

Kantor Center Position Papers

Editor: Mikael Shainkman

March 2017

BETWEEN THE FAR RIGHT AND THE FAR LEFT: CURRENT ISSUES OF RACISM AND NATIONALISM IN GREECE¹

Michal Navoth*

Executive Summary¹

This paper examines the political situation in Greece from the far right to the far left, especially in three political parties represented in the Greek parliament today: Golden Dawn, Independent Greeks and Syriza. Golden Dawn, Greece's third largest party, is among the parties furthest to the right on the political spectrum of Europe, a continent that has seen a marked rise in right-wing parties in the last years. Syriza is a left-wing party whose leader, Alexis Tsipras, was sworn in twice in 2015 (January and September) as Greek prime minister. Syriza's junior coalition partner, in both governments, is the right-wing party Independent Greeks. We will analyze and place the three parties and their divergent worldviews in the proper political context in light of the recent developments, including the crackdown against Golden Dawn, the general election of September 2015 and the implications of the ongoing refugee crisis in Greece.

Golden Dawn Unscathed by Crackdown

Golden Dawn, considered a violent political force, is arguably Europe's most ideological neo-Nazi party. On 17 September 2013, the murder near Athens of an anti-fascist musician, Pavlos Fyssas, by a supporter of the Golden Dawn, served as a wakeup call for the Greek authorities. As part of the crackdown on the party, which was launched on September 2013, an extensive investigation took place that ended only in

¹In memory of my father, Pessach Navoth 1926—2017.

September 2014.² During that time, all Golden Dawn MPs were arrested. The investigation was assigned to two magistrates, Ioanna Klapa and Maria Dimitropoulou. Following their search of computers confiscated from the far-right party's leaders, in which the latter were seen dressed in SS uniforms, giving the Nazi salute, and after examining witnesses and checking thousands of videos, pictures, speeches, documents and blogs, the investigators have compiled a 15,000-page dossier outlining why they believe Golden Dawn is a criminal organization.³

The crackdown on Golden Dawn also gave the Greek government, which had been trying for over a year to enact a bill that would strengthen the existing anti-racist criminal legislation, a decisive push to finally pass such legislation.⁴ On 9 September 2014 the parliament adopted a long awaited anti-racism law, Law 4285/2014, which amended the previous legislation. The Law includes harsher penalties for those who incite to discrimination, hatred or violence based on race, color, religion or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability. They can be sentenced to up to three years in prison with a fine ranging from 5,000 to 20,000 Euros. If the incitement resulted in a criminal act, then the perpetrator is sentenced to at least six months in prison and a fine ranging from 15,000 to 30,000 Euros. In case of imprisonment of at least one year, the perpetrator is deprived of his civil rights for a period from one to five years. The punishment also increases if incitement to violence is carried out by a civil servant in the course of duty. The Law also explicitly prohibits "public endorsement or denial of crimes" and criminalizes endorsement, trivialization, or malicious denial of the existence or seriousness of genocides, war crimes, crimes against humanity, the Holocaust, and crimes of Nazism, that have been recognized by decisions of International Courts or the Hellenic Parliament, if such behavior leads to incitement to violence or hatred, or if it is threatening or abusive toward groups of individuals based on race, color, religion, ethnic origin, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. If convicted, the perpetrator can be sentenced to up to three years in prison and receive a fine of up to 20,000 Euros. Once again, the punishment increases if incitement to violence is carried out by a civil servant in the course of duty. The Law also provides for the liability of legal entities or groups of persons. In addition to the sanction of a fine imposed on them, they are also cut off from receiving state funds. The Law is effective as of 10 September 2014, and even though it touches upon several of the points brought up in the crackdown on Golden Dawn, the new Law cannot be applied retroactively.⁵

On 16 October 2014 the prosecutor Dogiakos submitted a 698 page report to the judicial council of the Athens Appeals Court (the judicial council). Dogiakos asked the judicial council to indict all current and former Golden Dawn MPs, to be tried by a three-member criminal appeals court. While emphasizing that the courts have the right to judge a political party as a criminal organization, Dogiakos wrote in his report: “A party that seeks to achieve its goals through the use of physical or armed force is not legal.”⁶

The most convincing evidence concerned the days leading up to the stabbing of Fyssas and its aftermath. A chain of command that led to the top of Golden Dawn appears to have sanctioned, or at least known about it. Prosecutors have mapped out a web of phone calls indicating that party leader Nikolaos Michaloliakos himself was contacted both before and immediately after the murder.⁷ Dogiakos noted the structure of the criminal organization that was being directed from inside the Greek parliament. In particular the report depicted “the military structure, the absolute hierarchy” and the “blind obedience” to commands issued by the party leadership.⁸

