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GOLDEN DAWN AS A MODERN ULTRA-RIGHT PARTY IN GREECE

SUMMARY

In Greece, heavily beaten by austerity measures, the long recession and increasing unemployment, there is social collapse and the Greek people are being impoverished daily, sacrificed on the altar of dead-end policies of successive Memoranda. In this grim and pessimistic environment, we witness the exceptional growth and rise of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party. It needs to be emphasized that either by “word fragments” or more bluntly and systematically, extreme nationalist discourse is widespread and sometimes reproduced without being identified as such. And it is for this reason that tackling extremism and violence, fueled by intense nationalism, is not easy, nor is it certain that it will disappear even if Golden Dawn is utterly crushed. Besides, recent electoral results indicate that despite the barrage of revelations regarding its criminal activities, its blatant neo-Nazi characteristics, the arrests of its MPs and party cadres and consequent trials, their numbers were only slightly reduced, far from collapsed.

Key words: Golden Dawn, neo-Nazi, rasist, Greek debt crisis, austerity, recession

1. STRENGTHENING OF THE EXTREME RIGHT PARTIES AFTER THE FALL OF THE JUNTA

Today, forty years after the fall of the junta, self-censorship mechanisms of this domain –that is, being ashamed to declare to be a junta supporter—get weakened. Time goes by. This is proved by the rates of Golden Dawn in the traditional “black” voting dens of the country. Areas which, incidentally, have no problem with the migration issue ... The dictatorship “did its harm” to the tradition of the extreme Right in Greece as it delegitimized it, but gradually this tradition regains momentum and takes a new stride.

Secondly, there has been a penetration of the mush, constituting the yeast of the extreme Right ideology through the length and breadth of the Greek political spectrum. Nationalism, racism and sexism are not a monopoly of Golden Dawn – the same applies for other areas, of course. In Greece, however, the “Macedonian Struggle” of the 1990s led to the emergence of an aggressive nationalist speech, which diffused to the entire political spectrum, the Left not being the exception. Of course, this aggressive nationalist speech was primarily diffused by the Orthodox Church. It is no coincidence that in this context, Golden Dawn is taking its first infantile steps. It is the time when the old school self-victimized Greek nationalism met the dream of “powerful Greece”: a Balkan capitalist metropolis “economically penetrating” (according to a popular collocation of the decade) to the internal affairs of the weak neighbors. The Balkan –and mainly the Albanian- emigration to Greece in that decade strengthen intolerance and the privately directed racism.

In this sense, the migration issue is the point where the old-style Greek extreme Right meets with similar parties of other European states that constitute migrant destinations. Yet, attention should be drawn to the fact that anti-migration speech constitutes the facet of the far-Right formation, which feeds and breathes from the idea of a particular “threat” and risk. Today it is the migrants; yesterday it was the communists etc. If it is not threatened by something, the far-Right formation cannot survive. Throughout history, this is the way it has made up its threats, by stepping on peoples’ social impasses. Secondly, the deterioration of the living conditions dead ends during the crisis period results in the increase of the far-Right ‘neoplasm’.

Yet, this does not occur directly and univocally, as this is often considered to be the case with the Left: the far-Right thrives in countries that do not experience the

tension of crisis (e.g. the UK, Denmark, and Austria), while conversely it means to remain out on the fringes in countries struck for years by high unemployment rates, such as Spain.

The economic crisis certainly fortifies the extreme Right: this is primarily learnt by the German experience of the period between the two world wars, though it is not the only case. Something also shown from the current crisis management is that the idea of democracy itself as a whole is discredited by the neoliberal assault on society. This applies mainly where there exists the historical and ideological underground referred to at the beginning. Under these circumstances, we should consider very seriously that should the crisis be over, this could not necessarily result in the retreat of the extreme Right.

Just like the Right naively thinks that the Left in Greece is born right straight of the crisis, so do we naively think that the extreme Right will go with it. Certainly, the crisis and its neoliberal management nourish the extreme Right, but things are more complex.

Thirdly, there is a deep moral disrepute vis-à-vis the Greek political elite, reasonably considered by the Greek people as being responsible for Greece's plight. And this disrepute feeds Golden Dawn on two levels: first, the disrepute itself, as it sweeps across the political field, leaving intact only the far-Right "avengers". Secondly, because scandal hunting and the pompous promotion of the rotten Greek urbanism is perfectly appropriated by the extreme Right, which has always aimed at dismantling the "degenerate" ruling elite, finding abundant raw material in its wrongdoings.

Under the current circumstances, where the left-wing party is being politically consolidated and the right governmentalism is getting thinned-out, a part of the historic Right ravish the idea of extreme-right injections in order to address the difficulties it faces. The permanent risk of the historic Right slipping into fascism should not surprise those who have an elementary knowledge of the European, and particularly, the Greek history of the 20th century. This slip is a threat to the Republic. It is a threat to our ability to constitutionally disagree for the future of this country. Today, the Left is commissioned with the –familiar from history– additional duty of the defense of Democracy.

