

Philippines - We Stand in Solidarity with the Greek Peoples' Struggles Against the Implementation of the Austerity Package

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Under threat of economic collapse and a humanitarian catastrophe, after five months of 'negotiations' which have been described as "mental water-boarding", the Greek government has accepted the punitive funding deal that represents the interests of the big banks and European finance capital and which imposes further austerity and debt on the people of Greece.

Under the deal the VAT system will be made more regressive, pensioners will suffer further cuts, the power sector utility ADMIE will be privatized along with other public assets to service an unserviceable and illegitimate debt and collective bargaining will be eroded. Impacts will include the foreclosures, evictions and liquidation of thousands of homes and businesses who are not in a position to keep up with their mortgages and loans. The "troika" of the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund will control the way Greece's budget is computed. The deal also forces the Greek government to retrospectively annul the anti-austerity Bills that were passed in the last few months that Syriza has been in government. These austerity measures had to be adopted before discussion can even begin on a third €85 billion bailout for Greece. The deal contradicts the entire election program on which Syriza was elected.

The popular will of the Greek people, who voted "no" in the July 12 referendum, is being violated by the robber barons of European capital. This is an assault on democracy; a coup that robs Greece of its national sovereignty.

We note that the Syriza Central Committee voted against the deal and that 32 of Syriza's 149 MPs voted against the legislative package, and six more abstained. We also note that 15 of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) members also voted against the austerity package. We commend the left opposition for taking this stand.

However, we also note the main argument put forward by the Syriza leader and Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras who, while declaring that he "signed a text that I do not believe in", stated that the threat from the creditors was real and "there is no other choice".

While there have been protest actions in solidarity with Greece, the Syriza government stands alone, as the only anti-austerity government in Europe. We understand, therefore, that the relationship of forces in Europe is stacked against the Syriza-led government.

We also note the protests and strikes in Greece against the current austerity package, and we stand in solidarity with these struggles and the progressive mass movements in Greece, as they continue to fight against the implementation of this deal.

This is not just the struggle of the people of Greece alone. It's also the struggle of people of all over the world, in both developing and developed countries, who have been struggling for the past decades against the imposition of a whole range of neo-liberal measures - liberalization,

deregulation, and privatization, including neoliberal austerity programs imposed by capitalist governments led by the US and its allies, through the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other financial institutions. There has been a long history of struggles against debt repayments and for the cancellation of odious and illegitimate debts. The world has experienced how debt burdens and neo-liberal impositions have created havoc on economies, depleted natural resources, exacerbated inequalities, and impoverished peoples while siphoning off billions of dollars to global capitalist banks, giant corporations and imperialist governments.

We also claim the "Social Debt" owed to our people after decades of automatic debt service for "Illegitimate Debts," loans contracted through fraudulent and corrupt means. We continue to call for official and citizens' debt audits to investigate all public sector debts and contingent liabilities and review all laws pertaining and/or concerning public debt. We demand the immediate holding in escrow of payments for questionable loans and contracts, pending investigation, and re-negotiation and/or condonation, with appropriate sanctions against erring parties, whether governments or private entities.

We renew our demand on the Aquino government to repeal the Automatic Appropriations on Debt Servicing decree that automatically allocates up to one-third of the Philippines national budget for debt repayment.

We stand with Greece and call for the cancellation of ALL odious and illegitimate debts.

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