Golden Dawn

Name: Golden Dawn

Type of Organization:
- Political party

Ideologies and Affiliations:
- Neo-fascist
- neo-Nazi
- ultra-nationalist

Place of Origin:
Greece

Year of Origin:
1985

Founder(s):
Nikolaos Michaloliakos

Places of Operation:
Greece, Australia, United States

Overview

Also Known As:
- National Dawn
- Popular Association – Golden Dawn
- Λαϊκός Σύνδεσμος – Χρυσή Αυγή
- Χρυσή Αυγή

Executive summary:

Golden Dawn is a neo-Nazi party that has risen from a marginal role in Greek politics to become the third-largest political force in Greece in the wake of the 2008-09 global financial crisis and the subsequent implementation of severe austerity measures. Golden Dawn does not limit its extremism to rhetoric—party members have been involved in hundreds of acts of violence against immigrants and leftists across Greece. After a murder investigation from 2013 implicated at least one Golden Dawn Member of Parliament (MP) and several other members, further investigation into the political party—including through photos, videos, and phone records in the prosecutor’s case file—revealed a group whose members have illegally possessed firearms and explosives, and participated in money laundering, human trafficking, aggravated assault, and protection rings. One ex-member of Golden Dawn has claimed that the party discussed plots to overthrow the Greek government using “tanks.”

Golden Dawn was founded in the 1980s by neo-Nazi Nikolaos Michaloliakos. The party has long used strongly racist and anti-Semitic rhetoric, and the ancient Greek symbol used by Golden Dawn closely resembles the Nazi swastika. In particular, the party has focused its platform on opposing immigration and immigrants; its campaign slogan during the 2012 Greek general election was “So we can rid this land of filth.”

For over two decades, the party enjoyed negligible support, securing less than one percent of the vote in local, national,
and European elections. However, after the 2008-09 global financial crisis and the Greek government’s subsequent imposition of severe austerity measures that caused widespread unemployment and poverty, Golden Dawn’s electoral success improved dramatically.

As welfare provision and public services were dramatically rolled back in recent years due to the austerity measures, Golden Dawn has worked to fill this gap. The party provides a range of social services—particularly to poverty-stricken working class families—including soup kitchens, medical advice, “Greek-only” blood banks, and donations of food and clothing. The exclusive availability of these services to Greek citizens has led Athens Major George Kaminis to refer to them as “soup kitchens of hatred.”

In the 2012 Greek general election, Golden Dawn secured just under seven percent of the countrywide vote, which translated into 18 seats in the Greek parliament and made the party the fifth-largest political force in Greece. Since then, Golden Dawn has been able to maintain its electoral success in successive local and European elections and even increased its share of the vote. In 2014, Golden Dawn was elected into the European Parliament, taking three of 21 available seats for Greece. However, one elected Member of the European Parliament (MEP)—Eleftherios Synadinos—resigned from Golden Dawn in April 2018 and founded the Patriotic Radical Union (PAT.RI.E.). He resumed his MEP function as a non-attached member.

Following the result of the European elections in 2014, Golden Dawn constituted the third-largest political force in Greece. In the January 2015 elections, Golden Dawn again finished third in Greece’s general elections, despite key leaders having to run for office behind bars. However, in upcoming national elections in October 2019, Golden Dawn may face serious competition from the newly-formed center-left alliance Movement for Change, according to a May 2018 survey by Pulse for Skai TV.

Golden Dawn has long matched political action with violence, with its members taking part in hundreds of violent attacks. Golden Dawn members are also suspected of responsibility for the murders of two immigrants. But in recent years, Golden Dawn has tried to soften its image, attempting to rebrand itself as a nationalist organization and claiming that prior Golden Dawn references to the Nazi Party were “youthful indiscretions.” In order to appeal to more middle-class voters, Golden Dawn candidates in the recent European elections included university professors, lawyers, surgeons, businesspeople, and a former NATO commander. However, despite these cosmetic image changes, Golden Dawn’s violent attacks against immigrants and leftists continue.

The murder of anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013 by a Golden Dawn member triggered widespread outrage across Greece and led to a government-led crackdown on the group. As the Greek constitution does not permit banning political parties, the government has attempted to limit the group’s activities and funding through criminal investigations and prosecutions. In February 2015, a judicial panel charged 69 key party leaders—including several MPs—with belonging to a criminal organization, as well as possession of illegal weaponry, extortion, bodily harm, and murder. The trial commenced on April 20, 2015, and was still ongoing as of January 2019. The verdict was initially expected for fall 2016, but is now anticipated for 2020. In the meantime, all detained Golden Dawn members have been released because Greek law allows for a maximum pre-trial detention period of 18 months.

