

# Ruthless Economic Austerity Measures: Crushing Exploitation of the European People - But For How Long?

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In mid-May, 2010, European leaders met with International Monetary Fund (IMF) leaders and finally reached an agreement comprising a £750 billion rescue package for the euro. Since then, announcements have taken place every single day regarding ruthless, merciless new austerity measures which the common people of Europe will have to now face. Workers and non-workers alike will be paying heavily for the financial games of the bankers and speculators.

Eurozone countries along with Britain must cut their budgets by £400 billion in order to meet a 2013 compliance deadline, and it is the public who will be plundered of that 400 billion, particularly pensioners, the unemployed, the disabled - all those who desperately depend presently on social services provided by their governments. Greece is the forerunner for the rest of Europe, as it will cut its deficit by £30 billion over the next three years, punishing the weak and helpless humanity by slashing wage and pensions, eliminating vital social service programs and increasing already outlandish sales taxes. Spain is following suit, having just announced cuts totalling £80 billion to be taken from the salaries of state employees and by freezing pensions. Previously every newborn baby in Spain received £2,500 automatically from the government. The program has been swiftly and silently axed with nary a word coming in the press.

Portugal has frozen all hiring and public salaries and increased sales taxes so as to reduce its budget deficit by £2 billion. Italy has already begun cutting civil service jobs, cutting salaries, raising the retirement age and adding new cuts to the health care system. France will reduce its budget deficit from 8 percent to 3 percent of GDP by 2013, once again by raising the retirement age, cutting housing benefits, employment compensation and slashing museum funding. Germany intends to cut still more social service provisions such as family, child welfare and disability benefits along with annuities and pensions. Britain over the next four years will be cutting a whopping £100 billion, once again making the little people pay via slashing 300,000 public service jobs and freezing public sector pay.

In the US official retirement age is 67 years old. However, millions work longer because they can no longer make ends meet when retiring. Now the EU Commission has said that the retirement age in Europe must rise still higher, such that not more than one third of an adult life be spent in retirement. This suggests raising retirement / pension age to 70 years. Is it not convenient for the wealthy controllers of society? How many millions will fall ill before the age of 70 and have no means of survival on early retirement? The word that comes again and again to mind is "inhuman." How can we as a civilization, a global civilization, be

so inhuman to our fellow man? What did we miss, what did we fail to learn in our schools and universities or from our parents, that at the end of it all we are so inhuman?

What is the consequence of all these ruthless, merciless cuts, and why do we call them ruthless and merciless? Because they will lead directly to the unbounded impoverization and ensuing suffering of the common people – the little people who have no voice, no power, no weapon, to stop the barbaric brutality being meted out to them. What kind of civilization do we have that in country after country the wealthy leaders enact the cruellest of financial measures? An immediate effect will be deep impoverishment of the elderly on a massive scale. This is inhuman. Human beings have a right to live out their lives in mental peace and physical equipoise. No elderly person should have to be filled with fear of being thrown out of his house or apartment, being denied basic medical care, or even the fear of facing the slow and agonizing process called starvation.

If we dig a little deeper into the so-called financial crisis, we find that reams of money exist, and that what is occurring right now in every country is a systematic redistribution of income and wealth from the bottom of society to the top, i.e., from the poor people to the obscenely wealthy elite. For several decades. All governments, left and right, have laws in place which excuse income and property taxes for the rich while placing the entire burden of this income source on the meek and humble of the earth – the poor people. Governments and corporations have slashed wages for the past 30 years and created all kinds of new jobs paying absolute pittance, leading to massive individual credit card debt through no fault of the poor. For these sweet, suffering souls, it is always and always about making the choice between paying the rent or putting food on the table. This is the life of the poor. Poverty makes no distinctions from one country to another. Poverty is a universal phenomenon that must be stopped dead in its tracks.