Despite the crackdown and the unprecedented parliamentary actions taken against the party, Golden Dawn remains steadily the third largest party in the polls. In the national election on 25 January 2015 Golden Dawn came in third with 6.3 percent of the vote, which translated into 17 parliamentary seats. Thirteen of the lawmakers were re-elected, including Michaloliakos, his deputy Christos Pappas, and the swastika-tattooed party spokesman Ilias Kasidiaris. The latter were even in pretrial detention, and ran the election campaign while imprisoned.⁹ A triumphant Michaloliakos was pleased with the results, and wrote: “[w]e achieved this great victory despite the fact that we could not be guaranteed an equal and so-called democratic election ... having to campaign through a payphone.”¹⁰

In February 2015 the judicial council issued an indictment according to which 69 individuals, among them Golden Dawn’s leader and all its MPs would be tried.¹¹ The trial of 69 defendants commenced on 20 April 2015, which happens to be the anniversary of Adolf Hitler’s birthday. This was an ironic coincidence for a party whose leader, Michaloliakos, is an ardent admirer of Hitler and known to his sympathizers as the Führer.¹² Golden Dawn rejected the charges, claiming they are politically motivated. Among others, the political prosecution is attributed to the Jewish lobby.¹³ While more than 40 defendants were present, neither the party leadership nor the majority of its MPs were there, choosing instead to be represented by their lawyers in

what appeared to be an effort to undermine the significance of the proceedings. This, however, does not change the fact that for the first time in the modern, democratic Greece, an entire party leadership has faced trial.¹⁴ The trial, which was repeatedly adjourned due to legal arguments and technicalities, continued in the second half of 2015. It is estimated to go on for over a year, given the nature of the charges, the number of the accused and the number of witnesses.¹⁵

Despite the ongoing trial, approximately 500,000 Greeks once again voted for the Golden Dawn in the second parliamentary election in 2015, this time on 20 September. The result confirmed Golden Dawn as the country's third biggest political party. Not only did the party maintain the third position, but in comparison to January's election, slightly increased its electoral power: from 6.3 percent to seven percent. Consequently its seats in parliament grew from 17 to 18, which made Golden Dawn the only party that emerged strengthened from the September elections.¹⁶ The results were contrary to the prediction of analysts, who had forecasted a dip in Golden Dawn's popularity after Michaloliakos, only three days before the ballot, had openly admitted that his party accepted "political responsibility" for the murder of Fyssas, in September 2013.¹⁷ While accepting "political responsibility", Michaloliakos also claimed there was "no criminal liability". He defended himself and the party saying that "you cannot hold a whole political party responsible because [...] one of its followers committed a reprehensible act."¹⁸ Other Greek parties slammed Michaloliakos for his statement. A Syriza spokesman said that assuming political responsibility "outrages every democratic citizen who is struggling and wants the rule of law." New Democracy added: "[i]t is a provocative confession made during the election campaign to terrorize citizens and parties."¹⁹

This was a planned strategy of Michaloliakos to present himself and his party as anti-establishment. As the election approached, his provocative appearances escalated. In an old video, which appeared online,²⁰ Michaloliakos admitted proudly that Golden Dawn members were the actual descendants of Nazi sympathizers. Michaloliakos gambled that provocation would pay off in the current instable situation, and Golden Dawn systematically used this method to great success.²¹

Aware of the appeal of its nationalist and anti-immigrant platform in the island of Kos, the island hardest hit by the European refugee crisis, Golden Dawn released a video prior to the September election in which three children called upon voters to support the party and to keep Greece for the Greeks. Similarly, they urged them not to

become a minority in their own country.²² In the September election, Golden Dawn spiked in the Aegean islands of Lesbos and Kos. In Lesbos Golden Dawn nearly doubled its share of the vote, obtaining 7.8 percent in comparison with 4.7 percent received last January. In Kos the party received more than ten percent of the vote.²³

Not only did Golden Dawn portray itself as the “sole nationalist choice”, it also opposed the internationally sponsored bailout accords, which, it said, amounts to “ethnocide” or death of the nation. As the Tsipras government was compelled in the summer of 2015 to roll back on pre-election pledges, Golden Dawn has cast itself as the one force that could discard the punishing austerity demanded of Greece in return for bailout funds.²⁴ In short, by tapping into public anger over the growing population of immigrants and austerity measures in the debt stricken country, Golden Dawn managed to portray itself as true patriots and the only defenders of Greek interests. This populist approach is what secured half a million votes in the September 2015 election, despite the unprecedented ongoing legal proceedings against the party and its leadership.

