

Art of Olive Green

Towards Art, an Ethics & a Laugh

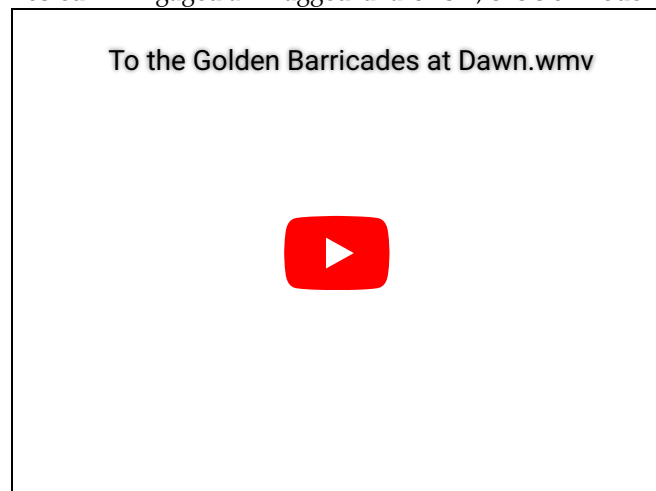
Archives

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Same Song, Different Drum

Posted by [getraer](#) on [May 10, 2012](#)

Posted in: Engaged art. Tagged: anarchism, crisis of modernity, engagement, fascist. Leave a comment



*In the 80s, it was a cliché: “SSDD—Same Shit, Different Day.” The first 14 bars of Golden Dawn’s march song (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtwUEBe1mro>) (**original at link**) bear a striking resemblance to a historical song from their ideological antipode. A Las Barricadas (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Odrfx7WmNwQ>) (To the Barricades, **original at link**) was a theme song of 1930s Spain, when leftists of every stripe from radical anarchists to tepid Republicans fought Franco and the Falangists until their end in concentration camps. This song in turn was derived from “The Warsawian (<http://www.marxists.org/history/ussr/sounds/lyrics/varshavianka.htm>),” a Polish song from the late 19th century that scored Russia’s 1905 and 1917 revolutions. (Also notoriously bad times for proto-fascists.) Note the resemblance here in “To The Golden Barricades at Dawn: Golden Dawn vs. CNT/FAI.” The Spanish are playing trumpets and singing in a higher register, but it’s even almost the same key as the Greeks with their drums, trombones and tuba. The only editing necessary was some tempo correction to stretch/shrink Barricadas at some key points; Golden Dawn’s song was metronomic. Coming soon to a torchlit street near you.*

News of Greece’s Hryssi Avgi (Golden Dawn) Party taking 7 percent of the vote in this week’s elections has catapulted this fasciform political concern into the international spotlight. Any disclaiming of neo-fascist intentions is pure smokescreen, and more steam than smoke. Embrace of GD is a particularly extreme example of the widespread disgust with mainstream politics all over the West. And as we in the States are in the throes of our 2012 presidential campaign, disgust is a healthy response.

Historically, in brokendown times, democracy was drawn and quartered between fascists and communists and/or anarchists. They faced off in the streets, burned and destroyed, looted armories, and started revolutions (both social and violent). The rise of one extreme necessarily evoked the other as the only possible cultural response. There have been punch-ups between GD and Greece’s far left for years. With GD’s 21 of the 300 seats in Parliament, do you expect to negotiate with a man like its leader Nichos Michaloliakos?

Michaloliakos said (<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/nikos-michaloliakos-the-farright-firebrand-who-holds-europes-future-in-his-hands-7720682.html>) in a speech prior to this year's election: "They haven't understood that when we have the power we will be merciless." Maybe he will respond to a little online petition or a boycott. The eternal Paul Robeson said to the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1956: "Wherever I've been in the world, the first to die in the struggle against fascism were the Communists."

Radical left and right also developed a lasting iconography that is resurfacing to accompany the exhumed conflicts of yestercenury. Golden Dawn's flag uses the same colors as that of the the Nazis, and in that context the "[meander \(http://proteus.brown.edu/greekpast/4524\)](http://proteus.brown.edu/greekpast/4524)," a common architectural motif from Greece's Geometrical Period (~900 BCE) becomes a dead ringer for a swastika. At least the meander is actually Greek, where the swastika came from almost everywhere *except* Germany. (Ironically, there are more swastikas in Greek Geometrical design than there ever were in pre-Nazi Germany). Since WWII, we have seen so many swastika flags in black red & white that the mind reflexively warps Golden Dawn's sigil into a swastika.

On the extreme left and right, the symbols, uniforms, catchphrases, and similar trappings were honed by propagandists and burnished with blood. They were even cross-borrowed, like Franco's Falangists copying the "worker blue" shirts of the CNT/FAI into their uniforms, and using the anarchists' black and red for the Falangist flag. Those colors had a proven emotional response. I'll be interested to see if this time around, political artists rise to the occasion to provide something new—or we just remix the nostalgia of the 30s like we have the 70s and 80s.

Mayday: I Believe the Children Are Further

Posted by [getraer](#) on [May 8, 2012](#)

Posted in: [Activism](#). Tagged: [engagement](#), [may day](#), [new york city](#), [occupy wall street](#), [OWS](#). [Leave a comment](#)

I should have written it up last week, but I've been struggling with a commission in uncharted technical territory and a victory garden being despoiled by an opossum. The opossum is so acclimated to people that she lumbered casually off the porch when I opened the door on my way to the studio; she had been picking through the compost for weeks (THAT's how that mango pit got 5' from the bin!) and more importantly, eating my seedlings. Point being, this post is too little too late for May Day, but I wanted to post these videos and a couple of comments.

I'm the only one at my office that I know of who took May Day off. Hell, of the folks I talked to I'm the only one who knew what it *was*—except for the Colombian custodial guy, who is a Union plumber that's had to do custodial work for years because of the nationwide construction sag. His greeting was: "I know where you were yesterday!" Otherwise, the ignorance was depressing, but the march was more fun than usual because I met up with a large group of friends. The chatting made for poor observation...so this would have been a thin blog anyway.



This little girl was the highlight of the march for me, and one of the highlights of the whole OWS experience, though she mightn't have been there with her mom in the coalition-building days of Liberty Plaza. She shouted with such poise and confidence, and incredibly, without appearing to be shouting. In the first video she's saying "Tell me what you want tell me what you want! Tell me what you need tell me what you need!" to which the crowd responds "JUSTICE!" She was a bit shrill in person but really got your attention because hers was obviously not an adult voice. In the second she's saying "They say cut back!" and the crowd responds "WE SAY FIGHT BACK!"

little girl: "they say cut back!!"/WE SAY FI...