What is the root of the problem except the banks? Governments across Europe pumped billions into the banks to keep them afloat, creating a huge new European debt of £183 billion. Now the banks, working hand in hand with governments and the EU, have turned right around to plunder the masses. In every country the ruling elite rely on social democrats and unions to enact their merciless austerity measures. We can no longer distinguish between right and leftwing governments. All are engaging in the same behaviour towards the helpless humanity, gently telling them “TINA – There Is No Alternative.” Unions make sure that any protests held last just a few hours or at most just a few days so that nothing serious develops – nothing like a European economic revolution or political revolution so as to throw out the economic exploiters of the masses. The middle class in all countries aids and abets the unions and ensures election of so-called democratic governments. The goal is to prevent at all costs a real political movement from spreading across Europe, symbolized even perhaps by a new European political party, which might have revolution as Plan B if Plan A – the redistribution of wealth to the masses – does not succeed. To achieve this goal, governments are further busy stoking up tensions between nations and communities. This strategy succeeds time and again throughout history to divert the masses from the crushing economic exploitation that engulfs them in tears and wipes the smiles from their faces forever.

Isn't it time for the exploited masses to put an end to the European Union along with its self-mandated currency called the euro? Isn't it time for the common people to stand up for their social, economic and political rights? Should they go on demanding those rights from the plutocracy that presently macro-manages their lives, or should they work with single focus

to completely dismantle and destroy the capitalist economic structure? Could anything be more urgent? Capitalism is grinding the bones of the people right into the ground and breaking their hearts into millions of sharp, jagged pieces - hearts that were meant for loving and laughing.

### Who Will Lead the Revolution?

When we talk of revolution, we have to be extremely careful. Nine times out of ten throughout history revolutions fail. Why? Because their leaders lacked morality, sincerity, dedication, vision and practical strategies for building a new and better society. If the leaders of revolution cannot lead the people towards brighter alternatives, towards workable solutions, for what then do we shout "revolution"? It will all be in vain, with thousands of lives lost for nothing. Prout founder Shri Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar says that the sufferings of the people are the direct result of the sins of the leaders. Similarly, we can say that the continued sufferings of the people in the post-revolutionary phase are due to the defects of the leaders, even if they might have initially had sincere intentions. It is not enough for leaders to wage a revolution. They need to know exactly where they are leading the masses. They need to have a clear vision of a future world incorporating an economic structure that brings economic peace to all. Isn't this the minimum requirement of those determined to lead the masses into revolution?

Presently we have political leaders who don't know squat about how to create a better society. Most went into politics for money, not for service to humanity. They have no qualifications, meaning they have no love, no compassion, no mercy on the poorest of the poor. So we have to look at the external as well as internal motives of those who shout revolution and those who long to lead the masses into a rebellion for bringing social, economic and political liberation. It is not enough for the popular leaders of the masses to daily bash the extant politicians who wreak economic havoc on the masses. Countless Ph.D.s in economics and political science adorn the internet with their scholarly articles exposing economic exploitation around the world. Those same Ph.D.s have no clue of the future, of how to build a new world imbibing economic justice. It is not enough for those leaders to unite the masses on the sentiment of anti-exploitation, they must additionally formulate and then enunciate to those masses a glorious vision of the future society post-revolution. What will change, how will it change? Can they describe the new economic structure that takes birth on the ashes of the dying capitalist structure? Will their vision work? What does history tell us? Will studying the economic-political systems of sweet indigenous peoples everywhere help us to gain that vision? Do present critics shout that communism is the solution? But communism never worked. It is just state capitalism. Under communism we saw grinding poverty even worse than under capitalism. So again, what vision is required in the minds and hearts of revolutionary leaders?

Amazingly, over the years and centuries, only the two models, capitalism and communism, really took off in the world, with now and then drops of Keynesianism for good measure. But even Keynesianism cannot solve the present crisis. Why don't we look for something new? Why don't we study the Prout economic model and see if it might work? Marx's model worked in theory but not on the ground because the system destroyed the incentive of the people to work. Capitalism breeds greed until hearts are replaced by dollar signs.

