

Pseudo-left conceals refusal of SYRIZA, PASOK and trade unions to oppose Golden Dawn

By Chris Marsden and Christoph Dreier
25 January 2013

Media reports estimate that between 3,000 and 5,000 demonstrators turned out to protest against the fascist Golden Dawn (Chrysi Avgi) party in Syntagma Square in Athens last Saturday. The march was made up of a number of pseudo-left groups and immigrant associations, with scarcely any representation from the trade unions and the main nominally “left” parties, PASOK, the Coalition of the Radical Left (SYRIZA) and the Democratic Left (DIMAR).

The implications of their refusal to mount any defence of immigrants was underscored by the funeral held earlier that day of Shehzad Luqman from Pakistan, killed by fascist thugs. Attacks on foreign workers have increased massively since Chrysi Avgi entered parliament for the first time in the June election, with around 400 cases reported in the last months, including three deadly assaults.

Under these circumstances, the past weeks saw reports that a mass antifascist protest would be held in Greece that had the backing of all the “left parties” and would involve tens of thousands. Many though not all of these reports had as their source the Greek Socialist Workers Party (SEK) and its sister party, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Britain, as well as various similar currents.

In its January 19 perspective, the World Socialist Web Site described what was called a “united front of the left against the fascist threat” as a “grotesque fraud”, aimed at rehabilitating “the parties that bear the chief responsibility for the rise of Golden Dawn” and subordinating the struggle of the working class against Golden Dawn “to the social democratic PASOK, the trade unions and SYRIZA”.

It is now clear that the proclamations of support by

major trade union federations and left parties were largely an invention. In order to drape these organisations in a progressive and antifascist guise, the pseudo-left groups collected signatures and formal endorsements from some union officials and secured a vote in some city councils in support of the demonstration.

The latest edition of *Socialist Worker* boasts, “The main organisation behind the Athens protest was the Movement Against Racism and Fascist Threat (KEERFA)” and that its “national organiser is Petros Constantinou, a member of the Socialist Workers Party’s sister organisation SEK.”

KEERFA’s greatest success was in securing the endorsement of the Athens City Council, where the two parties that sit in national government with the Conservative New Democracy, PASOK and DIMAR, voted to support the demonstration along with SYRIZA. The value of this endorsement was nil, given their collusion in anti-immigrant measures and their role in imposing the savage cuts against working people, which Golden Dawn exploits in order to whip up nationalism.

None of this stopped the propaganda offensive mounted by the pseudo-left, which not only provided an apologia for SYRIZA et al in Greece, but for equivalent forces in the UK.

The SWP was able to amplify its voice through its leadership position within Unite Against Fascism, which is funded by Britain’s Trades Union Congress. The SWP has a decades-long history of utilising antifascist rhetoric as a means of urging support for the Labour and trade union bureaucracy, stretching back to the Anti-Nazi League in the 1970s. Since then,

however, it has successfully integrated itself into the highest echelons of the trade union bureaucracy, assuming leading positions in a number of unions. In line with this, in 2003 the SWP liquidated the ANL into the UAF, whose primary goal is to promote tactical voting against the British National Party. Its co-chair is Weyman Bennett of the SWP.

On December 20, UAF issued a statement centring on the assault on SYRIZA MP Dimitris Stratoulis by Golden Dawn at a football match. “This attack on an MP of the main left opposition party should sound alarm bells,” declared Bennett, pledging “a massive campaign to get the BNP and far right out of the European parliament at the elections in 2014 and to prevent racism and xenophobia polluting politics here.”

The statement made great play of citing the support of Dimitris Tsoukalas, the SYRIZA MP formerly of PASOK and ex-leader of the bank workers union, before asserting, “The aim of Golden Dawn is to suppress any voice fighting against the politics of the Troika and the austerity Memorandum, against the policies that demolish the political, labour and democratic rights of the Greek People.”

The UAF/SWP statements are designed to conceal the fact that no national endorsement for its initiative was won from SYRIZA or any trade union, while concealing the role of these organisations in helping the Greek bourgeoisie impose the dictates of the troika. Just three days after Saturday’s demonstration, SYRIZA leader Alexis Tsipras was speaking before his real constituency when making an address to the Brookings Institute in Washington.

“Is there anything to fear [from] the left wing in Greece? In what way are we radical?” he asked rhetorically. “Scaremongers will tell you that our party, if it comes to government, will scrap the loan agreement with the European Union and the IMF, will lead the country out of the euro zone, will interrupt Greece’s ties with the civilized West, and that Greece will become a new North Korea.” “I hope to convince you that I’m not as dangerous as some are trying to say,” he continued. “Let me say this clearly: SYRIZA will keep Greece in the euro zone.”

It is precisely the pro-capitalist, pro-European Union stand of the so-called “left” and the demobilisation of opposition by the trade unions that is responsible for the growing prominence of Golden Dawn, which

portrays itself as an opponent of austerity, the EU, the bankers and the establishment parties such as SYRIZA.

A January 14 UAF statement made explicit how the SWP wished to benefit from the political initiative of its Greek co-thinkers and will help foster the same political dangers everywhere. It declared: “The coalition calling it is exactly of the kind that UAF has built and encourages here—the trade unions, progressive politicians and parties, immigrant, Muslim and black organisations, LGBT groups, intellectuals, writers and so on.”

The failure of their demonstration to attract significant support has not deterred the SWP from pursuing this agenda. Its report proceeded as if a triumphant success had been recorded, citing “25,000 people” having taken part in “the biggest mobilisation against fascism in living memory,” one that was “With the exception of the influential Communist Party” supported by “all the left parties”.

“There were over 25 solidarity protests across the globe on Saturday, from Moscow to Chicago,” it continued, without citing any other than an exaggerated claim that 500 rallied outside London’s Greek embassy under the leadership of the UAF. The only other report available anywhere cites “More than 60 people” gathering outside the Greek Consulate in Chicago—an indication of the true scale of the antifascist mobilisation of the “pseudo-left”.

Greek workers and youth must reject all such attempts to dragoon them behind the parties of the Greek bourgeoisie and the trade union apparatus in the name of “Left unity.” That will only hand the initiative to Golden Dawn and its ilk. They must instead take up the fight against the fascists as part of an industrial and political offensive to overthrow capitalism in Greece and throughout Europe and establish socialism.

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