2. NEO-NAZISM HISTORY IN GREECE

Greek Right wing extremists discovered the national-socialism, or Nazism, rather late, compared to similar organizations that existed and perished in Western Europe, or, at least - officially, abandoned that ideology in its primal shape, and derailed it toward other forms of nationalism, racism, xenophobia and populism. This path will be followed, again with a certain delay, by Greek neo-Nazis, yet not leaving the national-socialistic rhetoric. Also, and that is the key-point, they will continue to imitate Nazi death battalions and to organize paramilitary formations. They will, thus, continue to act violently and that is their major message they want to pass to mostly ignorant civilians, discontented by current social and economic circumstances.

Their specific behaviour does not end at this point. Details of their actions are well known to juridical institutions, through many reports and statements. Based on those, many members of Golden Dawn organization were legally prosecuted. “To the members of Golden Dawn, violence is a message and not the mean to achieving their potential ambitions. Specific characteristics of this organisation are military structure; absolute hierarchy (which, if usurped, can lead to severe consequences for a usurper; from physical violence, to inhuman and humiliating acts that will bring the punished person to devastation); blind obedience toward the directives given by those in higher positions; conspirative and beforehand determined behaviour patterns, demonstrated by younger members, in sudden, violent and massive attacks.¹

In such attacks, those who participate are well chosen by higher ranked members, led by detailed plan. The attack execution is also promptly organized, as well as a withdrawal. The “attack squad” selection is based on dispositions such as a very muscular physique and military training, similar to those for special units of any State Military Force. Also, any martial art skill will be additionally appreciated...”

Nationalism, either exposed or covered up, is a framework of Golden Dawn. Through their proclamations, one can clearly see and conclude that the organization itself, as well as any leader, besides the periodical changes of forms, is following same ideas as always. And those ideas are based on anti-Semitism, holocaust denial, and from classic racism to the intolerance toward anything that is different. Based on all above mentioned, this political party represents, on its own way, the model of neo-Nazi organisation on European level.

¹ Χασαπόπουλος Νίκος, Χρυσή Αυγή - Η Ιστορία, τα Πρόσωπα και η Αλήθεια, Εκδοτικός Οίκος Α. Α. Λιβάνη, 2012

At the same time, the violence related to this organisation is constantly and everywhere present. It seems that violence has premeditated purpose, depending on circumstances and leaders' tactics, and is organised and strategically planned.

That is specific characteristic of the Golden Dawn, related to other similar neo-fascistic organisation in other European countries, in last several years.² One can come to conclusion that Golden Dawn is unique case of political party with civil combat units. This organisation is successor of fascist and Nazi tradition in having paramilitary functions, strict discipline and hierarchy, using those means for disabling or terrorising opponents. From first proclamations of Golden Dawn, one can notice the paramilitary orientation profile, justifying it as something needed to face the "foreign aggressors" or "domestic subversions", as well as "providing protection".

We are dealing here with a political party that follows a military organisation model. It was obvious and clearly showed, after the murder of one young man, Fissas, in Athenian suburb Keratsini, that Golden Dawn is one political party with two cores. One is paramilitary core, consisted of organized members that act as an army, and other core is consisted of those who act as a retreat or background.

The motto "Blood – honour – Golden Dawn" follows this party since its foundation. It is not just an ordinary motto; it is a statement that calls upon the violence as a mean to protect the honour of national-socialism. And their violence imitates the German Nazi violence directed toward the "absolute evil", when someone is considered guilty not because he performed a violation of any kind, but because that someone is a Jew, a communist or different in any kind of way.

When PASOK (Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement) took over the authority, in 1981, that was followed by turning to far-right by New Democratic Party, which was center-right orientated till then. At that time, head of the ND party was Evangelos Averoff. This turn has for result some kind of restoration of extreme right ideology and rhetoric. Thus, far-right wing was given the opportunity for more opened expression of ideas, especially within the youth organization, called ONED. Within ONED, several groups were organizing and participating in violent acts.

Those groups were called "Rangers" and "Centaur". This ambient will become a fruitful ground for Nikos Mihaloliakos, the later founder of the Golden Dawn.

² <http://www.newsbeast.gr/politiki/arthro/588449/eglimatiki-organosi-me-ierarhia-kai-domi-i-hrusi-augijailgoldendawn.com>. 22-2-2016

He used members of K4A party and other neo-fascist movements, legal or illegal at that time, to form the Golden Dawn, which will be deactivated after a while, so that he can dedicate himself to lead the youth section of the EPEN party, founded by self-proclaimed prime minister during the military junta, Georgios Papadopoulos, who was later convicted to life sentence for crimes against the homeland.

