoglou, Tsorvas Thanas, Giorgos Dimou, Giorgos Stampelos...").

There were also **Ioannis Komianos, Nikolaos Tsorvas, Georgios Skalkos** - according to other statements of the members of the Nikea local organisation. All the above followed the instructions of Georgios Patelis, in charge of the local "battalion squad", in execution of a previous order given to him by **Ioannis Lagos**, who, as an MP of Golden Dawn in Piraeus. Lagos was responsible for all the districts of Piraeus. The "battalion squad" of Nikea had been formed on the order to be ready and capable of harming its political opponents and undesirable people in general, using physical or armed violence.

In the offices of the branch all the above were assembled as a battalion squad and were given instructions for the assault and the target-victim. In the two or three cars of the procession the following were present: **Georgios Roupakias** with **Ioannis Kazantzoglou** and two other women in the first one and **Athanasios** and **Nikolaos Tsorvas** in the second. Along with them were about 10-12 motorcycles with at least 17 people. Forming a squad, they moved in a procession, organised according to a plan. They arrived within a few minutes (the distance from the organisation's offices in Caesareas Street to the place of the murder in Panagi Tsaldari Street is about 2-3 minutes with a two-wheeler vehicle) outside the Coralli cafe. There they found the other members of the branch, **Ioannis Aggos, Leontas Tsalikis, Anastasios Michalaros**, as well as other members who had in the meantime converged to the point following the orders given to them.

The fully assembled battalion created favorable conditions for perpetrating the murder: in particular, a climate of general confusion, harassment, tension and intimidation of Pavlos Fyssas and his friends, amongst them two women, via shouting and insults, as well as by beating them, leaving Pavlos Fyssas trapped and vulnerable.

At this point, it is important to refer to evidence from the eyewitness accounts who confirm the actions of the members of the Nikea battalion squad:

- a. In his sworn statement, **Doulvaris Georgios**, friend of Pavlos Fyssas, stated: “We saw them strutting like a squad. In addition to shouting, they stamped their feet in the street rhythmically, in order to to make us afraid [...] They did not want us to escape. It was obvious because they were all assembled as a battalion, armed, wearing helmets.”
- b. In his sworn testimony, **Rotas Georgios**, DIAS Police Officer stated: “The image of 40-50 men, dressed in black and holding clubs, created a state of tension that something might happen or something had happened. The fact that they started to run, moreover as a team, seemed to me like someone gave the order.”
- c. In his sworn testimony, **Dimitrios Chatzistamatis** stated: “Fuck them [up]!... I understood that these phrases were initially shouted by one certain person, who gave me the impression that he was the leader, and then the rest of the group shouted themselves.”
- d. In the radio conversations between the police base and the vehicles (motorcycles and patrol cars) who were present during the attack: “Speaker:” Fifty people with bats, heading to the store called Coralli. Have you received?”
- e. In a similar report of the Hellenic Police that states: “Crew 1: ‘... on Pavlou Mela and Kefallinias, there are about twenty people of Golden Dawn ... Base... we can see there are some iron railings and some bats Crew: ‘We are seeing people of Golden Dawn, chasing other people on Tsaldari Street. They are hunting them to catch them.’ Crew: ‘From Perama Crew: people from Golden Dawn ... We see them heading to Kefalinias street...’.”



At the same time, the group of Golden Dawn members strengthened in number. And it was encouraged by **Georgios Roupakias**, a member of the Five-Member Council of the same local organisation as its treasurer (proved by the “list of local organisations”, written by Golden Dawn Central Administration manager, **Dimitrios Vlachopoulos** as well as the organisation’s accountant, **Angeliki Gennata**). Roupakias drove his car down Panagi Tsaldari Street, moving in the opposite direction to the allowed traffic flow, left it in the middle of the street at number 62, got out of it in a hurry and, with a knife which he brought with him, struck Pavlos Fyssas suddenly and repeatedly. The thrusts were in the chest, at the height of the heart, resulting in his death.

The police officers of DIAS did not intervene in order to prevent the assassination of **Pavlos Fyssas**, but only arrested **Georgios Roupakias**, who confessed his act, following the pleas of the victim himself, Pavlos Fyssas. In a one or two minutes before he bled out from the mortal trauma to his heart and aorta he managed to identify his assassin.

It is also important to note the testimony of **Dimitrios Chatzistamatis**, who saw Pavlos Fyssas after the murderous stabbing by Georgios Roupakias: “The stab wound was like a rose: that means the offender had turned the knife in Fyssas body. The one who made it is certainly trained. A man who defends himself does not strike someone that way. [...] It gave me the impression that Roupakias was doing it, the stabbing to make himself valued in the eyes of others.”

