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# ‘And Bloodshed Must Be Done’: Heavy metal and neo-Nazism in Greece

## ABSTRACT

*This article explores the genealogy of the relationship between the discourses promoted in the heavy metal music press and neo-Nazi publications in Greece since the 1980s. It aims to show that the proliferation of neo-Nazi ideologies and practices in Greece after 2008 was not simply a result of the – on-going – financial crisis; rather, its seeds had been planted during the 1980s and particularly in the 1990s. We shall illustrate how this connection resulted from a conscious decision taken by key neo-Nazi groups and explore how the cultivation of such relationships gradually led to the further dissemination of neo-Nazi discourse within the mainstream heavy metal music press.*

## KEYWORDS

heavy metal  
neo-Nazism  
music press  
‘zines  
underground culture  
far-right  
crisis

## INTRODUCTION

Greece is the only EU-member country where an openly and unapologetically neo-Nazi (and not simply far-right) party – Golden Dawn – has achieved a significant degree of electoral success since the Second World War. Although the party lost its parliamentary representation in 2019, up until that point seventeen of the party's members were serving as MPs. The consistently significant percentages of the popular vote that Golden Dawn has received in national elections (until 2019) indicate a robust electoral base since 2012. Golden Dawn's results in national and European elections are a testament to its strong electoral base (May 2012: 6.97 per cent; June 2012: 6.92 per cent; European Parliament 2014: 9.39 per cent; January 2015: 6.28 per cent; September 2015: 6.99 per cent). Indeed in 2019, the party won slightly less than 3 per cent of the vote, at a moment when dozens of its members were prosecuted by the Greek justice system – including the entire party leadership.

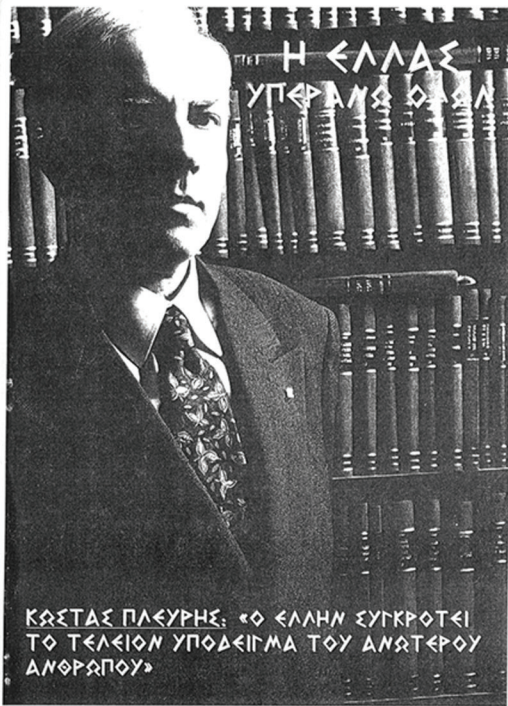
Golden Dawn immediately gave the world a taste of its politics on the night of the 2012 national elections, when it first entered the Greek parliament. As soon as it became clear that Golden Dawn's share of the popular vote had risen from 0.2 per cent in 2011 to an astonishing 6.92 per cent just one year later, national and international journalists flocked to the party's premises for a press conference. Despite cameras broadcasting live footage and the event receiving unprecedented international attention, party members engaged in similar tactics to those that had characterized their behaviour both in the past and during the elections themselves: a skinhead entered the tiny packed room in semi-military fatigues, gave a military salute and loudly ordered everyone in the room to stand up in deference to Nikos Michaloliakos, the party leader. The man who led this ritual was Golden Dawn MP Georgos Germenis, better-known as Kaiadas, his stage name in the internationally popular black metal band, Naer Mataron, a band that has released songs such as the notorious, 'And Bloodshed Must Be Done'.

Kaiadas (also known to historians as the 'Caeadas chasm') was supposedly a pit in ancient Sparta that was used to dispose of new-borns who were not entirely healthy at birth – an early type of eugenics. Although there are references to the cave in ancient Greek literary sources (cf. Pausanias 4.18.4–7), archaeologists are yet to find conclusive evidence of its existence. Nevertheless, like the Nazis before them, Greek neo-Nazis identify with ancient Sparta and the modern neo-Nazi version of ancient Sparta's history (Roche 2013; Chapoutot 2016; Hamilakis 2016). For example, the anthem of Golden Dawn refers to its members as the 'new Spartans', and Aithir, a neo-Nazi member of the Greek metal bands Invocation, Naer Mataron, Kaiadas and Gauntlet's Sword, notes: 'Sparte [*sic*] was perhaps the first National Socialist in the history [...] A proud state which gave birth to some of the best and hardest warriors in European history' (*Strength Through War*'zine 2003: 19, original English). Along with other members of the Greek metal scene (e.g. Giorgos Mastoras), Kaiadas has played a central role in the party. The sheer number of musicians who were Golden Dawn MPs (e.g. Giorgos Germenis, Artemios Matthaiopoulos) or candidate MPs (e.g. Giorgos Mastoras, Apostolos Gletsos) implies that the links between some youth music subcultures and neo-Nazism in Greece are not coincidental (Psarras 2012; Apergis 2020). Musicians belonging to Greek heavy metal bands or associated with the metal scene – as well as other genres – have played leading roles in the party for decades. Without suggesting that all of those associated with the Greek metal scene

are supportive of neo-Nazism or that they have all been co-opted by neo-Nazi groups (Apergis 2020), this article aims to trace the links between specific aspects of the metal music subculture and Greek neo-Nazi groups. As our study of music publications will demonstrate, the connection between the metal music scene and neo-Nazism was deliberately cultivated as part of a strategic decision made by some of the earliest Greek neo-Nazi groups, such as the *Antidoto* (antidote) magazine group. *Antidoto* was probably the most crucial neo-Nazi publication of the 1980s as it represented a faction within the then divided neo-Nazi camp that was particularly focused on the war over cultural production. They were the most explicit representatives of the autonomist or so-called Third Way of the New Right, which promoted the idea that neo-Nazism was neither right nor left but a progressive, anti-systemic movement and subculture. As we will show, over time neo-Nazi discourse also spread to the popular mainstream metal press.

By exploring the genealogy of the relationship between the discourses promoted in the Greek heavy metal music press and neo-Nazi publications, this article seeks to show that, despite analyses by several scholars and commentators (Bistis 2013; Dinas and Rori 2013; Ellinas 2013; Koronaiou and Sakellariou 2013; Angouri and Wodak 2014; Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015), the bloom in neo-Nazi ideologies and practices after 2008 was not just a product of the on-going financial crisis; in fact the contemporary phenomenon is based on programmatic work done by neo-Nazi groups during the 1980s and especially the 1990s (Karamanidou 2016; Dalakoglou 2013a, 2013b; Vradis and Dalakoglou 2011).

