

SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE FOR THE PERSECUTED PEOPLE IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST GOLD MINING

The Solidarity Committee with the people struggling and under persecution in the fight against Halkidiki's gold mine is constituted (and aspires to be further supported) by political and social collectives, assemblies, and individuals active in the struggle against the installation of gold mines in N.E.Halkidiki.

We consider our different perspectives and starting points capable of conveying a more comprehensive picture of the situation and of producing numerous and diverse actions, in the context of a two-way relationship with the local struggling community, in a state of equivalency which is imposed by our common struggle, and far away from any petty consideration.

Common ground for us is also that the struggle can only be conducted in direct confrontation with the investors and those who support them, and with direct democratic procedures involving the residents of Halkidiki affected by the mine project. This cooperation is imposed by the gravity of the situation in Halkidiki and the size of the impact this investment has on multiple levels of the Greek society.

The basis of this collaboration is concentrated on three points:

- Opposition to the mining activity and the subjection of N.E.Halkidiki to the mining code.
- Solidarity and support with the residents in struggle and those persecuted by the law.
- Immediate release of the people in detention and the end of any subsequent prosecution.

Concerning the first point, our opposition to the mining activity is founded on the following:

- The environmental damages that the mining process (open pit, draining groundwater etc.) will inflict to the Kakavos Mountain through the complete destruction of a unique local ecosystem, the dangerous process of elaboration of ore with the use of cyanide, the installation of ponds with arsenic concentrates and, in general, all the impacts that the heavy mining industry (*pyro-metallurgy* is the most polluting industrial activity) has on the environment and the life of the people.
- The fatal damages that the mining activity will cause on the local economy, based on agriculture and tourism. The area cannot see the coexistence of a heavy mining industry with other economic activity non related to it, which results in a sacrificing and dissolving local economy and in a deeply divided local society for the sake of profit.
- Finally, the mining activity constitutes a way to grab and plunder common resources, which are prey to the company, which, on the one hand robs and on the other hand excludes the actual holders of the resources and the area from any management option

Our second ground is that the massive and heterogeneous struggle of the residents of the affected areas has put the problem in a national and global perspective. The people in struggle radicalize their opposition, of course within the contradictions inherent to the whole Greek society, and understanding the situation, they get out of the ordinary institutional struggle procedures, obtaining, causing cracks in the existing structures. For instance, the village of Ierissos is at the moment an area under no municipal authority and without a police station.

This attitude is, of course, unacceptable for the state-patron of the company. Today, at the time of the Memorandum and the wave of strong neo-liberal policies that is hitting Greece, the rebellion has become the ultimate crime and the state is therefore acting in a highly repressive manner against the residents in struggle.

- Entire regions and populations are being targeted and repressed, in order to spread terror and to counter any reaction
- A state of emergency has been established, in which everyone and everything is recruited based on the requirements of the investment, using the only one feasible way, the violence of the state and of the para-state. Besides, the very concept of being subject to the mining code dictates a state of exception, a place for state and investors' arbitrariness. A place where your land is necessarily expropriated, your struggle is necessarily repressed and your life is necessarily and totally underestimated and associated with a company.

As far as the third point is concerned, our common position - belief is that no struggle can go forward and succeed if leaving behind losses, people to their fate and hostages to the appetites of the state.

The imprisonment of fighters without even a lawful-looking procedure, without evidence, and putting the existing law context in the garbage is a vindictive persecution of beliefs, with the sole purpose of terrorizing and dissolving any resistance in the area.

In order to ensure the struggle, the inescapable condition is to remove from the state the opportunity to terrorize the population.

We believe that the political and organized attitude of the struggling residents is the only sufficient condition, not only for the release of the fighters detained, but also to ensure the success of the struggle.

Lastly, we believe that what is happening in Halkidiki is a more exemplary picture of what is happening in whole Greece, where governments and companies, invoking “development” with fast track procedures, ie without any social legitimacy, intervene drastically against regions and populations - the example of Keratea may have just been the prelude to the upcoming conflict.

Moreover, the practices used by the state to suppress the struggling people have been extended in all the society, extending the state of exception altogether.

The practice, for example, of collecting DNA, which was applied outside of any legal framework to a large number of residents of Halkidiki, is also trying to expand into larger groups and cases, directly threatening the freedoms of the whole society.

Even the state of easy and prolonged pre-trial detention, with a belief-targeted character, also shows that what is going on in Halkidiki is only a single piece of what is happening in the whole country.

Our action as committee is based on open and direct democratic procedures, aspiring to achieve the highest possible degree of social clustering in the matter. Part of our collective effort is:

- the documentation and promotion of the struggle in Halkidiki in a scientific and technical level
- the dismantling of the company's arguments on the environmental, economic and social issue
- the solidarity and support for the persecuted in a legal, scientific and ethical level
- the spread of information about the struggle and the breaking of the veil of silence established by the media, which are in direct relation with the interests in the region, and lastly
- the establishment of a lasting bidirectional communication between residents of Halkidiki and people in solidarity with them, in Thessaloniki.

We call all those who are interested, collectives and individuals who accept such a context of establishment and operation, to participate in the proceedings of the committee, so as to jointly give the dynamic response we owe to the state and the companies.

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