Mihaloliakos will then return to Golden Dawn and activate it, as a pure-blooded nationalist, through the movement called “Popular Assembly”. The major focal point considering Greek far-right wing is related to the fall of the Berlin Wall and is coinciding with events on larger scale of far-right wings actions all over Europe, based on three key words: xenophobia, racism and chauvinism. All three modules are obviously inwrought in political acting and propaganda of Jean-Marie Le Pen in France, Jörg Haider in Austria and Gianfranco Fini in Italy. And while major political turmoil is happening worldwide, in Greece, too, political scene is changing. First of all, the clear borderline between right and left wing is tearing apart, at the moment when, in 1998, communists decided to participate in coalitional government formed mostly by members of right wing party, New Democracy, who defeated PASOK which was governing for two four-year terms. It was a period marked by major campaigns that were propagating neoliberal doctrine in structures of Greek economy. Downfall of the “Eastern bloc” embodied in USSR and other ideologically akin countries from Central and Southeast Europe had for result the creation of refugee waves that overflowed the Greece, too. The refugee influx, firstly from Albania, at the beginning consisted mostly of the Greek-origin minority that have been living in Albania and particularly in Northern Epirus district, and afterwards consisted of the Albanians, was happening after the crush of the absolutistic communistic regime of Enver Hodja. At that time, political and economic turbulence are at its peak, accompanied by financial affairs and frauds (the best known was a Pyramid System), aiming the civilians frugal savings. Also, due to political changes, prisons gates were open, in order to release all the political prisoners, convicted by previous regime.

However, with them along, many criminal elements managed to get released out of prison. The border between Greece and Albania is no longer an insurmountable impediment. That was the political decision of at that time government, based on positions of European political main stream.

Second large wave of immigrants, that still lasts, followed the opening of new crisis hotspots in Asia. Mostly from Afghanistan and Pakistan, via Turkish territory

and Aegean Sea, shoal of refugees are reaching Greece in hope that it will be just a “transit station” on their way to Western European countries. Meanwhile, refugees remain wedged in labyrinths of European bureaucracy which, by certain legislative regulations, are hampering immigrants to reach their final destinations, thus forcing them to stay in Greece.³

Such a milieu produces conditions for developing far-right and neo-Nazi movements. They are not concentrated on their former claims, considering the re-establishing the junta, or amnesty for the convicted adherents and members of that regime. Instead, they are focusing on nationalism and mass immigration problems; issues that are rather current in many countries, especially in France, where the public opinion is reflected in electorates votes.

The Greek far-right stream is carefully monitoring the occurrences in west Europe, where local far-right parties note first successes in elections, due to the xenophobia. Hence, Greek extremists, having the French National Front as an example, oppose to the mass immigration in Greece. In addition, traditional racism, followed by anti-Semitism, where Greek far-right wing is accusing the worldwide Zionism as a main cause of deterioration of Greek-Christian tradition. The immigrant issue on which Greek far-right wing insists is the main confrontation platform against the Greek left wing.

For the Greek far-right parties, this issue is the strongest argument, considering the intensive problems of refugee flood that is not that much noticeable in other European countries. Also, immigrants are target group for far-wing followers so that they can express their Nazi-inspired violence in many forms. That is the focal point for the “awakening” of Golden Dawn and establishing the up-to-date shapes.

Since its appearance, in December 1980, this political party, through the same-titled periodical, characterizes itself as a “national-socialistic” that differs from the rest of the far-wing organization of that time.

Somewhat later, Golden Dawn will affirm those stands in their founding documents, although denounced by the arrested and convicted high executive members of this Party. More specific, they will establish their stands and beliefs in “Rule Book of the Party and Its Ideological Proclamation”.

Golden Dawn decides to act, or – to be more specific – to start applying in practice all the theoretical propagating stances. “There couldn’t be a better political climate

³ Τσίριμπας Γιάννης, Η δράση της φρίκης, "Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών", 5.10.2013

for a success of the political project of its leader, than in that certain period in the beginning of the last decade of the last century. Furthermore, the international ambient was favorable, short after sudden expansion of neo-Nazi attacks all over the Europe”.

1992 was a year of political turning point in Greece. Nationalistic and xenophobic waves escalated, as a result of turmoil in the Balkans. Prior to that, regime in Albania was overthrown and that caused the mass migrants inflow from the north borders directions.

In such environment, Nikos Mihaloliakos organized the First Party Congress, rushing to take an advantage of current circumstances. It is not, therefore, pure coincidence that exactly during that period, “attack groups”, or – to be exact – violent battalions of Golden Dawn, appeared. Their first operation, as described in “Golden Dawn, face and history”, by N. Hasapopoulos, took part in summer of 1992. An argument between them and followers of non-parliament left wing party “was an initial spark for outbreak of larger excesses between members of the Golden Dawn and the government opponents, that outspreaded within the wide center of Athens and lasted till the next morning, resulting with numerous injured...”

In years that followed, older and newer members of the Golden Dawn took upon them to punish the internal enemies, meaning everyone who – by their opinion – is impugning the Hellenistic origin of Macedonia.

What should be emphasized considering the most of the neonazistic, non-democratic, anti-Semitic and anti-parliament organizations and political parties, is the contradictory they are falling into, throughout the ‘90s, and the Golden Dawn is the best example for that phenomenon. Most of them are opposing to the – as they claim – rotten parliamentarism and accusing the ministers and members of the parliament for being traitors and scoundrels, even those from the far-right wing parliamentary parties, yet they are not hiding the ambitions of becoming a parliamentary party, having such opponents for parliament colleagues.