As the criminal investigations have led to a discontinuation of Golden Dawn’s state funding for the party—previously a major source of the party’s income—Golden Dawn has increasingly explored international avenues to widen its reach and to attract funding by opening offices in the United States and Canada where large Greek diaspora communities exist. Golden Dawn also uses the trials to present itself as the victim of state repression.

**Doctrine:**

Golden Dawn openly advocates national socialism, racism, and anti-Semitism. Hitler, the Third Reich, Rudolf Hess, the Waffen SS, and the swastika are Golden Dawn’s idols and emblems and have appeared repeatedly in its publications and rallies. In 1987, Golden Dawn leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos wrote in the party magazine, “We are the faithful soldiers of the National Socialist idea and nothing else.” Even as recently as 2012, Michaloliakos denied the Holocaust: “I have read
In Golden Dawn’s ideology, the absolute enemy of the nation—indeed, of the entire planet—is considered to be the United States and liberalism. This theory is based on notions of the “cultural superiority” of an “Orthodox Greek nation” threatened by “Western bourgeois culture” and a supposed “Jewish conspiracy.” Correspondingly, the real “friends of the nation” are considered to be Russia, Serbia, and other Orthodox Christian countries, the Arabs, who are “oppressed by Zionism,” and every right-wing regime worldwide, as long as it is an enemy of the United States and Israel. But like other right-wing extremist parties, Golden Dawn is also fighting the purported “Islamification” of Greece and Europe.

Special notice should be made of the participation of Golden Dawn members in ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims in Srebrenica in 1995. Golden Dawn sent some of its members to join the so-called “Greek Volunteer Guard” to fight on the side of the Bosnian Serbs lead by Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić. After the massacres at Srebrenica, this “Guard” triumphantly raised the Greek flag side-by-side with the Chetnik flag.

Golden Dawn campaigns on a strongly anti-immigration platform, using racist slurs openly and regularly. For example, in a 2012 interview, two parliamentarians demanded that only people with “Greek blood” should be allowed to participate in elections. The party’s xenophobia is coupled with an apparent fundamental contempt for liberal democracy. In 2012, Golden Dawn MP Ilias Kasidiaris made international headlines when he physically attacked two female left-wing MPs on a live talk show because they had criticized Golden Dawn. When Golden Dawn leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos briefly appeared in parliament in June 2014 for a vote to strip him of his immunity from prosecution on further charges, he verbally abused other MPs. Outside of the parliament, hundreds of Golden Dawn supporters sang the national anthem and insulted MPs, shouting “Scum! Traitors!”

In recent years, Golden Dawn has sought to soften its image in order to appeal to a bigger spectrum of voters. During the 2014 European elections, for example, many of Golden Dawn’s candidates were middle-class professionals, including university professors, lawyers, surgeons, businesspeople, and a former NATO commander. When Golden Dawn organizes public events, it now rejects the neo-Nazi label and prefers to present itself as a “nationalist” and “patriotic” organization (although there are exceptions to this practice). Partly due to Golden Dawn’s agitation, brutal attacks on immigrants and other hate crimes (mainly against leftists) have become common phenomena in Greece.

Greek neo-Nazis also engage in social action—but only for “real Greeks.” They have established an expansive outreach program that provides services to the elderly in impoverished areas and distributes food and clothing to the needy (termed by Athens Mayor George Kaminis as “soup kitchens of hatred”), drawing comparisons to Hezbollah by party leaders themselves. As welfare services such as health care provided by the state are drastically rolled back due to the country’s austerity measures, Golden Dawn has tried to fill the gap—for example, by establishing a network of doctors that provide medical advice to impoverished families.

Organizational Structure:

According to a report by a Greek prosecutor, Golden Dawn’s leadership structure is similar to a “military-type operational force whose members attack mainly immigrants.” Inspired by the Führerprinzip prominent in Nazi ideology, Golden Dawn’s leadership structure is strictly hierarchical. Consequently, Greek prosecutors argued that Golden Dawn’s leadership orchestrates the violent attacks carried out by members of the group.