In the act of the assassination of Pavlos Fyssas, Roupakias had direct and immediate accomplices, as evidenced by many witness statements and testimonies, as follows:

- a. **Angeliki Legatou**, DIAS police woman, who first reached the point of the murder: “... two on his right and one on his left, pulling him and beating him. The fourth was Roupakias, who held a thrusting knife and attacked Pavlos Fyssas by striking him suddenly and repeatedly on the left upper torso, resulting in his death [...] The three men who fled and disappeared were pulling Fyssas and Roupakias stabbed him. In fact, they helped Roupakias to stab him...”.
- b. **Paraskevi Karagiannidou**, an eyewitness: “The guy (Fyssas) was beaten by 2-3 people together, with helmets, punches

and kicks, and then grabbed by a man with a few gray hairs who struck him [...] Then came the police and those who beat him began running to flee...”.

- c. **Andreas Biagis**, DIAS policeman: “I saw Roupakias beating Fyssas with his hands and Fyssas reciprocating. Around them there were 2-3 people who were shoving Fyssas and helping Roupakias.”

However, immediately after the stabbing of Fyssas, the other defendants, taking advantage of the confusion, escaped arrest by the DIAS police officers who reached the spot and who, only upon the direction of a dying Fyssas, arrested Roupakias.

The participants in this criminal act functioned on the basis of attacks and military instructions to “sow terror” (as stated in video 390 of **Georgios Patelis** hard disk, in his speech for a motor procession during which “we did terrorism in the area of Agios Nikolaos”). Most of them were wearing the uniform of the local security organisation of Nikea: a black shirt, white-grey-black camouflage trousers, and boots, according to **Dimitra Zorzou’s** testimony: “What we noticed was all they were big. Most had shaved heads, wearing black clothes, white-grey-black trousers and black shirts. Some were holding helmets and I saw a bat.” In addition, **Ioannis Aggos** himself, in his statement before the Investigator, describes the dress of the “security battalion” of the Nikea organisation: “I note that for the Security of the building which includes 15 people, there is a specific dress, a black T-shirt with a Golden Dawn logo, white-grey-black trousers, military boots and optional cap.”

It is important to emphasise that the mobilisation of this battalion squad faithfully followed the hierarchical structure of the organisation. The member of the Security section **Ioannis Aggos** informed **Ioannis Kazantzoglou** (in charge of the Security) who addressed the local secretary of the organisation **Georgios Patelis** and he, in turn, informed **Ioannis Lagos**, MP of Piraeus and responsible for the entire Piraeus Region, for him to approve the execution of the mission. This follows from the telephone conversations and graphs of communications:

23:25 Kazantzoglou calls Patelis (call duration: 198 seconds)

23:26 Patelis calls Lagos.

- 23:26** Lagos calls Patelis (call duration: 64 seconds).
- 23:28** Patelis sends the sms to the men of the local Security section of Nikea.
- 23:49** Lagos sends sms to Patelis.
- 23:50** Patelis sends sms to Lagos.
- 00:12** Stampelos sends sms to Lagos.
- 00:15** Lagos calls Patelis.
- 00:30** Lagos calls Patelis (call duration: 139 seconds).
- 00:37** Lagos calls Michaloliakos (call duration: 45 seconds).

George Patelis as the secretary of the local organisation was the head of its local actions in the region. According to the statement of the defendant **Nikolaos Tsorvas**: “I have participated in 2-3 motor processions of the local organisation in Nikea and Georgios Patelis was the leader of these processions and his commands had to be followed strictly by all its members.”

The repeated telephone communications between the members and the leadership of the battalion squad are interrupted between 23:50-00:06, during the time when the attack and the ultimate assassination of Pavlos Fyssas takes place. After the arrest of **Georgios Roupakias**, the telephone communications resume frantically, with the most important being the one between **Ioannis Lagos** and the Leader **Nikolaos Michaloliakos**.

Finally, an important element in demonstrating Golden Dawn as a criminal organisation is the memorandum by the defendant **Georgios Dimou** dated 4/10/2013. It mentions the events after the assassination of Pavlos Fyssas and the threats he received by members of the organisation, such as the defendant **Georgios Tsakanikas**, who acted, as he says, with the mandate of **Ioannis Lagos**: “Listen, Dimou, you are the only one who called Roupakias... Better you go to prison than the Nikea local to be caught. If you do not say what I tell you to say, we’ll make you suffer until we kill you. I tell you to know this: we kill the traitors, do you understand? Do not go to the police ...”. The same is confirmed by the testimony of **Vassilios Chandrinou**.