Till recently, there was a mutual stance of experts, considering the far-right wing. Ana Fragoudaki wrote: “During the period of more than three decades, since the mid ‘70s, Greek far-right wing is marginal and its political presence is almost non-existing.

Researching the ascent of far-right in Europe, the Greece is treated as an exception. Meaningless presence (of far-right stream) in three countries was explained by the prior dictatorships. Thus, large percentage of Greek, Spanish and Portuguese citizens identifies stands and political language of far-right supporters with dictatorial regimes...” Circumstances changed, however, by appearance and practice of neonazistic Golden Dawn. Regardless of being neonazistic and – as it will turn out, later on – felonious organization, it managed to enter the national parliament in 2012, supported by 440.000 voters.⁴ In 2009, Golden Dawn and its related branches reveal their criminal profile. By intimidating and brutal attacking immigrants and far-left supporters in all the country, it manages, a year later, to ensure its representatives and delegates in Athens municipality.

Namely, until that time, Golden Dawn already had formed attack squads throughout most of the Greece, not even hiding its hatred toward immigrants and was taking advantage of two facts: lack of more efficient state functioning and unfavorable stance of many civilians toward the drastic increase of the illegal immigrants, as well as problems in local communities caused by those illegal immigrants.

In 2009, the highest number of violent attack of the right wing extremists, mostly Golden Dawn members and their supporters was recorded and yet, most of those cases remained unsolved. It is deemed that in 2009, right wing extremists and neo-Nazis performed approximately 80 acts of violence, 13 of which were toward civilians and members of the far-left wing parties and organizations. In the 2009 elections for the national parliament, held in October, Golden Dawn won 0,29% of electorate (19.624 votes).⁵ This result couldn't, at any rate, announce the rise of this Party in years that followed, when implications of the economic crisis became more conspicuous.

Obtrusion of this neonazistic party was felt in their violent and criminal acting toward immigrants and left wing extremists.

The perpetrators were video-recording most of those deeds, posting them, afterwards, on different social networks, along with the comment: “Here we come”.

4 <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Ekloges/Eklogika-apotelesmata-New/5-2-2016>

5 <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Ekloges/Eklogika-apotelesmata-New/5-2-2016>

2. POGROM OF 2009 OPENS DOOR FOR ATHENIAN MUNICIPALITY

Even though the right wing extremists' attacks radically escalated all over the Greece during the 2009, having as a target immigrants and domestic opponents, the following year was successful, as for the local elections.

In Athens municipality, they won 5,29%⁶ of votes, hence the leader of the Golden Dawn, Nikos Mihaloliakos, was assigned as a member of the City Board. The reason for this ascent of the Golden Dawn popularity was a fact that many citizens were intimidated by uncontrollable situations caused by the presence of illegal immigrants who flooded the Athens downtown, where criminal rate raised exponentially, and with insufficient state interventions to prevent that.

Under the conditions of escalating economic-capitalistic crisis, the social, political and constituent stabilization of neonazistic formation Golden Dawn, caused the striking solicitude.

On elections for European parliament, held on May 25th 2014, Golden Dawn won 9,4%⁷ of votes, coming third, after SYRIZA and New Democracy. This success should be also observed through the fact that many members of this Party were criminally processed and leading members were under detention. The fact that the Golden Dawn was characterized as a criminal organization has little or no impact on preferences of significant number of voters.

On the contrary, they became even more popular. One very important aspect of functioning and acting of Golden Dawn is connected with its organic bond with bourgeois authority coalition.

That organic, structural bond with bourgeois coalition was the focal point of crushing the myth of so called anti-Semitic character of this neonazistic organization. "Anti-Semitic" formation was dilapidating and started to reveal wide and deep implication of Golden Dawn into the system, or, to be exact, into the establishment.

In critical and crisis moments of previous periods, the Golden Dawn was acting as a formation which protects financial and political interests of the ruling class, but, on the other hand, it didn't form organic conformation with parts of the governing bourgeoisie.

6 <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Ekloges/Eklogika-apotelesmata-New/5-2-2016>

7 <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Ekloges/Eklogika-apotelesmata-New/5-2-2016>

Within that framework, the integrity of the protection of bourgeois class interests transforms into fastidious bonding with some parts of the ruling class, however without further insisting on protection of bourgeois coalition interests.

The attempt of Golden Dawn to interfere in redistribution of labor between bourgeois and working class caused the combination of circumstances related to social spheres, having a financial and political protection of ruling class as a strategic objective.

Organic and strategic bond with parts of ruling class started to be obvious in faction conflicts and, more precisely, within the attempts to force the ship-owners capital assets as a leading force in ruling class; they are imposing their objectives, thus defining themselves, indirectly, by the connection with state power.

Golden dawn and coalition government

That shape shifting of class interest's defense, started to manifest through the characteristics of absolute protection of bourgeois governing coalition, and especially in protection of ship-owners interests. Here are some examples: submitting questions to the Parliament, on behalf of ship-owners, considering their financial interest; attempt to establish and organize the "Employers Syndicate"; blunt animosity toward the workers' demands and downright collaboration with security and order forces. Clarification of acting and presence of Golden Dawn within the social framework is based on elements of verbal and physical violence aimed toward the immigrants and workers' unions and organization that oppose to the way or confronting and treating the economic crisis, as well as protecting the higher class' interests. Their organic connection with repressive mechanisms of bourgeois state, such as police, provides them the ground for their targeted actions.

