



THE METRO IS COMING...

Exarcheia has stood for decades as a hub for combative social struggle and as a beacon for self-determination and resistance to all forms of authority and the state. Simultaneously, the history of Exarcheia as a neighborhood of struggle has been characterized by constant acts of state repression and attempts at asphyxiation of the self-organized projects. The scope of these actions includes the persecution of squats, anarchists, migrants and generally of the antagonistic/ resistance movements, and increasing attempts at changing the core essence of the neighborhood through the effects of gentrification. **We see Exarcheia as a place of conflicting class interests and understand state intervention as serving the interests of the ruling class.**

The most recent play in this strategy has been to relaunch plans for the creation of a metro station in Exarchia, a plan that is marketed through the fairy tale of economic development. We understand this project as the latest counter-insurgency measure to crush the collective aspirations and resistance in the neighborhood.

The new Athens METRO line 4 is planned to run from Alsos Veikou in Galatsi to Goudi, passing through Exarchia with a metro stop on the square. In addition, 2 more stops in the perimeter of Exarchia are on the cards, one on the corner of Alexandras av. and Moustoxydi st. and another on Akadimias (somewhere between Ippokratous and Sina st.). The estimated cost of this 'grand bouffe' for the project comes to 1,5 billion and is claimed by 3 multinational conglomerates:

*TERNA-Vinci-Siemens

*AKTOR-Ansaldo-Hitachi

*J&P Avax-Alstom-Ghella

Which conglomerate will get the project will be finally chosen in June 2019, while at the end of 2019 the contract will be signed and the works will begin. The construction will begin in the end of 2020, and the metro stations will be delivered after about 8 years. So, we have plenty of time to subvert their plans, so long as we start today!

This attempt at redeveloping Exarchia Square in line with corporate interests is not unprecedented. In 2003, the government had already pushed forward such a plan in the lead-up to the Athens Olympics of 2004 in an effort to extend business activity in the surrounding shops and cafes. At the time, this was understood as an attempt to increase the profitability and commercial value of the area at the expense of the movement, and so the early stages of the construction site were targeted by direct action and sabotaged. In the end, government and investors had to withdraw their plans in the face of active resistance.

For years, class/social fighters have fought against the increasingly for-profit and exclusive metro system in Athens. We understand the metro system as a part of class society. Constructions of metro stations have gentrified and violently transformed certain areas into

sites of capitalist enterprise, increasing rents and costs of living, while further stigmatizing and impoverishing other neighborhoods. The introduction of electronic barriers this year was the latest demonstration of the profit-based stance of the state, excluding those who cannot pay.

It is quite clear then that at the heart of this strategy are the questions of displacement of undesired populations and antagonistic class interests. As seen in other metropolitan areas, public transportation is another tool in the hands of capital and state interests through the militarized surveillance, the monitoring of the population and the harassment and persecution of the marginalized, the impoverished and the migrants.

Although capitalism and exploitation already exist in Exarchia, through the interests of both petty-bourgeois business owners and the different mafias operating in the neighborhood, the announcement of plans to build a metro station is a call for extended large-scale capitalist investment. It flirts with corporations and aims to seduce those who would privately profit from the gentrification of this area. For the vast majority of residents, however, the metro would mean higher housing prices and cost of living with more airb'n'bs and speculation. At the same time, the metro would bring an increase in police, security and surveillance to the area, before, during and after the construction process. It is obvious to us that the first targets of this increased repression would be squats, migrants, the attempts at creating self-organized structures outside of state authority and institutions and the anti-state struggle. The encampment of state control in the heart of the neighborhood means the dissolution of a ground that has provided safe haven to persecuted populations and a base for those who seek to organize in favor of collective emancipation and liberation.

This is a direct attack upon everything that Exarchia stands for. The public space in the area is not up for speculation, nor is it up for policing. We reject the vision of "progress" promoted by the neoliberal state: we believe that progress comes from the collective

and horizontal self-organization and struggle of the people for the satisfaction of their needs and not from the desires of the ruling class.

The threat to build a metro station in Exarchia carries the potential for the colonization of the neighborhood with capitalist domination, but we embrace this struggle as a chance for the neighborhood to come together as a collective force of resistance. Unavoidably, this struggle will ultimately show who is fighting for a neighborhood as a living and vital place of community and who joins arms with repression for the sake of their wallets. **The collective struggle against state control and exploitation is the seed for social transformation.**

...WE SHALL NOT LEAVE OUR HISTORY AND OUR NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE FANGS OF GENTRIFICATION AND REPRESSION

**Assembly on Exarchia square for the resistance against the construction of a metro station,
every Thursday at 18.00 on Exarchia sq.**

*Assembly of Exarchia square against the metro
January 2019*