A Political Marriage of Convenience: Syriza and Independent Greeks

In the January 2015 election Syriza, a left wing political party originally founded in 2004 as a coalition of left-wing and radical left parties, received 36.3 percent of the votes. Its leader, Alexis Tsipras, was able to form a coalition within 24 hours of the elections. His coalition partner was the right-wing party, the Independent Greeks, founded in 2012, that garnered 4.7 percent of the votes. Thus, the new government had a majority of 162 seats.²⁵ Although the two parties shared, at least in the first half of 2015, a common agenda to reject the imposed austerity measures, they are standing well apart on most other issues.²⁶ One of the issues on which they have opposing views concerns Israel and antisemitism. In December 2014 Independent Greeks’ leader, Panos Kammenos, singled out the Jews for not paying taxes (although as defense minister and in his previous capacities he had a positive attitude towards Israel with whom he has been favoring a close military cooperation).²⁷ However, due to his party’s position in the coalition government both of January and September 2015, he has found himself defending the Jewish community. For instance, Kammenos was the one who called on the Justice Ministry to take action against Golden Dawn MP Pappas, after an incident in the Greek parliament on 30 May 2016, when Pappas described Israel as an “eternal enemy of Greece and Orthodoxy” and referred to Israel as a “regional troublemaker”.²⁸

Even considering the tax statement, Kammenos, is still likely to be more pro-Israel than the Syriza lawmakers, some of whom participated in the flotillas to Gaza in 2010, and organized anti-Israel demonstrations in Athens during Operation Protective Edge in 2014.²⁹

Syriza is not of one piece, but the party stresses that even though some of its MPs are sharply critical of Israel, they reject antisemitism.³⁰ Although the party has been traditionally pro-Palestinian, it seems that for pragmatic reasons, after its election Syriza's leadership is determined to strengthen Greece's military and economic ties with Israel. A number of official meetings in Israel have taken place, including Tsipras' official visit at the end of November 2015. Likewise, a Government-to-Government meeting, led by Israel prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras, was held in Jerusalem on 27 January 2016 with a view to continue strengthening the strategic bilateral relations.³¹

Syriza emphasizes that it is a staunch critic of the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn.³² The Greek Foreign Ministry of the newly elected government issued a statement on 27 January, the International Holocaust Remembrance Day and the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, saying: "[T]he Greek people pay homage to the thousands of their compatriots, Greek Jews who fell victim to Nazi barbarity."³³ Syriza leaders have regularly attended events commemorating the Holocaust in Greece. Moreover, in 2015, shortly after the election, Athens observed the International Holocaust Remembrance Day in a large-scale event organized by a senior Syriza leader, in cooperation with the Jewish community.³⁴

Tsipras won the January election on an anti-austerity platform that he was later forced to abandon. Following a failed negotiation with Greece's creditors in the first half of 2015, Tsipras decided to hold a referendum. 61 percent of the Greeks responded positively to Tsipras' call to reject the bailout proposal in a referendum held on 5 July.³⁵ Shortly thereafter, on 12 July 2015 Tsipras ignored the results of the referendum, reneging on previous promises to tear up any bailout agreements preceding Greek governments had signed with the troika of international lenders—the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank. Not only did Tsipras give in, but he was forced to sign onerous terms of a third bailout. When Greece was on the brink of bankruptcy and a Euro zone exit in August 2015, Tsipras accepted a new package of budget cuts, tax rises and other economic measures in return for an additional 86 billion Euros.³⁶

After the Greek parliament endorsed the third financial rescue package, 25 hardline Syriza MPs revolted. They called for Greece to leave the Euro zone and formed their own party, Popular Unity.³⁷ As a consequence, Tsipras lost his majority in parliament, resigned from his post as prime minister on 20 August 2015 and called for general elections within a month. He hoped to obtain a new mandate to consolidate his power and implement the latest bailout package.³⁸ In the election of 20 September 2015 Syriza received 145 seats in the 300-seat parliament, compared to 149 in the election of January 2015 that swept the party to power.³⁹ The rebels in Popular Unity fell short of the three percent threshold for entering parliament. Tsipras quickly announced he would resume co-operating with Independent Greeks that won 3.6 percent of the vote and 10 seats. This unlikely partnership, forming a narrowly based coalition, worked smoothly during Syriza's first term.⁴⁰