Joint repressive actions of police forces and Golden Dawn formations have as a purpose to detach the labor activists' manifestation against the capitalistic-state obtrusion in industry and economy, from the living social framework.

Disability to organize the civil hegemony, under the deep economic crisis, incorporates the Golden Dawn into the implying distribution of labor between bourgeois and working class.

Organizing and structural connection of Golden Dawn to the parts of State mechanisms clearly depicts their affection toward the employers, thus dilapidating

their well known profile of an anti-Semitic formation, which was so eagerly promoted by the fascistic leadership of Golden Dawn. Working class and anti-fascistic movements is obliged to restrain further infiltration of fascistic, racist and employers-supporting Golden Dawn. Anti-fascistic reflexes should be recuperated in all sectors of working class. Unveiling of the criminal acting of this organization might contribute to anti-fascistic activation.⁸

Another recent research⁹ of Greek social scientists believes that Golden Dawn phenomenon and far-right rhetoric in generally, have their roots and support in crucial state institutions. Results of that research are pointing toward four directions: police, judiciary, the military and church, and the report title is: “Mapmaking of cells of far-right extremism, racism and xenophobia in Greek State”.

This is the first research conducted by focusing on mechanism that is functioning in the State, with relative independence from it and with extreme conservatism that reaches the limits of far-right rhetoric and practice.

By registering some cases, legislating regulative, as well as some official statements, this research unveils the aspects of the right extremists ascend, that was, till recently, treated as marginal and individual occurrences, and had never been a scientific research topic so far. The study on right extremists in Greece shows that maintaining of the conservative elements within the State institutions exists, although it is not only a Greek phenomenon.

Historic relapses, along with combination of circumstances in Greece hit by the crisis, demolish the mechanism of responsibilities in named institutions and drag toward the extremism a great deal of politicians and public opinion, which causes a great concern.

Lastly, one of the reasons for far-right rise is a political recipe of recession. We also must take under consideration that new disposition of power in European Union helps in political dissension and antagonism.

⁸ Pittas Kostas: “The fascist threat and a fight to tear it down”, Marxist Bookshop, 2011

⁹ <http://www.kathimerini.gr/55178/article/epikairothta/ellada/ereyna-gia-diasyndeseis-me-thn-xrysh-aygh-sthn-asfaleia-a8hnwn-15-2-2016>

The youth and the far-right wing in greece

the right extremists do not necessarily identify themselves with representative parties on the official political stage. Far-right politic in Greece, in last several years, has been adopted by wider political forces that go beyond the narrow frameworks of far-right parties. The far-right orientation of one portion of the youth is not a new phenomenon. New right extremism is not sudden advent. Over the time, it was developed and implanted as a specific ideology for facing the social issues, leaning on degradation of democratic values and political system.

As long as democratic forces and institutions allow unhindered conduction of far-right logic and practice, with impunity, the power of democracy is undermined. Democratic forces in Greece are obligated to protect democracy; otherwise not only they encourage the neonazism, but they also go further into the delegalizing of democracy, whose reputation is already debased.

A short review of social events during the latest Greek history indicates that nowadays youth has very little or no responsibility at all for the on goings in Greece, in the last 20 years. However, various aspects of Greek far-right indeed manage to convince a certain portion of youth to join them, to support them during the elections, or to accept, no question asked, their tactics and argumentation. Thus, obligation and responsibility of every democracy supporter is to contribute in prevention of further spreading of far-right ideology among the young people, as well as to obstruct enrooting of such ideology in stably and concrete political plea. We shouldn't, of course, underestimate democratic reflexes that grew stronger, during the past several years, in other portion of youngsters, who, amidst the certain devaluation of democracy and further endangering of basic rights, insist on demanding for more profound social justice and equality.

2 <http://www.kathimerini.gr/55178/article/epikairothta/ellada/ereyna-gia-diasyndeseis-me-thn-xrysh-aygh-sthn-asfaleia-a8hnwn-2-2-2016>

Thus, there is no reason whatsoever to claim that the Greek youth inclines toward far-right. It should be also considered that in last few decades, diametrically opposite political believes are developed among the young people, which lead them into frequent confrontation. Research implied that there are two affronting stances:

a) Those who accept right extremism

b) Those who object to right extremism, their arguments and practice, and giving support to the victims of far-right ideology, insisting on solidarity.

Nowadays acceptance of right extremism, among the great deal of young people, didn't happen overnight. It has been prepared and developed systematically over the last few decades, by gradual degradation of the democratic institutions, followed by escalation of crisis in relations between the youth and the rest of the society.

In addition, there is no strong political option which would be able to effectively maintain the idea of equality and solidarity within the society.