In 2013, the Guardian (London) reported that members of the Greek armed forces have been training “Golden Dawn hit squads,” paramilitary-like structures that allegedly encompass up to 3,000 members.
Financing:

Public funding originally constituted an important source of financing for Golden Dawn. For example in 2013, 873,000 euros in Greek state funding had been allocated to the party. However, following a vote in parliament in October 2013, state funding for Golden Dawn was cut off due to the ongoing investigation by state prosecutors as to whether Golden Dawn is a criminal organization.40

Golden Dawn has declined to shed light on its funding sources, stating simply that it is funded by supporters.41 Journalist Dimitris Psarras alleges that Golden Dawn has received financial support from like-minded groups in Europe and Russia.42 Golden Dawn has also used its satellite offices to raise money and donations for its cause. In September 2014, the London-based Guardian reported that Golden Dawn’s Australian branch had raised money through an unregistered charity called Voithame Tin Ellada (VTE).43

Recruitment:

Golden Dawn employs a range of strategies to recruit members, including grassroots mobilization and participating in neighborhood initiatives. It has attracted widespread appeal, boasting thousands of members and attendants at Golden Dawn rallies.44 Golden Dawn also works to appeal to Greek expatriates, including those living in Australia, Canada, and the United States.45 The group also recruits online. According to the website, Golden Dawn New York aims “to counter the lies and propaganda against Golden Dawn in the English speaking world by providing official translations of Golden Dawn articles.”46

Within the country, Golden Dawn is heavily focused on recruiting from Greek’s youth population. The group has used gyms, athletic clubs, and martial arts clubs as grounds for recruiting youths. It actively recruits at high schools, and even stands accused of launching an indoctrination course called “national awakening,” aimed at children ages 6-10.47 These sessions have included lessons on neutral subjects like ancient Greek history and the Christian faith. However, according to Greece’s education ministry, the course was a blatant form of manipulation, aimed to instill a sense of Greek supremacy. The competing Greek party Syriza accused Golden Dawn of “brainwashing little tots with Nazi propaganda.”48 Educators and commentators have also noted similarities to the Nazi method of indoctrination.

In 2011, Golden Dawn opened an office in Heraklion, the capitol of Crete. For years, party members approached young people “in cafes and the gym, presenting themselves as family and protectors. They took them for coffee and gave them lessons on Greek history.” Following the 2013 murder of Pavlos Fyssas, local teachers made an effort to teach history in a less nationalistic manner as well as discuss and confront fascist ideology in the classroom. More than 50 schools also organized an anti-fascist festival. In April 2018, militant activists destroyed Golden Dawn’s office in Heraklion, causing them to leave the island.49

Golden Dawn has a youth club, Galazia Stratia (Blue Army). The group has used bribes to recruit younger members. It hands out cellphones to students, claiming that the kids need access to phones in order to protect themselves from neighborhood crime. They even aim to appeal to Greek youth through music. As of 2013, two of Golden Dawn’s members of parliament were musicians, and had used music to propagate violent and hateful messages. One MP was the bass player in a band that praised Hitler’s Auschwitz death camp in one song, and had another song called “Speak Greek Or Die.”50 Members of the Galazia Stratia have also been regular participants and instigators of soccer hooliganism. Analysts believe that strong emotional ties to a soccer team help create a sense of identity and belonging that is particularly appealing to disaffected youth. In November 2017, hooligans of the Thessaloniki PAOK soccer club insulted and attacked local Pakistani Muslims who publicly celebrated the birth of the Prophet Mohammed.51

In public platforms, Golden Dawn propagates an extremist Greek supremacy ideology at the exclusion of the country’s immigrants, homosexuals, and religious and ethnic minorities. The group appears to have capitalized on the immigration crisis to curry favor with the population. One Golden Dawn MP has said, “There are no legal migrants in Greece, not even
one.”

The party’s 2012 election slogan was similarly xenophobic and ominous: “So we can rid this land of filth.”

Golden Dawn has also benefitted from the country’s financial crisis. In line with its nationalist, supremacist ideology, the party has refused to accept any austerity measures from Greece’s creditors, endearing the group to the mainstream Greek population.

Training:

During the highly publicized Golden Dawn trial, prosecutors have painted Golden Dawn as a criminal organization posing as a political party. In doing so, the prosecution has pointed to evidence of military training and attack battalions that, according to one ex-member of Golden Dawn are preparing “to overthrow the Greek government.”