3. THE MURDEROUS ATTACK AGAINST THE EGYPTIAN FISHERMEN

Below is an account of the hearing in respect to the murderous attack against **Abuzeid Embarak** in Perama on 12/6/2012:

In Perama, Attica, on 12/6/2012 and around 3.10 am, the defendants **Anastasios Pantazis, Konstantinos Papadopoulos, Eleni-Christina Nikitopoulou, Thomas Marias** and **Markos Evgenikos** acted together with at least 20 people who remain unknown to the authorities up to now. Wearing black clothes and - some of them - the Golden Dawn insignia, they approached on motorbikes the house of the Egyptian fishermen Muhammad Abu Hamed, Ahmed Abu Hamed and Saad Abu Hamed at 32, Themistokli Sofouli St.

Having first spotted **Abuzeid Embarak** (also Egyptian who was staying as a guest at the same house) sleeping on the roof of the property, they attacked him with clubs, wooden sticks and iron bars, and seriously injured him in vital parts of his body, head and face. This resulted in a double fracture of the lower jaw and nasal bones, as well as lung collapse, deep rupturing traumas on the face and head, and a large swelling on the visceral skull tissue.

They then attempted to storm the house, calling the occupants insulting and racist names and causing damage. One of the perpetrators,

who in the process was identified as **Anastasios Pantazis**, shouted to the victims “now you will find out what is Golden Dawn” and “we will fuck you”. Pantazis is proven to be part of the leadership of the local organization (LO) of Golden Dawn in Perama, while Marias and Papadopoulos are also registered members of the same LO, according to the case file. The perpetrators threw a fire extinguisher as well as its contents inside the house and left within a few minutes. That as because the occupants of nearby blocks of flats had began getting out to their balconies and onto the street to see what was happening (testimony of witness **Tatsiopoulos**). Before leaving the Golden Dawn LO caused extensive damage to the vehicles the Egyptian fishermen use for their livelihood (a van and a three-wheel motorbike).

The attack was extremely violent and thoroughly organised along the lines of neo-naazi stormtroopers. Specifically:

- a. Multi-person group:** the perpetrators arrived on motorbikes after having gathered first at the far end of Perama (a fast-food outlet called Beat). Many of them were dressed in black outfits and some had Golden Dawn shirts on. Police officer **Polichronidou**, who brought in the perpetrators and testified to the court, confirmed that Pantazis and another accused wore T-shirts with the Golden Dawn insignia.
- b. Armed attack:** The perpetrators went up to the roof of the house where Abuzeid Embarak was sleeping. They attacked him with bats, sticks, batons and iron bars/ They and severely injured him in several parts of his body, but mainly to his head and face. Recovery required, among other things, the application of jaw wiring to the victim. He was unable to eat solid food for six months. Then they attempted to invade the house, causing damage to the wooden shutters and glass windows. They broke the vehicles of the victims on leaving. This is sustained, organised, manifold and shows all the features of premeditated and purposeful attack. All this assault lasted for a total of about five minutes and was completed with

an equally concerted and sudden departure of the group from the scene of the attack. The perpetrators left as one.

- c. Hierarchical organization of the attack: Anastasios Pantazis** was identified as the head of the attack and was one of those who had a Golden Dawn shirt on. In the afternoon of the previous day, a few hours before the attack, Golden Dawn MP **Ioannis Lagos**, the head of the party in Piraeus and Perama, in a meeting at a cafeteria in Perama had said, "... we have received complaints about issues that exist here in the area of the fish market in Keratsini. About all these issues with the Egyptians who come here, do whatever they want, sell their fish in the way they want, get them from where they want and generally do not stand accountable to anyone. We tell them that from now on they will be giving account to the Golden Dawn ... ". [In Greek the phrase used means being both accountable to, having to answer to, and showing your commercial accounts to.]

During the hearing, the Egyptian fishermen recognised the perpetrators, namely: Pantazis was recognised by Ahmed and Muhammad Abu Hamed unreservedly, and by Saad Abu Hamed with 90 percent certainty. Ahmed and Muhammad Abu Hamed recognised Agriogiannis unquestionably. Muhammad Abu Hamid recognised Marias, Evgenikos and Papadopoulos unquestionably and Ahmed Abu Hamed with 80 percent certainty.

In their defence memoranda and their statements to the investigators, some of the defendants changed their initial statements.