The young people of today's Greece are, for decades, in fact since the end of the WWII and after, the ones who live or will live worse than their parents. Economic crisis, through the very specific ways that ruling elite is facing the structural problems of Greek society, is offering to the major portion of Greek youth only one option – unemployment, considering that, according to official statistics, more than 50%¹⁰ of young people have no job. And that tendency is growing. Whatever hope the youngsters were growing, “getting on their own feet” is postponing till further notice.

The far-right party Golden Dawn that has neonazistic indications, as well as some other far-right formation, such as “Popular Orthodox Assembly” (L.A.O.S.), has managed to take advantage of given circumstances, although they didn't participate in creating them.

Namely, the main reason that made young people to turn toward the far-right should not be interpreted as a result of some miraculously successful functioning and acting of, i.e. Golden Dawn. Attention should be directed toward the gradual and systematic deterioration of functioning of democracy, throughout the last decades, and indeed from the very inwardness of its own system.

Actually, the social process, from which the sudden success of Golden Dawn emanated, is consisted of general uncertainty of political system and democratic institution and systematic collapsing of most important democratic institution, provoked by the political elite. In addition, the rise of the Golden Dawn was contributed by a certain void, or – more precise – by lack of existence of some strong opposite political party that would balance the inclination toward the far-right.

Therefore, ascend of the Golden Dawn didn't happen suddenly, nor it was imposed to the Greek society. Such improvised theories, no matter how convenient they

¹⁰ <http://tvxs.gr/news/eyropi-eop/eurostat-energia-pano-apo-50-stoys-neoys-elladas-kai-ispantias-10-2-2016>

could be for someone, only contribute to the enlarging of the myth of the Golden Dawn and their potentials for political acting; liberating, on the other hand, the rest of democratic society from their responsibility for the general state of the entire Greek society.¹¹

Today, forty years after the fall of the junta, self-censorship mechanisms of this domain—that is, being ashamed to declare to be a junta supporter—get weakened. Time goes by. This is proved by the rates of Golden Dawn in the traditional “black” voting dens of the country. Areas which, incidentally, have no problem with the migration issue ... The dictatorship “did its harm” to the tradition of the extreme Right in Greece as it delegitimized it, but gradually this tradition regains momentum and takes a new stride.

Secondly, there has been a penetration of the mush, constituting the yeast of the extreme Right ideology through the length and breadth of the Greek political spectrum. Nationalism, racism and sexism are not a monopoly of Golden Dawn – the same applies for other areas, of course. In Greece, however, the “Macedonian Struggle” of the 1990s led to the emergence of an aggressive nationalist speech, which diffused to the entire political spectrum, the Left not being the exception. Of course, this aggressive nationalist speech was primarily diffused by the Orthodox Church. It is no coincidence that in this context, Golden Dawn is taking its first infantile steps. It is the time when the old school self-victimized Greek nationalism met the dream of “powerful Greece”: a Balkan capitalist metropolis “economically penetrating” (according to a popular collocation of the decade) to the internal affairs of the weak neighbors. The Balkan –and mainly the Albanian- emigration to Greece in that decade strengthen intolerance and the privately directed racism.

In this sense, the migration issue is the point where the old-style Greek extreme Right meets with similar parties of other European states that constitute migrant destinations. Yet, attention should be drawn to the fact that anti-migration speech constitutes the facet of the far-Right formation, which feeds and breathes from the idea of a particular “threat” and risk. Today it is the migrants; yesterday it was the communists etc. If it is not threatened by something, the far-Right formation cannot survive. Throughout history, this is the way it has made up its threats, by stepping on peoples’ social impasses. Secondly, the deterioration of the living conditions dead ends during the crisis period results in the increase of the far-Right ‘neoplasm’. Yet, this does not occur directly and univocally, as this is often

¹¹ Σωτήρηου Ιωάννα, Το αυγό του φιδιού εκκολάπτεται στο σχολείο, "Εφημερίδα των Συντακτών", 17.10.2013

considered to be the case with the Left: the far-Right thrives in countries that do not experience the tension of crisis (e.g. the UK, Denmark, and Austria), while conversely it means to remain out on the fringes in countries struck for years by high unemployment rates, such as Spain.

The economic crisis certainly fortifies the extreme Right: this is primarily learnt by the German experience of the period between the two world wars, though it is not the only case. Something also shown from the current crisis management is that the idea of democracy itself as a whole is discredited by the neoliberal assault on society. This applies mainly where there exists the historical and ideological underground referred to at the beginning. Under these circumstances, we should consider very seriously that should the crisis be over, this could not necessarily result in the retreat of the extreme Right.

Just like the Right naively thinks that the Left in Greece is born right straight of the crisis, so do we naively think that the extreme Right will go with it. Certainly, the crisis and its neoliberal management nourish the extreme Right, but things are more complex.

Thirdly, there is a deep moral disrepute vis-à-vis the Greek political elite, reasonably considered by the Greek people as being responsible for Greece's plight. And this disrepute feeds Golden Dawn on two levels: first, the disrepute itself, as it sweeps across the political field, leaving intact only the far-Right "avengers". Secondly, because scandal hunting and the pompous promotion of the rotten Greek urbanism is perfectly appropriated by the extreme Right, which has always aimed at dismantling the "degenerate" ruling elite, finding abundant raw material in its wrongdoings.