Empirically, our exploration is also based on material that has not been previously studied, especially in the Greek context. It includes digital copies and print originals of nationally distributed magazines and smaller publications such as Greek and international ‘zines (Figure 1). We consulted *Metal Hammer* (MH), the eminent Greek metal music magazine; the full run of the extreme right *Antidoto* magazine (1987–93); the full run of *The Forest* black metal magazine; issues 1 and 2 of the heavy metal magazine *Iron*. Regarding smaller distribution zines, we consulted numerous Greek zines: *Revenge of Metal* (vols. 4–6) written by members of Golden Dawn under the pseudonym ‘Nazi-headbangers’; *Sub Terra* 1996 written by Georgos Florakis (editor of MH) and George Zaharopoulos (of Necromantia); *Wallachian Tyrant* 2003 and *Heathen Pride* 2003 written by members of Der Stürmer who were also members of Golden Dawn; *Medieval Tortures* issues 2 and 3 written by a member of the bands Funebre Inferi and Hieronym Inferiorum, Figure 1; and *Blasphemous* magazine (1991 and 1992). We also researched international zines featuring Greek bands: *Dark Blaze* 2001 featuring Naer Mataron; *Hatemonger Warzine* 1997 and 2003 featuring Lamentation/Der Stürmer; *Strength Through War* 2003 featuring The Shadow Order; *Horror High* 1996 featuring Necromantia; *Pure Fucking Hell* 1994 featuring Varathron; *Amortization* 1996 featuring Necromantia, *Genocide* 1996 featuring Wampyre ShadowWolf; *666* (1999–2000) featuring Goatvomit and Unholy Archangel; *Hellflame* 1997 and 1998 featuring Cernunnos and Unholy Archangel respectively; *The New Aeon* 1996 featuring Necromantia; *In Search of Pure Negativity* 2017 Special Hellenic Issue featuring interviews with 19 Greek bands; *Through Fire and Ashes* 2014 featuring Iron Youth; and *Swastikas Rising* 2017, featuring Der Stürmer. All magazines and ‘zines cited above are in the authors’ research collection, either as physical or digital copies.



Medieval Tortures  
 face to face with the bitch, Anne Frank, what you would like to do her???  
 - Original question! Well, I would do the same for her as any other Jewish sow/pig: humiliation, torture and extermination!!!  
 Thank for your interview and support...

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ΧΡΥΣΗ ΑΥΓΗ

"PEOPLES LEAGUE/GOLDEN DAWN" was formed in the 1980 by a handful of very young, still veteran Athens NationalSocialists under the leadership of Nikolaos G. Mihalakakos. N. G. Mihalakakos is the leader of the Movement since then. The first issue of the same titled GOLDEN DAWN magazine was out in December 1980 and despite its humble appearance, it was a corner-stone for the National Socialist/Nationalist politics in Hellas. GOLDEN DAWN opened offices in Athens & Thessaloniki (Macedonia, N.Hellas) and published 13 issues of its magazine since the beginning of 1984. A delegate of G.D. also participated in 1981 to the "New European Order Congress" which took place in Barcelona.

Between 1984-1986 GOLDEN DAWN ceased its activities, closed its offices and cancelled the publishing of the magazine. That was a tactical move.

In February 1986 GOLDEN DAWN was back. New offices in Athens & Thessaloniki and the magazine was out again, too. Today GOLDEN DAWN has offices in 10 big Hellenic cities and cadres of members/supporters in many others.

In 1993 the movement unleashed (!) a same-titled weekly political newspaper and managed to keep it published, despite Systems fierce opposition, until today. "GOLDEN DAWN" magazine on the other hand has its 98th issue out and it is a highly ideological 52 pages quarterly magazine. The Youth Front of the Movement has also its quarterly faunzie called ANTEPITHESI (Counter Attack) which is very acceptable among the teenager population of Athens. Also, the Kalamata division of GOLDEN DAWN has published the 1st issue of a magazine called "The Greek Worker". All the above magazines & the paper are written exclusively in Hellenic. The movement organizes open demonstrations and marches, like the one which takes place in the night of 30 or 31 of January every year since 1997. Never have those open activities been interrupted by the Systems puppets (anti-fascists) but from time to time there violent opposition by the police.

GOLDEN DAWN has organized three Movement congresses and a international one (European Youth Congress, Thessaloniki October 1998) and have participated with delegates in various events/congresses that have taken place in other European countries.

The "PEOPLES LEAGUE/GOLDEN DAWN" is generally considered as a model NS Organization among the Worldwide NS Movement. The high status that is possessed today by GOLDEN DAWN is the result of years of hard struggle, including repeated bombings of our various offices, constant presentation in big cities and many street-fighting's against numerically superior enemies, organized smearing campaign against us by the media and certain interest groups, systematic boycott of our newspaper, etc.

On 16 of June 1998, three leftist students were attacked and beaten by an obscure gang of about 10 young people. At once the media accused GOLDEN DAWN for the event, without the slightest evidence to support their accusations. After many days the "victim" followed the media orders and "recognized" the leader of the attacker the member of GOLDEN Dawn's Political Council, named Perianthos Androutsopoulos.

Perianthos Androutsopoulos, an outstanding comrade and a battle-hardened National Socialist, didn't give himself over the pseudo-democratic System, stating clearly that he is persecuted because of his ideology. Perianthos is still a physically free man and he hope that he will remain as such.

<http://pages.hotbot.com/politics/goldendawn/english.html> 8/11/1999

Figure 1: Two images from the Medieval Tortures zine. Left: The penultimate page from Medieval Tortures zine (1998, issue 2). The image on the left features Kostas Pleuris, who founded the first post-Second World War extreme right party in Greece, 4th of August, named after the Metaxas dictatorship ('4th of August Regime', 1936–41). The words read: 'The Greeks are the perfect example of the higher human'. The image on the right features an announcement by Golden Dawn in the same zine. It is in English and provides a brief history of the 'movement' as well as a refutation of a Golden Dawn attack on leftist students.

1. After the collapse of Socialist Federal Republic Yugoslavia, one of the new independent states that emerged in 1991 was the Republic of Macedonia, named after one of the previously federal republics. Greece opposed the use of the name 'Macedonia' by an independent state, leading to a dispute that resulted in the UN recognizing the country by the temporary name 'Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' (FYROM) in 1993. In June 2018, the two

## GOLDEN DAWN AND METAL MUSIC

In 1992, huge demonstrations took place in Athens and Thessaloniki to protest against the Republic of Macedonia's use of that name for the new nation state that emerged after the dissolution of Yugoslavia on the northern border of Greece.<sup>1</sup> At the time, these protests were promoted by the government of Konstantinos Mitsotakis (the father of current PM Kyriakos Mitsotakis), the Church, the state-run TV channels and the newly created private ones, as well as most of the country's newspapers and political parties. Meanwhile, the People's Socialist Republic of Albania had collapsed a year earlier (1991) and hundreds of thousands of immigrants had started coming to Greece for the first time, making this the largest international population flow to Greece since the end of the 1922–23 Greek–Turkish war and the population exchange between the two countries (see Dalakoglou 2017). As a former leading member of Golden Dawn would comment in a book years later, these were the 'best circumstances for a nationalist [socialist] movement to flourish' (Kousoumvriss in Psarras 2012: 68). Psarras (2012) notes that it was in the aftermath of these

demonstrations, in January 1993, that Golden Dawn was organized as a political party and started publishing a weekly newspaper (see also Figure 2 for the lasting influence of the 'Macedonian question' on the scene).