4. THE MURDEROUS ATTACK AGAINST THE COMMUNIST TRADE-UNIONISTS OF PAME/KKE

The murderous attack on the Communist trade unionists in Perama is the third undetermined criminal act of Golden Dawn examined so far by the court. The overall indictment charges that immigrants, dissidents and ideological/political opponents are seen as enemies by the “Golden Dawn” criminal organisation. If in the murder of Pavlos Fyssas, a dissident (an antifascist musician) was struck down, and if in the case of the Egyptian fishermen the immigrants who live and work in Greece were targeted, then in the case of KKE (Communist Party of Greece) and PAME (All Workers Militant Front) members, it is the left wing trade unionists who were targeted. Those later constitute a serious political and ideological opponent of the criminal organisation, in keeping with its nazi ideology.

1. *The attack*

The main features of the assault as determined by the witnesses, are as follows:

- i. The attack involved multiple members - about 50 people participated in it (some 30 more people, probably from Salamina, came as an extra support force).

- ii. Perpetrators were divided into two equal groups (from 20 to 25 individuals each).
- iii. The arrival of the perpetrators was achieved speedily and silently from two different streets: the two perpendicular narrow streets, with the aim of trapping the victims.
- iv. The point where the victims were targeted is where Democracy Avenue has been transformed into a one-way street of smaller width, darker and easier to encircle.
- v. The perpetrators were overwhelmingly dressed in dark clothing. Some wore T-shirts with Golden Dawn insignia.
- vi. Some of the perpetrators had their faces covered (helmets, scarves, sweatshirts, etc.)
- vii. The two groups were united in a semicircular arrangement blocking any escape route, aligned in three rows, with the older and those with the most dangerous weapons standing in the first row.
- viii. Most of the perpetrators in the first row held bats, sticks, folding clubs and started to yell, shout and terrorise their victims. It is worth mentioning the metallic ends on the sticks and bats, recognised by the witnesses Goutis, Tiliakos, Sklavolias and Karamberis. These were lumps of wood which had had crafted onto them sharp pieces of metal.

At this point, the terrorist goal of the perpetrators had already been achieved. If the perpetrators only wanted to terrorise their victims, they could have left. But their purpose was not just terrorising, but homicidal.

- ix. The perpetrators were led by **Anastasios Pantazis** and **Antonios Hatzidakis**, both heads of the local organisation Golden Dawn in Perama.
- x. The leaders were looking for the main target of the attack, **Sotiris Poulikogiannis**, in whom the identities of the KKE member and PAME leader are common. This shows that they knew

very well which group they had set upon and what their purpose was. They asked, “Where is Poulikogiannis?”

- xi.** The leaders proclaimed their political identity: “We are from the Golden Dawn.” The statement was heard by the witnesses Poulikogiannis, Goutis, Diamantakis, Vaxevanis, Tiliakos, Sklavolias.
- xii.** The interval between the battalion’s appearance and the onset of the attack was very short. The phrases used by the perpetrators were forboding (“leave now” when each escape route is blocked) and hooligan-style (as Pountidis testified).
- xiii.** The trigger of the attack was given by an intervention from one of the chiefs, **Antonios Hatzidakis**.
- xiv.** The attack was unprovoked and coordinated, coming at the same time, as the whole group of perpetrators moved in an organised fashion.
- xv.** All the weapons held by the first row of perpetrators began to club down on the head of Sotiris Poulikogiannis, who fell to the ground.

At this point, supposing that the aim of the perpetrators was merely to strike a blow to the KKE and PAME members, the attack should have been completed and the perpetrators left. That was not the case.

- xvi.** The attack continues for at least 2-3 minutes after the first blow to Poulikogiannis.
- xvii.** The attack was extremely violent. A key feature was that perpetrators struck the heads of identifiable targets. It is characteristic that Pountidis was hit on the head and required stitches. Zimaris was beaten with a object bearing nails as he protected his head. Vaxevanis was hit on the elbow as he protected his head, etc.

At this point, we can say with certainty that the homicidal purpose has been proven. It is unquestionably proven by a) the weapons used by the perpetrators and which were appropriate for their homicidal capacity, b) the intensity of the blows that were extremely violent, c) the vital bodily parts targeted by the perpetrators, ie the heads of the victims.

- xviii.** After a few minutes, the leaders of the Golden Dawn squad shouted: "It's the end" and "Perama! To here!". The groups divided by area of their organisation, which proves that the mobilisation was not only from the Perama organisation.
- xix.** The groups left in a coordinated way back along the directions that they had come. From neighbours, information came that on the upper road motorbikes were parked (which were the means of escape). The same goes for the "support group" as is testified by the bus driver **Lyrintzis**.