Evidence from the prosecutors shows Golden Dawn members in military clothing wielding knives, swords, handguns, rifles, and even a bazooka. According to the ex-member of Golden Dawn, “They kept telling us that we’ll break into the parliament with tanks.”

According to the ex-member—serving as a witness in the trial against Golden Dawn MPs—Golden Dawn even recruited a butcher in order to train its members in the art of using a knife effectively so they could learn to “neutralize opponents.”

The butcher also allegedly supplied guns to Golden Dawn members.


25 Michas Takis, Unholy Alliance: Greece and Milosevic’s Serbia (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002), 22.


Jessica Elgot, “European Elections: 9 Scariest Far-Right Parties Now In The European Parliament,” *Huffington Post*, May 26, 2014, [http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/05/26/far-right-europe-election_n_5391873.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2014/05/26/far-right-europe-election_n_5391873.html) [43].


Key Leaders

- Nikolaos Michaloliakos
- Christos Pappas
- Ilias Kasidiaris
- Ilias Panagiotaros
- Giannis Giannopoulos
- Artemis Matheopoulous
- Georgios Epitideios
- Lampros Fountoulis
- Eleftherios Synadinos
- Theodoros Koudounas
- Ioannis Vouldis
- Konstantinos Barbarousis

Eleytherios Synadinos
Member of European Parliament affiliated with the Patriotic Radical Union (PAT.RI.E.), resigned from Golden Dawn in 2018

Theodoros Koudounas
Member of Golden Dawn’s central committee

Ioannis Vouldis
Member of Golden Dawn’s central committee

Konstantinos Barbarousis
Former Golden Dawn Member of Greek Parliament (expelled)
Golden Dawn

History:

- **June 2018:** Golden Dawn expels Constantinos Barbarousis, Member of the Greek Parliament, after being indicted on charges of treason for promoting a military coup and the arrest of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras during a Parliament’s plenary session.
  


- **March 9, 2016:** One of Golden Dawn’s MEPs is expelled from the plenary session after a racist outburst, calling Turks “dirty and polluted” and “like wild dogs.”
  

- **March 31, 2017:** Golden Dawn’s headquarters in Athens is attacked by a group armed with sledgehammers, batons, helmets, and firebombs.
  

- **April 20, 2015:** The first court session takes place but is immediately adjourned.
  

- **February 2015:** A judicial panel charges 69 defendants—including 18 Golden Dawn MPs—with belonging to a criminal organization, as well as possession of illegal weaponry, extortion, bodily harm, and murder.
  

- **January 2015:** Golden Dawn comes third in the elections, earning 17 seats in Greece’s parliament.
  

- **November 2014:** In the state prosecutor’s file against Golden Dawn MPs, one witness alleges that Golden Dawn recruited a butcher in order to train its members in the art of using a knife effectively so they could learn to “neutralize opponents.”
  

- **October 2014:** Greek state prosecutor Isidoros Doyiakos orders all Golden Dawn MPs to face trial.
  

- **September 16, 2014:** The annual report by the Greek national police’s internal affairs department identifies several police force members with links to Golden Dawn, claiming that those individuals turned a blind eye to offenses committed by the group. Source: “Police report identifies officers with ties to Golden Dawn,” Ekathimerini, September 29, 2014, http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite1_1_17/09/2014_542992 [53].

- **May 22, 2014:** In elections for the European Parliament, Golden Dawn secures 9.4 percent of the vote in Greece and takes three of 21 available seats for Greece.
  
  While Golden Dawn currently does not affiliate with any faction in the European Parliament due to the party’s violent neo-Nazism, it previously takes three of 21 available seats for Greece.

- **May 18, 2014 - May 22, 2014:** In local elections, Golden Dawn emerges as the third-largest political force nationally.
  

- **January 2014:** Because of a possible ban on Golden Dawn’s participation in European elections in May 2014, 200 Golden Dawn supporters register a new political party, National Dawn.
  

- **January 2014:** Three additional Golden Dawn politicians are arrested and accused of holding key roles in a


September 28, 2013: Greek police arrest Golden Dawn leader Michaloliakos, party spokesman Kasidiaris, and 13 other leading members on charges of forming a criminal organization. They are investigated for manslaughter, assault, extortion, bombings, and money laundering. The arrests and charges against members of the group constitute some of the most significant steps that can be taken against Golden Dawn, since the Greek constitution does not permit banning political parties in Greece. Source: Helen Smith, “Golden Dawn leader charged with heading a criminal gang,” Guardian, September 28, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/28/greece-golden-dawn-leader-charged-criminal-gang [62].