A few hours after the new cabinet was sworn in on 23 September, Twitter users started protesting the appointment of the deputy infrastructure, transportation and network minister, Dimitris Kammenos, from the Independent Greeks (not related to his party's leader, Panos Kammenos) who had made numerous antisemitic, racist and homophobic statements on social media.⁴¹ Earlier that year, during the debt crisis negotiations, Kammenos, at the time an Independent Greeks MP, compared Greece's suffering under austerity measures imposed by its European creditors, including Germany, with the hardship of Jews murdered in the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. In June 2015 Kammenos mocked pro-EU demonstrators by posting on his Facebook page and on Twitter an image of the sign over the gate to Auschwitz which had been altered to replace the German words "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work Sets You Free) with the Greek for "We're Staying in Europe."⁴² The Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS) immediately protested⁴³ The following day the Independent Greeks distanced itself from Kammenos and the party's spokeswoman said that the lawmaker's post was an "utterly personal action".⁴⁴ Kammenos deleted the picture and replaced it with an update in which he apologized for "a misunderstanding" but doubled down on his comparison: "[m]aybe the comparison was unfortunate," he wrote, "but my country is experiencing an economic holocaust."⁴⁵

In face of the protest, Kammenos was asked to stand down less than 24 hours after being appointed, and he was replaced by Panagiotis Sgouridis. Tsipras hoped that his prompt response would demonstrate that antisemitism and bigotry will not be tolerated from public officials.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the question to be asked is whether it

was wise to nominate Sgouridis under such circumstances. Only three months earlier, in June 2015, he had drawn parallels between the Holocaust and the Israeli blockade of Gaza in the inauguration of a Holocaust Memorial in Kavala, a port city in northern Greece.⁴⁷

Conclusion: Extremists Thrive in Economic and Refugee Crises

At the height of Greece's financial crisis in May 2012, riding a wave of anti-austerity fury gave a boost to both parties at the edges of the Greek political spectrum: Golden Dawn and Syriza.⁴⁸ Syriza and its partner to the narrowly based coalition, the Independent Greeks, were brought together by a mutual hatred for the bailout program and their determination to put an end to the tough austerity measures demanded by the international creditors. Both parties said that the latter had turned the country into a "debt colony".⁴⁹ However, after Syriza abandoned the anti-austerity platform, which has been the common denominator, it remains to be seen what the future will bring for that unlikely alliance.⁵⁰

Golden Dawn, while not offering alternative programs, continues its strong opposition to the bailout conditions, believing itself to be the political force that can lead such a policy in the crisis-plagued country.⁵¹ Golden Dawn and Independent Greeks, being both nationalist and xenophobic, and pursuing an anti-immigrant policy, frequently scapegoat outsiders, blaming them for Greece's economic woes. In that respect, the two parties differ from Syriza. According to Takis Pappas, Associate Professor of comparative politics at the University of Macedonia Greece and author of *Populism and Crisis Politics in Greece* (2014), immigration has traditionally not been a central issue for the left, but rather a fixation of the Greek right. Since Golden Dawn has already acquired most of "issue ownership" over immigration, Independent Greeks tries to exploit the issue in its own way, but without being associated with Golden Dawn.⁵²

Syriza is pursuing a policy of protecting immigrants' rights and has championed policy changes such as speeding up the process of asylum petition.⁵³ In accordance with its platform to give citizenship to second generation immigrants, at the end of June 2015 the Greek parliament passed a law granting children of foreign nationals citizenship as long as they are born and raised in the country. Independent Greeks and Golden Dawn opposed the law. Also opposing the law was the conservative opposition party New Democracy.⁵⁴

The Golden Dawn is unfettered by such concerns, and its surge in Kos and Lesbos, the epicenters of the migrant crisis in Greece, is directly related to the factors that explain the rise of the party in 2012, when it first entered the Greek legislature. The near collapse of the Greek state's socioeconomic credibility enabled the then marginal Golden Dawn to move to the center of the political scene. Moreover, the party exploited the security void and presented itself as a support network for Greeks at a time when national institutions were receding or even totally absent. For years the Greek political system ignored the issue of illegal immigration, but Golden Dawn targeted foreigners under the pretext of guaranteeing public safety. Violent attacks and racially motivated hate crimes have become a common phenomenon.⁵⁵ Throughout this period, the party has been pursuing an anti-immigrant stance. With its xenophobic statements and aim to expel foreigners from Greece, Golden Dawn has adopted the slogans: "Rid this land of filth" and "Greece for the Greeks".⁵⁶