From all these facts, it is beyond doubt that the attack was organised. The common elements of this attack with the assassination of Pavlos Fyssas and the murderous attack on Abuzeid Embarak are: the formation of a multi-member group, many armed men - usually dressed in black, a statement of political identity, a surprise attack in a short timetable, a coordinated completion of the attack, and an organised departure just as abrupt as its beginning.

2. The pre-announcement

The attack is pre-announced. On 8 August 2013, the Golden Dawn leadership (three MPs, Lagos, Panagiotaros and Michos) visited the Ship Building Zone and made incendiary statements that they were filming and uploading on the internet propaganda with the now-known phrases: "PAME and KKE will disappear from the Zone." "The abscess will be drained". Reference as made both to the Communist Party and to PAME which means a hit against the Communists as ideological

opponents and the driving force of the Union, which is a hindrance to the attempt to control the Ship Building Zone, on the order of the contractors. Present at the meeting were both **Anastasios Pantazis** and **Georgios Patelis**, the heads of two local organisations of Perama and Nikea, and accused of assassination attacks, with neither of them having any professional relationship to the Zone.

The court now has strong evidence that the leadership not only called for the murderous attack but organised it up to the last detail.

3. *The implementation*

The core members who carried out the announced intention of Golden Dawn are **Anastasios Pantazis** (local leadership) – **Ioannis Lagos** (central leadership), with each one having their own special role.

Local leadership has the following tasks:

- a. find the people who will make up the battalion (Squadrisimo or Strumabteilung),
- b. keep them on “standby alert”,
- c. have the weapons ready (in our case carefully crafted, created, etc.),
- d. identify the target,
- e. find the best spot for the attack,
- f. have an action plan and escape plan.

The central leadership has the ultimate power to “kick off” the attack, as described in detail in the video “Whatever moves gets slaughtered” found on **Georgios Patelis’** hard drive.

Here, one must avoid confusing three distinct moments of the assassination plan: decision, planning, and order. The decision precedes the day of the attack. Planning time is the time when weapons are being prepared, people are trained, etc. That way, the time from the order given – that is when the communist trade unionists are spotted – to the attack is can be made sufficient. So the question “how did the

battalion squad get to organise the attack within 50 minutes?” is the biggest proof of the existence of a criminal organization.

In the case of the murderous assault of 12 September 2013, defendant Lagos not only gives the order but has complete supervision and absolute control over the criminal act before, during and after it materialises. This is proved by:

- a. the three sms messages of Lagos to Patelis: (11:49:41): “THE COMMIES WILL GET A GOOD LESSON TONIGHT... TASOS HAS GATHERED 30 PEOPLE AND IS HEADING TOWARDS THERE” - (11:52:19): “NO, THEY WILL DO THE JOB”. - (11:56:58): “THEY GOT A FIRST ANSWER”.
- b. the messages of Lagos to Develekos with the most important sms: “we slaughtered them”.
- c. the conversation between Lagos and Develekos twenty minutes after the attack.

4. The structural identity of the “political party” and the criminal organisation.

Golden Dawn is an organization with a strict hierarchical structure and military discipline, in its own words. This alone results in the logical conclusion that there is no possibility of having more than one leading center.

However, after examining the murderous assault on communist trade unionists, things became more concrete. So:

Anastasios Pantazis is the head of the local organization of the “party” in Perama, a head and then a member of the five-member council. At the same time, he is the head of the battalion squad that perpetrated the assassination attacks on the Egyptian fishermen in the summer of 2012 and on the Communist trade unionists in the autumn of 2013.

Ioannis Lagos is the regional Gauleiter and MP of the “party” in Piraeus, a member of the Political Council, the supreme leading body of Golden

Dawn. At the same time, he is the head of the Piraeus battalion squads and guides its murderous attacks (even with his non-official presence).

This results in an absolute structural identification of the hierarchy of the “political party” and of the criminal organisation as described in the indictment.

5. *The Führer’s absolute authority*

The knowledge and absolute authority of the “Führer” emerged in the process from two axes:

- a. the nazi ideology, which is not some mistaken “ideas of our youth”, but is still present and emerges from recent evidence: **Ilias Kasidiaris** with the flag of the Wehrmacht in 2012, **Christos Pappas** in the Mussolini mausoleum in 2011, **Nikolaos Michaloliakos** and his statement presenting Golden Dawn as the “seed of the defeated army of 1945” in 2012, and so on.
- b. the practice of the organisation according to its leading cadre: speeches of both **Georgios Patelis** (in Salamina) and **Ilias Panagiotaros** where members are asked for blind obedience to the hierarchy and given the assurance that “nothing in Golden Dawn is done accidentally”. In fact, it is said that “disobedience to your superior is disobedience to the Leader, because the superior is in his position by decision of the Leader.”