Crucially, these events took place alongside the emergence of the so-called second wave of Greek black metal in the early 1990s, with most of the bands in this scene having links to National Socialism and its Satanist offshoots. Legion of Doom, Lamentation (the precursors to Der Stürmer), Tatr and Bacchia Neraida were either explicitly part of what is referred to as National Socialist Black Metal (NSBM), or 'apoliteic', as described by Shekhovtsov (2009). According to Shekhovtsov, apoliteic music can contain explicit or implicit references to the core elements of fascism, but it is publicly detached from practical political labour, e.g. organizing members, party activities or recruitment. Thus, while some of the bands and band members may publicly distance themselves from neo-fascism and neo-Nazism, such as Kawir, Acherontas or Necromantia, the symbols, lyrics or discourse they use clearly and positively reference them.

Several factors explain the influence of far-right organizations and Golden Dawn on the Greek metal scene. Firstly, there were and are metal bands that are openly supportive of Golden Dawn and/or whose members were/are also in the party. Naer Mataron is the most well-known case, since one of its founding members (Kaiadas) was a Golden Dawn MP between 2012 and

countries signed the Prespa Agreement, which officially resolved the issue with mutual acceptance of the name 'Republic of North Macedonia'. Nevertheless, the far-right in Greece was staunchly against the agreement, leading to mass demonstrations in Greece against the treaty. The then main opposition party, New Democracy (currently in government since 2019), voted against the agreement in Parliament in 2018.



Figure 2: A letter from J.V.H. aka Jarl von Hagall, nom de plume of Nikos Giouhalas, leading member of Golden Dawn, member of national-socialist Rock Against Communism, Black Metal band Der Stürmer. The letter calls on the Black Metal scene to expel ('kill') Baltak, a band that asserts Slavic origin for the ancient Macedonians. From 666 'zine (2000: 57).

2. All translations from Greek are by the authors.

2019, while the band's other long-standing member (Indra or Necrolord or Sotiris S or Bestial Necroperversor of Traditional Goat Worship and Mockery, *nom de plume* of Sotiris Schinas) is also a member of Golden Dawn and could often be heard speaking at party meetings throughout Greece. It is important to note that Naer Mataron is not a marginal band on the global music scene. It is perhaps the only 'professional' band composed of members of Golden Dawn: their music has been released by a well-respected 'indie' metal company (Season of Mist), and they have collaborated with well-known musicians from Sweden (Henrik Nordvargr Björkk), Norway (Yusaf Parvez) and the United States (Jarboe, previously from the much-appreciated band, Swans). They had a promising career for the kind of music they play (black metal), and they continued releasing music, even after Kaiadas's election as an MP.

Other bands that are part of the Golden Dawn-related Greek metal scene include the infamous Legion of Doom, Der Stürmer (inspired by the eponymous tabloid-style anti-semitic newspaper published from 1923 to the end of the Second World War by Nazi Julius Streicher) and Iron Youth. Legion of Doom were among the pioneers of NSBM, while Der Stürmer have established themselves as one of the most outspoken NSBM bands of the global scene – in the early 2000s, one of the band's members was the international liaison officer for Golden Dawn. Iron Youth play a Thrash Metal-skin hybrid, and one of their members is Georgos Mastoras (mentioned above), a leading Golden Dawn member responsible for liaising with youth subcultures. In the mid-1990s, Mastoras, one of Golden Dawn's oldest members, was also responsible for editing a short-lived but influential Nazi-metal fanzine, *The Revenge of Metal* (He Ekthikisi tu Metal) (Figure 3), as well as Golden Dawn's Youth Front magazine *Counterattack* (*Antepithesi*). His political beliefs are evident from the three quotations below<sup>2</sup>:

Iron Youth is the Revenge of Metal and Greek Nazi Headbangers' first official band. Our zine is the vanguard in the White Power press in Greece. And of course, despite our fondness for *Oi!* and Hatecore, we cannot hide that Heavy Metal is the modern WHITE MUSICAL POWER.

(Iron Youth 1998: 5)

Above all, we understand modern music as another cultural weapon in the Great Battle we are fighting and not as an end in itself. The only end in itself is BLOOD [...]: 'ONLY BLOOD CAN TURN THE WHEELS OF HISTORY', Zieg Hail!

(Mastoras 2003: 10)

We once again hail our growing club of friends and comrades who support us and we ask them to support our hopeful White Power Metal (and Hatecore) music scene. At the same time, WE DEMAND [from our friends and comrades], as activists, to be politically active first and foremost. Musical interests are not enough to bring Victory.

(Mastoras 1997: 3)

Historians' reports on Golden Dawn have revealed that the phenomenon of black metal band members holding the highest party positions is far from coincidental. As Psarras (2012) notes, by the mid-1990s Golden Dawn was invested in linking with football fans, hooligans and music scenes as a way to attract youth. As mentioned, since 1998 Golden Dawn has also had a Youth

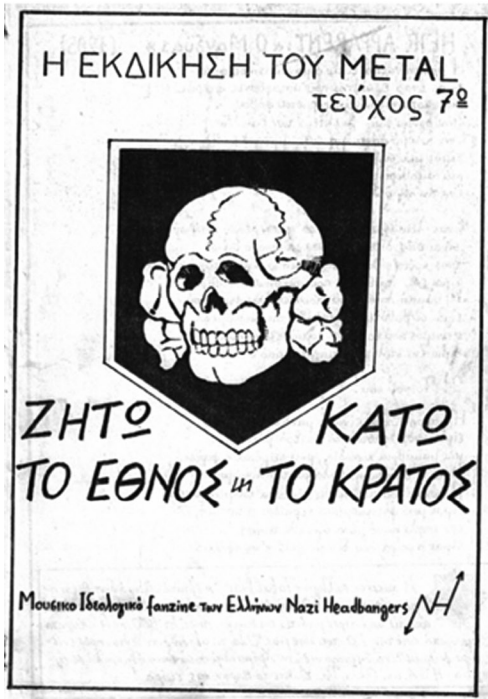
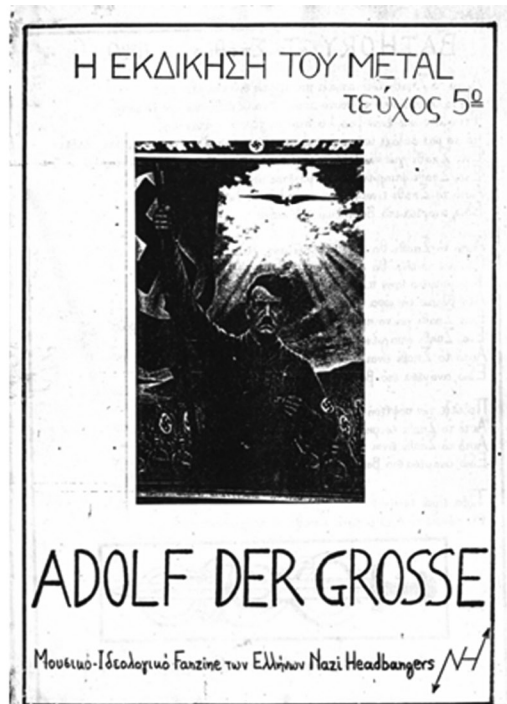
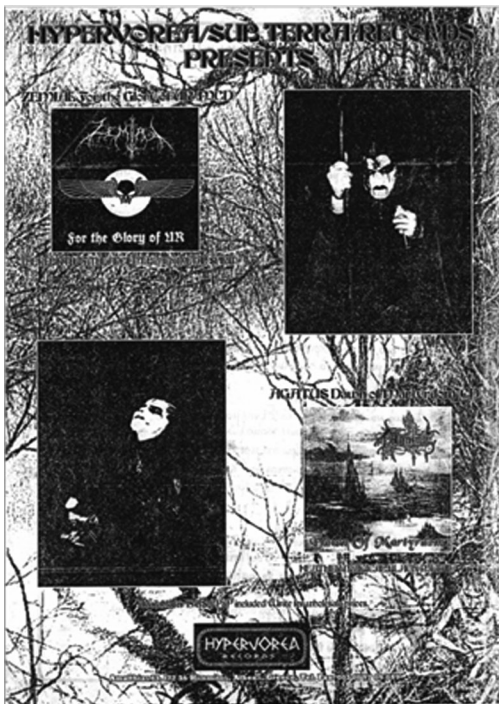