September 23, 2013: An inquiry is launched over claims that members of Greece’s armed forces were involved in training Golden Dawn hit squads. According to the public order minister, “five senior police officers—the heads of the special forces, internal security, organised crime, firearms and explosives, and a rapid-response motorcycle division—had been moved to other posts pending investigations.” In addition, the southern and central Greece police commanders step down from their posts citing personal reasons. Source: Helen Smith, “Greece launches inquiry into claims Golden Dawn trained by armed forces,” Guardian, September 24, 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/23/greece-inquiry-golden-dawn-armed-forces [64].

September 17, 2013: Leftist musician Pavlos Fyssas is stabbed to death near the port of Athens. The attacker is later arrested by the police and states that he was a member of Golden Dawn. Source: Nektaria Stamouli, “Greek killing prompts fears of political violence,” Wall Street Journal, September 18, 2013, http://online.wsj.com/articles/SB1000142405274870407620455890856[65].


2005: Periandros, who violently attacked Greek student Dimitris Kousouris in 1998, is sentenced to 12 years in prison.
1984: Nikolaos Michaloliakos becomes one of the leaders of the youth wing of the National Political Union (EPEN), which was founded by then-imprisoned Georgios Papadopoulos, leader of the military junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974. Source: Yiannis Baboulias, “Who is Nikolaos Michaloliakos?” London Review of Books, October 3, 2013, http://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2013/10/03/yiannis-baboulias/who-is-nikolaos-michaloliakos [15].


2004: News media allege that Periandros, who had violently attacked a student in 1998, was able to evade arrest for several years due to Golden Dawn’s connections to the police force. Source: Areti Athanasiou, “Άστυνομοι κάλυπταν τον “Περίανδρο,” Ta Nea, April 17, 2004, http://www.tanea.gr/relatedarticles/article/4332198/?iid=2 [73].


1985: Nikolaos Michaloliakos leaves the EPEN and founds Golden Dawn.

Golden Dawn

Violent history:

Golden Dawn MPs have personally been implicated in attacks and murders. In June 2012, Golden Dawn MP and spokesperson Ilias Kasidiaris physically assaulted two female left-wing politicians while being filmed on Greek TV show Good Morning Greece. In September 2013, one Golden Dawn member stabbed leftist musician Pavlos Fyssas to death. Ioannis Lagos—a Golden Dawn MP—was implicated in Fyssas’s murder, and prosecutors claim that he directed the murder himself.

These are not lone incidents. Throughout the early 2010s, Golden Dawn members were recorded carrying out the majority of documented racist crimes in Greece. Attacks committed by Golden Dawn members have ranged from stabbings, aggregated assaults, and murders. They were carried out by individual members of Golden Dawn acting alone as well as those acting in a group.

- **May 2011:** A Bangladeshi immigrant is murdered by members of Golden Dawn.
- **June 12, 2012:** Golden Dawn members violently attack Egyptian fisherman Abou Zeid Mubarak.
- **June 7, 2012:** On a morning television show, a high-profile member of Golden Dawn, Ilias Kasidiaris, physically assaults female politicians Rena Dourou and Liana Kanell. He throws water in Dourou’s face and slaps Kanell after she protested his assault on Dourou.
- **July 7, 2012:** A group of Golden Dawn members attack Pakistani immigrants outside their house in Nikaia.
- **August 23, 2012:** Members of Golden Dawn confront police over the transfer of immigrants awaiting deportation to an army base in Corinth. They threaten to turn off the water supply to the base. Later, two immigrants were stabbed.
- **August 25, 2012:** In the courtyard of the Greek parliament, Golden Dawn MP Dimitri Koukoutsi attacks the president of the Pakistani Community Association, Javed Aslam, and Vasiliki Katrivanou, an MP from the left-wing Syriza party.
- **September 7, 2012:** Two Golden Dawn MPs and approximately 50 group members attack migrant street vendors at a festival in Rafina. Two Golden Dawn members pretend to be immigration officers and asked to see documents while the group destroys stalls.
- **October 12, 2012:** A 21-year-old Egyptian is attacked by four members of Golden Dawn. He is severely beaten with chains and bitten by a dog. The attacks leave him blind.
- **November 1, 2012:** Around 150 people, including an unidentified number of high-ranking members of Golden Dawn, attack migrants and damage migrant shops.
- **November 15, 2012:** Members of Golden Dawn threaten to burn down the house of an immigrant family who was behind in their rent payments. The police only arrive after the group has left, and the group returns the following night to repeat their threats.
- **2013:** At least 100 attacks are attributed to Golden Dawn. Investigations revealed that Golden Dawn regularly sends “militias” to attack migrants. A witness admits that he had participated several times in attacks with 50 to 60 motocycles. Two neo-Nazis had sat on each motorcycle, and the ones sitting in the back “had a stick and beat on each Pakistani he could catch,” the witness says.
- **January 3, 2013:** An Egyptian worker is attacked by three men on motorbikes. Their jackets bear the sign of Golden Dawn.
- **February 7, 2013:** Members of Golden Dawn gather outside Medicin du Monde clinic in Perama and threaten staff and patients.
- **February 14, 2013:** A group of Golden Dawn members attack three Pakistani workers.
- **July 21, 2013:** Six members of Golden Dawn pose as police officers and enter a house lived in by migrant workers in...
Tavros to check their papers. When the migrants ask for help from a police car, the Golden Dawn members begin beating the migrants. They steal the migrants’ wallets and work permits.70

