

Why debt is an excuse in the case of Greece: Guest post

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The [following was posted as a comment](#) in the blog by Ivan Horrocks, a regular commentator here. I thought it worth sharing more widely, with minor editorial changes and an addition because it expresses a sentiment with which I entirely concur:

There's a massive outcry about Greek debt and how and why it must be repaid otherwise the world as we know it will collapse. This, however, has very little to do with any form of rational argument. It is, quite simply, a device to wreck the Syriza government as quickly as possible, and to make sure that what happens can be laid at the feet of that government, and not blamed on the ECB, IMF, EC, or any other EU country, or — and this is most important — global capital (by which I primarily mean multi-national corporations, the 1% and their agents and supporters).

And why is that necessary? Because the full significance of the recent events in Greece are far, far broader and deeper than simply whether Greece repays its debts or not. For the first time in Europe for a very long time a progressive political party that is not either beholden to and/or implicitly supportive of the neoliberal project has got into power. Not only have they got into power, but they've done so with a clear mandate for pursuit of an entirely un-neoliberal agenda.

Now think of what happens if having won power Syriza goes on to deliver even half of the policies that they've promised to pursue (and I understand some of these will be passed through the Greek parliament as early as Wednesday). Where does that leave the likes of our own government, that of Germany, almost every newspaper and media owner in the world, the big four, almost every politician in a so called "left" or social democratic party (e.g.. Ed Miliband), every organisation that makes its money from lobbying in support on big business or providing any other service that promotes or delivers any aspect of the neoliberal project, the rich, The City, the EC, and so on and on. Any and all of these have spent years telling us there is no alternative.

In short, Syriza represent a direct challenge to those who have spent decades designing and imposing neoliberalism on Europe and the world. They are equivalent to the Allende government in Chile in the 1970s — and many of us are old enough to

remember where that threat to the “world order” — as so many so called democrats saw it at the time — ended.

For me then — and for the sake of Syriza and the Greek people — the debate needs to move away from debt as fast as it can, because that’s just a smokescreen to hide the true nature of the forces that are about to be deployed to undermine the potential success of this movement. From a neoliberal perspective there's a need for haste in destroying Syriza, before any success they might otherwise have emboldens Podemos in Spain, and then a general reawakening of non-neoliberal movements across southern Europe. I've no doubt that would then spread to France, and then who knows. Consequently, over the next three months Syriza will be subjected to the most concerted (and often secret) attacks any government in Europe has known for decades - probably since the birth of labour movements in the inter-war period. We must hope and assume (given their backgrounds) that those involved in the Syriza government are fully aware of this.

The agents of neoliberalism have spent 40 years establishing the hegemony of their project and they are not going to allow that to be challenged now and anything and everything will done to ensure that remains so.