Figure 3: Pages from *Revenge of Metal* 'zine. Top left: Penultimate page of *Revenge of Metal* issue 5; an advert by Hypervorea Records, owned by Giorgos Zaharopoulos who at the time was having an international career as the leader of Necromantia, a respected Greek black metal band and was also editing popular Heavy Metal magazine *Metal Invader*. Top Right: Cover of *Revenge of Metal* (vol. 5, early 1997). Right: Cover of *Revenge of Metal* (vol. 7, late 1997), with the National Anarchist slogan 'Hail the Nation, Smash the State'.



3. Title of the first album of the black metal band Naer Mataron, led by Golden Dawn members, including the former MP G. Germenis.
4. Adonis Georgiadis – vice-president and poster child of the main centre-right and currently governing party of the country, New Democracy – and others have frequently referred to the concept of the left's 'ideological hegemony' (for a summary of the idea, see Georgiadis's TV show *Greeks Rise*, 25 October 2016).

Front, whose goal, according to its leader, Georgos Mastoras, is to infiltrate subcultures in which 'youth has a massive presence, like music and football stadiums' (Mastoras 1999, cited in Psarras 2012: 134). In his capacity as a Golden Dawn representative speaking to a neo-Nazi skinhead fanzine, he argued that 'music is not just fun' but 'one of the most effective ways of influencing people'. Neo-Nazi musicians are '[s]oldiers dedicated to National socialist World biotheory' (*Oi! Hate* zine 1: 4).

### 'UP FROM THE ASHES'<sup>3</sup>

It was not only the *Counterattack* fanzine that propagated the dissemination of neo-Nazi ideology via the infiltration of the music scene, as other Greek neo-Nazi groups had been talking explicitly about such goals since the 1980s. After the fall of the far-right junta of the colonels in 1974, factions of the Greek extreme-right were critical of what they described as the 'ideological hegemony of the Left'.<sup>4</sup> Groups belonging to the extreme-right (e.g. National Socialists heavily influenced by Hitler's version of Nazism) sensed that their movement lacked intellectuals and cultural influence. The main thinker of the French Nouvelle Droite (New right), Alain de Benoist, and his Gramsci-inspired thinking, is an influence in this respect. The Nazi-sympathizing magazine, *The [social] Movement* (To Kinima) (Figure 4), and its publishers (Free Thought, Eleftheri Skepsi) were already writing about de Benoist as well as publishing and advertising his books (*De Benoist's The Right Ideas/Les idées à l'endroit* published in Greek as *Hoi ideas sta ortha*) as early as 1980.

A few years later, the neo-Nazi magazine *Antidoto* reiterated the necessity for the far right to increase its cultural production and gain cultural hegemony over the Greek youth:

On the cultural front, to date the Right did not have a culture [...] The Left's cultural discourse is bankrupt. The realists among the leftists speak about a post-Marxist left, ecology and 'alternative autonomist solutions'. This many-faceted political-cultural crisis entails many positives for us. Because it allows us to interact with a society for which all dogmas have collapsed and the people are looking for something new. We should not let our youth and the people turn to conservative 'solutions' [...] The youth that today embodies confrontation and war with the system, must fight under our flags.

(Anon. 1989: 17)

*Antidoto's* very first issues featured a picture of Che Guevara on the cover and articles on anti-Americanism at a time when Athens was full of aesthetically similar and popular Lefty publications. Yet the content of *Antidoto* had very straightforward neo-Nazi ideologies: white supremacy, antisemitism and so on were all there, and indeed, in later issues, swastikas and other Nazi symbols appeared more openly on the front cover. So the *Antidoto* 'conglomerate' started publishing books and sketches, and more relevant to our subject, it began releasing, critiquing and promoting music. The first group to receive praise from the *Antidoto* team was the newly 'established' Greek skinheads (Figure 5).

The articles on skinhead subculture came at a time (the mid-1980s) when skinheads were actively supporting right-wing groups (and the police) in their clashes with leftists and anarchists. In *Antidoto* 2 (Anon. 1987a: 14, 'SKINS')



Figure 4: Communism-mocking artwork from the National Socialist magazine *To Kinima*, (Anon. 1980: 47). The caption reads: on the left, 'A Chinese boy drinking his Coca Cola on the Great Wall of China'; on the right, 'Poor Mao, poor Stalin, poor Communists, you've been completely ridiculed'.

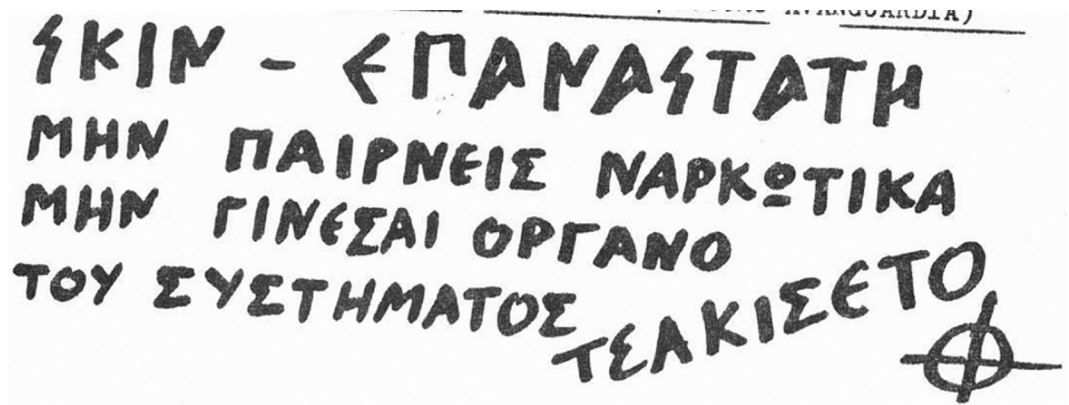


Figure 5: From *Antidoto 3 'Skin [head] – Revolutionary. Don't take drugs. Don't become an instrument of the system; crash it'* (1987b: 4).