Under the current circumstances, where the left-wing party is being politically consolidated and the right governmentalism is getting thinned-out, a part of the historic Right ravish the idea of extreme-right injections in order to address the difficulties it faces. The permanent risk of the historic Right slipping into fascism should not surprise those who have an elementary knowledge of the European, and particularly, the Greek history of the 20th century. This slip is a threat to the Republic. It is a threat to our ability to constitutionally disagree for the future of this country. Today, the Left is commissioned with the –familiar from history– additional duty of the defense of Democracy.

3. HOOLIGANISM AND GOLDEN DAWN

The common element of the far Right and hooliganism is the signification of violence as a value by itself. The brutal reliance on violence as a means of settling disputes, the emphasis on discipline, the expressive rituals of symbolic violence and the militarized way fascist organizations operate, have been attractive models to a part of followers. The patriotic chauvinism and nationalist rhetoric bridged with the passion for the followers community, the place and postmodern elements from the world of body building, martial arts and skinheads subculture, while the practices of political entrism were the tool for penetration of the extreme Right in the football micro-society. We live in a time where expressive rituals can achieve these convergences without them being necessarily based on a common ideology.

Discussing with nationalist followers, I had the feeling that some of them do not realize what fascism, Nazism and nationalism is. They generally talk about patriotism, love for the nation, just like they express their love for their team. However, a distorted perception of the fans culture, coupled with their emphasis on the values of strength, physical supremacy etc., can easily lead to such considerations.

4. CONSOLIDATING THE RATES OF GOLDEN DAWN

Golden Dawn took the third place in the elections to the European parliament held on May 25, 2014, obtaining 9.4%¹² of the votes. The vote in the neo-Nazi formation is absolutely conscious.

Once we fully realize the ‘structural’ sequence between social ‘consciousness’ (crisis-conscious shift of one segment of the oppressed working classes towards Golden Dawn) and racist-fascist ideology, then we can contribute to the structural fighting of the neo-Nazi formation.

Golden Dawn works as a formal social-political intermediary that ‘shifts’ energy and social power towards the urban complex of the ruling power. This mediation is not direct and linear, instead, we would say that it is filtered ‘and mediated in the social field, where specific social classes and sections of classes are ‘attached’ to the wider crisis-related ideological narrative of Golden Dawn. The reasonable question that arises is: how come Golden Dawn receives a relatively high rate, the

¹² <http://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Vouli-ton-Ellinon/To-Politevma/Ekloges/Eklogika-apotelesmata-New/5-2-2016>

time when its leading members are prisoners in custody? How can this happen the time when they are accused of being part of and directing a criminal organization?

The high rate that the neo-Nazi formation has attained should not take anyone by surprise. A direct osmosis with the 'individual' narratives on the crisis and on the detention of Golden Dawn leaders proves the truth. The way individuals realize the causes of the crisis and the detention of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn members, does not 'complement' but follows the neo-Nazi argumentation.

In this context there have appeared views on unfair targeting and prosecuting of the 'nationalists', and on their targeting by the international 'Zionist' lobby (anti-Semitism is a sine qua non condition for the statutory establishment of fascism-Nazism) which, acting together with the traitors and corrupt Greek politicians, is lobbying to manipulate the 'extermination' of Greek nationalist movement. This said we should highlight another aspect of the issue: the particularly high rates that Golden Dawn attained at polling stations where police officers voted.

Golden Dawn has not been the long and effective "hand" of the state, but the form of imposition and establishment of state "authoritarianism", a form which has mostly contributed to the suppression of social plurality. We have argued that Golden Dawn was seamlessly incorporated in the renowned "authoritarian statist". Imposition of an "authoritarian" statist under the current crisis circumstances has produced the terms and conditions for the crystallization rather than the emergence in the political party spectrum of those ideological forms that have so far horizontally penetrated society.

In this case, the neo-Nazi formation is not a simple and consistent expression of a political party, but a "total accumulator" of racism and intolerance that was registered within the Greek society.

Verbal and physical targeting of the "other" and "different" was the crucial meeting point between different social classes and Golden Dawn. Thus, the exercise of verbal and physical violence has "ratified" in both a symbolic and a real level this social and ideological "meeting", otherwise said this adhesion. The violence exercised by the neo-Nazi organization exceeded even the limits of "normality", targeting the violent meaning of the social field. Social integrity itself, being the "victim" of the destructive globalization, had to be reconstructed on a 'new' national base.

In this way, the exercise of verbal and physical neo-Nazi violence conveyed the message of Golden Dawn, a message rejecting the multiple facets and directions

of social life. And this violence, as it is known, acquired the features of physical extermination, namely the “killing of the different”. The continuous sweeps, far from hiding the glamorous spectacle of an excessive waste of violence occurring in the big cities almost every day, they put it in the spotlight, instead. This spectacle, not signaling the suppression of crime but the suppression of existence, exceeded by far the stated objectives on law and order, being in some sense a rehearsal for the “Final Solution” envisaged by Golden Dawn.

