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**Greece**

# **Hands off the squats!**

- IV Online magazine - 2019 - IV536 - September 2019 -

Publication date: Monday 2 September 2019

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**Demonstrations protesting again the expulsion of the squats in the Exarcheia neighbourhood of Athens were held on Saturday 31 August.** [1] We publish a statement by OKDE-Spartakos, Greek section of the Fourth International.

At the end of August, the new New Democracy government chose to evacuate 4 squats, political and refugee ones, in the centre of Athens. It is a repressive action that goes hand in hand with its harsh repressive agenda against the movements, the oppressed, the multinational working class. The ND government and state mechanisms have been making efforts to make this plan public for a long time. We have seen tangible examples of ND's anti-labor and repressive action since it became government. A striking example is the abolition of asylum. [2]

The evacuation of the four squats, Spyridon Trikoupi 15 and 17, Gare, and Rosa De Foc, is the beginning for the evacuation of others. It is a blow by the state against the movement. The ND government has practically zero tolerance, speaks out against the movement in terms of fight against crime, and stimulates conservative reflexes among the petty bourgeoisie. It is, of course, also based on the continuation of the repressive policy by the former "left" SYRIZA government, by evacuating squatters and perpetuating its "citizens' safety" discourse and its anti-immigration policy towards refugees with the EU-Turkey agreement. After all, executives of SYRIZA (e.g. Zachariadis) were quick to recall their own action. It is confirmed that there is continuity in the state and its repressive mechanisms.

Occupation is a medium and a tool of the left and anarchist movement, of the refugees, the working class, the radicalized youth, to self-organize our struggles. At the same time, they are useful and necessary to meet social needs, such as the right for housing. They are targeted as examples of collective self-management and as projects that challenge individual ownership, but also as sites of political and cultural integration and reflection.

With the evacuation of refugee squats, the state has indicated that it wants to undermine the solidarity movement with them and the structures that were created by the mass refugee movement in the summer of 2015. It is attempting to ease the picture of the refugee as an "intruder" and "criminal", to impose as socially acceptable the concentration camps and the repressive operations against immigrants, if they have not already drowned in the Aegean. A misanthropic speech for refugees has always been expressed by the representatives of the state, as was the case with the far-right cop Balaskas.

Government, police, and the media give Exarchia a picture of a region inaccessible and the site of constant illegal action. This image is needed to depreciate an area historically linked to the movements and to evacuate the spaces of political collectivism that exist in it. The present government, like the previous governments for decades, would very much like the neighbourhood to change its character and become a commercialized alternative Soho. [3] To be done once and for all with its "disgrace". But they will fail once again because the movement will block their way.

We need to defend the squat movement in its multiple forms as it has a "place" in buildings, both private and public, and in the city's public space, workplaces, schools. With unity in action, without sectarianism. It is necessary to unify the occupation movement with the other areas of the labour movement, solidarity with refugees and the movements of the oppressed.

The blow against the squats should not be underestimated by anyone, as through that all operations of class struggle are undermined. We demand immediate release of those arrested. We stand in solidarity with the refugees, our class brothers. We support the solidarity marches and rallies.

*Athens*

*31 August 2019*

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[1] On the evacuations see *The Guardian*, 26 August "[Greek police raid Athens squats and arrest migrants](#)" and "[Inside Exarcheia: the self-governing community Athens police want rid of](#)".

[2] A legal state of protective environment against the police in universities.

[3] As in the Soho area of London.