5. While a complete history of Greek National Socialism has yet to be written, Aristotelis Kalentzis is certainly one of its central and most interesting figures. Jailed in 1977 for causing explosions and being in possession of explosives, he remained in jail for about ten years. He wrote a book against former allies and has remained a controversial figure even within the neo-Nazi 'scene'.

and 3 (Anon. 1987b: 3–4, 'SKINS: Lookout Teams for White Power'), there were texts showing the early interest of the *Antidoto* team in music culture. In *Antidoto* 11 (Anon. 1987c: 28), there is an anonymous article on European skinheads ('SKINS in Europe'). In the next issue (Anon. 1987d: 5–8), the far-Right terrorist, Aristotelis Kalentzis,<sup>5</sup> writing as a 'political prisoner' from jail, issued a 'paeon' to the Greek skinheads, commenting that the 'short-haired uncompromising youth of our times' (1987d: 5–8) were 'demanding to play again in front of their parental home, they are swinging [...] a heavy chain against the first nigger they see' (1987d: 5–8).

The moment, 1987, is politically significant. In 1987 the university students' sector of New Democracy (DAP-NDFK) won for the first time the national university students' election with 27 per cent of the vote. This was a landmark moment for Greek politics, as it marked the end of the brief left empowerment project that had begun at the end of the junta in 1974 with the great majority of university students voting for the Left. Three years later, in 1990, DAP-NDFK won its biggest victory with an astonishing 47 per cent of the vote. The reasons for this success are numerous and not relevant to this article, but briefly one can argue that the disillusionment with the wider Left, identified with PASOK, which was elected on a heavily far-left and anti-imperialist manifesto, was largely to blame. Perhaps one of the most indicative incidents was the police assassination, during riots, of the 15-year-old anarchist Michalis Kaltezas in 1985 (during PASOK's second term), which triggered a split within the Left and disempowered left-leaning forces within the universities. Meanwhile, the Communist Party was trying to gain hegemony within the Left, leading to the disillusionment of many non-members and later of its own members (see Giovanopoulos and Dalakoglou 2011). There was also a matter of public presence and control over public spaces from the mid-1980s when New Democracy, in collaboration with police forces and neo-Nazis, Le Penists and skinheads organized infamous strike teams employed to great effect against demonstrators, protests and rival youth cultures like punks, students and anarchists. It is within this context that the first Greek skinhead band recorded their first song, 'North Epirus', and played a gig at the festival of the far-right party EPEN, which was established by the former military dictator, Georgios Papadopoulos. 'North Epirus' is the name that Greek nationalists give to South Albania, which they consider part of the Greek territories (Epirus) that must be liberated. Although this might sound like a random Right-wing expansionist song, North Epirus was a very important issue for the Greek far-right in the 1980s and early 1990s, and it ultimately led to serious incidents. The Northern Epirus Liberation Front (MAVI), a Greek far-right terrorist group, conducted a series of attacks on Albanian targets (1984: bomb explosion outside the Albanian embassy in Athens; 1991: bomb attack on the Albanian consul), the most serious of which occurred in 1994 when the group penetrated Albanian territory, entered an army barracks, kept the soldiers hostage and killed their officer (see Dalakoglou 2017).

Despite the early interest in skinheads and their musical subcultures, metal became the form of neo-Nazi music *par excellence* for the *Antidoto* team. The first feature on metal was an interview with a Greek 'white power' epic metal band, Sacramento ('Sacramento: When Dream Becomes Reality', Anon. 1990: 24). The racist, white power-type discourse is palpable:

*Antidoto*: How can you explain the fact that there are no 'big' black heavy metal bands?

*Thanasis* [band member 1]: Blacks should not play H.M. [heavy metal]; pure heavy metal is for whites only.

*Alexandros* [band member 2]: Blacks cannot play H.M., it's not in their blood, nor do they have a vast mythology to draw inspiration like us Greeks and Nordic people.

(1990: 24)

This article was followed by a second one in *Antidoto* 30 (Ilioupouli Student Nucleus: DIGENIS AKRITAS 1991: 39) on epic heavy metal. The article makes the case that heavy metal is both racist and patriarchal:

Heavy Metal is a wild, aggressive place [...] charged with a polemical mood; so it is natural to reject the feminine presence, not as audience, but as creative and equal composers and players of this particular genre [...] H.M. is white music and no rational being can doubt that; even a superficial knowledge of the genre confirms the truth of this sentence [...] H.M. music has a deep racial power that fills every true fan with certainty and confidence.

(1991: 39)

Beginning in *Antidoto* 31 (Anon. 1992a: 38), a regular feature on music called 'Metal Anatomy' was introduced in the magazine. The anonymous author of 'Metal Anatomy' writes in *Antidoto* 32:

We will be provocative everywhere and always. With our looks and our music. With our way of thinking. With our heroic way of life [...] We are H. Metal fans. The only white rebellious music. The only uncompromising voice of youth against everything [...] Living in times when the 'peaceful' mood that is prevalent serves the economically powerful and dominates the weak, heavy metal by shouting with all its might 'if you want peace, prepare for war' is viciously attacked by the Jewish establishment [...] One can easily understand by the above that H.M is a music by whites for whites.

(Anon. 1992b)

While the *Antidoto* faction did not rise to prominence like Golden Dawn, since it disbanded early, it nevertheless makes for a fecund case study. Firstly, we must bear in mind that at the time, Golden Dawn, like *Antidoto*, did not exist in the form of a party, but more as a group that published the *Golden Dawn* magazine. Secondly, several of *Antidoto's* collaborators and allies rose to leading positions within the far-right in the years that followed. For example, Nikolaos Krespis, the magazine's treasurer, was elected as an MP for Golden Dawn in 2012. Theodosios Athanasas later sided with another far-right politician, Makis Voridis, and became director of his ministerial office when the latter became a minister with New Democracy. Vorides remains a prominent member of the current New Democracy majority in the Greek parliament. Christos Charitos (1988) followed a path that saw him settling into Golden Dawn in 2014 while before he was editor of the Le Penist Greek Front's newspaper and was involved in the Panhellenic Union of Olympiakos (football club) fans. Others, such as Ioannis Charalabopoulos ('Judeochristianity or

6. If something changed between 2003 and 2011, it was that within this period that xenophobic violence became explicitly racist, focusing on the colour of the skin versus simply migratory status (see crisis-scape map of racist attacks in Greece: <http://map.crisis-scape.net/>, accessed 24 February 2021). Nevertheless, as has been argued elsewhere (see Dalakoglou 2016), Albanian migrants being the most 'different' Europeans (e.g. Muslim majority, isolationism, poverty, etc.), they were the migrant group primarily targeted by anti-migratory operations at that time, from neo-Nazi violence and semi-military police operations to sinking of their boats in the Mediterranean.