- **September 15, 2013:** Golden Dawn MP Ilias Panagiotaros interrupts a World War II remembrance event in the small town of Meligalas. He grabs the microphone, shouts, and shoves elderly townspeople.79

- **September 17, 2013:** Leftist musician Pavlos Fyssas is stabbed to death near the port of Athens. The attacker is later arrested by the police and states that he was a member of Golden Dawn.80

- **August 24, 2014:** Golden Dawn members attack a gay couple in Athens, seriously injuring one of them.81

- **November 18, 2016:** Golden Dawn members are suspected of attacking a refugee camp with Molotov cocktails and rocks on the Greek island of Chios.82

- **April 1, 2017:** A student is heavenly beaten and seriously injured allegedly by members of Golden Dawn.83

- **November 1, 2017:** A prosecution lawyer in an ongoing Golden Dawn trial is attacked outside Athens police headquarters by Golden Dawn supporters.84

- **February 26, 2018:** A group of suspected neo-Nazis and Golden Dawn members storms the anti-fascist Favela Free Social Center in Piraeus, wielding iron bars, setting off flares and besmearing the walls. Five people are injured. Party leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos denies Golden Dawn’s involvement.85

- **April 23, 2018:** Violent clashes between a Greek far-right group, riot police, and migrants rage on the island of Lesvos, leaving several people injured. Asylum seekers are protesting against their prolonged stay in the overcrowded registration camp, when far-right extremists insult and throw objects at them.86

- **May 21, 2018:** Approximately two dozen people attack Thessaloniki’s Mayor Yiannis Boutaris at a public event, throwing him on the ground and kicking him repeatedly. Police subsequently arrest four men, among them an off-duty police officer. As Boutaris is reviled by extreme nationalists, authorities blame the beating on “extreme-right thugs.”87

- **December 17, 2018:** The Holocaust memorial in Thessaloniki is vandalized and besmeared with a swastika painting for the fourth time in 2018. Previous attacks have been attributed to far-right supporters, including those from neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn.88
Golden Dawn


81 Helena Smith and Patrick Kingsley, “Far-right group attacks refugee camp on Greek island of Chios,” Guardian, November 18, 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/18/far-right-group-attacks-refugee-camp-greek-island-chios [95].


Associations:

**Ties to Extremist Entities:**

Golden Dawn has attended various festivals with the Italian far-right extremist party Forza Nuova. The two groups have marched together both in Greece and in Italy. Golden Dawn MP Artemis Mattheopoulos serves as Deputy Chairman of the Alliance for Peace and Freedom, an organization run by Forza Nuova leader Roberto Fiore.

Golden Dawn reportedly has close links with the Hungarian neo-Nazi party Jobbik and its former leader Gabor Vona.

**Ties to Other Entities:**

In November 2013, Casa Pound allegedly held a meeting in Rome, which two senior members of Golden Dawn attended, one of which was Apostolos Gkletsos, a former MP and member of Golden Dawn’s Central Committee. The outcome of the meeting allegedly signaled the emergence of a potential alliance between Casa Pound and Golden Dawn.