So, on the evening of the attack, the members of the battalion squad had a strong and firm belief that they were executing orders from the leader of the organisation, Nikolaos Michaloliakos.

And if there was any doubt, it was removed from the way in which the organisation covered up its criminal actions. In the case of the attack on the members of the KKE and PAME, we have an angry denial and extortion of accusations against the victims for “slander”, proving the full and complete coverage of the perpetrators of the attack by the leadership of the nazi organisation.



Golden Dawn's battalion squads supervised by its MP Ilias Kasidiaris

5. OTHER CASES AND WITNESSES

After the hearing of the three emblematic cases that are being co-tried in the Trial of Golden Dawn, the court examined witnesses for other criminal cases where Golden Dawn members participated. What was proven by these testimonies is the the existence and action of multi-member storm troops (“battalion squads” at the indictment), groups of Golden Dawn men, who are organised, structured and hierarchical, ready to act and ultimately commit criminal acts.

The **Modus Operandi** has revealed a specific mode:

Number many versus few.

Artillery Armed against unarmed.

Speed Fast turnout with vehicles and cars.

Political identity Statement either with clothes or with slogans and words.

Start Surprise attack.

Attack Timetable Short schedule.

End Equally surprising with the start.

Objective The enemies of the organisation, immigrants or ideological and political opponents.

Purpose the terrorising of a whole community of people, not just the person being hit, but the community they belong to in the eyes of the perpetrator.

Incentive the nazi ideology that determines the choice of targets, an incentive that can be met alongside others (economic motives, etc.).

Role of the leadership of the organisation organises, announces and guides the battalion squads.

Some of the criminal acts of Golden Dawn members that have been examined by the Court are:

- a. The attack against the Social Centre “Synergeio” in Ilioupoli (witnesses **Panagiotis Tsafolopoulos, Panagiotis Drimyliis, Dimitrios Gogoulos, Dimitrios Kissas**) on 10 July 2013 by 30 motorbike loads, with male members and supporters of Golden Dawn, with the logo of the organisation: black T-shirts with insignia. The attack, during which one person was injured and the office of the Centre destroyed, took place in the presence of two MPs of Golden Dawn, **Ioannis Lagos** and **Nikos Mixos**, the first of whom used his parliamentary car.
- b. The attack against the Anarchist Centre “Antipnia” (witnesses **Ruben Sans, Georgios Miliarakis, Ekaterini Gerouki, Vassiliki Margari**) on 30 June 2008 by 15 motorbike loads with male members and supporters of the Golden Dawn in Petralona. The attack started with the perpetrators stating their political identity (“You have the greetings of Golden Dawn, you will die”), with two members of the Antipnia Centre stabbed almost fatally. One of the perpetrators, **Vassilis Siatounis** was a leading member of Golden Dawn and alongside **Athanasis Stratos** has already been convicted for attempted murder (they are now being accused as members of the criminal organisation).
- c. The attack against Pakistani immigrants (witnesses **Andreas Bilalis, Petros Capouas, Liakat Ali, Hanif Mohammad, Mazar Iqbal**) on 13 February 2013, by 10-12 members and supporters of Golden Dawn, all men, inside their house, in Vainia,

lerapetra. The perpetrators have already been convicted for bodily harm and are now accused of participating in a criminal organisation.

- d. The attack against a 16-year-old pupil at Paleo Faliro (witnesses **Kambioti Artemis, Dermetzidis Iordanis, Dermetzidis Phoebos, Gaga Maria, Koursopoulos Kimon, Damianopoulou Eleni**) by Golden Dawn member **Georgios Apostolopolos** who has been convicted of grievous bodily harm and is now accused of participating in a criminal organisation.
- e. The racist attacks in the centre of Athens around the Agios Panteleimonas Square (witnesses **Javied Aslam, Naim Elgadour, Seck Khadim, Salum Francis**) during the period 2011-2013. Of these racist attacks, few have found their way into the courts. This is because the victims were afraid to denounce the attackers, as they did not have legal papers and risked to be arrested and imprisoned although they were the victims. Such is the case of the attempted arson of the Muslim worship space at Attiki Square (for which Naim Elgadour has testified) where 40 Bangladeshi citizens were nearly burned alive on 30 October 2010. However, there have been some cases that have been tried. One was the arson of the Coin-treau shop on 13 May 2013 in America's Square by Golden Dawn member **Nikolaos Papavassiliou** and **Georgios Perris**.