Paganism?', *Antidoto* 32 [1992]: 12) and Vasilis Misiris made regular appearances on national TV as experts in the paranormal, UFOs and other conspiracy theories about ancient Greece. Spiros Tzanopoulos, who wrote an article entitled 'On the racial problems of Europe and Greece' in *Antidoto* 25 (1990: 8), gained his fifteen minutes of fame as a pro-Serbia fighter during the massacre of Srebrenica in 1995. Kostas Baikousas, a former high school PE teacher, receives annual praise on the anniversary of his death from neo-Nazi groups like Hypervorea and ARMA. The son of the publisher of *Antidoto*, Nikos Sorotos, was a candidate for the local elections in Athens with Golden Dawn. Finally, while *Antidoto* never transformed into a party the way Golden Dawn did, its emphasis on youth subculture has left a lasting ideological and political legacy with the self-styled 'autonomist' National Socialist groups like Black Lilly and Blood and Honour Hellas.

### FROM NEO-NAZI FANZINES TO MAINSTREAM YOUTH MUSICAL PRESS

Contrary to what some authors have claimed – e.g. Triandafyllidou and Kouki (2014) who imply that 2011 was the first time mass anti-immigrant violence was witnessed on the streets of Athens – violence against immigrants was both evident and tolerated long before the financial crisis.<sup>6</sup> The events of 2003 provide a very explicit example of such violence: after Albania beat Greece in an international football match, multiple mini-pogroms took place on the streets of Athens and other cities and towns, primarily targeting Albanians along with immigrants of other ethnicities. The pogroms resulted in the death of one Albanian migrant and left dozens wounded. Crucially, it is not only the large number of people involved in the pogroms who we ought to consider here, but the 'silent acceptance' and almost sympathetic understanding for those responsible by the Greek public. It was widely considered that the perpetrators were provoked by Albanians openly celebrating their victory in public spaces such as Omonoia Square in central Athens (Golfinopoulos 2007). The previous year, Greece had won the European football Championship for the first time in history, so the defeat was even more humiliating for the million Greeks who had flooded the same public spaces in celebration the year before. As Psarras notes, 'Albania winning the game was considered by almost everybody to upset the implicit social hierarchy, according to which immigrants cannot but be second when compared with natives' (2012: 150). These events cannot be disassociated from the degree of influence Golden Dawn had already gained within youth football culture. The fan club of the Greek national team, 'Blue Army' (Galazia Stratia), was led by the prominent Golden Dawn MP Panayiotaros, while explicitly neo-Nazi-controlled fan clubs of the individual teams were also operating (NOPO in Panathinaikos, Gataioi in AEK, Ieroloxites in Aris, etc.), and were also often led by Golden Dawn members (Zaimakis 2018).

Although the relationship between neo-Nazis and football fans (Psaras 2012; Golfinopoulos 2007; Zaimakis 2018) has been addressed by some studies on neo-Nazism in Greece, what is equally important and much less studied is how the far-right groups achieved their stated aims to disseminate neo-Nazi discourse within youth music subcultures such as heavy metal. Few have focused on the period in question (mid-1990s to mid-2000s), and particularly on how neo-Nazi discourse found its way into *MH*, the most popular Greek mainstream metal music magazine, which was the most popular cultural

magazine in the country<sup>7</sup> featuring extreme right-wing discourses for a time. Our research revealed plenty of evidence that *MH* features discourse on anti-communism, white supremacy, racialism/racism and antisemitism mixed with pro-paganism and anti-Christianity (or rather, anti-Judeo-Christianity).

In unpacking anti-Christian sentiments, we can see that they reflect the far-from-close ties of a younger generation of nationalists with Christianity. Furthermore, anti-Christianity, for many National Socialist musicians of the metal scene in Greece and worldwide, is in fact a rejection of the Jewish ancestry of Christianity. That is why, for example, Christianity is often referred to as 'Judeo-Christianity', and why Satanist black metal bands are sometimes rejected by National Socialists, since 'Satan is a Jewish concept' (Tzanetatos 2000: 13). In one of the earliest Greek death-black metal zines, edited by Necromantia and Varathron band members, we read the following quote by Stephan (Necroabyssius) of Varathron:

Ignorant shitheads that do not understand what they are dealing with claim to be Satanists. 'My ass'. Stucked [*sic*] in a theory made by Jews and Christians (almost the same) and it is not real Satanism [...] Satanism is something totally different.

(Necroabyssius 1991: 16)

These 'real' Satanist-pagan trends, which linked Satan and Satanism to ('Greek') paganism versus 'Judeo-Christianity', were also present in the early days of Golden Dawn, with poems dedicated to Satan-as-Pan and Eosforos (Greek name for Satan) written and published by Golden Dawn's leader and other members (see 'The Great Pan' by Nikolaos Michaloliakos published in 1980, and 'The shining light of Eosforos' by Odyseas Paterakis published in 1982). Michaloliakos' poem was later translated by Naer Mataron in their song 'Goat Worship' from 2011 as 'Freezing silence from the forest, the stench of crime / Seizure of the moment and human sacrifice / Goat figured he came forth, of myths nostalgic / Satanically supreme, the great pan' (Psarras 2019).

Furthermore, many of the bands associated with global NSBM have also been featured in *MH*: Graveland and Burzum are among the most famous non-Greek ones, but Greek NSBM bands have also featured in *MH*'s pages either in reviews, advertisements or in playlists of favourite songs. Naer Mataron's music was reviewed in 6/1997 (vol. 149), while two months later their release *Up from the Ashes* was second in the top-ten 'GREEK FREAK PLAY-BOY-LIST' (vol. 151, 8/1997). Legion of Doom, probably the most (in-) famous Greek NSBM band, received a positive review for their album entitled *For Those of the Blood*, with the acknowledgement that the reviewer did not 'want to be one to judge on an ideological level' (vol. 149, 6/1997).

In many cases, references to neo-Nazism or fascism are made in a covert manner, as if leaving a trail for the initiated:

Either because, due to Tolkien, we have a holy alliance with the High Elves, or because we have a different opinion about the Second World War, we think that Paul Anderson inverts concepts and along with them, inverts the fighting parties.

(vol. 151, 8/1997)

7. One should note that metal culture has a long history in Greece. Metal releases have repeatedly topped the Greek foreign music charts (Iron Maiden, Metallica, Iced Earth and Nevermore). Metal music magazines began appearing in the very early 1980s, while national professional metal music magazines have been among the top-selling lifestyle magazines in recent decades. For example, the Greek version of *Metal Hammer - Heavy Metal* enjoyed sales of more than 20,000 copies per month in the 1990s, peaking at 50,000 in the early 2000s, making it one of the best-selling cultural monthly magazines in Greece. Within Greece, metal enjoyed a large fan base with a glut of bands playing a variety of styles - although black and extreme metal was the main export, e.g. Rotting Christ, Necromantia, Varathron, Septic Flesh, Nightfall, Homo Iratus and Greek NSBM bands.