Clearly these factors manifest themselves now, when the refugee problem arises in a more acute form. As the local authorities were waiting for the central government to react, and while the Greek government waited for the European Union to determine their policy regarding the growing waves of immigration that reached the islands, Golden Dawn exploited the situation to spread their virulent ideas and to gain ground.⁵⁷ With extensive coastlines and easily crossable borders, Greece has become a gateway to the European Union. On 21 December 2015 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) confirmed that in 2015 the total number of migrants and refugees arriving in Greece was 821,008 (out of which 816,752 arrived by sea and 4,256 by land).⁵⁸ Such numbers of refugees, especially seen against the size of Greek population of some 10.8 million people, have increased the appeal of Golden Dawn and their racist views on foreigners and immigration.⁵⁹

However, since April and May 2016 the numbers of refugees have dropped dramatically, and the total number of arrivals in Greece is lower than the preceding year.⁶⁰ The reason for this reduction in numbers is the European Union (EU)-Turkey Agreement from 18 March 2016, aiming to end the irregular migration from Turkey to the EU. But the Agreement is controversial. It raises legal problems, and practical questions remain unresolved.⁶¹ Thus, the agreement is far from implementation, and also Greece's hope to stem the flow of migrants and refugees to its shores within a European-wide response to deal with the escalating crisis is not likely to be fulfilled in the near future.

Against the backdrop of the ongoing refugee crisis, and despite the legal crackdown against the party, Golden Dawn emerged from two election cycles in 2015, confirming its position as the third largest party in Greece. This may increase the danger of racist and xenophobic views making inroads into mainstream Greek political discourse. Some analysts, like Dimitris Keridis, professor of international political science at Athens' Panteion University, worries that a prolonged crisis will enable Golden Dawn to establish a permanent presence in Greek political life.⁶²

As long as the refugee and economic crises are not solved, Golden Dawn's position will in all likelihood remain strong. Under such circumstances, and when Tsipras has to strive to maintain the stability of his government and to deliver the promises of his economic deal, it remains to be seen whether he will be able to stick to his staunch opposition against dealing with Golden Dawn.

* Michal Navoth is an Israeli attorney, focusing inter alia on public international law. In this capacity she publishes and lectures in various local and international forums on subjects relating to legal aspects of the Arab Israeli Conflict, human rights and antisemitism. Navoth is also a frequent commentator on events in Greece.

¹ The paper is partly based on a presentation given at the ESA Research Network 31: Ethnic Relations, Racism and Antisemitism midterm conference on "Refugees and migration—nationalist/racist responses", September 1-2, 2016, Warsaw University.

² For a description of the crackdown and the investigation, see: Michal Navoth, "The Worrisome Defiance of the Golden Dawn", *Kantor Center Position Papers*, August 2014, p. 4–6.

³ Helena Smith, "Golden Dawn: courage of two women stems the rise of Greece's neo-Nazis", *The Guardian*, 23 March 2014, Yiannis Baboulias, "Greece's Neo-Nazis Were Scarier Than Anyone Imagined", *Foreign Policy*, 13 November 2014. See also Navoth, "Worrisome Defiance", n. 17 and accompanying text.

⁴ "Greece bans Holocaust denial, cracks down on hate speech", 10 September 2014. International Jewish organizations and KIS have long pressed the Greek government to take a tougher legislative stance on hate speech. See also: Michal Navoth, "Greece", in *Antisemitism Worldwide 2013 General Analysis Draft*, Kantor Center for the Study of Cotemporary European Jewry, Tel Aviv University, p. 43.

⁵ "Law 4285 'Amendment of Law 927/1979 (Gov. Gazette A 139) and adaptation thereof in the Council Framework Decision No 2008/913/JHA of November 28, 2008, on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law (L 328) and other provisions'",

Government Gazette, Sheet 191, 10 September 2014. An informal translation was submitted to the author by KIS.

⁶ Dimitris Psarras, *Golden Dawn on Trial* (Brussels & Athens: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung 2015), p. 8; “All Golden Dawn MPs should face criminal trial, prosecutor recommends,” *Damomac*, October 17 2014. Two former lawmakers left the party at the beginning of 2014.

⁷ Baboulias, “Scarier”.