In the final phase of the witnesses called by the District Attorney, the court examined witnesses exclusively for the criminal conspiracy clause from a broad social and political spectrum, amongst them: the University Professor of Constitutional Law **Nikolaos Alivizatos**, the mayor of Athens **Georgios Kaminis**, the specialist journalist **Dimitrios Psarras**, the ex-SYRIZA MP and human rights activist **Vassiliki Katrivanou**, and others.

The examination of witnesses ended with ex members of Golden Dawn questioned, either with their name, as was the case of **Ilias Stavrou**, ex cadre of the organisation, or with a protected status (without their

names or faces revealed) as was the case of Witnesses A, B, C, D and E who testified through a special sound system and documented the criminal activity of the organisation.

The process will now continue with the reading of the investigative files (either in written or visual/audio form) and is expected to conclude at the end of 2018.



Antifascist demonstration in Syntagma, Athens

6. CONCLUSION

We are now in the tenth year of what some economists have termed “a long depression” following the collapse of Lehman Brothers in the US in 2008.

The European political systems – for so long a stable alternation between the governmental parties of the centre left and centre right – are now more emaciated than at any time since the Second World War.

Comparisons with the 1930s abound in the European media and it has become a journalistic commonplace that economic distress automatically brings the rise of the “populist right”. That contains an aspect of truth. But it is hopelessly one-sided and can serve to exculpate political responsibility for the growth of racism and of fascism. An economic crisis is not like a meteorological depression, which brings with the force of nature bad weather. Just because GDP falls or is flat, why should the level of racist and fascist activity naturally rise?

That was not an automatic process in interwar Europe – neither is it now. Too literal a comparison with the 1930s can obscure both the specific developments today and also what may usefully be gained from historical comparison in informing strategies to oppose the far right successfully.

Europe experienced a frenzy of fascist violence during the interwar period. The level is incomparably lower today. But the last five years

do point to a trend of fascist murders of “political opponents” as well as racist violence generally.

In 2011 **Anders Breivik** murdered 69 youth members of the Norwegian Labour Party and eight others. Neo-Nazi skinheads killed teenage left activist **Clement Meric** in Paris in 2013. In September of that year, Golden Dawn stabbed anti-racist rapper **Pavlos Fyssas** to death in Athens. In 2016 came the murder of Labour MP **Jo Cox** in June by a man who was reported at the time to have shouted, “Britain First!” (which is also the name of a fascist organisation) or “Put Britain first!”. In September of that year, Finnish fascists killed 28-year-old Jimi **Joomas Karttunen** after he verbally confronted them.

The far higher levels of fascist and far right political violence in the interwar period need to be placed in the context of much more polarised societies across Europe of that time. Millions of men were demobilised from the First World War into devastated societies, wracked by revolution and counter-revolution from Kiel to Constanza.

Even during the short-lived stabilisation of the Roaring Twenties the general level of political violence remained high. Organisations of veterans – of the right, of the conservative centre, and of the left – were adjuncts to all the political forces in Germany, for example.

The circumstances in which far right forces are attempting to win political power today are radically different.

There is a range of formations. The fact that they all consciously occupy a space to the right of the mainstream centre right parties means they share a very general “radical right wing” character. If you want to build in that political space you need constantly to demonstrate in word and in deed that you are “more radical”, perhaps more “militant” and prepared to act directly, than mainstream parties of the right. And those parties are increasingly turning to the politics of racism and scapegoating. The authoritarian centre right governments of Poland, Hungary and Austria are but hard-line variants of a wider phenomenon. Beneath the general character of the far right, there remain important differences of strategy and ideology.

First, there are clearly neo-Nazi parties such as Golden Dawn. Second, we have the parties of the “Eurofascist” extreme right. The term

is an analogy to the “Eurocommunist” evolution of many Communist parties in the 1970s towards emphasising “a long march through the institutions”, especially parliament, as a strategy for political conquest as opposed to a sudden, insurgent advance. The most important are the Front National in France and the core of the Freedom Party (FPÖ) in Austria.

And third, we have the newer, national-chauvinist and xenophobic parties of the hard right, such as UKIP in Britain and, in its origin, the Alternative for Germany, the AfD, alongside older but broadly similar formations in Scandinavia and elsewhere. Along with these political parties we have seen anti-Muslim and violent “street movements” such as the English Defence League and, much more substantially, Pegida in Germany.

This classification is important, especially when discussing tactical issues in the fight against the extreme right. But ideologically, the far right everywhere represents a radicalisation of the reactionary ideas of the right in general in each national political context. So everywhere they share hardened racism, particularly Islamophobia.