Facets of ideology	Quote from MH
Anti-communism	<p>‘That’s where [Exarcheia] you can see everyone from successful yuppies reminiscing about their youth all the way to ugly and unfucked [female] communists wearing Che Guevara t-shirts’ (vol. 219, 3/2003)</p> <p>‘If you cannot understand why this happens, remember that we live in a country where 14-year-old communists are singing rebetika hashish songs while smoking their first Marlboro’ (vol. 213, 9/2002)</p> <p>‘How much worse can it get than this? Ethereal ambient, silly “medieval” atmosphere for Communist Youth of Greece “goths”, fake-classicism, fat sopranos, kitsch [...]’ (vol. 216, 12/2002)</p>
Antisemitism, Anti-Christianity/ Judeo-Christianity, Paganism	<p>‘G. Simmons continued his pro-Bush statements by saying that America is the world’s only hope for a bright future and whoever has any issues with America will have to deal with him. If we take his origin into account, wouldn’t that explain a lot?’ (Gene Simmons of KISS is an Israeli-born American Jew) (vol. 223, 6/2003)</p> <p>‘No Innocent Victim [the band] are one of the main reasons behind the spread of the Christ-core phenomenon, [a phenomenon which] is positive not only for the unquestioned quality of the bands, but also for spreading the message of a personal contact with the Holy – thus making clear the irrelevance and danger represented by the Judaism-derived religions (Judaism, Islam, Christianity)’ (vol. 203, 11/2001)</p> <p>‘I believe Satanism is a Judeo-Christian idea, since the concept of Satan was put forward by the Jews, and later by monotheistic religions [referring to Christianity and Islam] based on ethics and not ethnos/nature like the religions of our ancestors [...]’ (vol. 219, 3/2003)</p> <p>‘In the next issue I will present my thoughts on the strange confusion between Ancestral Gods and the Christian devil. A Sun knight is naturally an ancient world knight’ (vol. 130, 11/1995)</p> <p>‘As an American Jew you shouldn’t be making comments regarding terrorism in a hardcore gig, considering the global political situation’ (vol. 217, 1/2003)</p>
Supposed common European heritage/ white supremacy	<p>‘The epic [musical] element is often apparent, reminding one of traditional Nordic music. This particular mix of elements could be called Pure European Music. Kneel, then, before the Ancient European Spirit and the wonderful music of [...]’ (vol. 149, 6/1997)</p> <p>‘Probably this book’s most positive element is the feeling it gives the reader regarding the affinity between the Greek, Celtic and German-Scandinavian myths that leads to certainty about the common heritage and origin of European culture and the leading nations of the continent’ (vol. 152, 9/1997)</p> <p>‘The nostalgic way in which Spyridon and Pantelis Giasafakis create their music does not hesitate to experiment with European folk (something that easily proves our common cultural kernel/heritage/background/ancestry) [...] Lyrics in Greek and modern Greek [...] As releases like this one are increasing, European youth seems to awaken. That’s what’s most important’ (vol. 161, 6/1998)</p> <p>‘Today, metal is closely related to classical music. Sometimes due to the need for the musician’s instrumental expertise [...] Sometimes due to the epic [musical] arrangements, using Wagner as a main lead. And sometimes due to the need to prove the European descent of the genre’ (vol. 179, 12/1999)</p>

(Continued)

Facets of ideology	Quote from MH
Racialism/racism	<p>'Do you think Bush can bring unity to a society divided by racial hatred?' (vol. 194, 2/2001)</p> <p>Q: 'Do you think that the political-military situation we are currently going through could potentially evolve to a global racial/religious war? A: [...] Watch the news and the battle at Temple Mount. When Jews are allowed to rebuild Solomon's Temple on this mountain, the end will be near [...] (inter-viewers note: with all due respect, the dude is spot on!)' (vol. 205, 1/2002)</p> <p>'[T]he positive powers are represented by three main characters with specific roles: the great King Aragorn, the white Sage Gandalf and the little hobbit Frodo. They represent the three de facto functions of our race, the Indo-Europeans [...] A particular racism is the second remark I want to make. The pure blood of the Western kings seems to be decisive for men's quality for Tolkien. Even hobbit races have clear and different racial characteristics' (vol. 130, 11/1995)</p>

Table 1: Examples of particular types of discourse detected in MH over the years. The table should be read as an illustration and not as a definitive and complete archive. All the quotes below were written by MH editorial staff and journalists in articles, album reviews and questions to interviewees, etc. None of the quotes below represents words by people who were not employed by the magazine at the time. Names of the authors are withheld, as naming individuals does not serve our purpose, which is to show how neo-Nazi and similar discourses were disseminated in the mainstream Metal Press in Greece (that is why we do not include full references, to avoid easy identification of the individuals).

Within the CD booklet, there is a clever pagan message: a photograph depicting three nurses that instead of a red cross have the Algiz rune [a German and later Nazi mysticism symbol] on their hats. (vol. 175, 7/1999)

Medieval yes, but with a stronger epic and martial focus, with as many 'democratic' references (see also Blood Axis, Der Blutarsch) and as militant as he gets without being called the word that ends in '-ist' [fascist], as that would be the end of his career. (vol. 193, 11/2001)

Some of MH's journalists did not shy away from promoting – albeit in purposely vague terms – openly neo-Nazi magazines. In MH vol. 149 (6/1997), for instance, there was an advertisement for the well-known neo-Nazi youth magazine *Resistance*, published by William Luther Pierce in the United States. It is worth quoting in full:

RESISTANCE #8. New issue for a 'zine well known for its political beliefs that includes articles about bands like Involved Patriots and No Remorse as well as essays among which one can read about William Wallace and Scottish history as we learned it from 'Braveheart'. Careful, this 'zine is not for everyone.

Finally, we should mention that at least two of MH's editors in the early and mid-1990s either made public racist comments or were publishing outright racist and anti-Semitic articles in the magazine. MH editor, Georgos Florakis,



was interviewed by a Norwegian 'zine as part of his involvement in the band Wampyre ShadowWolf:

I hate all religions as I hate all sheep. I don't believe in any higher power except in the power of my inner self. By that, I mean that I can do whatever I think and that I can think in the deepest way. In my opinion everyman should believe in his inner self instead of believing in weak Jew assholes as the one called Christ [...] I'm working really hard as I'm the editor of [metal magazine] Sub Terra. You know how hard it is to publish a magazine! My daytime job is in the Hellenic edition of Metal Hammer.

(Shadow 1996)

Charis Prasoulas, an editor in the late 1980s who has since become infamous within Greek Metal circles for his polemical and extreme right-wing writing in *MH* and elsewhere, in support of the supposed true (epic) metal, wrote in his War Flag of the Sun column:

As Trash [Metal] is withering away and no longer a danger, 'salesmen' are trying to insert funk elements and black people into Metal, in an effort to normalise difference and increase sales, but not only for that. Heavy Metal is the only white music that can still enchant the young and it will not be eroded because it is not just a musical genre. Blacks cannot play metal simply because their means of expression are different. It is a matter of nature, not society. Those who know understand what I am saying; the opinion of others is of no interest to us.