The osmosis between state and neo-Nazi violence was a tangible reality. The targeting of the “other” and the “different”, lying in the existence of the racist ideology, has changed the terms of realizing the social and political affairs, particularly during the period of the deep economic and capitalist crisis.

As argued above, this verbal and physical targeting of the multiply “different” was the “crisis” meeting point between different social classes and Golden Dawn. Little attention has been drawn to the research of the symbolic “places” involved in this interconnection, otherwise said, in this sequence of violence. And these ‘places’ have been the various cafes and gyms, which, mainly before the advent of the economic crisis “sprang up” like mushrooms in many provincial towns.

These symbolic “places” have delimited the frame of delivering and articulating the racist and fascist ideology. Within these areas there have been developing forms of a rudimentary understanding of the “crisis” economy, the same time when these areas have acted as “generators” of political and ideological conflicts. In the cafes ideologies are “fermented” and take “flesh and bones”.

Cafes and gyms are areas acting as “filters” that directly diffuse racist-fascist ideology and argumentation. Especially in the cafes both party-ideological discourse and personal subjectification are equally articulated. Cafes are the places where there is a direct and “popular” understanding of social-political developments.

This is not about forming a specific political irrationalism. Instead, this is about expressing the logic of common sense, the common ‘logic’ that generates black monsters. The days are difficult. There’s need for a systematic work on the definitive eradicating -social, political and ideological- of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn.

5. CONCLUSION

Economic crisis and its consequences in Greece, during the last period brought up the Golden Dawn on the political scene. That organization is not a paradox of its time. It is a social phenomenon, formed and fed by racism, populism; sport fans with extreme way of supporting their clubs, favoring the violence and vitiation of revolt. During the past three years, it was clearly shown that all those who were counting on certain reflexes of the social revolt (anarchistic groups, politically intolerant media and demagogical political parties) were representing the umbilical cord that fed and raised the Golden Dawn. In that way, economic crisis surfaced one already created monstrous formation.

The continuance was exactly as expected: history (and, in this case, the Weimar Republic) teaches us that economic dead-end and social despair take over the political rein, and “the sheep choose their sheepfold”. In such a terrifying ambience, it is shown that Golden Dawn could have served the irrational hatred more comprehensive than any other political party or organization; it could have spoken with its acts, devaluating any political rhetoric.

As political formation, Golden Dawn applied Hitler’s communicational practice: completely simplified and outraged messages of blind hate, insisting on evil (that is much easier adopted than goodness), insisting on terror and violence (that are easier to submit to, rather than to coexist) and, finally, promising the definite solving of all human problems by “surgical murder” (it is not by chance that they say for immigrants that they are “cancer of society”, just as Hitler was addressing to the Jewish people in that manner).

The Golden Dawn exists throughout the fear that it invokes (just like dragons, in old and new myths). The only vital and direct reaction against it is not to let that fear to silence us; not to be afraid of its members when they are threatening us; to express, in any given way, our democratic, legit and non-violent reaction, without thinking will we be intimidated, physically abused or murdered. It will be more and more difficult, in time, because the common people will continue accepting this nightmare. We are, therefore, obligated, to repeat to ourselves and to our fellow citizens, the following: “Don’t be of those ordinary people who applaud to the nazistic atrocities, remember that those were ordinary people who applauded to Hitler and helped him to lead the Germany and the whole world into

historical catastrophe, so that generations afterwards were and are ashamed of their ancestors”.

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ZLATNA ZORA KAO MODERNA POLITIČKA PARTIJA EKSTREMNE DESNICE U GRČKOJ

Apstrakt

U Grčkoj, koja je teško pogođena merama štednje, dugim periodom recesije i povećanom stopom nezaposlenosti, pojavljuje se socijalni kolaps, a grčki narod svakog dana postaje sve siromašniji, žrtvovan na oltaru beznadežne politike sukcesivnih memoranduma. U ovoj strogoj i pesimističnoj sredini, svedoci smo izuzetnog porasta i uspona neonacističke partije Zlatna zora. Mora se naglasiti da, bilo „fragmentima reči“ ili otvoreno i sistematično, ekstremno-nacionalistički diskurs je naširoko rasprostranjen, i ponekad čak i reprodukovan bez njegovog definisanja na taj način. Baš iz tog razloga hvatanje u koštac sa ekstremizmom i nasiljem, zadojenim intenzivnim nacionalizmom nije lak zadatak, niti je sigurno da će nestati kada bi Zlatna zora bila potpuno slomljena. Pored toga, sporašnji izborni rezultati ukazuju na to da, uprkos baražu otkrića koja se tiču njenih kriminalnih aktivnosti, i uprkos njenim nesumnjivo neo-nacističkim karakteristikama, hapšenju članova parlamenta i partijskih kadrova, kao i suđenju kao rezultat hapšenja, njihov broj je samo blago umanjen, daleko od kolapsa.

Ključne reči: *Zlatna zora, neo-nacizam, rasizam, grčka dužnička kriza, štednja, recesija*