

Greece: The worrying re-legitimation of Golden Dawn

Wednesday 4 March 2015, by [KAMPAGIANNIS Thanasis](#) (Date first published: 4 March 2015).

The intervention of SYRIZA MP and Speaker of the House Zoi Konstantopoulou during the first (and so far sole) session of the Greek Parliament sent a chill through the country's anti-fascist movement. The Speaker proposed the postponement of the parliamentary sitting because the District Attorney had not given permission to the MPs of Golden Dawn (Nikolaos Michaloliakos, Ilias Kasidiaris and Co.) to attend.

Given that the agenda of the session was a relatively unimportant vote (lifting the immunity of far-right ex-LAOS and now New Democracy politician Adonis Georgiadis), Konstantopoulou was effectively demanding the participation of Golden Dawn MPs in all parliamentary procedures, thereby rendering their detention pending trial meaningless.

Konstantopoulou had previously challenged the prosecution of Golden Dawn's parliamentary whip and opposed the suspension of the party's finances, again citing "democratic sensibilities". This time, however, her intervention acquires institutional prestige that it didn't have when she was just an opposition MP.

The argument that Golden Dawn is a "legitimate political party", which the anti-fascist movement fought against in 2012-13 — and which took Pavlos Fyssas's blood to be defeated [[1](#)] — now returns, yet from the mouth of a left-wing Speaker of the House. It is certain that the state and its mechanisms, the police and the judges, took on board the message sent by Konstantopoulou, whatever her intentions.

How to explain these statements by a leading SYRIZA politician, which are far from being simply an individual aberration? To get past the idea that Konstantopoulou's intervention can be explained by her "explosive temper" (!), let's recall here the decision of SYRIZA's Rena Dourou to give GD's Ilias Panagiotaros offices in the Prefecture, statements by SYRIZA MPs Nikos Filis and Nikos Voutsis that questioned the validity of the prosecution of the neo-Nazis, and so on.

Before SYRIZA became the government, the alleged reason was the need to distance the Left from previous government's Samaras-Dendias initiatives against Golden Dawn and avoid it being "trapped" in a "constitutional arc". But now that SYRIZA is in government, why do such statements continue?

The explanation is twofold. First, the leadership of SYRIZA is so deeply committed to "bourgeois legality" that it considers that Nazis should have rights "since people voted for them". Of course "people" voted for Hitler as well, but this does not make Dachau and Auschwitz — a repeat of which would be the outcome of the avowed political program of Golden Dawn — less horrifying. Second, SYRIZA has put forward a strategy of division of the Right, with ANEL in government, Golden Dawn in the far-right opposition and the Karamanlis wing of New Democracy inhabiting the Presidency. This strategy supposedly disrupts Samaras's New Democracy, thus justifying all compromises: the coalition with Panos Kammenos, the Presidency to the hands of Prokopis Pavlopoulos, the "democratic" whitewashing of Kasidiaris and so on.

A consequence of this dangerous strategy is that Golden Dawn now only appears in the publications and websites of SYRIZA as a bogeyman, one used to frighten creditors and, of course, discipline those on the Left who criticise the government's retreats: "Sit still, because after SYRIZA comes Golden Dawn". It is no accident that the Nazi organisation is spreading exactly the same message to its supporters.

In practice, this line means underestimation of the threat or, worse, paralysis in the anti-fascist movement: "Let the judiciary do its work undistracted," as Tsipras said after the arrest of Golden Dawn leaders — even though Konstantopoulou's proposal represents a direct intervention against the "independence of the judiciary".

As in other fields, the anti-fascist movement — which has many good comrades from SYRIZA in its ranks — must fight independently for the realisation of its goals, the most important of which is now the conviction of the neo-Nazis in the upcoming trial. The worrying intervention of Konstantopoulou should serve as a warning to every anti-fascist.

Thanasis Kampagiannis

P.S.

* <http://left-flank.org/2015/03/04/worrying-re-legitimation-golden-dawn/>

* Thanasis is one of the lawyers representing victims' families in the criminal prosecution of Golden Dawn. A version of this article was originally published in the Greek Workers' Solidarity [<http://ergatiki.gr>] newspaper

Footnotes

[1] <http://left-flank.org/2013/09/19/greek-nazis-kill-while-the-state-prosecutes-anti-fascists/>