**Ties to Individuals:**

According to a website linked to Golden Dawn, the leader of the organization, Nikolaos Michaloliakos, received a letter from Alexander Dugin, a professor at Moscow State University and former Kremlin adviser. In the letter, Dugin, who is also one of the architects behind Putin’s “Eurasian” ideology, called for an open exchange between Golden Dawn and his Moscow-based think tank and positively noted Golden Dawn’s geopolitical views. Michaloliakos has allegedly expressed support in the past for closer ties with Russia.
Golden Dawn


Golden Dawn

Media Coverage:

Analysis of Group

Golden Dawn has attracted increasing international media coverage since it successfully entered parliament following the 2012 Greek general election. Much of the media attention has focused on the party’s continued electoral success in the context of severe austerity measures, its openly neo-Nazi character, and its violent attacks against immigrants and leftists. However, as the party’s gains are almost exclusively viewed as a product of the financial crisis, the potential longer-term impact of Golden Dawn’s social and welfare activities and its international undertakings and links to far-right organizations appears underexplored at times.

Although Golden Dawn was founded nearly 30 years ago, the group hardly featured in international media coverage until the Greek general elections in 2012, when the party—to the surprise of analysts and the political establishment—was able not only to dramatically increase its share of the vote but to secure 18 seats in the Greek parliament. International observers and media commentators were alarmed that an ultra-nationalist party which openly models itself after the Nazis and advocates for mining Greece’s borders to keep out immigrants was so successful in a national election. In a BBC article in October 2012, former “Newsnight” editor Paul Mason echoed the consensus of much of the international press regarding Golden Dawn’s success. He drew parallels between and modern Greece and Germany during the Weimar Republic, arguing that Golden Dawn’s rise was fuelled by “hopelessness” and “inertia” and must be understood in the context of the financial crisis and the effects of the severe austerity measures that Greece had to endure. Though Mason rejected a direct comparison to the political and economic context of the Weimar Republic, he argued that “[W]hile the crisis may be on a scale weaker than the one that collapsed […] in Greece, the forces holding democracy together may also be weaker.”

International commentators were careful not to overstate the importance of Golden Dawn’s 2012 electoral success, with The New York Times pointing out that “the group is still far from being a major threat to [Greek Prime Minister Antonis] Samaras’s party, or to his fragile three-party coalition government.” However, the fascist, violent, and aggressive character of the group and its leaders was emphasised by most media outlets. Reuters’s Dina Kyriakidou pointed out the inherent contradiction of denying being a neo-Nazi organization while at the same time “openly adopting similar ideology and symbols” and the Guardian described an incident during which the “high-profile neo-Nazi MP” Ilias Kasidiaris physically attacked two left-wing female politicians during a live talk show. With sharp irony, the Guardian’s Helen Smith described Mr Kasidiaris as “the most vocal opponent of suggestions that Chrysi Avgi [Golden Dawn] is a violent organisation with a history of attacks on society’s most vulnerable not least Greece’s burgeoning population of immigrants.”

Following a string of attacks on migrants across Greece during 2012 and 2013—for many of which Golden Dawn has been alleged to be responsible—international media outlets investigated Golden Dawn’s growing appeal among segments of the Greek population despite its violent reputation. As state welfare assistance was rolled back dramatically following the implementation of austerity cuts, Reuters pointed to Golden Dawn’s moves to fill the void. “Part of its [Golden Dawn’s] appeal is down to the sort of welfare work that Hamas, the Palestinian party, does in Gaza. Golden Dawn distributes food in poor neighborhoods, helps old ladies get money safely from ATMs—and has also set up a Greeks-only blood bank.”

While the rise of Golden Dawn was repeatedly explained in the context of stringent austerity measures and widespread poverty and unemployment, international media outlets gave less attention to the international dimension of Golden Dawn’s activities. Thus, the connections of the organization to Russian President Vladimir Putin were not widely picked up on widely even though Foreign Affairs magazine highlighted that Golden Dawn “is thought to receive funds from Russia.” The Guardian noted Golden Dawn’s efforts to open offices across Europe and in the United States, quoting a Golden Dawn expert who stated, “Golden Dawn is not like other parties in Greece. From its beginnings, in the early 80s, it always had one eye abroad.”