⁸ Manfred Ertel, “Sun Sets on Golden Dawn: Greek Party Accused in Killings and Racist Attacks”, *Spiegel Online*, 4 November 2014.

⁹ Laurence Peter, “Greek elections: Jail fails to deter far-right Golden Dawn”, BBC News, 26 January 2015, “Golden Dawn leader and MPs to stand trial, Greek court officials say”, *The Guardian*, 4 February 2015, “Judges’ report on Golden Dawn case expected next week”, *Ekathimerini.com*, 30 January 2015. In the previous elections of June 2012, when Golden Dawn first entered the Greek parliament, it obtained 18 parliamentary seats. In March 2014 the number of the party’s MPs was reduced to 16. See Navoth, “Worrisome Defiance”, n. 37 and accompanying text.

¹⁰ See: The Central Board of the Jewish Communities in Greece (KIS), *2015 Anti-Semitism in Greece*, December 2015, p. 1.

¹¹ Niki Kitsantonis, “Trial Postponed for Greek Neo-Fascist Golden Dawn Party Members”, *New York Times*, 20 April 2015.

¹² By April 2015 Michaloliakos and other MPs who had been in custody, had been released, as the 18-month detention limit had expired, see: Psarras, *Golden Dawn on Trial*, p. 8. Restrictive measures, such as house arrest, have been imposed. See also: Helena Smith, “Golden Dawn leaders’ trial adjourned until next week”, *The Guardian*, 7 May 2015.

¹³ Such attribution is an exception to the new rhetoric the party has adopted since its prosecution and the preparation of the trial. Unlike the past, when its leadership openly espoused antisemitism, Golden Dawn has transformed its rhetoric by referring to “Zionism”, and “Zionist interests”. The reason for such camouflage emanates from the fact that antisemitism is a form of racism and as such can be prosecuted under the anti-racism law, Law 4285/2014. Anti-Zionism is not captured within the bounds of the law and cannot be considered as a criminal offence. See Michal Navoth, “Greece” in *Antisemitism Worldwide 2015 General Analysis Draft*, Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry, Tel Aviv University, n. 32–35 and accompanying text.

¹⁴ “Trial of far-right Golden Dawn leaders starts in Greece”, *The Guardian*, 20 April 2015.

¹⁵ “Golden Dawn trial set to resume next week”, *Ekathimerini*, 3 September 2015. See also KIS, *2015 Anti-Semitism*, p. 1.

¹⁶ Helena Smith, “Neo-fascist Greek party takes third place in wave of voter fury”, *The Guardian*, 21 September 2015.

¹⁷ Till September 2015, for exactly two years, Golden Dawn denied any connection with the alleged murderer. See also Navoth, “Worrisome Defiance”, n. 14 and accompanying text.

¹⁸ Philip Chrysopolus, “Greece’s Golden Dawn Leader Assumes Political Responsibility for Rapper’s Murder”, 17 September 2015.

¹⁹ “Greek parties slam Golden Dawn leader for statement on murdered musician”, 17 September 2015.

²⁰ Most of Golden Dawn MPs were practically excluded from the TV channels. Some had a public speech ban. See Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, “[M]emo on Greek Elections 20 September 2015”.

²¹ Matthaios Tsimitakis, “Greece’s Fascists Are Gaining”, *New York Times*, 4 October 2015. Thus, for example, in the area of Piraeus, where Fyssas was murdered, Golden Dawn increased its share from 7 to 8 percent. It is also not surprising that the southern Peloponnese, an area of Nazi collaborators during World War II, rewarded the Golden Dawn by giving it far more votes than the national average.

²² Tsimitakis, “Gaining”.

²³ Frances Martel, “Golden Dawn Surges in Greek Islands Amid Migrant Crisis”, *Breitbart*, 21 September 2015.

²⁴ Smith, “Neo-fascist”; Smith, “Trial adjourned”. During a debate in the parliament in July 2015, when Greek MPs approved harsh bailout agreement, Kasidiaris tore up the agreement and threw its remnants in the air after shouting about the “despicable document”, Lizzie Dearden, “Greece debt crisis: Watch angry Golden Dawn MP rip up bailout deal during heated debate”, *Independent*, 16 July 2015.

²⁵ Coming in second was the conservative New Democracy party of outgoing Prime Minister Antonis Samaras. Golden Dawn came third, see: Arye Mekel, “The New Greek Government: Israel has Reason for Concern”, *BESA Center Perspectives Paper*, No. 283 (2015). Syriza is the Greek acronym for the coalition of the radical left. Independent Greeks known by its Greek acronym Anel.