For that reason, and on account of a process of radicalisation of the far right, the distinctions between these different formations are not absolute.

The rise of the AfD in Germany is a case in point. It has defied a twin presumption of mainstream political commentary two years ago: that its radicalisation to the extreme right would cost it electoral support; and that its entry into state parliaments would lead to it moderating back towards the centre right.

The AfD was founded four years ago as a right wing Eurosceptic party by neoliberal economists reacting on a nationalist basis to the bailout programs for Southern Europe. The subsequent evolution of the party has been sharply to the racist right at the same time as it has grown electorally. A critical moment was the ousting of the original leadership in 2015 and its capture by a group who made anti-immigrant

and anti-Muslim racism much more central to the party's programme. That was before the large-scale refugee flows, as was the explosion of the Pegida anti-Muslim street agitation into which AfD branches immersed themselves.

"Europe" hardly featured in the party's agitation in this year's federal election here it took 12.6 percent. Stopping the supposed "Islamisation" of Germany was central to its propaganda. The radicalised racist rhetoric has drawn seasoned fascists into the party. It now contains a "fascis-ing" wing arguing for more radical - ie violent - tactics as a complement to the electoral front. The election of **Alexander Gauland** as co-leader at the party's congress in December 2017 marked a victory for that wing.

It is in the evolution of far right politics in contemporary Europe that a fruitful comparison with the period of the 1920s and early 1930s may be made - providing a context for the continent-wide significance of the trial of Golden Dawn and its outcome.

In the decade of the 1920s there was also a spectrum of radical right and reactionary forces. They ranged from national-conservative, through monarchic-militarists, nativist "plebeian" street movements, anti-democratic clerical reaction, to followers of the "New Idea" - fascism as expounded in Mussolini's Italy.

There was no single hegemonic model of right wing, anti-democratic reaction. Mussolini's success, certainly after the consolidation of his regime and suppression of all parliamentary democracy following 1924, did provide inspiration for all manner of reactionary forces. But it was one point of reference in a crowded field of reaction and could be regarded as a uniquely Italian phenomenon, a product of Southern European particularity.

It was not until the advance of the NSDAP, with Hitler gifted the Chancellorship in January 1933 and the total suppression of democratic norms four months later, that fascism - in its National-Socialist variant - became the especially virulent model for all those of the radical and authoritarian right. Its influence can be measured in how military figures, from Hungary to Spain, who had looked to traditional means

of military-police authoritarianism now bolted on the methods of the fascist mobilisation of plebeian social layers.

Today's Europe also has a morphing range of radical right wing forces, lacking – as yet – a single leading model that can settle by example the competing political and organisational strategies, and the often fractious rivalries of those who hold them.

It is here that the trial of Golden Dawn, as part of a wider movement against it, is of such significance beyond Greece. Here is a far right formation that explicitly sees itself as neo-Nazi. By placing its “battalion squads” at the very centre of its organisation it has more faithfully than any other far right organisation of significance pursued the “militant” strategy of violent conquest of power combined with cynical use of the electoral field which the NSDAP adopted in the mid-1920s.

The trial and the movement against Golden Dawn these last four years have already played a vital role in limiting the attractiveness of that model among the swirl of radical right wing forces and audiences. But only to an extent. Golden Dawn cadres travelled to the US to work closely with the White Supremacist forces who mobilised in Charlottesville, running amok and murdering **Heather Heyer**.

The formal lines of association between Golden Dawn and wider far right forces in Europe remain open. Additionally, what the French anti-fascist movement has termed the “fasco-sphere” of extreme right online networks and activity means that the channels for influence and for radicalisation towards explicitly fascist, neo-Nazi and terroristic ideas are far more numerous and fluid than just the formal relations between different radical right strands.

For those activists of the Front National, for example, frustrated at what they see as their party's failure to turn an increased vote via cosmetic moderation into actually winning power, Golden Dawn may provide a more “militant”, more activist, “purer” alternative.

The destruction of any credibility for that alternative, therefore, has reverberations beyond Greece. There has been success already. But a huge amount depends upon the outcome of the trial.

If Golden Dawn is convicted on all counts, then the message will go out that this is a “model” of far right politics that will not bring you laurels – but a long time in prison. Of course, that will not in itself break up the bases of far right and racist populist politics. It will, however, be an important gain for every democrat in Europe.

This is the import of the decision the Greek judiciary must make. And it is for that reason that we alert European opinion to what is to be decided, and to their role also in ensuring that comparisons with the darkest chapter of Europe’s past do not become a self-fulfilling prophesy.

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