### What About Economic Decentralization?

The Prout economic model stipulates that we need a decentralized economy. Prout

founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar emphasizes the tremendous importance, the absolute necessity, of socio-economic decentralization, saying that where economic centralization continues, the “people cry out in agony due to scarcity and starvation!” Industrial centralization is devastating to a well-knit social order. No matter what form capitalism takes – individual capitalism, group capitalism or state capitalism – capitalists will always prefer centralized production, because all forms of capitalism prefer profit over human welfare. For this very reason, people in the poorest parts of the world go to sleep “crying in the cimmerian darkness!” Hence, brothers and sisters, let the clarion call be raised everywhere, it is time that people override their corporate-colluding governments and implement economic decentralization.

We need local, economically and ecologically sustainable communities, villages and towns. When central governments make no attempt to even conceal their indifference to the common people, is there any alternative but to go local and set up such communities? It’s each man for himself now. But instead of thinking thus, we can think, it’s each community, each village, each town for itself. Let’s take care of each other at the local level. TINA – There Is No Alternative! Countless good people have suggested going local. Produce local, make local, sell local and buy local – this will keep a community alive and thriving, isn’t it? Converting every company, corporation and large proprietorship to cooperatives will cause the community to take a great leap in the direction of economic democracy and cultural caring. Here we can add that the banking system also will be managed by cooperatives in a Prout economic structure. Central banks will be controlled by local governments. Prout is about local control over everything – growing healthy food locally, having access to local medical care, guiding local educational curriculum, building structures from local natural resources.

But again, who will lead the people in the direction of such an economy, of such a new culture where people care deeply for one another, to the extent that a community will never allow a single person to go hungry or be without a doctor when needed? Who will lead the people, brothers and sisters? If a great intellectual denounces the present strangulating structural violence taking place, it is just not enough. He must have the vision of what the common people have to build when the revolution is over. People are longing everywhere for a new world. We have to build that world, and it is the leaders of the revolution, loved and adored by the masses for their endless compassion for suffering humanity, who need to take the people forward and guide them in building a new economic structure, a new political structure, show them the way to create a deeply caring, nurturing culture where not one single person is left behind. The strong spirituo-moralists who fight ceaselessly against immorality, corruption and all forms of injustice in the society are the real revolutionaries. They wage a ceaseless struggle against immorality. They have no timidity with regard to fight, because peace comes only from fight. Peace does not walk in the door on a platter. The people who fight endlessly against immorality and injustice are the people who by definition become our leaders because such people will always take care of the oppressed, marginalised, and neglected human beings.

As Shrii Sarkar says, the theory of leadership is one thing, but the practical, human qualities of a leader are quite another. In the past some persons, due to having intelligence, social awareness and great oratory skills, were able to start a revolution. But, in most cases, they had no vision of how to guide the people during the post-revolutionary phase. A great leader who has established himself through dedication, ideological zeal and deep sincerity can succeed against tremendous odds, including the military might of society’s

exploiters. When revolution begins, a fight will start against all immorality and corruption in the society. The moral, intellectual and spiritual strength of the leaders will bring about their victory. Yet even when the revolution is over, the leaders will have to remain constantly vigilant that new exploiters do not come to power. Hence their struggle is never-ending. In the words of Shrii Sarkar, "The greatest achievement of a revolution is to eradicate exploitation and bring about a progressive change in the collective psychology through the minimum loss of life and property."

Be the Leader You Wait For

In view of what is happening today in Europe, in view of the rising thousands of homeless people in America, is it not time for revolution? We are defining revolution here as accelerated change, radical change, in our society. Is it not time to end the economic exploitation of entire humanity? Let us not wait for leaders. Let us become the leaders the world waits for. Let us adore the suffering human beings everywhere and work day and night to accelerate change in the economic and social order, so that their suffering comes to an end. We can do no less.

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