²⁶ For their different approaches on the issue of illegal immigration, see *infra*. See also: Helena Smith, “Who are the Independent Greeks”, *The Guardian*, 26 January 2015. The first rift in coalition was

over building a mosque in Athens. Independent Greeks lawmakers voted against two amendments pertaining to the issue. The MPs of the Golden Dawn, who took an openly anti-Muslim position also voted against it. See Phillip Chrysopoulos, "First Rift in Coalition Over Building of Mosque in Athens", 13 May 2015.

²⁷ Michal Navoth, "Greece", in *Antisemitism Worldwide 2014 General Analysis Draft*, Kantor Center for the Study of Cotemporary European Jewry, Tel Aviv University, p. 48. Helena Smith *et al.*, "Greece's new anti-austerity government set on collision course with Brussels", *The Guardian*, 26 January 2015.

²⁸ JTA, "Far-right Golden Dawn MP calls Israel 'eternal enemy' of Greeks", *The Times of Israel*, 1 June 2016. For a change in the position of Panos Kammenos, see: *2015 Anti-Semitism in Greece*, p. 5. Yet, to another lawmaker of Independent Greeks antisemitic statements costed a ministerial office. See *infra*.

²⁹ "Politician who said Jews don't pay tax appointed as Greece's defense chief," *Haaretz*, 29 January 2015; Mekel, "Reason for Concern." In one of the demonstrations Tsipras, by then Syriza's leader, criticized Israel severely. See "Analysis: The victory of Syriza in Greece is bad news for Israel," *The Jerusalem Post*, 26 January 2015. See also Arye Mekel, "Israel-Greece Relations," *The Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies Policy Memorandum No. 9, 24-25 (2015)* [Hebrew].

³⁰ "Analysis". See also: Mekel, "Israel-Greece Relations." For the split of the party and its hard core led by Lafazanis, see *2015 Anti-Semitism in Greece*, p. 5.

³¹ Israel and Greece to hold G2G meeting in Jerusalem, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 26 January 2016, Jerusalem.

³² Mekel, "Reason for Concern".

³³ A. Makris, "Greek Foreign Ministry Issues Statement on Holocaust Remembrance Day," *Greek Reporter*, 27 January 2015.

³⁴ Mekel, "Reason for Concern".

³⁵ Arye Mekel, "The election in Greece: Between the Refugees crisis and the Economic crisis", *Haaretz*, 20 September 2015 [Hebrew]; Helena Smith, "Greek centre-right neck and neck with Syriza as snap election nears," *The Guardian*, 6 September 2015; "Syriza defies the polls with comfortable re-election win," *Economist*, 20 September 2015.

³⁶ Helena Smith & Graeme Wearden, "Tsipras triumphant as Syriza returns to power", *The Guardian*, 21 September 2015; Suzanne Daley, "Alexis Tsipras Given a Second Chance by Greek Voters," *New York Times*, 20 September 2015. The Greek parliament approved the bailout program on 14 August 2015, see: Mekel, "Between."

³⁷ "Syriza defies the polls"; Daley, "Second Chance"; Helena Smith, "Greek centre-right neck and neck with Syriza as snap election nears". For Panagiotis Lafazanis, the leader of the Popular Unity and former Energy Minister, the enemy is not only the "Germanized Europe", but also the U.S. and Israel. He claimed that Greece could have potential without being a "satellite state of the American-Israeli Middle East axis" and called to end the military cooperation between Greece and Israel. See: "Popular Unity Party signs up Israel- haters and conspiracy theorists", *Enantiastonantisemitismo*, 14 September 2015.

³⁸ Mekel, "Between."

³⁹ "Greece election: Alexis Tsipras hails 'victory of the people'," *BBC NEWS*, 21 September 2015. In accordance with the Greek electoral system, the numbers of seats in both election include 50 extra seats allocated to the largest party.

⁴⁰ "Syriza defies the polls".

⁴¹ Matthaïos Tsimitakisoc, "Greece's Fascists Are Gaining," *New York Times*, 4 October 2015. Kammenos is very active on social media. Thus, in response to a survey according to which "recorded attacks against Jews surged to 40 percent in 2014" he posted on 17 April 2015 the following comment on twitter: "Have you recorded the attacks of Jews against all of us?" see: *2015 Anti-Semitism in Greece*, p. 7.