Following the murder of left-wing rapper Pavlos Fyssas in 2013 by a member of Golden Dawn, media outlets have closely followed government efforts to prosecute the organizations leadership and crack down on racist violence. While the
government-led action has generally been viewed as successful in curtailing the activities of the group, Golden Dawn’s electoral success at the recent European elections indicates that they are still popular among voters. This adds more pressure on the government to successfully prosecute Golden Dawn’s leader Michaloliakos and other members of the group during their upcoming trial. However, the Wall Street Journal has already speculated that the “the evidence so far probably isn’t enough” to allow for the group to be banned.\[^{105}\]

While western media interest in the activities of Golden Dawn has significantly increased over the last two years, much media analysis has remained limited to linking the group’s success to the consequences of severe austerity measures. Accordingly, Golden Dawn’s ascent is predominantly viewed as a product of the financial crisis.


Rhetoric:

**Ilias Panagiotaros, April 2014 [117]**

"[Hitler is a] great personality, like Stalin."\(^{106}\)

**Ilias Panagiotaros, April 2014 [118]**

"Until 1997, [the] international association of doctors, and I don't know what, considered homosexuality a sickness, illness, which it is."\(^{107}\)

**Ilias Panagiotaros, 2013 [119]**

"Golden Dawn wants to become, and will become, like Hezbollah in Lebanon, which is in effect a second government that helps even the last of its poor citizens (...)".\(^{108}\)

**Nikolaos Michaloliakos, August 2012 [120]**

"We feel disgusted in the parliament. If they want us to, we can abandon it at any given moment and take to the streets. There, they shall see what the Golden Dawn is really about, they will see what battle means, they will see what struggle means, they will see what bayonets sharpened every night mean.\(^{109}\)

**Nikolaos Michaloliakos, 2012 [121]**

"I have read a lot of books casting doubts on the number of six million Jews.\(^{110}\)

**Nikolaos Michaloliakos, 2012 [122]**

"No one should fear me if they are a good Greek citizen. If they are traitors — I don't know.\(^{111}\)

**Ilias Panagiotaros, 2012 [123]**

"There are no legal migrants in Greece, not even one.\(^{112}\)

**Ilias Panagiotaros, 2012 [124]**

"Greek society is ready - even though no-one likes this - to have a fight: a new type of civil war. (...) On the one side there will be nationalists like us, and Greeks who want our country to be as it used to be, and on the other side illegal immigrants, anarchists and all
those who have destroyed Athens several times.”

Nikolaos Michaloliakos, 2012
“Auschwitz, what Auschwitz? I didn’t go there. What happened there? Have you been there?”

Nikolaos Michaloliakos, 2012
“Those who betray this country — it’s time for them to be afraid. We are coming.”

Golden Dawn election slogan, 2012
“So we can rid this land of filth.”

Ilias Panagiotaros, then-spokesman for Golden Dawn, 2012
“Greece is dying from immigrants, politicians like the guy you just saw and bankers.”

Two Golden Dawn parliamentarians, 2012
“Only people with “Greek blood” should be allowed to participate in elections.”

Nikolaos Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn party leader, 2012
“Those who betray this country— it’s time for them to be afraid. We are coming.”

Nikolaos Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn party leader, 2012
“No one should fear me if they are a good Greek citizen. If they are traitors— I don’t know.”

Nikolaos Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn party leader, 2012
“There were no ovens, no gas chambers, it’s a lie[...] Auschwitz, what Auschwitz? I didn’t go there. What happened there? Have you been there[?] [...] I have read a lot of books casting doubts on the number of six million Jews...”
Golden Dawn

Golden Dawn MP Candidate, 2011-2012

Regarding Greece’s immigrants:

“These parasites drink our water, eat our food and breathe our Greek air... They are primitive, a contamination and subhuman. We don’t care about their existence.”

Golden Dawn MP Candidate, 2011-2012

Regarding Greece’s immigrants:

“We are ready to open the ovens! We will turn them into soap but we may get a rash. We’ll use it to wash cars and pavements only... We will make lamps from their skin; Giorgos will sell their hair in the market.”

Nikolaos Michaloliakos, Golden Dawn party leader, 1987

“We are the faithful soldiers of the National Socialist idea and nothing else.”

Ilias Kasidiaris

“In less than 100 years, Greeks will become a minority in their country. The only way to strike at the root of evil is through the municipal elections.”

Nikolaos Michaloliakos

“We are the faithful soldiers of the National Socialist idea and nothing else.”

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Golden Dawn


125 Renee Maltezou and Deepa Babington, “‘Here comes the mayor!’- Greek far right fires up Athens campaign,” Reuters, April 15, 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/15/greek-election-athens-idUSBREA3E0N920140415 [144].