(Metal Hammer, vol. 34, 9/1990)

Despite these explicit – and implicit – sympathies among the magazine's contributors and by extension its editors, we should stress that *MH* is *not* a neo-Nazi magazine. Any reader of the magazine is bound to find progressive opinions. Examples are numerous, such as a nuanced piece on the events of 11 September 2001 (vol. 202, 10/2001); an editorial in opposition to the Iraq war (vol. 220, 4/2003); articles on counter-cultural artists (Allen Ginsberg in vol. 149, 6/1997), as well as favourable articles on anarchist bands (Hasma in vol. 179, 12/1999; Dihasmenes Alitheies in vol. 224, 7/2003) etc.

Moreover, it must be stressed that even some of the most serious anti-Nazi forces, both physically (on the streets) and politically – namely anarchist groups and anarchist squats – are also heavily involved in the metal 'scene', especially extreme metal (death, black and thrash metal and grind). While the usual music to be heard in squats was and still is punk, hardcore, techno and noise, from the early 2000s up to the time of writing, metal music, including black metal, has also been an aspect of anarchist youth subculture (Figure 6). Furthermore, the radio station of the Communist Party of Greece, 902FM, has a programme devoted to metal since at least as far back as the late 1990s. Despite this, as we argue in this article, one must bear in mind that no political force other than the far-right has systematically and successfully employed the use of metal music – black metal to a large but not exclusive extent – as a tool to target and recruit youth in order to cement and increase its support base.



Figure 6: Two posters advertising metal gigs and parties in anarchist squats and social centres. Left: Photograph of a poster put up in Exarcheia, Athens, December 2014. A metal bar at Analipsi squat. Right: Poster from a gig in one of the most well-known squats in Thessaloniki, the Steki sto Viologiko squat, in 2004, with a death metal band, Into the Gore, in the line-up. Both items from the authors' collection.

### THE ALT-RIGHT BEFORE THE ALT-RIGHT

Greece is the EU-member country to have been hit hardest by the financial crisis of 2008, and EU–IMF–ECB-imposed austerity has had a catastrophic impact on Greek society [on poverty (Dagoumas and Kitsios 2014), public health (Kentikelenis et al. 2014), the environment (Apostolopoulou et al. 2014) and more generally (Dalakoglou 2013; Dalakoglou and Agelopoulos 2017)]. It is telling that unemployment continues to be the highest in Europe since 2011, and youth unemployment (those aged between 15 and 25) has soared above 50 per cent. In this context, it should not come as a surprise that most explanations for the rise of Golden Dawn tend to have a temporal focus on the years of economic collapse and political and social turmoil; or at the most, look to the early 2000s, when far-right groups first gained a significant presence on the streets, in mainstream culture, on TV and in parliament (Popular Orthodox Rally party). However, what this article has demonstrated is that Greece has experienced a deliberate dissemination of nationalist and neo-Nazi ideology via musical subcultures by far-right parties and movements since as early as the 1980s. As such, any studies of the rise of the far-right as a result of the current financial crisis need to consider the acceptance and normalization of far-right discourses within seemingly harmless cultural spheres throughout the previous decades, when anti-communist, racist, white supremacist and anti-Semitic discourses were normalized and even presented with sympathy.

This phenomenon does not only apply to the Greek case; on the contrary, since the ideas of the Third Way Far-Right and New Right appeared there has been a sustained emphasis on cultural production. In 2016, many commentators around the globe were shocked by the election of Donald Trump and the apparent and unforeseen diffusion of extreme-right ideas among large swathes of educated and ‘normal-looking’ young people (Slobodian 2019) – just as most Greeks were shocked by the rise of Golden Dawn. Trump’s links to the so-called alt-right were and are evident. The term ‘alt-right’ is used to describe a loose network of individuals, organizations, think tanks and media outlets that adopt a worldview ranging from extreme to neo-Nazi to nationalist patriotism. Arguably, what connects most of these different strands is an emphasis on culture (Flisfeder 2018) and despite the (so far mainly journalistic) focus on online wars waged by the alt-right, it should be noted that, interchangeably with its online presence, the alt-right was previously engaged in wider (and older) offline ‘cultural wars’, and most recently in actual physical war – the alt-right murderers who frequently carry out mass shootings or target Black Lives Matter or anti-Trump activists during protest etc.

The cultural war strategy was also employed by William Pierce of the by now notorious National Alliance in the United States, whose label Resistance Records and its sub-labels, such as Cymophane, were formed or acquired in the early 2000s/late 1990s to influence youth cultures. In this case there was an explicit global connection to Greece between Golden Dawn’s G. Mastoras and Resistance Records, as Iron Youth’s 2001 album (*Respect/Defend/Create*) was released by the label.

As in the case we documented for Greece, metal and black metal occupies a prominent place in the history of the cultural wars that preceded the rise of the alt-right in the United States and the far- and extreme-right in other countries. Black metal as pure, European music with revolutionary roots has featured, for example, in *Taki’s Magazine*, one of the few more mainstream magazines that featured positive accounts of Golden Dawn:

[Black metal has] a mystical conception of nature, blood, and soil, and Black Metal artists may be called ‘conservative revolutionary’ in so much as they advocate putting an end to the liberal order, by revolutionary means if necessary, and instituting a new dispensation founded on conservative principles. (Of course, the term ‘conservative’ must not be understood here as having anything to do with the Republicans.)

(Kurtagic 2009: n.pag.)

The author of the piece, Alex Kurtagic, is one the leading intellectuals of the alt-right movement. Before rising to the leadership of the alt-right movement with a co-editorial position in Richard Spencer’s *AlternativeRight.com* and op-eds published in some of the most important alt-Right outlets (*Radix journal*, *American Renaissance*, *Counter-Currents Publishing*, *Occidental Observer*, *Occidental Quarterly*, *VDare*, etc.), Kurtagic was the owner of the black metal label, Supernal Music. Supernal Music, established in 1996, was an avid supporter of NSBM, releasing music from stalwarts of the scene such as Thor’s Hammer (Poland), Drudkh (Ukraine), Capricornus (Poland), Hate Forest (Ukraine) and Sunwheel (Poland).

Overall, youth cultures have been a primary target for de Benoist politics. Golden Dawn invested in black metal and *Oi!/Rock* against Communism (RAC) with determination (see also Psarras 2012). There is explicit evidence

that similar strategies existed more globally, all closely connected with the rise of the alt-right.

Golden Dawn is not in the parliament after the 2019 elections. Its leading members and core, including its leader Nikos Michalioliakos and Kaiadas, were convicted and sent to jail in October 2020 for forming and leading a criminal organization following the murder of Pavlos Fyssas in September 2013 by a Golden Dawn member. Nevertheless, there is plenty of speculation as to what happened to those 500,000 GD voters in a country of five million registered voters. Moreover, there is plenty of reflection on and inquiry into neo-Nazi ideology and the wider damage it has caused in the body politic of Greece and other countries. Yet seeking answers to such questions must involve a much more diachronic and nuanced investigation into the particularities of social and cultural production. This will allow us to gain insights into the processes that popularize and normalize neo-Nazism so as to better organize the fight against neo-Nazism in the future.

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