⁴² Robert Mackey, "Greek Lawmaker Compares Debt Crisis to Holocaust," *New York Times*, 24 June 2015; "Greek rightist MP trivializes (once again) the Holocaust", *Enantiastonantisemitismo*, 24 June 2015; "Greek Prime Minister Commended for Removing Government Minister, Author of Anti-Semitic Social Media Posts," *Anti Defamation League*, 25 September 2015; "New Greek minister Kammenos quits in tweets row", *BBC NEWS*, 24 September 2015.

⁴³ "Announcement for the trivialization of a Holocaust Landmark by MP Dimitris Kammenos (Anel)", *KIS*, 24 June 2015.

⁴⁴ "MP trivializes".

⁴⁵ Mackey, "Lawmaker Compares".

⁴⁶ Tsimitakisoc, "Greece's Fascists"; "Greek Prime Minister Commended". See also a letter from KIS to Tsipras, seconding the removal of Kammenos from his ministerial post, "Greek PM sacks minister over anti-Semitic tweets after only a few hours in office", *The World Jewish Congress*, 24 September 2015.

⁴⁷ The Holocaust Memorial was dedicated to the 1,484 Jews of the town who died in Treblinka. See also: Michal Navoth, "Greece", in *Antisemitism Worldwide 2015 General Analysis Draft*, Kantor Center for the Study of Cotemporary European Jewry, Tel Aviv University, n. 2,3,5 and accompanying text.

⁴⁸ Smith, "Trial adjourned"; Tsimitakisoc, "Greece's Fascists".

⁴⁹ Smith, "Independent Greeks."

⁵⁰ In this context it should be mentioned that the Independent Greeks was founded in 2012 after its leader MP Panos Kammenos was expelled by the New Democracy conservative party for not conforming with the party's policy in voting for Greece's bailout memorandum. See: *2015 Anti-Semitism in Greece*, p. 5.

⁵¹ Smith, "Trial adjourned".

⁵² Michelle Chen, "What Does Syriza's Victory Mean for Greece's Immigrants?", 27 January 2015. For a characterization of Independent Greeks see Helena Smith et al., "Greece's new anti-austerity government set on collision course with Brussels", *The Guardian*, 26 January 2015; "Defies the polls".

⁵³ Chen, "Syriza's Victory".

⁵⁴ The law is expected to affect approximately 200,000 second-generation migrants, including those whose parents arrived in the early 1990s from Eastern Europe, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. See Arye Makris, "Greece's Migrant Naturalization Bill Expected to Pass in Principle But without ANEL Support", 24 June 2015; "New Law Grants Greek Citizenship to Second Generation Migrants," *Migrant Report*, 29 June 2015.

⁵⁵ Michal Navoth, "The Greek Elections of 2012: The Worrisome Rise of the Golden Dawn", *The Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, No. 1 2013, pp. 87–88.

⁵⁶ Navoth, "Elections 2012", p. 88. The Golden Dawn even used its Nazi rhetoric to enhance its anti-immigrant platform, see: Navoth, "Worrisome Defiance", n. 7 and accompanying text. In July 2013 on the basis of Law No. 927/1979 a public prosecutor pressed charges against Alexandros Plomaritis, a former Golden Dawn parliamentary candidate, for introducing the use of Nazi-era tactics against immigrants in Greece. In a program aired in March 2013 on Britain's Channel 4 News and filmed in Athens, Plomaritis threatened to turn immigrants "into soap," put them in "ovens," and "make lamps from their skin". On 16 September 2014 an Athens court found Plomaritis guilty of inciting racist violence, and issued a one-year suspended sentence. See: "Golden Dawn candidate found guilty of inciting racist violence," *Ekathimerini*, 16 September 2014.

⁵⁷ Tsimitakis, "Greece's Fascists".

⁵⁸ "Irregular Migrant, Refugee Arrivals in Europe Top One Million in 2015: IOM," 22 December 2015.

⁵⁹ Estimation from July 2016. See: *The World Factbook*.

⁶⁰ "Greece data snapshot", UNHCR, 2 October 2016.

⁶¹ The Agreement took effect on 20 March 2016. European Commission –Fact Sheet, "EU-Turkey Agreement: Questions and Answers," 19 Marh 2016; "The Economist explains Why the EU-Turkey deal is controversial", *The Economist*, 11 April 2016; "EU-Turkey refugee deal—Q&A", *The Guardian*, 8 March 2016.

⁶² Smith, "Neo-fascist." See also: Navoth, "Worrisome Defiance," n. 43 and accompanying text.