

## **FOR A FREE STREFI**

If plateia is the heart of Exarchia, Strefi hill is its lungs. This small hill, the forest, the basketball courts, the little amphitheatre, and the roof of Asteras serves as a free open-air meeting space for neighbors and for the youth that find a home in Exarchia. In the last couple of months the state began to implement its designs for the control and repression of Strefi. They banned all free self-organized events including parties, theater shows, concerts, and a community football tournament. As part of their plans they demolished the occupied Gym squat to clear the way for further control. **On Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> of September the State upgraded its repression and began a project to close down and forbid access to the roof of Asteras.** At 7 in the morning construction workers of the council of Athens, accompanied by civil cops, began to erect a gate around its premises. A few hours later, people from the neighborhood took direct action to ensure that this space remains public and so they dismantled the attempted enclosure.

The State's plan is to continue operations until they have fenced up all of the roof. **This open space, the roof, that looks over the west mountains of Attica all the way to the sea, is a historical meeting place for the metropolis. It is where generations of youth have sat to talk, dance, play, and watch the sunset away from commercial spaces and away from the control of cops and surveillance.** Strefi hill is the wilderness of Exarchia. It is a forest, a free natural area high up from the rest of the neighborhood, and as such offers refuge from control and repression. Authority is always threatened by and wants to subordinate such uncontrollable areas, well aware of the danger they pose to state domination, as places of organization of resistance. When public gathering becomes dangerous for authority the state responds with bans, by erecting fences and evacuating the public space from all free association. The state's message to the youth on the roof is clear: go shut yourselves up behind the closed doors of private homes and businesses.

So, Strefi hill is of the utmost importance for the neighborhood not only because it is a free space where we can meet each other, organize, share our cultures, our creations, and our experiences of living. It is also a strategic entry point for the state's infiltration into the neighborhood. Why this neighborhood? We shall never tire of repeating the reasons: **Because it is a hub of resistance to state domination and its brutality, it is a pivotal ground for the movement for social liberation.** Moreover, the attack on Exarchia is interwoven with the repression of migrants' self organization and the prevention of their radicalization, since this neighborhood is where a multitude of migrants meet in a relative asylum from state persecution. The repression of Exarchia is part of the counter-insurgency policy of the state, a timeless policy for the fortification of its domination, its exploitation and oppression. The attack on Exarchia has been particularly methodical in the past few years of the Syriza government. These leftist parasites, as competent executors of counter-insurgent politics, came to legalize and deepen all totalitarian measures. **The target is not just this neighborhood. The target is any kind of resistance to the onslaught of state and capital. The defense of Strefi is a matter of survival for this resistance.**

**NO FENCES ANYWHERE  
TEAR DOWN THE URBAN PRISON**

*Squat GARE*  
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